

2026–2027 GRADUATE HANDBOOK



MASTER OF SUSTAINABILITY (MSs)

MASTER OF WATER SECURITY (MWS)

MASTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (MES)

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (PhD)

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN



WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY	3
A Message from SENS Leadership	4
Message from the Graduate Co-Chairs	5
Message from the SENS Student Association (SENSSA)	6
Vision, Mission, and Core Values.....	7
Graduate Attributes for our Thesis-Based Graduate Students	9
Core Competencies and their Associated Roles for SENS’s Professional Programs	10
Faculty and Staff	16
NON-THESIS GRADUATE PROGRAMS.....	18
Master of Sustainability (MSs).....	19
Master of Water Security (MWS)	23
Advisor and Student Roles and Responsibilities for Professional Programs (MSs & MWS)	26
THESIS-BASED GRADUATE PROGRAMS.....	28
Master of Environment and Sustainability (MES)	28
Doctor of Philosophy in Environment and Sustainability (PhD).....	35
Supervisor and Student Roles and Responsibilities for Thesis-Based Programs	46
AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS.....	49
IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL STUDENTS.....	50
APPENDIX A: Student-Supervisor Agreement	55
APPENDIX B: Advisory Committee Structures	56
APPENDIX C: Guidance for Evaluation of a Thesis/Dissertation	60
APPENDIX D: Student Making Satisfactory Progress Guidelines.....	61
APPENDIX E: SENS Policy Statement on Plagiarism	63
APPENDIX F: Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Awards	67



WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) is an international model of excellence for interdisciplinary, solution-oriented, and experience-based learning for issues dealing with environment and sustainability. We aim to provide high-quality mentorship of interdisciplinary researchers and practitioners within the context of sustainability education. Our faculty bridge multiple disciplines across the natural, physical, and social sciences, as well as the humanities and engineering, to address the most challenging environmental and sustainability issues faced by society. We are pleased to welcome you to the SENS community!



This handbook contains information about policies and procedures governing the SENS graduate programs. While the School has worked to ensure that its procedures adhere to the standards of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) at the University of Saskatchewan, faculty, staff, and students should contact the School's Graduate Chair to address any questions about CGPS procedures as they relate to the handbook.

NOTE: the handbook reflects SENS, CGPS, and University policies that are current as of the date of publication; however, the Graduate Handbook may be subject to revision throughout the academic year and that written notice of any changes affecting students currently in the program will be provided.

A MESSAGE FROM SENS LEADERSHIP

Welcome to the School of Environment and Sustainability!



We are very pleased that you have chosen SENS for your graduate education. Our scholarly community engages in a unique brand of solution-oriented, interdisciplinary scholarship addressing a wide range of environment and sustainability issues. You are joining a remarkable community of faculty, staff, and students who are excited to help you develop the skills and experience needed to pursue your career goals.

Your graduate education with SENS is intended not only to provide you with pragmatic tools and skills that you can readily apply but also to help you frame and address deeper questions—those that sustainability science and the worldwide movements for human dignity and reconciliation between peoples show us are necessary for our societies and our planet to thrive. We are truly an interdisciplinary faculty that is leading the way in effecting positive change. Wherever possible, we endeavour to incorporate the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and framework into our research and teaching. We commit to offering you the education, skills, and support you need to make a genuine and positive impact in the world.

We expect SENS students to build upon their existing knowledge of other fields of study with new knowledge, approaches and ways of knowing from fields/topics/disciplines with which they are less familiar. This requires imagination, flexibility, and dedication to ensure that your graduate degree works for you, preparing you appropriately for a future that none of us can predict precisely, but which we hope can be impactful and rewarding for you because of what you learn here. SENS alumni have found jobs in a wide variety of sectors and developed meaningful and exciting careers. We are confident that by investing in yourself and your future during your time at SENS, you will also find your own path to success. SENS is committed to leveraging the novel opportunities in front of us to make top-quality graduate education in environment and sustainability more accessible. SENS faculty and staff are constantly striving to discover and apply new ways to ensure that wherever you are or wherever you come from, your graduate experience with us is world-class.

Beyond coursework and research, I encourage you to pursue a well-rounded experience. The SENS Students' Association (SENSSA) is an opportunity to cultivate meaningful relationships with your peers with similar interests. Our alumni always reflect on the tremendous difference that those connections with peers, staff, and faculty made in their careers. Attending university is a time of extraordinary freedom and a time of new social experiences and challenges layered onto the academic challenges. We want to help you exceed your academic objectives and enjoy both the rich experience of social life at SENS and USask while achieving the knowledge you need for a future career.

Enjoy, engage, succeed, and take advantage of all that SENS and USask has to offer!

On behalf of SENS, I wish you a very successful academic year ahead.

Karsten Liber, PhD
Executive Director and Distinguished Professor

MESSAGE FROM THE GRADUATE CO-CHAIRS

It is a great honor, on behalf of the staff, faculty, continuing students, and the University of Saskatchewan community at large, to welcome you to the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS). You are joining a vibrant, diverse, and collaborative community of curiosity-driven leaders and innovators. As an interdisciplinary graduate school, we are committed to equipping leaders of tomorrow to address society's most pressing environmental and sustainability challenges through innovative teaching, transformative learning experiences, and groundbreaking research. Most importantly, you are now part of a community of change-makers and champions of a healthy environment, a healthy economy, and a healthy society.

Through our four graduate programs and an undergraduate Certificate in Sustainability, SENS offers a purpose-driven and holistic education. Our programs are designed to ensure students gain a deep subject matter expertise, technical competencies, and professional skills through a unique combination of classroom, field-based and experiential learning opportunities. At SENS, we are a collaborative community, which means you will have the opportunity to engage and work with students, faculty member and partners from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, which will enrich your academic journey, support your well-being, and help you grow into a confident and effective leader in environment and sustainability. Our carefully crafted curriculum prepares our graduates to become forward-thinking professionals and future leaders that are well-equipped to develop bold, evidence-based solutions that meet the needs of our communities and ecosystems.

As your Graduate Chairs, Markus Hecker and Edmond Sanganyado, we are committed to supporting you and to ensure you have a transformative and memorable experience at SENS. We encourage you to reach out whenever you have questions about your program, your experience at SENS or at USask, or when you want someone to speak with freely. We look forward to getting to know you and celebrating your future success as a graduate student in SENS.

Again, a very warm welcome to SENS!



Markus Hecker, PhD
Professor and Graduate co-Chair



Edmond Sanganyado, PhD
Associate Professor and Graduate co-Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE SENS STUDENT ASSOCIATION (SENSSA)

Dear Graduate Students,

On behalf of the School of Environment and Sustainability Students' Association, congratulations on your admission to the University of Saskatchewan! We are excited to welcome you to our community.

The School of Environment and Sustainability Students' Association (SENSSA) is the graduate student association that promotes, supports and advocates for the interests of graduate students at SENS. As an association, our objectives are:

- Serve as the representative and administrative body of graduate students within SENS,
- Promote the unity and welfare of graduate students within SENS,
- Support the intellectual, social, professional, and community engagement activities of graduate students within SENS,
- Foster communication and collaboration among graduate students and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA),
- Organize social and academic activities for members,
- Increase awareness of sustainability-related issues among members and the university community, and
- Promote sustainability in all our activities and initiatives.

SENSSA offers many ways to get involved, including participating in our social, wellness, and professional development events, becoming a SENSBA council member, or running for one of the Executive positions. Being part of SENSBA can give a fun and rewarding experience during your studies, while also offering valuable volunteer and leadership experience that can strength your résumé.

We wish you all the best in your program at the University of Saskatchewan and look forward to meeting you at the start of the program or at future SENSBA events.

"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean." –Ryunosuke Satoro

Sincerely,
Your SENS Students' Association



VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES

PURPOSE

The School of Environment and Sustainability is a national leader in solutions-focused research and teaching across environmental sciences, sustainability, and community-engaged scholarship. We focus on water security, energy and mineral resources, and community sustainability, with a special commitment to serving rural, remote, Indigenous, and Northern communities, ecosystems, and economies. By convening and working with a broad range of partners, including federal and provincial governments, industry, and local and community-based organizations, our work supports nation-building in Canada - now and for future generations.

MISSION

To inspire and train change-makers for a sustainable world: Through research, teaching, and community engagement working across engineering, natural sciences and social sciences, the School of Environment and Sustainability leads transformative change on complex environmental, and sustainability challenges by collaborating with global and local partners, and mobilizing knowledge, with a special commitment to benefitting rural, remote, Indigenous, and Northern communities, in our province, country, and around the world.

VISION

To be a leading light in a world where communities, ecosystems, and economies thrive together: To be the leading global academic hub for research, teaching, and engagement in water security, energy and mineral sustainability, and community resilience with a special commitment to rural, remote, Indigenous and Northern communities in a world where communities, ecosystems, and economies thrive together, guided by environmental stewardship and a commitment to social well-being.

VALUES

Aligning with the University values statement, SENS considers the following Values to guide the School's activities:

PURPOSEFUL IMPACT— “Discovery the World Needs”: The knowledge that our work creates (and in many cases co-creates with external partners) is germane to the challenges of our era and will contribute to the social, cultural, ecological, and economic goals of a range of partners and communities we serve. We aim for local impact and global relevance.

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION: We thrive through our relationships and connections—a strength rooted in the pragmatism and ambition of a community that recognizes that we can simply do more by working together.

COMMUNITY & SENSE OF PLACE: We are inspired by and deeply rooted in local priorities yet strongly connected to global knowledge and opportunities.

INTERDISCIPLINARY LEADERSHIP: We understand that tackling the world's greatest challenges requires the intersection of diverse minds, traditions, experiences, and ways of knowing.

RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION: We embrace complexity and change, helping governments, industry, and communities adapt and encouraging stewardship that benefits ecosystems, economies, and societies.

Aligning with key University signature areas, SENS prioritizes the following signature areas to guide the School's research, teaching, and engagement priorities:

WATER

- Improving water quality and accessibility through foundational research at the water, food, and energy nexus
- Seeking solutions to land-water management challenges
- Building climate and water resilient communities and sectors
- Addressing, water-based health inequities

ENERGY AND MINERALS RESOURCES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

- Identifying accessible and sustainable energy solutions that engage and benefit rural, Northern, and Indigenous communities
- Generating critical mineral innovations to help meet international demands for low-carbon and renewable energy technologies and food production

COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Promoting social innovation, biocultural diversity, community connections, and local capacity-building
- Enhancing rural, remote, Northern, and Indigenous communities' efforts and capacity for environmental stewardship and self-determination
- Supporting empowered and inclusive evidence-based decision-making by those we work with, better enabling them to identify and establish the policies, practices, and resources needed to address the realities of both a changing climate and rapid geopolitical realignment
- Focusing on effective and equitable governance arrangements that provide self-sufficiency, resilience, and long-term sustainability



Spring Convocation 2025 (photo: Amy Janzen)

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES FOR OUR THESIS-BASED GRADUATE STUDENTS

SENS graduates ...

