

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES: CONCENTRATION IN SUSTAINABILITY (MA/MS)

Master of Arts/Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies, concentration in Sustainability

Unit: Graduate School (<https://louisville.edu/graduate/>) (GI)
Academic Plan Code(s): IS_MA_SUS, IS_MS_SUS

Program Information

The program is not accepting new student applications and is suspending admissions for the 2025-2026 academic year.

The large-scale goal of the Master of Interdisciplinary Studies in Sustainability Degree programs (both MA and MS degree programs are available) is to prepare students to address complex regional, state, national and global challenges posed by the intersection of human exponential growth and increasingly limited resources that support society. Students seeking a career involving research or doctoral program should consider pursuing the Master of Science option.

The exponentially rising demands that human populations make on natural resources and ecological systems that supply us with energy, food, water, and many other ecosystem services will be further threatened by climate change and the pollution of air, soil, and water. Continued reliance on a "business as usual" approach to the economic production and consumption of goods and services, often characterized by the stresses it places on The Commons and by a disregard for environmental and social justice, now threatens the ability of the natural world to absorb our collective impact, erodes our collective security, and polarizes our societies. Substantial changes in social contracts, economic systems, as well as individual and institutional behaviors will be needed to provide more sustainable, healthy and secure societies. National, regional and local experimentation is needed to find solutions to societal challenges.

This Master of Interdisciplinary Studies in Sustainability program is an initiative of the University of Louisville's Sustainability Council which seeks to integrate sustainability into everything that goes on at UofL. Students in the program are encouraged to contribute to the Sustainability Council's efforts to explore sustainable solutions for UofL and our community.

More information about the UofL Sustainability Council can be found on their website (<http://louisville.edu/sustainability/>).

Admission Requirements

The program is not accepting new student applications and is suspending admissions for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree (any major is acceptable), and provide a completed application form, a transcript of all undergraduate course work, and letters of recommendation.

Admission is competitive. The minimum requirements for unconditional admission are the baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution, an undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

Those applicants whose native language is not English and who do not hold a degree from a university where the language of instruction

is English, must complete the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a score of at least 79 on the internet-based test, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with a minimum score of 6.5 or Duolingo score of 105.

Application Deadlines

The program maintains a rolling admissions policy. Target dates include:

Fall semester: July 15

Spring semester: November 15

Summer semester: April 15

Application Materials

The following materials must be submitted via the Graduate School website:

1. **Graduate Application**
2. **Application Fee**
3. **Transcript(s):** Transcripts of your college records from all of the schools you have attended must be submitted to the Graduate School, Graduate Admissions. Students must have earned an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university.*
4. Those for whom English is not their native language must also submit TOEFL scores, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or Duolingo.*
5. **Three Recommendation Letters:** Three letters of recommendation from academic sources are required and must be submitted online to the Graduate School, Graduate Admissions.

The committee for reviewing student applications will consist of faculty currently serving on the Sustainability Council's Education Committee.

For answers to commonly asked questions by applicants, please review the Frequently Asked Questions page of the Graduate School website.

*There are additional requirements for international students. These requirements are listed at louisville.edu/graduate/futurestudents/international-applicants/international-students (<https://louisville.edu/graduate/futurestudents/international-applicants/international-students/>).

Accelerated Degree Admissions Process

Students should apply to these programs in their junior year. Advising to ensure the requirements are met without extraneous credit hours is imperative and strongly recommended for timely degree completion and financial considerations for the accelerated degrees. Please be sure to consult with advisors and the director of the master's program.

Special Requirements for Accelerated Master's Degree Program Admission

1. An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better
2. Completion of SUST 101, 201, 202, 301, 302 and 303 with a minimum GPA of 3.0

The accelerated degree program allows a student to complete the Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability and the Master of Arts or Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies: Concentration in Sustainability

over a five year period. The first four years consist of undergraduate studies, including three core sustainability graduate level courses taken during the senior year, culminating in the award of the Bachelors of Arts in Sustainability degree. Core courses should include PLAN 675, SUST 602, and research methods.