Think holistically with ethical intent

- Apply critical and creative thinking to sustainability problems
- Transcend disciplinary boundaries to achieve harmonious integration of human and natural systems
- Identify and assess how human and natural systems work and interact

Deeply understand sustainability

- Explain and understand the origins and multiple dimensions of sustainability
- Think across and within systems
- Develop a fulsome vocabulary to demonstrate a deep understanding of sustainability
- Understand how complexity and uncertainty affect the sustainability of socio-ecological systems

Integrate a range of perspectives and ways of knowing

- Demonstrate and encourage respect for a range of perspectives and ways of knowing
- Are able to articulate the benefits and limitations of a range of perspectives and ways of knowing
- Are profoundly aware of their own position, its strengths, limitations, and assumptions

Are ambassadors for sustainability and agents of change

- Mobilize theory into practice to solve problems
- Ask bold/difficult/challenging questions
- Are courageous, tenacious risk-takers in the face of change
- Can perceive practical solutions and new insights to sustainability challenges

Have research expertise

- Can work effectively in interdisciplinary, inter-cultural and/or cross-sectoral teams
- Understand the process of research
- Know how to design and execute effective interdisciplinary research
- Can synthesize, integrate, analyze and evaluate data for the purpose of creating new knowledge
- Know how to conduct research ethically

Demonstrate collaborative, leadership and professional skills in knowledge sharing

- Can work effectively in interdisciplinary, intercultural and/or cross-sectoral teams
- Can plan and manage sustainability projects and research
- Can effectively manage self in the context of sustainability projects (e.g. setting realistic deadlines, being reliable, working effectively under uncertainty, solving problems, maintaining a positive attitude, modelling professional conduct)
- Can facilitate, mediate, translate, and communicate knowledge to appropriate audiences in many different forms

Have a substantive area of expertise in keeping with their program of study

- Demonstrate excellence within their chosen field of study
- Can create, analyze, synthesize, and communicate within their field(s) of study
- Can communicate their expertise effectively to those outside that field

CORE COMPETENCIES AND THEIR ASSOCIATED ROLES FOR SENS'S PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

1. Leader

The ability to lead teams to engage in respectful relationships with other individuals and organizations, reflective practice, and innovative undertakings in the face of changing conditions and sustainability challenges

Outcomes

- *Models ethical practice, integrity, and responsibility*
- *Demonstrates commitment to sustainability principles and social justice*
- *Creates organizational cultures that foster learning and trust between those organizations and others they collaborate with*
- *Seeks strategies for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples*
- *Supports the professional and personal growth of team members*
- *Adapts leadership style as situations demand, with consideration for others' individual styles, strengths, interests, needs, and capabilities*
- *Takes measured risks, creating innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to sustainability challenges*

2. Integrator for influencing organizational culture and change

The ability to apply strategies for systematic and ethical inquiry to support organizational learning and effectiveness

Outcomes

- *Generates understanding of their organization's culture, policies, and behaviour to constructively influence change*
- *Uses frameworks for comprehensively integrating knowledge from multiple sources to inform decisions which translate that knowledge into action*
- *Applies appropriate principles, methods, and theory of human interaction at individual and group levels to clarify and steer organizations towards sustainability objectives*
- *Identifies and meaningfully engages key change agents to influence and support organizational decisions and practices*
- *Seeks strategies to acknowledge, confront, and grow from conflicting points of view within a sustainability organization or project*

3. Critical and change-oriented thinker

The ability to guide personal and organizational strategy by applying systems thinking in order to develop holistic and innovative solutions to sustainability challenges

Outcomes

- *Effectively navigates complexity and uncertainty in socio-ecological systems and understands how to cope effectively with those characteristics of sustainability challenges*
- *Approaches problems openly but systematically, without prejudging their solutions*
- *Effectively explains and understands the origins and multiple dimensions of sustainability*

- Regularly challenges assumptions in order to facilitate learning and performance in oneself and others
- Interprets, integrates, and acts on diverse quantitative and qualitative data related to human and natural systems, including their own organizations, in order to advance practice

4. Collaborator, Communicator, and Bridge Builder

The ability to convey and receive information and build effective, respectful relationships with others, especially where differences exist

Outcomes

- Applies effective two-way communication strategies to work with different audiences and contexts
- Creates and maintains constructive and respectful relationships and networks across collaborating organizations
- Enables respectful inclusion of multiple ways of knowing, being, and doing; particularly those of Indigenous Peoples
- Balances expertise with humility and openness
- Facilitates exchange of knowledge, values, and perceptions among parties to generate healthy debate and formulate strategies that embrace multiple problem understandings and forms of practice

5. Reflective Practitioner and Adaptive Manager

The ability to learn from experience and action in ways that help organizations continuously learn and re-assess their own goals, policies, and procedures

Outcomes

- Demonstrates awareness of the strengths, limitations, and assumptions of one's own standpoint on sustainability issues and in interactions with others
- Encourages continuous learning in oneself and others, as well as fostering effective organizational learning that continuously evaluates decisions
- Generates and/or maintains effective systems for management of projects and programs including financial and budget management; data collection, use, management, and curation; people, and technical resources
- Seeks and provides feedback to team members to enhance individual and group performance
- Effectively self-monitors and manages oneself and others in the context of sustainability projects



Spring Convocation 2025 (photo: Amy Janzen)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At the University of Saskatchewan, “integrity is expected of all students in their academic work—class participation, examinations, assignments, research practica— and in their non-academic interactions and activities as well.”¹

What academic integrity means for students:

- Perform your own work unless specifically instructed otherwise.
- Check with your instructor about whether collaboration or assistance from others is permitted.
- Use your own work to complete assignments and exams.
- Cite the source when quoting or paraphrasing someone else’s work. Discuss with your professor if you have any questions about whether sources require citation.
- Follow examination rules.
- Discuss with your professor if you are using the same material for assignments in two different courses.
- Be truthful on all university forms.
- Use the same standard of honesty with fellow students, lab instructors, teaching assistants, sessional instructors and administrative staff as examinations, assignments, research, you do with faculty.²

Please consult

- o the University Library for more information about [Academic Integrity](#) and the Library’s [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and
- o The Office of the University Secretary for more information about [Academic Misconduct, definitions and regulations](#).

POLICIES ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SENS aims for the judicious and ethical use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) in programming by students, staff and faculty. These policies apply to both undergraduate and graduate programs, including graduate student research, PhD candidacy assessments, graduate theses, graduate project reports, and courses.

[Policy on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning](#)

[Policy and Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in Graduate Student Research](#)

¹University of Saskatchewan. University Secretary’s Office. 2012 “Integrity Defined.” <https://secretariat.usask.ca/documents/student-conduct-appeals/StudentAcademicMisconduct.pdf>

² <https://libguides.usask.ca/AcademicIntegrityTutorial/Definitions#s-lg-box-15782948>.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) is committed to working towards improving the equity, diversity, and inclusion in communities within our School, University, and beyond. SENS makes the following commitments:

- To enhance the feeling of belonging to the School and participation in the School's activities, SENS offers an orientation process for new students, support for a graduate student association within the School, and inclusion of graduate student representatives on School committees (where merited).
- The school values the health and well-being of all members. We strive to ensure that all members are aware of relevant campus and community health, wellness, and social supports ([Student Wellness Centre](#)). We also ensure students, faculty and staff are aware of applicable training opportunities that can strengthen our understanding of ourselves and each other. If you are not healthy, know that you can reach out to instructors, supervisors, program directors, or the graduate chair to navigate accommodations needed, and get oriented to the supports available via the university. [Access and Equity Services](#) "is responsible for providing, along with faculty, reasonable accommodations for students who experience barriers to their education on the basis of a prohibited ground(s), including disability, religion, family status, and gender identity."
- SENS offers opportunities for all persons of any background to participate in its programs.
- The school endeavors to meet the needs of all students. Please reach out to our Graduate Chair or your program chair/supervisor to discuss specific needs and options to accommodate.
- Access to role models and mentors is important. The School strives to take equity considerations into account in the appointment of faculty, staff, research assistants, and teaching assistants. The School also considers diversity and equity in its selection of invited speakers.
- The School's Graduate Chair serves as Equity Advisor when needed. The equity advisor can assist the Admissions and Award Committee in supporting applications from students with special needs and disabilities when requested.
- Scholarships and funding opportunities sometimes provide support for equity deserving groups. Please talk to your program director or the graduate chair if you want to learn more about funding opportunities.

GRADUATE STUDENT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Conique Facey

Graduate Programs Assistant
Room 326 Kirk Hall
Telephone 306.966.4331
sens.info@usask.ca

Carolyn Pytlyk

Manager, Academic Programs
Room 338 Kirk Hall
Telephone 306.966.8755
carolyn.pytlyk@usask.ca

Sandra Betancur Vesga

Academic Programs Advisor
Room 328 Kirk Hall
Telephone 306.966.1985
sens.professional.admin@usask.ca
sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca

THE GRADUATE STUDENT COMMUNITY

The students enrolled in the School of Environment and Sustainability are a vital part of the School community. Given the broad scope of the field of environment and sustainability, students come to the School from many different disciplinary backgrounds and have diverse academic and research interests. A vibrant graduate student community provides intellectual stimulation for the School's students, a network of social support for those students who are new to Saskatoon, and a breadth of skills, insights, and training useful in approaching, and addressing sustainability problems.

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (SENSSA)

All graduate students in the School of Environment and Sustainability are automatically considered members of SENSSA. The mandate of SENSSA is as follows:

1. to provide for the administration of the activities of the graduate students within SENSSA,
2. to promote the unity and welfare of graduate students within SENSSA,
3. to serve and further the intellectual, cultural, and social activities of graduate students within SENS,
4. to promote and maintain communication with graduate students within the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) of the University of Saskatchewan, and
5. to promote sustainability in all its endeavours.

More information about SENSSA can be found on its webpage [here](#).

THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) is the campus-wide body which advocates for the needs and concerns of graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan. The GSA represents graduate students on many University committees. Graduate students may contact the GSA for information or assistance with problems related to University affairs.

Graduate Students' Association
Emmanuel & St. Chad, 1337 College Drive

Mailing Address: Room 110 Place Riel 1 Campus Drive Saskatoon, SK Canada S7N 5A3
Telephone: (306) 966-8471
Facsimile: (306) 966-8598
Website: [GSA](#)



ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN STUDENT SUPPORTS

You will find many supports across the University:

[The Student Wellness Centre](#) offers urgent and non-urgent physical and mental health care to University of Saskatchewan students and their spouses and children.

[Student Central](#) can help with questions about finances, registration, academic life and more.

[College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies \(CGPS\)](#) support you throughout your program. CGPS focuses on three priorities—collaboration with partners internal and external to the university, opportunities for international experiences, and program quality and innovation.

[The Grad Hub](#) is the go-to place to find relevant information for graduate students.

[Tyson's IT Checklist for New Students](#) provides guidance for incoming students to get themselves set up for their academic career.

[International Student and Study Abroad Centre \(ISSAC\)](#) is a central support unit and a campus partner for all students, staff, and faculty. ISSAC is dedicated to fostering a welcoming, globally aware, and inclusive campus community.

[Gordon Oaks Red Bear Student Centre](#) is dedicated to supporting the personal, social, cultural, and academic success of Metis, First Nations, and Inuit Students.

[Access and Equity Services \(AES\)](#) is guided by Saskatchewan's Human Rights legislation and the duty to accommodate individuals requiring accommodations based on disability, religion, family status, and gender identity.

SENS COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

USask Email Address

Your USask email is connected to your PAWS account, and this is the email address used by your professors and the School to contact, connect, and keep you informed. Please ensure that you check this account regularly.

PAWS

There is a [SENS channel in PAWS](#), so add it to your favourites. You can find links to helpful resources to plan your degree and manage your program, including the steps required to graduate. There are additional writing resources and links to campus services and supports like the International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC).

SENS Communications

Watch for emails from "SENS Communications", keeping you up to date on SENS-related news and events. For wider-reaching campus events, follow [University of Saskatchewan Environmental Programs](#) on Facebook. You can also follow [School of Environment and Sustainability – Usask SENS](#) on LinkedIn.

SENSA (SENS Students' Association)

SENSA has an Instagram page and will send emails to your USask email account with updates on activities, seminars, and events.

Find [School of Environment and Sustainability Students' Association](#) on Instagram.

FACULTY AND STAFF

The School of Environment and Sustainability is overseen by an Executive Director. The School's core faculty hold standard or primary- joint appointments directly with the School, or they hold secondary-joint appointments with the School, in which case their main affiliation is with another academic unit. Several of the School's faculty are affiliated with the [Global Institute for Water Security](#) or the [Toxicology Centre](#).

Administration	
Karsten Liber , Executive Director and Distinguished Professor	karsten.liber@usask.ca
Andrew Ireson , Assistant Director, Academic (Internal)	andrew.ireson@usask.ca
Markus Brinkmann , Assistant Director Academic (External)	markus.brinkmann@usask.ca
Markus Hecker , co-Graduate Chair	markus.hecker@usask.ca
Edmond Sanganyado , co-Graduate Chair	edmond.sanganyado@usask.ca
Oscar Zapata , MSs Program Director (Energy Security)	oscar.zapata@usask.ca
Graham Strickert , MSs Program Director (Regenerative Sustainability)	graham.strickert@usask.ca
Saman Razavi , MWS Program Director	saman.razavi@usask.ac
Jennifer Milburn , Executive Officer	jennifer.milburn@usask.ca
Sandra Betancur Vesga , Academic Programs Advisor	sandra.betancur@usask.ca
Tyson Brown , Online Instructional Support Specialist	tyson.brown@usask.ca
Courtney Burnyeat , Strategic Business Advisor (Human Resources)—on leave	courtney.burnyeat@usask.ca
Maria Luisa Cerna de Hernandez , Financial and Administrative Assistant	maria.hernandez@usask.ca
Conique Facey , Graduate Programs Assistant	conique.facey@usask.ca
Graham Fairhurst , Research Services Specialist	graham.fairhurst@usask.ca
Amy Janzen , Communications Specialist	sens.communications@usask.ca
Carolyn Pytlyk , Manager, Academic Programs	carolyn.pytlyk@usask.ca
Alan Reynolds , Strategic Business Advisor (Human Resources)	alan.reynolds@usask.ca
Sarah Werner , Strategic Initiatives Coordinator	sarah.werner@usask.ca
Karen Yang , Strategic Business Advisor (Finance)	sens.finance@usask.ca
Faculty	
Helen Baulch , Professor	helen.baulch@usask.ca
Markus Brinkmann , Associate Professor and Director, Toxicology Centre	markus.brinkmann@usask.ca
Douglas Clark , Professor—on sabbatical (1 July 2026–30 June 2027)	d.clark@usask.ca
Grant Ferguson , Professor Joint appointment College of Engineering, Department of Civil, Geological, and Environmental Engineering	grant.ferguson@usask.ca
Elaina Guilmette , Assistant Professor AP	elaina.guilmette@usask.ca
Markus Hecker , Professor	markus.hecker@usask.ca
Andrew Ireson , Professor	andrew.ireson@usask.ca
Tim Jardine , Professor	tim.jardine@usask.ca
Varuni Jayasooriya , Assistant Professor	varuni.jayasooriya@usask.ca
Paul Jones , Associate Professor	paul.jones@usask.ca
Vladimir Kricsfalusy , Associate Professor AP	vladimir.k@usask.ca
Karsten Liber , Distinguished Professor and Executive Director	karsten.liber@usask.ca
Karl-Erich Lindenschmidt , Professor—on sabbatical (1 July–31 December 2026)	karl-erich.lindenschmidt@usask.ca

Jeff McDonnell , Distinguished Professor	jeffrey.mcdonnell@usask.ca
Greg Poelzer , Professor	greg.poelzer@usask.ca
Saman Razavi , Professor	saman.razavi@usask.ca
Maureen Reed , Distinguished Professor	maureen.reed@usask.ca
James Robson , Associate Professor—on sabbatical (1 January–30 June 2027)	james.robson@usask.ca
Edmond Sanganyado , Associate Professor	edmond.sanganyado@usask.ca
Graham Strickert , Associate Professor AP	graham.strickert@usask.ca
Colin Whitfield , Associate Professor	colin.whitfield@usask.ca
Oscar Zapata , Assistant Professor	oscar.zapata@usask.ca

Associate Faculty	
Ajay Dalai , Distinguished Professor Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, College of Engineering	ajay.dalai@usask.ca
Colin Laroque , Professor Department of Soil Science, College of Agriculture and Bioresources	colin.laroque@usask.ca
Kerry McPhedran , Professor Department of Civil, Geological and Environmental Engineering, College of Engineering	kerry.mcphedran@usask.ca
Ben Ralston , Assistant Professor College of Law	benjamin.ralston@usask.ca
Hamed Samarghandi , Associate Professor Edwards School of Business	samarghandi@edwards.usask.ca
Jafar Soltan , Professor Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, College of Engineering	jafar.soltan@usask.ca
Susann Tegtmeier , Assistant Professor Department of Physics and Engineering Physics, College of Arts and Science	susann.tegtmeier@usask.ca
Andrew Watson , Associate Professor Department of History, College of Arts and Science	a.watson@usask.ca



Orientation 2025
(photo: Amy Janzen)

PROFESSIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAMS

SENS is proud to announce that our **Master of Sustainability** and **Master of Water Security** programs have been accredited by the Canadian Environmental Accreditation Commission (CEAC) through ECO Canada, recognizing our commitment to delivering high-quality environmental education that prepares graduates for success in Canada's evolving environmental workforce.



Preparing Graduates for Environmental Careers

Achieving ECO Canada accreditation demonstrates that our programs have undergone a comprehensive external review by academic and industry experts. The accreditation process evaluates areas including curriculum, faculty, student services, learning resources, and program quality to ensure graduates are equipped with the knowledge and competencies valued by today's environmental employers.

Students enrolled in an ECO Canada-accredited program are eligible for exclusive opportunities designed to support their transition from education to employment, including:

- Complimentary EPt Student membership with ECO Canada
- Access to career development resources and mentorship opportunities
- Eligibility for reduced requirements when pursuing the Environmental Professional (EP®) designation
- Participation in career events, networking opportunities, and employer engagement initiatives
- Connections to Canada's environmental professional community

Learn more about ECO Canada: [Environmental Employment Programs and Services](#).



MASTER OF SUSTAINABILITY (MSs)

Master of Sustainability (MSs): Our MSs students transcend disciplinary boundaries to manage complex problems and address sustainability challenges from the local to the global context. This program is typically completed in two years. Students will have the option to focus their MSs studies in one of two areas: *Regenerative Sustainability* or *Energy Security*. The MSs provides students with theoretical and conceptual understandings of key contemporary sustainability issues, hands-on learning opportunities and appropriate methods for addressing sustainability problems, and professional/management skills. Students address real-world issues by working with a public, private, or non-profit partner, or on a faculty member's research project. Graduates go on to work in industry, the non-profit sector, the public sector and in research organizations. (project-based: 24 credit units of course work and a 6-credit unit project, or course-based: 30 credit units of course work)

Students from a wide variety of disciplines—ranging from the arts and social sciences to the life and physical sciences, pure and applied—are admitted to the MSs program. Students should have sufficient background to pursue their chosen area of study. Students may be admitted on a conditional basis if they require additional courses to provide appropriate background training but otherwise meet admission requirements.

Dr. Graham Strickert is the Program Director the Regenerative Sustainability stream. MSs students with questions about their Regenerative Sustainability program should contact Dr. Strickert at (306) 966-2403 or graham.strickert@usask.ca.

Dr. Oscar Zapata is the Program Director for the Energy Security stream. MSs students with questions about their Energy Security program should contact Dr. Zapata at (306) 966-1617 or oscar.zapata@usask.ca.

****IMPORTANT:** For staff support, all MSs-related requests must be sent to sens.professional.admin@usask.ca rather than a staff member's personal email. This will ensure timely responses to requests and consistent recordkeeping of communications and requests.

MSs PROGRAM RESIDENCY AND MILESTONES

Residency in the program is considered fulfilled when all requirements are met. Graduate students and those involved in graduate studies are strongly encouraged to ensure that students move as expeditiously as possible through their programs. Master's programs are limited to four years in length. This time is measured from the beginning of the first term of registration for work which is included in the program of studies (This may be course work done at the University of Saskatchewan or elsewhere, and, in general terms, includes thesis, project, certificate, or practicum work.).

The following checklist itemizes the benchmark tasks normally completed during the MSs program. This list is not presented in any set order, and the program is not limited to the items on this list. MSs students in both fields of study will typically complete the program in 2 years of full-time study.

	Program Requirements (Master of Sustainability—ENERGY SECURITY)	Responsible Party
Program start	☐ Complete Program Orientation	Program Director/Student
Course Work	☐ Required courses: ENVS 839, ENVS 840, ENVS 841, ENVS 842, ENVS 843, ENVS 844, ENVS 845, ENVS 846, ENVS 847, ENVS 848 ☐ ENVS 990 ☐ GPS 960	Student
Midway check in	☐ Check in meeting or gathering	Program Director, Academic Programs Advisor, students
Program Wrap up	☐ Students will have met program requirements when all course work has been completed. ☐ Apply to graduate	Student

	Program Requirements (Master of Sustainability— REGENERATIVE SUSTAINABILITY)	Responsible Party
Program start	☐ Complete Program Orientation	Student/Program Director
Course Work	☐ Required courses: ENVS 839, ENVS 852, ENVS 853, ENVS 807 ☐ 12 credits of electives ☐ ENVS 990 ☐ GPS 960 (GPS 961 and/or GPS 962 may also be required.)	Student with guidance and advice from the MSs Program Director
Midway check in	☐ Check in meeting or gathering	Program Director, Academic Programs Advisor, students
ENVS 992 Project (project-based option)	☐ Prepare project proposal	Student
	☐ Receipt of ethical approval to conduct research (if necessary); refer to the Ethics website	Student, prior to any field work
	☐ Complete 992 project	Student with project community partner or faculty advisor
	☐ Participate in fall symposium (project presentation)	Student
Additional course work (course-based option)	☐ 6 credit units of course work electives (in addition to other 12 cu of electives)	Student
Program Wrap up	☐ Students will have met program requirements when all course work and the ENVS 992 project or additional electives have been completed (i.e. 30 credit units in total). ☐ Copy of project submitted to School and to partner organization (project option) ☐ Apply to graduate	Student

REQUIREMENTS

COURSE WORK

A fully qualified MSs student is required to take a minimum of **30 credit units**. For complete, up-to-date information on MSs courses, please consult the [2026–2027 University Catalogue](#).