The fifth year consists of graduate coursework leading to completion of the Master of Arts or Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies:

Concentration in Sustainability. The accelerated curriculum allows students to apply 9 credit hours of graduate core course work taken during their undergraduate studies towards the completion of both the BA and Master's degrees. An additional semester of research may be required to complete a thesis for the Master of Science degree.

Program Requirements for a Master of Arts Degree

Code	Title	Hours
Required Course		3
URBS 631	Sustainability Theory	
Core Courses		
Students are required to take one course in each Core Area:		
Sustainability and the Built Environment		3
URBS 633	Sustainable Development & Planning	
URBS 615	Environmental Policy	
Sustainability and the Natural Environment		3
SUST 602	Sustainability and the Natural Environment	
Sustainability and the Social Environment		3
ANTH 522	Ecology, Politics and Culture	
URBS 684	Research Design	
Research Methods or Statistics course in the student's selected Core Area		3
Seminar		3
Capstone		3
Guided Electives within Core Areas (see below)		9
Minimum Total Hours		30

Program Requirements for a Master of Science Degree

Code	Title	Hours
Required Course		3
URBS 631	Sustainability Theory	
Core Courses		
Students are required to take one course in each Core Area:		
Sustainability and the Built Environment		3
URBS 633	Sustainable Development & Planning	
URBS 615	Environmental Policy	
Sustainability and the Natural Environment		3
SUST 602	Sustainability and the Natural Environment	
Sustainability and the Social Environment		3
ANTH 522	Ecology, Politics and Culture	
URBS 684	Research Design	

Research Methods or Statistics course in the student's selected Core Area	3
Seminar	3
Thesis	6
Guided Electives within Core Areas (see below)	9
Minimum Total Hours	33

Students will work with their academic committees to select the core and elective courses needed. It is strongly recommended that a student's committee distribute elective courses such that at least three (3) or four (4) credit hours are in an area other than that of the student's home department. Other courses may be acceptable with the program director's approval.

Built Environment

Code	Title	Hours
CEE 660	Transportation Planning and Urban Development	3
CEE 661	Environmental Analysis of Transportation Systems	3
CEE 681	Green Engineering & Sustainable Design	3
GEOG 536	Sustainable Transportation	3
LAW 902	Real Estate Transactions	2-3
URBS 633	Sustainable Development & Planning	3
URBS 614	Transportation and Land Use Planning	3
URBS 618	Urban Design	3
URBS 622	Historic Preservation & Sustainable Practice	3
URBS 606	Site Planning	3
URBS 620	Capstone Studio	6
URBS 621	Housing and Community Development	3
URBS 661	Public Management	3
URBS 615	Environmental Policy	3
URBS 690	Special Topics	1-3

Natural Environment

Code	Title	Hours
ANTH 528	Animals and Humans	3
ANTH 531	Anthropology of Water	3
ANTH 535	Nutritional Anthropology	3
BIOL 567	Conservation Biology	3
BIOL 644	Global Change Ecology	4
BIOL 660	Advanced Ecology of Urban and Suburban Landscapes	4
BIOL 663	Advanced Population and Community Ecology	4
BIOL 667	Advanced Conservation Biology	4
ENVS 663	Climate and Environmental Change	3
SUST 703	Land and Ecosystem Conservation	1-3

Social Environment

Code	Title	Hours
ANTH 530	Human Impacts on Past Environments	3
ANTH 540	Health and Civilization	3
ANTH 626	Food Justice	3
ART 692	Art, Thinking & Social Change	3
GEOG 500	Globalization Seminar	3
HIST 610	Introduction to Historic Preservation	3
HIST 611	Studies in American History	3
HSS 675	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at the Individual Level	3
HSS 676	Community Health Promotion and Disease Prevention	3
HSS 697	Special Topics in Health and Sport Sciences	1-3
LAW 931	Environmental Law	2-3
LAW 939	First Amendment Law	2
PHEH 620	Global Issues in Environmental and Occupational Health	3
PHEH 651	Advanced Environmental Health Services	3
PHPB 612	Health Communication: Theory and Practice	3
PHPB 722	Health Risk Communication	3
URBS 632	Sustainable Social-Ecological Systems	3
POLS 639	Seminar in International Relations	3
SOC 710	Statistics II	3