ENERGY SECURITY (30 CREDIT UNITS)

The Energy Security field of study is offered as a course-based program of study. Students must take the following 10 courses (30 credit units):



[ENVS 839.3 Ways of Knowing through the Concept of Sustainability](#)
[ENVS 840.3 Renewable Energy and Energy Transitions](#)
[ENVS 841.3 Renewable Energy Systems](#)
[ENVS 842.3 Community Economic Analysis and Renewable Energy](#)
[ENVS 843.3 Energy Project Finance](#)
[ENVS 844.3 Community Vision and Engagement](#)
[ENVS 845.3 Project Development: Government, Law, and Regulations](#)
[ENVS 846.3 Negotiations and Consultation in Sustainable Development](#)
[ENVS 847.3 Data Collection for Community Energy Planning](#)
[ENVS 848.3 Creating a Community Energy Plan](#)
[ENVS 990.0: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#)

All courses being taken will be recorded on the student's Degree Works. Additional courses may be required if the MSs Program Director feels that the student's background is deficient in some area that is required. Students in the MSs in Energy Security typically complete the program in 22 months of study.

All graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan are required to complete [GPS 960: Research Ethics](#) and may be required to take either [GPS 961: Ethics and Integrity in Human Research](#) or [GPS 962: Ethics and Integrity in Animal Research](#), depending on the nature of their project, thesis, or dissertation work.

At the Master's level, students must achieve a grade of at least 60% in all graduate courses required for the degree and maintain an overall weighted average of at least 70% in those courses to retain standing.

REGENERATIVE SUSTAINABILITY (30 CREDIT UNITS)

Students in the Regenerative Sustainability field of study may choose to pursue either a project- or course-based program of study. Students must take the following:



1) Required Courses (12 credit units)

[ENVS 839.3 Ways of Knowing through the Concept of Sustainability](#)

[ENVS 852.3 From Systems to Design Thinking](#)

[ENVS 853.3 Regenerative Sustainability](#)

[ENVS 807.3 Sustainability in Theory and Practice](#)

[ENVS 990.0: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#)

2) Electives (12 credit units): students must choose a minimum of 12 cu of course work from the available graduate courses offered at the time of enrolment—with the possibility of special permission to take courses outside of SENS. All electives from outside of SENS must be pre-approved by the Program Director via email.

3) Project or Additional Electives (6 credit units)

[ENVS 992.6 Project in Environment and Sustainability](#) OR

Additional Electives (6 credit units)

NOTE: The MSs in Regenerative Sustainability Project-based program is no longer direct entry. Students interested in completing the Project option must apply at the end of their second semester to transfer to the project-based option. To be eligible to transfer to the project-based option, students must

- have a minimum GPA of 80%
- have attended courses regularly
- demonstrate commitment to community engagement
- demonstrate a positive attitude
- demonstrate teamwork and collaborative skills

Students interested in transferring should contact the Program Director and Academic Programs Advisor about accessing the application form.

More information on SENS courses can be found in the [University Course Catalogue](#).

All courses being taken will be recorded on the student's Degree Works. Additional courses may be required if the MSs Program Director feels that the student's background is deficient in some area that is required to complete the final project. Students in the MSs in Regenerative Sustainability typically complete the program in 22 months (the course-based option) and in 24 months (the project-based option) of study.

ENVS 992: PROJECT

ENVS 992.6: *Project in Environment and Sustainability* (only available for the project-based option in the Regenerative Sustainability field of study) is intended to give students an opportunity to investigate applied topics in environment and sustainability. This may include scientific, technical, social, economic, cultural, institutional, or other appropriate attributes of environmental and sustainability challenges. Projects should be interdisciplinary in scope and should allow students to further develop critical thinking and applied research and project management skills as they investigate environmental problems through service learning. The ENVS 992 Placement Director is responsible for overseeing ENVS 992. If you have specific questions about 992, please speak to the Placement Director Vladimir Kricsfalusy (vladimir.k@usask.ca).

ENVS 992.6 engages students in active learning that often takes place in conjunction with a partner organization. These partners are primarily non-profit and charitable organizations, although governments, municipalities, and private companies may also offer this experience for students. These practical experience hours will be under the supervision of a faculty advisor from the university. Preparation for the project will take place in-class in the Fall and Winter terms of the students' second year. The project will usually take place in the Spring/Summer term of the second year. We expect most students will work on individual placements or projects; however, an option exists for students to work in small teams (2–3 students) on a deliverable. Students will be encouraged to make links between their own scholarly interests and the course material. The course asks students to share their knowledge with peers at the university where they will connect their practical experiences to studies in environment and sustainability.

Students in ENVS 992 are expected to present on their projects during the annual Student Symposium in August.

ENVS 990 SEMINAR

All MSs students are also required to register in [ENVS 990.0: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#). The aim of the ENVS 990 seminar is to provide students an opportunity to think critically about a wide range of topics relevant to environment and sustainability and to engage in vibrant relevant discussion. To facilitate discussion and interaction of the SENS community as a whole, the seminar coordinator encourages—and will take steps to facilitate—the engagement of all SENS core, associate, and adjunct faculty in the ENVS 990 seminar series. Students registered in all graduate programs are required to register for ENVS 990 and to complete the minimum requirements.

In the FIRST YEAR of their program, students are required to:

- Complete the Academic Integrity tutorial through the USask library (when an online tutorial, students will need to upload their completion certificate to Canvas)
- Attend or view the short presentation provided by the SENS librarian (to be included as part of a scheduled 990 session or via a recorded presentation on Canvas)
- Attend the Generous Scholarship seminar session, normally organized early in the Fall term, and complete (and submit) any assigned homework.
- Complete the 4 Seasons of Reconciliation (or equivalent) module in the Fall term (when an online module, students will need to upload their completion certificate to Canvas).
- Attend all other ENVS 990 seminars organized during the Fall or Winter terms, and complete (and submit) any assigned homework. The focus of these 990 seminars will vary but will include sessions on job readiness, professional development, and the building of professional relationships.

Tutorials and modules are typically available in asynchronous online format. The seminar sessions will be delivered online or in hybrid format (to be confirmed ahead of the Fall term). There will normally be one 990 session per month during the Fall and Winter terms.

Attendance Expectations

Students are required to self-report their attendance at each seminar by signing in, either using the registration sheet provided for in-person attendance or by signing into the Chat if connecting virtually.

****NOTES:**

- **Students enrolled in an in-person program are expected to attend 990 sessions in-person.**
- **Students enrolled online are required to keep their cameras on to confirm their attendance.**

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated in two main ways. They will receive grades for each course that they take, with these grades determined by the assigned course instructors and based on the assessment criteria set by the relevant course syllabus. They will also receive grades associated with the ENVS 992 Placement (if completing the project-based option for the MSs). While the faculty advisor and partner organization co-advisor are ultimately responsible for assigning most grades, the Placement Director will participate in the evaluation of the project presentation and student's professional performance.

MASTER OF WATER SECURITY (MWS)

Master of Water Security (MWS): MWS students develop knowledge and skills in both the physical and societal dimensions of water security. Water security is an interdisciplinary field of study that considers human impacts on the environment, and the linkages and feedback among atmosphere, land, and water systems. MWS students are taught and mentored by faculty from the Global Institute of Water Security. Students typically complete the program in two years of study. Students take course work in areas related to water security: hydrology, groundwater, data analysis and modelling, water quality, water policy, and resource management. Students also complete a water security research project with a public, private, research, or non-profit partner. (30 credits of course work and a 6-credit unit project)



The MWS program, a joint initiative between SENS and the [Global Institute for Water Security](#) (GIWS), consists of 30 credit units of course work plus a 6-credit unit project placement. Students from a wide variety of disciplines—from the arts and social sciences to the life and physical sciences, pure and applied—are eligible to apply to the MWS program. As such, no specialist training is required, but students should have sufficient academic background to pursue the Master's.

Dr. Saman Razavi is the MWS Program Director. MWS students with questions about their program should contact him at saman.razavi@usask.ca.

****IMPORTANT:** For staff support, all MWS-related requests must be sent to sens.professional.admin@usask.ca rather than a staff member's personal email. This will ensure timely responses to requests and consistent recordkeeping of communications and requests.

MWS PROGRAM RESIDENCY AND MILESTONES

Residency in the program is considered fulfilled when all requirements are met. Graduate students and those involved in graduate studies are strongly encouraged to ensure that students move as expeditiously as possible through their programs. Master's programs are limited to four years in length. This time is measured from the beginning of the first term of registration for work which is included in the program of studies. (This may be course work done at the University of Saskatchewan or elsewhere, and, in general terms, includes thesis, project, certificate, or practicum work.)

The following checklist itemizes the benchmark tasks normally completed during the MWS program. This list is not presented in any set order, and the program is not limited to the items on this list. Students typically complete the program in 24 months of full-time study.



ENVS 806: Field Trip to Hannin Creek (photo: Andrew Ireson)

	Program Requirements	Responsible Party
Program start	☐ Complete Program Orientation	Program Director/Student
Course Work	☐ Required courses: ENVS 805, ENVS 806, ENVS 815, ENVS 816, ENVS 817, ENVS 819, ENVS 820, ENVS 821, ENVS 829 or ENVS 824, ENVS 830 ☐ ENVS 990 ☐ GPS 960 (GPS 961 and/or GPS 962 may also be required.)	Student with guidance and advice from the MWS Program Director
Midway check in	☐ Check-in meeting or gathering	Program Director, Academic Programs Advisor, student
ENVS 992 Project	☐ Prepare project proposal	Student
	☐ Receipt of ethical approval to conduct research (if necessary); refer to the Ethics website	Student, prior to any applicable field work
	☐ Complete 992 project	Student with project community partner or faculty advisor
	☐ Participate in fall symposium (project presentation)	Student
Program Wrap up	☐ Students will have met program requirements when all course work and the ENVS 992 project have been completed. ☐ Copy of project submitted to School and to partner organization ☐ Apply to graduate	Student

REQUIREMENTS

COURSE WORK

A fully qualified MWS student is required to take a minimum of 36 credit units (30 cu of course work and a 6-cu project). The required courses (30 credit units) are

- [ENVS 805.3: Data-driven Solutions for Sustainability](#)
- [ENVS 806.3: Field Skills in Environment and Sustainability](#)
- [ENVS 815.3: Modelling for Water Security](#)
- [ENVS 816.3: Chemicals in Aquatic Systems](#)
- [ENVS 817.3: Fundamentals of Hydrogeology](#)
- [ENVS 819.3: Catchment Hydrology](#)
- [ENVS 820.3: Water and Human Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [ENVS 821.3: Sustainable Water Resources](#)
- [ENVS 824: River Science](#) or [ENVS 829.3: River, Lake and Wetland Science](#)
- [ENVS 830.3 Water Policy and Management](#)

MWS students are also required to register in

- [ENVS 990.0: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#) (no credit units) and
- [ENVS 992.6: Project in Environment and Sustainability](#).

For information on MWS courses, please consult the [2026–2027 University Catalogue](#).

All graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan are required to complete [GPS 960: Research Ethics](#), and may be required to take either [GPS 961: Ethics and Integrity in Human Research](#) or [GPS 962: Ethics and Integrity in Animal Research](#), depending on the nature of their project, thesis, or dissertation work.

At the Master's level, students must achieve a grade of at least 60% in all graduate courses required for the degree and maintain an overall weighted average of at least 70% in those courses to retain standing.

ENVS 990 SEMINAR

All MWS students are also required to register in [ENVS 990.0: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#). The aim of the ENVS 990 seminar is to provide students an opportunity to think critically about a wide range of topics relevant to environment and sustainability and to engage in vibrant relevant discussion. To facilitate discussion and interaction of the SENS community as a

whole, the seminar coordinator encourages, and will take steps to facilitate, the engagement of all SENS core, associate, and adjunct faculty in the ENVS 990 seminar series. Students registered in all graduate programs are required to register for ENVS 990 and to complete the minimum requirements.

In the **FIRST YEAR** of their program, students are required to:

- Complete the Academic Integrity tutorial through the USask library (when an online tutorial, students will need to upload their completion certificate to Canvas)
- Attend or view the short presentation provided by the SENS librarian (to be included as part of a scheduled 990 session or via a recorded presentation on Canvas)
- Attend the Generous Scholarship seminar session, normally organized early in the Fall term, and complete (and submit) any assigned homework.
- Complete the 4 Seasons of Reconciliation (or equivalent) module in the Fall term (when an online module, students will need to upload their completion certificate to Canvas).
- Attend all other ENVS 990 seminars organized during the Fall or Winter terms, and complete (and submit) any assigned homework. The focus of these 990 seminars will vary but will include sessions on job readiness, professional development, and the building of professional relationships.

Tutorials and modules are typically available in asynchronous online format. The seminar sessions will be delivered online or in hybrid format (to be confirmed ahead of the Fall term). There will normally be one 990 session per month during the Fall and Winter terms.

Attendance Expectations

Students are required to self-report their attendance at each seminar by signing in, either using the registration sheet provided for in-person attendance or by signing into the Chat if connecting virtually.

****NOTES:**

- **Students enrolled in an in-person program are expected to attend 990 sessions in-person.**
- **Students enrolled online are required to keep their cameras on to confirm their attendance.**

ENVS 992: PROJECT

ENVS 992 is intended to give students an opportunity to investigate applied topics in water security. This may include scientific, technical, social, economic, cultural, institutional, or other appropriate attributes of water security challenges. Projects should be interdisciplinary in scope and should allow students to further develop critical thinking and research skills as they investigate water security problems through service learning. The ENVS 992 Placement Director is responsible for overseeing ENVS 992. If you have specific questions about 992, please speak to the Placement Director, Graham Strickert (graham.strickert@usask.ca)

ENVS 992.6 engages students in active learning that often takes place in conjunction with a partner organization. These partners are primarily non-profit and charitable organizations, although governments, municipalities, and private companies may also offer this experience for students. These practical experience hours will be under the supervision of a faculty advisor from the university. Preparation for the project will take place in-class in the Fall and Winter terms in year 2 of the program. The project will usually take place in the Spring/Summer term of year 2. We expect most students will work on individual placements or projects; however, an option exists for students to work in small teams (2–3 students) on a deliverable. Students will be encouraged to make links between their own scholarly interests and the course material. The course asks students to share their knowledge with peers at the university where they will connect their practical experiences to studies in environment and sustainability.

Students in ENVS 992 are expected to present on their projects during the annual Student Symposium in August.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated in two main ways. They will receive grades for each of the courses that they take, with these grades determined by the assigned course instructors and based on the assessment criteria set by the relevant course syllabus. They will also receive grades associated with the ENVS 992 Placement. While the faculty advisor and partner organization co-advisor are ultimately responsible for assigning most grades, the Placement Director will participate in the evaluation of the project presentation and student's professional performance.

ADVISOR AND STUDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS (MSs & MWS)

Regarding the professional programs specifically, the roles of the faculty advisor, the program and project directors, the student, and the partner organization can be articulated as follows:

Role of the Program Director: The Program Director is a mentor, advisor, and senior colleague, who provides an atmosphere of respect for the student and encourages the student throughout the program.

For the 2026–2027 year,

Dr. Graham Strickert is the MSs Program Director in Regenerative Sustainability. Regenerative Sustainability students with questions about their program should contact him at (306) 966-2403 or graham.strickert@usask.ca.

Dr. Oscar Zapata is the MSs Program Director in Energy. Energy Security students with questions about their program should contact him at (306) 966-1617 or oscar.zapata@usask.ca.

Dr. Saman Razavi is the MWS Program Director. MWS students should contact him at saman.razavi@usask.ca.

The Program Director has the following responsibilities toward the student:

- to coordinate and oversee course delivery for the program.
- to guide the student's timeline to completion and milestones.
- to be accessible for and to encourage regular meetings with the student; provide expectations, criteria, and evaluation for written work in a timely fashion.
- to provide letters of recommendation on request in a timely fashion.
- to inform of policies, regulations, expectations, and standards of the School, CGPS, and the University with respect to course work, research, scholarship, intellectual property, academic integrity, safety, ethics, collaborative work, authorship, acknowledgements, conference presentations, and professionalism.
- to help ensure the diverse needs of students are met
- to provide timely responses to student's emails to address any questions or concerns that they have throughout the duration of their program

Role of the ENVS 992 Placement Director: The Project (992) Director is a mentor, advisor, and senior colleague, who leads the 992 projects and provides an atmosphere of respect for the student.

The ENVS 992 Placement Director has the following responsibilities toward the student:

- to match the student with an ENVS 992 project placement and faculty advisor,
- to provide expectations, criteria, and evaluation for the ENVS 992 Project, in a timely fashion,
- to ensure eligibility of the ENVS 992 Project Placement for grading,
- to prepare students for oral presentations of project proposals at the SENS Symposium, and final project presentations at ENVS 992 Capstone Event, and
- to provide opportunities for student to enhance their skills in proposal development and project management.
- to provide timely responses to student's emails to address any questions or concerns that they have throughout the duration of their projects

For the 2026–2027 academic year,

Dr. Vladimir Kricsfalusy is the ENVS 992 Placement Director for the Master of Regenerative Sustainability program. Students with questions about their project placements should contact Dr. Kricsfalusy at vladimir.k@usask.ca.

Dr. Graham Strickert is the ENVS 992 Placement Director for the Master of Water Security program. Students with questions about their project placements should contact Dr. Strickert at graham.strickert@usask.ca. Dr Strickert is supported in this role by Dr Andrew Ireson, who can also be contacted at andrew.ireson@usask.ca

Role of the Faculty Advisor: The faculty advisor is a mentor, advisor, and senior colleague, who provides an atmosphere of respect for the student. As the senior partner, the advisor must encourage commitment on the part of the student. The advisor has the following responsibilities toward the student to:

- be engaged with the student throughout the duration of their ENVS 992 project placement.
- ensure the viability of the student's proposed ENVS 992 project placement.
- prepare the student for their oral proposal presentation, and delivery of written project report and/or other project deliverables as agreed upon with the partner organization.
- attend the oral proposal presentation and end-of-program SENS Professional Masters Symposium, and co-grade the project (including project report/ deliverable, oral presentation, and professional performance).

Role of the Partner Organization: The partner organization will identify a representative who will serve as the organization's liaison with the student and the faculty advisor. This liaison, working with the faculty advisor, will serve to mentor and advise the student in an atmosphere of respect. The liaison and the partner organization's responsibilities toward the student are to:

- work with the student's faculty advisor and the ENVS 992 Placement Director to guide the student's research project, including timeline to completion, milestones, and positive learning outcomes for the student.
- establish a research project that offers positive learning outcomes for the student.
- be accessible for and to encourage regular meetings with the student.
- be accessible as a mentor and responsive to student questions and needs.
- ensure that the liaison role is filled in the event of absence.
- attend the oral proposal presentation at end-of-program capstone event, and co-grade the project (including project report/ deliverable, oral presentation, and professional performance).

Role of the Student: The student is a junior colleague in a relationship of mutual respect with the faculty advisor, the project director, and the partner organization. The student makes a commitment to the program and should be dedicated to the completion of the program within an acceptable timeframe and in accordance with the policies and regulations of the School and the University. The student is entitled to mentorship, advising, guidance, and monitoring by the Program Director, ENVS 992 Placement Director, faculty advisor, and partner organization co-advisor.

The student's responsibilities are to:

- maintain regular and frequent communication with the faculty advisor, Program Director, ENVS 992 Placement Director, and the partner organization.
- be aware of the many other commitments the faculty advisor, Program Director, ENVS 992 Placement Director, and the partner organization will have and schedule meetings and document review in a responsible manner that respects these commitments.
- know and adhere to policies, regulations, expectations, and standards of the School, the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS), and the University with respect to course work, research, scholarship, intellectual property, academic integrity, safety, ethics, collaborative work, authorship, acknowledgements, conference presentations, and professionalism.
- adhere to professional and respectful interaction with the partner organization, including being sensitive to time and resource demands.
- meet deadlines for registration, course work, research, applications, reporting, presentations, and convocation preparations.
- strive for excellence and take full responsibility for course work and research.
- establish and adhere to a timeline and milestones for completion.
- record research systematically, completely, and honestly.
- report on progress in the program to the Program Director and in ENVS 992 to the Placement Director.
- submit work for evaluation, allowing reasonable time for review, and consider advice from the faculty advisor and the Program Director, ENVS 992 Placement Director ENVS 992.
- provide copies of a finished and professionally executed product in a timely fashion.
- interact with the partner organization as appropriate relative to the completion of the project in a manner that reflects well upon the School.
- make thoughtful, frugal, and responsible use of resources.
- maintain, keep clean, and return to order the workplace.
- advise the program coordinator and the advisor of absences or delays due to vacation, illness, or other reasons.

THESIS-BASED GRADUATE PROGRAMS



MASTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (MES)

Master of Environment and Sustainability (MES): The MES is a thesis-based program that provides students with the opportunities and skills to advance their understanding of environmental and sustainability challenges in today's world. Education in complex problem-solving, the foundations of sustainability, and research skills prepares students to play a significant role in knowledge generation, translation, and decision-making. Students can explore the meaning of interdisciplinary research by considering a wide range of scientific, technical, political, social, economic, and institutional factors that shape environmental and sustainability problems, their management, and their potential solutions. (Minimum: 12 credit units of course work plus a thesis)

Students from a wide variety of disciplines—ranging from the arts and social sciences to the life and physical sciences, pure and applied—are eligible to apply to the MES program. As such, no specific training is required for admission, but students should have sufficient background to pursue their chosen area of study. Faculty serving as supervisors of graduate students must be faculty of SENS and be members of CGPS. Associate and adjunct faculty members who are approved by CGPS can serve as co-supervisors.

Probationary Admission: Applicants whose qualifications do not meet the minimum requirements or whose academic qualifications are difficult to assess may be admitted on a probationary status to a program. Applicants in this category may be required to take one or more preparatory courses to improve their qualifications. In this case, they will be required to pay additional fees. The student's status will be reviewed after a specified amount of academic work is completed. If progress is satisfactory, the Program Director or Graduate Chair may recommend to CGPS that the student be considered fully qualified. Students who do not achieve the probationary conditions may withdraw voluntarily or failing this, will be required to discontinue. In certain exceptional situations, the academic unit may extend the probationary period with a new set of conditions, agreed to by the student and by the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

****IMPORTANT:** For staff support, all MES-related requests must be sent to sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca rather than a staff member's personal email. This will ensure timely responses to requests and consistent recordkeeping of communications and requests.

MES PROGRAM RESIDENCY AND MILESTONES

Residency in the program is considered fulfilled when all requirements are met. Graduate students and those involved in graduate studies are strongly encouraged to ensure that students move as expeditiously as possible through their programs of studies. Master's programs, whether full- or part-time, are limited to four years in length. This time is measured from the beginning of the first term of registration for work which is included in the program of studies. (This may be course work done at the University of Saskatchewan or elsewhere, and, in general terms, includes thesis, project, or practicum work.) The following timeline is based on a typical September program start date. For program start dates other than September, please consult the Graduate Chair for instruction on the program requirements and timelines for completion.

The following checklist itemizes the benchmark tasks normally completed during the MES program. This list is not presented in any set order, and the program is not limited to the items on this list.

Time in Program	Program Requirements	Responsible Party
Year 1	☐ Required courses (6 credit units): ENVS 803, ENVS 807 ☐ ENVS 994 ☐ ENVS 990 ☐ GSR 960 (GSR 961 and/or GSR 962 may also be required.) ☐ 6 credit units of electives	Student, in consultation with supervisor for course selection
	☐ Select members for graduate advisory committee. An initial meeting of the committee is recommended to establish expectations.	Supervisor with student
	☐ Student/Supervisor Agreement	Student and supervisor
	☐ Select research topic and prepare thesis proposal	Student with supervisor
	☐ Advisory committee meeting: approval of proposal	Student and advisory committee
	☐ Research and data collection can commence once required ethics certificates or research licenses are secured, and with approval of the advisory committee	Student. Copies of ethics certificates or licenses must be filed with the graduate secretary
	☐ Program of Studies Form	Student, supervisor, and/or chair
	☐ Annual Committee Meeting and Progress Report	Student and supervisor
	☐ ENVS 990 attendance requirements are met at the end of the first year of residency.	Student
Year 2 to program completion	☐ Presentation. Based on the thesis research, and with permission of the supervisor but before the thesis defence (20 minutes; typically takes place during the Student Symposium)	Student is responsible for scheduling and presenting seminar Supervisor records and confirms that presentation requirement has been met
	☐ Permission to Write	Supervisor and student determine when permission should be sought from thesis advisory committee. Advisory committee chair records minutes of meeting (or e-mail correspondence) and files decision
	☐ Permission to Defend	Supervisor and student determine when permission should be sought from thesis advisory committee. Advisory committee chair records minutes of meeting (or e-mail correspondence) and files decision
	☐ Thesis Submission (multiple copies)	Student
	☐ Final Copies of Thesis	Student
	☐ Annual progress reports are required until program completion	Student and supervisor

COURSE WORK

A fully qualified MES student is required to take a minimum of 12 credit units of graduate course work. The required courses are

- o [ENVS 803.3: Research in Environment and Sustainability](#) and
- o [ENVS 807.3: Sustainability in Theory and Practice](#).

MES students must also take six credit units of electives. Please refer to the [University Course Catalogue](#) for a complete list of ENVS courses.

A MES student will normally complete the course requirements in the first year of full-time study. Additional courses may be required if the advisory committee feels that the student's background is deficient in some area. All required courses must be noted on the program of studies. ENVS 803 may be waived as a required course for SENS MES students and another course substituted under circumstances where the request has been approved at the supervisor and advisory committee levels. Renewal of funding for graduate students requires satisfactory progress in the program of studies.

The elective course work will be in the student's area of specialization and is selected in consultation with the advisory

committee. A student may take one 400-level undergraduate course to fulfill the elective requirements, with the approval of the advisory committee. Credit may be granted for graduate-level courses taken previously at this or another university, provided they have not already been credited toward a bachelor's or advanced degree. The Admissions and Awards Committee may require a student to complete an examination to demonstrate proficiency before credit is granted for courses taken at another university.

The student is also required to register in

- [ENVS 990: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#) (no credit units) and
- [ENVS 994: Research in Environment and Sustainability](#) (no credit units).

The requirements for ENVS 990 are met by attending and participating in structured School seminars and presenting the results of thesis research. Completion of the research requirement is met when the thesis is successfully defended and approved.

All graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan are required to complete [GPS 960: Research Ethics](#), and may be required to take either [GPS 961: Ethics and Integrity in Human Research](#) or [GPS 962: Ethics and Integrity in Animal Research](#), depending on the nature of their project, thesis, or dissertation work. Students may also be required to complete other additional training and certification as it relates to their research. Students should discuss what is needed with their supervisors.

At the beginning of the program, a supervisor will work with the student to develop a **program of studies (PoS)**. This program indicates the nature of the research, the members of the committee, and all course and other requirements. The program of studies must be approved by the advisory committee of the student at the beginning of the program. Any changes made to the program of studies must be approved by the advisory committee and must be recorded in writing and submitted to the School and to CGPS. The Program of Studies form is available in the SENS Channel in PAWS under the "Policies, Procedures, and Forms" tab. Each year, the student is expected to demonstrate progress towards completing course requirements. Failure to make progress may result in a recommendation that the student withdraw. Additionally, students supported by funding must maintain specific grade point averages in order to retain funding. Students failing to meet these requirements will have funding withdrawn and may face an assessment of unsatisfactory progress. Please consult APPENDIX C.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The MES Advisory Committee will consist of the following:

- Chair—must be SENS core faculty, or a secondary-joint appointment with approval of the Graduate Chair, where they have strong knowledge of SENS procedures.
- Supervisor(s)—must be SENS core faculty or secondary-joint appointments. If associate or adjunct faculty, there must be a co-supervisor who is SENS faculty. If the student is co-supervised, the co-supervisors function as a single member, with a single vote.
- At least one additional member.
- Supervisor will NOT chair the committee.

Advisory Committee Approval:

- ***Advisory committees must be submitted to the SENS Academic Programs Advisor and Graduate Chair for approval***, prior to the first advisory committee meeting. The proposed committee structure shall indicate if the chair is a voting member of the committee or if the chair is normally a non-voting member except in circumstances of a tie.
 - The Graduate Chair will review the structure to ensure the required roles are fulfilled and avoid any situations of conflict of interest or possible perceptions of conflict of interest. Note that CGPS approval is also required in cases where a proposed committee member is not a member of graduate faculty.
 - This approval will be kept in the student's records.
- MES advisory committees should be struck within the first semester of the student commencing their program. At the proposal stage, the committee composition shall be re-evaluated to ensure that it meets the needs of the student.
- Any changes in the advisory committee must similarly be submitted to the Academic Programs Advisor and Graduate Chair for approval and will be kept in the student's records.
- Where a temporary change in committee structure is required (e.g., in case of a leave for a committee member), this change may be made by the supervisor (or co-supervisors) without formal approval.

NOTE: In the event of an absence of a committee meeting for a student advisory committee meeting, please reach out to the Graduate Chair for guidance on how to proceed. In the unusual event of an absence for a defence in emergency situations,

please contact CGPS for review and approval.

ENVS 990 SEMINAR

All MES students are also required to register in [ENVS 990.0: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#). The aim of the ENVS 990 seminar is to provide students an opportunity to think critically about a wide range of topics relevant to environment and sustainability and to engage in vibrant relevant discussion. To facilitate discussion and interaction of the SENS community as a whole, the seminar coordinator encourages, and will take steps to facilitate, the engagement of all SENS core, associate, and adjunct faculty in the ENVS 990 seminar series. Students registered in all graduate programs are required to register for ENVS 990 and to complete the minimum requirements.

In the **FIRST YEAR** of their program, students are required to:

- Complete the Academic Integrity tutorial through the USask library (when an online tutorial, students will need to upload their completion certificate to Canvas)
- Attend or view the short presentation provided by the SENS librarian (to be included as part of a scheduled 990 session or via a recorded presentation on Canvas)
- Attend the Generous Scholarship seminar session, normally organized early in the Fall term, and complete (and submit) any assigned homework.
- Complete the 4 Seasons of Reconciliation (or equivalent) module in the Fall term (when an online module, students will need to upload their completion certificate to Canvas).
- Attend all other ENVS 990 seminars organized during the Fall or Winter terms, and complete (and submit) any assigned homework. The focus of these 990 seminars will vary but will include sessions on job readiness, professional development, and the building of professional relationships.

Tutorials and modules are typically available in asynchronous online format. The seminar sessions will be delivered online or in hybrid format (to be confirmed ahead of the Fall term). There will normally be one 990 session per month during the Fall and Winter terms.

Attendance Expectations

Students are required to self-report their attendance at each seminar by signing in, either using the registration sheet provided for in-person attendance or by signing into the Chat if connecting virtually.

****NOTES:**

- **Students enrolled in an in-person program are expected to attend 990 sessions in-person.**
- **Students enrolled online are required to keep their cameras on to confirm their attendance.**

PRESENTATION

Students in the MES program are required to present at least one seminar, which typically will take place during the annual SENS student symposium. The seminar will focus on the research the student has done.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Each year a student is expected to demonstrate progress towards completing program requirements. The **advisory committee and student must meet annually**, and a Progress Report form is submitted to the Academic Programs Advisor (sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca). The Progress Report and meeting minutes from the committee must be accompanied by a short form to be completed by the student and submitted to sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca. This meeting may coincide with the Thesis Proposal Defence or Permission to Write or may be held separately.

Failure to make progress may result in a recommendation that the student withdraw. Additionally, students supported by funding must maintain specific grade point averages in order to retain funding. Students receiving SENS scholarships must maintain a 75% or 80% grade point average (dependent on the scholarship in question).

Other awards may have other GPA requirements. Students failing to meet these requirements will have funding withdrawn and may face an assessment of unsatisfactory progress.

At the master's level, students must achieve a grade of at least 60% in all courses required for the degree, while maintaining an

overall average of at least 70%. If the student fails to meet these standards, the advisory committee will assess the student's performance and determine an appropriate course of action. The student may be permitted to re-take a course or undertake other remedial work if, in the opinion of the advisory committee, the overall performance of the student was otherwise satisfactory. If this is not the assessment of the advisory committee, it will recommend that the student discontinue.

THESIS

As they prepare to develop and write their theses, students are strongly encouraged to consult the CGPS [Thesis ROADMAP](#).

PROPOSAL

During the first year of residence, the student will select a thesis research topic and prepare a thesis proposal. The student will be guided in this by the student's supervisor and advisory committee. The proposal should clearly establish the objectives of the research, outline the theoretical context of the research, and identify the methods to be used to meet the research objectives. The thesis proposal should be between 5,000–10,000 words and its content must include:

- Title page
- Layperson summary (or plain language abstract)
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Statement of research purpose, objectives, questions, and/hypotheses
- Review of the literature/context for the proposed research
- Proposed research methods, study design, and analytical approach
- Potential significance and contributions
- Potential limitations
- Proposed research communication and dissemination
- Research timeline
- Draft research budget (if applicable)
- Literature cited
- Appendices (if applicable)

The proposal should, ideally, be submitted and defended within nine months from first registration in the program but must be completed within 24 months. The thesis proposal is submitted to the student's supervisor for review. Once the proposal is judged satisfactory by the supervisor, copies of the proposal are provided to the other members of the advisory committee. The student will present the proposal, and the committee will determine, by consensus, if the proposal provides a satisfactory basis for thesis research. Written confirmation of approval must be filed with the Academic Programs Advisor by the chair. The supervisor will ensure that a copy of the approved thesis proposal is sent to the Academic Programs Advisor to place in the student's file.

PERMISSION TO WRITE THE THESIS

When the supervisor has determined that the student has made sufficient progress in data collection and analysis of the thesis research, a meeting of the advisory committee will be held to evaluate the quality of that work and to assess whether the student should progress to writing the thesis. The committee chair will indicate in writing that permission to write has been given and will send this documentation to the Academic Programs Advisor (sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca) who will place it in the student's file.

THESIS

The thesis must be based on original research and demonstrate judgment and scholarship on the part of the candidate. It must represent a worthwhile contribution to environment and sustainability which would warrant publication, in whole or in part, in a recognized scholarly form. The quality of the thesis is evaluated by an examining committee, consisting of the advisory committee and an external examiner not affiliated with SENS, but typically at the U of S, who is knowledgeable about the thesis topic. Students and advisory committee members should consult [Appendix B: Guidelines for Evaluating a Thesis](#).

The graduate student will develop a thesis under the guidance of the supervisor. Once the advisory committee has recommended that the thesis proceed to defence, the student will provide an electronic copy of the thesis for distribution to the members of the advisory committee, the external examiner, and the School.

At least one month prior to the intended defence date, the supervisor must advise the Graduate Chair and the Academic Programs Advisor via email that the student is ready to defend. A copy of the thesis to be defended must be attached, and the name of the proposed external examiner also provided at this time. The Academic Programs Advisor will prepare the necessary paperwork for CGPS, and the Grad Chair will approve it to be sent forward. Once approved, the external examiner must be given at least two weeks for reading of the thesis and preparation for the defence. These timelines are strictly enforced by CGPS and the School.

THESIS FORMAT

Students may prepare a thesis by manuscript (if approved by the advisory committee) or a thesis by traditional format. General guidelines for the dissertation format requirements are provided in CGPS's [Grad Hub](#). SENS does allow for alternative format theses; students interested in this option should consult with the Graduate Chair as early as possible. The recommended length of the main body of a traditional Master's thesis is between 50 and 100 pages.

SENS recommends that the following be completed for the thesis by manuscript: a minimum of one article suitable for a peer-reviewed publication or equivalent scholarly outlet, as per disciplinary standards, and a second research chapter (this might be a second article suitable for publication, a methodological paper, etc.). Guidelines for the preparation of a manuscript-style thesis can be found in CGPS's [Thesis Roadmap](#). The student must be the first author on all papers associated with the main body of the thesis, and a footnote explaining author roles is required.

Evaluation of the MES manuscript style thesis is the same as that for the regular thesis option. The difference between the traditional and manuscript style thesis is in format only. Submission or acceptance of a manuscript for publication is independent of the evaluation of the thesis, which rests with the advisory committee and the external examiner.

PERMISSION TO DEFEND

Once a full draft of the thesis is completed, and the supervisor has had an opportunity to review it and make comments, the student will present the thesis to her/his committee members for review. The Academic Programs Advisor will prepare the necessary paperwork for CGPS, and the Grad Chair will approve it to be sent forward. Once approved, the external examiner must be given at least two weeks for reading of the thesis and preparation for the defence. These timelines are strictly enforced by CGPS and the School.

APPOINTMENT OF THE THESIS EXAMINING COMMITTEE

The examining committee for a Master's student consists of the advisory committee and an arm's length examiner as approved by the Graduate Chair, Executive Director, or designate of the School. Criteria for selecting arm's length examiners for MES defence are as follows:

1. After the advisory committee has agreed the thesis is acceptable for examination, the Graduate Chair, Executive Director or designate will approve an arm's length examiner for the defence and notify their CGPS Program Advisor so that CGPS can ensure that the student's program requirements (all but thesis defence) have been met.
2. The arm's length examiner will not have been a member of the student's advisory committee. The arm's length examiner may be from within or outside the academic unit but should not have been directly involved in the student's thesis research. The arm's length examiner must have the thesis a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the defence date.

EXAMINATION OF THE THESIS

An oral examination is limited to work done by the candidate for the thesis and to knowledge of directly related material. Outside of the examining committee, members of the University community and guests may attend the oral presentation of the thesis. These attendees may remain in the audience during questioning with permission of the examining committee and student. At the conclusion of the examination, the examining committee meets to determine if the thesis, and its defence by the student, meet the standards for the degree. The examining committee members will decide by consensus or majority vote whether the thesis:

1. has passed without revisions,
2. has passed with revisions (major or minor)³,
3. must be re-examined, or

³ Note that "minor" revisions are considered revisions that could be completed in no more than two weeks of (full-time) work, with "major" revisions completed within no more than six weeks of (full-time) work.

4. is unacceptable, and the student's program is to be terminated.

The examining committee will also determine if the oral examination:

1. is satisfactory,
2. is not satisfactory, and must be repeated, or
3. has failed and will not be repeated.

The student is advised immediately of the examining committee's decision. The examining committee's decision is recorded using form [GPS 403.4](#), which will be submitted to CGPS by the SENS Academic Programs Advisor.

AFTER THE DEFENCE

An electronic copy is to be submitted to the University's Electronic Thesis and Dissertation site. Information about submitting to this site can be found [HERE](#). The student is responsible for submitting the thesis electronically.



Reciprocity with Partners:
Building a Clay Oven in Partner
Community (photo: Jessica
Litman, MSs student)



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (PHD)

Doctor of Philosophy in Environment and Sustainability (PhD): This dissertation-based degree is for students who want an advanced education in researching 21st century environmental and sustainability challenges. Our PhD students attain a deep understanding of sustainability concepts while designing and implementing their own original research. These interdisciplinary scholars demonstrate excellence in their fields of study and are ready to become leaders in academia, industry, non-profit organizations, and the public sector. (Minimum: 6 credit units of course work plus dissertation)

Admission to the PhD program requires a Master's degree, except where the conditions for a transfer from a Master's program have been met and approved (see below). Applicants who do not hold a Master's degree must first register in a Master's program. An appropriate supervisor must be available before a student will be recommended by the Admissions and Awards Committee for admission to CGPS. This is determined by the Admissions and Awards Committee through consultation with faculty whose research interests correspond to those of the student. Faculty serving as supervisors of graduate students generally must be faculty of SENS and be members of CGPS, although non-SENS faculty can be approved to supervise thesis students under specific circumstances (contact the Graduate Chair or Assistant Director-Academic for details). Associate and adjunct faculty members who are approved by CGPS can serve as co-supervisors.

****IMPORTANT:** For staff support, all PhD-related requests must be sent to sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca rather than a staff member's personal email. This will ensure timely responses to requests and consistent recordkeeping of communications and requests.

TRANSFERRING INTO A PHD PROGRAM WITHOUT COMPLETING A MASTER'S DEGREE

Exceptional students may be recommended for transfer into a PhD program without completing a research-based Master's degree. Students seeking direct entry to a PhD program must first register in a Master's program. Recommendation may be considered by the advisory committee if the student has a grade point average exceeding 80% and research completed at the time of consideration is deemed to be of appropriate quality. Recommendation to transfer from a Master's program to a PhD program must be initiated through a formal meeting of the student's advisory committee that then forwards its recommendation through the Graduate Chair to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Students wishing to transfer to the PhD program without completing a Master's degree must successfully complete a Proposal Defence within the first 24 months of their program, have 9 credit units at the 800-level with an 80% average, and meet all the other CGPS requirements.

Additionally, those who transfer into a PhD program prior to completing a Master's degree must take all the necessary course credit units for both the Master's and the PhD degrees. Transfer from a Master's program to a PhD program should take place after the end of the first year and cannot take place later than the end of the second year of the program. Advisory committee membership will be reassessed as part of the Needs Assessment should the student be transferred to a PhD program.

PHD PROGRAM RESIDENCY AND MILESTONES

Residency in the program is considered fulfilled when all requirements are met. Graduate students and those involved in graduate studies are strongly encouraged to ensure that students move as expeditiously as possible through their programs of studies. PhD programs are expected to be completed within a maximum of six years. [Please refer to CGPS policy about [TIME in PROGRAM](#)] This time is measured from the beginning of the first term of registration for work which is included in the program of studies (this may be course work done at the University of Saskatchewan or elsewhere, and, in general terms, includes thesis, project, or practicum work). The following timeline is based on a typical September program start date. For program start dates other than September please consult the Graduate Chair for instruction on the program requirements and timelines for completion.

The following checklist itemizes benchmark tasks normally completed during the first, second, and third years of the PhD

Time in Program	Program Requirements	Responsible Party
Year 1	☐ Required courses (6 credit units): ENVS 809 and ENVS 803 ☐ ENVS 990 ☐ ENVS 996 ☐ GSR 960 (GSR 961 and/or GSR 962 may also be required.)	Student, in consultation with supervisor for course selection
	Needs Assessment: Within 4 months of the program start date ☐ Initial Advisory meeting is held ☐ The Program of Studies is determined	Meeting notes, Progress Report, and Program of Studies must be filed in writing to the Academic Programs Advisor by the advisory committee chair
	☐ Student/Supervisor Agreement	Student and supervisor
	☐ Annual Committee Meeting, Progress Report, and meeting minutes	Student and supervisor
	☐ Research and data collection can commence once required ethics certificates or research licenses are secured, and with approval of the advisory committee	Student. Copies of ethics certificates or licenses must be filed with the Academic Programs Advisor
	☐ ENVS 990 attendance requirements are met at the end of the first year of residency.	Student
Year 2	☐ All course work identified on the Program of Studies must be completed by 12 months after the program start date.	Student
	Candidacy Assessment: Both Candidacy Assessment components must be successfully completed by no later than 18 months from the program start date. ☐ Proposal or Prospectus ☐ Candidacy Paper	Student Results of the Candidacy Assessments must be filed in writing to the Academic Programs Advisor (sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca) by the chair of the advisory committee
	☐ Presentation #1. Typically based on the research proposal and usually delivered during the SENS Research Symposium	Student is responsible for scheduling and presenting. Supervisor records/confirms that requirement has been met
	☐ Annual Committee Meeting, Progress Report, and meeting minutes	Student and supervisor
Year 3 to program completion	☐ Presentation #2. Based on the dissertation research, and with permission of the supervisor but before the dissertation defence (Presentation may be delivered as a university seminar, or at a regional, national or international academic conference)	Student is responsible for scheduling and presenting. Supervisor records/confirms that requirement has been met
	☐ Permission to Write	Student Advisory committee chair records minutes of meeting and files decision
	☐ Permission to Defend	Supervisor and student determine when permission should be sought Advisory committee chair records minutes of meeting (or e-mail correspondence) and files decision
	☐ Dissertation Submission (multiple copies)	Student
	☐ Dissertation Defence	Student and advisory committee
	☐ Final Copies of Dissertation	Student
	☐ Annual progress reports are required until program completion	Student and supervisor

program. The program is not limited to the items on this list.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: INITIAL MEETING AND PROGRAM OF STUDIES

A Needs Assessment is required for all students entering the PhD program. The Needs Assessment consists of an Advisory Committee meeting where a Program of Studies will be established, and the advisory committee formed (see [The Graduate Advisory Committee](#)). The Program of Studies indicates the nature of the research, current advisory committee members, and all course and other requirements determined through the initial meeting. The Program of Studies will identify tentative dates for completion of the two components of the Candidacy Assessment.

Timing: The student is expected to have their initial meeting with supervisor and potential committee members within the first 4–5 months of first registration in the PhD Program. The purpose of this meeting is to get to know each other and establish a Program of Studies (if not already finalized). The meeting should, ideally, be held in person, but teleconference or videoconference arrangements are acceptable when necessary.

Administration: Ideally, the advisory committee is determined prior to the initial meeting. However, this may not always be possible as some projects are in the early stages of development. Members selected for the Needs Assessment meeting may be considered prospective members of the advisory committee. The final committee composition will be determined at the proposal stage when the research topic is more refined.

The Program of Studies form is available in the SENS Channel in PAWS under the “Policies, Procedures, and Forms” tab. The Program of Studies is submitted by the Academic Programs Advisor to CGPS on behalf of the School. The program establishes the specific degree requirements to be met by an individual student. Any changes in the Program of Study must be recommended by the student’s advisory committee and approved by the Admissions and Awards Committee and CGPS. A revised Program of Studies form must be completed and submitted to the School whenever a change in the program is required. In addition to the specific requirements in the Program of Study, the student must meet residency and registration requirements established by the University.

Reporting: The chair of the advisory committee must provide the Academic Program Advisor with a Progress Report (found in the SENS Channel in PAWS), the meeting minutes, and completed Program of Studies for it to be entered into the student’s Degree Works.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The supervisor must have a faculty appointment with SENS (either standard, primary-joint, secondary-joint, associate, or adjunct). However, associate faculty and adjuncts can only co-supervise a PhD student in SENS, alongside a core SENS faculty member.

The PhD Advisory Committee will consist of the following:

- Chair—must be SENS core faculty, or a secondary-joint appointment with approval of the Graduate Chair, where they have strong knowledge of SENS procedures. Ideally, this person will be versed in the subject matter.
- Supervisor(s)—must be SENS core faculty or secondary-joint appointments. If associate or adjunct faculty, there must be a co-supervisor who is SENS faculty. If the student is co-supervised, the co-supervisors function as a single member, with a single vote for all committee decisions.
- At least one regular member, can be from within SENS.
- Cognate member—cognate must be from a different principal academic unit (not SENS).
- Supervisor(s) will NOT chair the committee.

Advisory Committee Approval:

- Advisory committees should be developed by supervisors in consultation with their student and consistent with the rules for committee composition. The Academic Programs Advisor or Graduate Chair can answer questions related to committee composition. The proposed committee structure shall indicate if the chair is a voting member of the committee or if the chair is normally a non-voting member except in circumstances of a tie.
 - The Graduate Chair and/or Academic Programs Advisor will review the structure to ensure the required roles are fulfilled and avoid any situations of conflict of interest or possible perceptions of conflict of interest. Note that CGPS approval is also required in cases where a proposed committee member is not a member of graduate faculty.
 - This approval will be kept in the student’s records.
- Potential PhD advisory committee members should be identified within the first semester of the student’s program. At the proposal stage, the committee composition shall be re-evaluated to ensure that it meets the needs of the student.
- Any changes in the advisory committee must similarly be submitted to the Academic Programs Advisor and Graduate Chair for approval and will be kept in the student’s records.
- Where a temporary change in committee structure is required (e.g., in case of a leave for a committee member), this change may be made by the supervisor (or co-supervisors) without formal approval, although the graduate chair should be informed.

NOTE: In the event of an absence of a committee meeting for a student advisory committee meeting, please reach out to the Graduate Chair for guidance on how to proceed. In the unusual event of an absence for a defence in emergency situations, please contact CGPS for review and approval.

COURSE WORK

Courses complete the student's general training in environment and sustainability and develop an area of specialization sufficient to permit the student to undertake research which will contribute to the discipline. Course work in Term 1 is normally directed by the supervisor, based on the School's PhD program requirements. The selection of course work in subsequent terms and the dissertation research are directed by the advisory committee (see "Program of Studies").

A fully qualified PhD student is required to take a minimum of 6 credit units of graduate course work. At SENS, our PhD students must take [ENVS 809.3: PhD Seminar in Sustainability](#) and [ENVS 803.3 Research in Environment and Sustainability](#). In instances where the student is lacking in prior knowledge about sustainability, it is recommended that they take ENVS 818 (Introduction to Sustainability) at the beginning of the Fall term as a precursor to ENVS 809. A PhD student is normally expected to complete the course requirements in the first year of full-time study. Additional courses may be required if the advisory committee feels that the student's background is deficient in some area. All required courses must be noted on the Program of Studies.

PhD students may also take elective courses that will be in the student's area of specialization and are selected in consultation with the advisory committee. Please refer to the [University Course Catalogue](#) for a listing of SENS courses. Credit may be granted for graduate-level courses taken previously at this or another university, provided they have not been credited toward another degree. The Admissions and Awards Committee may require a student to sit an examination to demonstrate proficiency before credit is granted for such courses.

PhD students are also required to register in

- [ENVS 990: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#) (no credit units) and
- [ENVS 996: Research in Environment and Sustainability](#) (no credit units).

The requirements for ENVS 990 are met by attending and participating in structured School seminars for the first year of the PhD program. Completion of the research requirement (ENVS 996) is met when the dissertation is successfully defended, and the final dissertation has been submitted to CGPS.

All graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan are required to complete [GPS 960: Research Ethics](#), and may be required to take either [GPS 961: Ethics and Integrity in Human Research](#) or [GPS 962: Ethics and Integrity in Animal Research](#), depending on the nature of their project, thesis, or dissertation work. These courses must be completed within the first 12 months of registration in the program and prior to the acceptance of the research proposal.

ENVS 990 SEMINAR

All PhD students are also required to register in [ENVS 990.0: Seminar in Environment and Sustainability](#). The aim of the ENVS 990 seminar is to provide students an opportunity to think critically about a wide range of topics relevant to environment and sustainability and to engage in vibrant relevant discussion. To facilitate discussion and interaction of the SENS community as a whole, the seminar coordinator encourages, and will take steps to facilitate, the engagement of all SENS core, associate, and adjunct faculty in the ENVS 990 seminar series. Students registered in all graduate programs are required to register for ENVS 990 and to complete the minimum requirements.

In the **FIRST YEAR** of their program, students are required to:

- Complete the Academic Integrity tutorial through the USask library (when an online tutorial, students will need to upload their completion certificate to Canvas)
- Attend or view the short presentation provided by the SENS librarian (to be included as part of a scheduled 990 session or via a recorded presentation on Canvas)
- Attend the Generous Scholarship seminar session, normally organized early in the Fall term, and complete (and submit) any assigned homework.
- Complete the 4 Seasons of Reconciliation (or equivalent) module in the Fall term (when an online module, students will need to upload their completion certificate to Canvas).

- Attend all other ENVS 990 seminars organized during the Fall or Winter terms, and complete (and submit) any assigned homework. The focus of these 990 seminars will vary but will include sessions on job readiness, professional development, and the building of professional relationships.

Tutorials and modules are typically available in asynchronous online format. The seminar sessions will be delivered online or in hybrid format (to be confirmed ahead of the Fall term). There will normally be one 990 session per month during the Fall and Winter terms.

Attendance Expectations

Students are required to self-report their attendance at each seminar by signing in, either using the registration sheet provided for in-person attendance or by signing into the Chat if connecting virtually.

****NOTES:**

- Students enrolled in an in-person program are expected to attend 990 sessions in-person.
- Students enrolled online are required to keep their cameras on to confirm their attendance.

PRESENTATIONS

Students in the PhD program are required to present two seminars, both of which typically will take place during the annual SENS Student Symposium held in the spring (these presentations do not occur during the same year). The first seminar will be based upon the student's research proposal, and the second will normally be presented after permission to write the dissertation has been granted, but prior to defence. The second seminar will focus on outcomes of the research the student has done.

Requirements for the second seminar may be met by an oral presentation at a national or international academic conference. Students must apply to the Graduate Chair for approval prior to the conference. The following conditions must be met:

- i) the student must be the presenting author,
- ii) it must be an oral presentation of research (duration of eight minutes, or longer),
- iii) the research must be that of the dissertation,
- iv) it must be a national or international conference venue, and
- v) either the supervisor or a member of the advisory committee must be present and file a report on the acceptability of the presentation with the 990 Coordinator or graduate support staff.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Each year a student is expected to demonstrate progress towards completing program requirements. ***The advisory committee and student must meet annually, and a Progress Report form and the committee meeting minutes submitted to the Academic Programs Advisor at sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca.*** The Progress Report from the committee must be accompanied by a short form to be completed by the student and submitted to the Academic Programs Advisor. These reports are typically completed in association with a milestone meeting (e.g., proposal presentation, candidacy paper).

Failure to make progress may result in a recommendation that the student withdraw. Students are reminded that different sources of funding may hold specific requirements, such as maintenance of a minimum GPA (that may vary with funding source). Students who do not meet these funding requirements may have funding withdrawn and may be given an assessment of unsatisfactory progress.

At the doctoral level, students must achieve a grade of at least 70% in all courses required for the degree. If the student fails to meet these standards, the advisory committee will assess the student's performance and determine an appropriate course of action. The student may be permitted to re-take a course or undertake other remedial work if, in the opinion of the advisory committee, the overall performance of the student was otherwise satisfactory. If this is not the assessment of the advisory committee, it will recommend that the student discontinue. Please consult Appendix C.

CANDIDACY ASSESSMENT

The candidacy assessment process will have two components, a proposal or prospectus and a candidacy paper—the purpose of which is to ensure that the student understands and can meet the standards of evidence and scholarship in their chosen field(s) of research and is able to articulate the interdisciplinary nature of their work from a broad sustainability perspective. The assessment allows the student's graduate advisory committee to evaluate the student's potential for interdisciplinary research

in environment and sustainability by assessing the student's foundational knowledge in the field(s) of study in which the research is situated, and the student's ability to reconcile work across fields. NOTE: the student cannot obtain assistance from any outside sources (e.g., fellow student, faculty member, or writing support).

NOTE: Changes to the PhD Candidacy Assessment Criteria took effect 1 May 2024. Students enrolled prior to this date can choose the new or old model but still must complete their requirements within 24 months of enrollment. For a description of the old model, please see a previous version of this graduate handbook.

Timing: The Candidacy Assessment must be completed within 18 months of the program start date as identified on the student's Program of Studies form. The two components (proposal and the candidacy paper) can be completed in any order, but one of the two components must be done in the first 12 months to serve as an early indicator of additional coursework/training required and an opportunity for the committee to note areas of improvement for the student in advance of the second component. Any additional requirements set as a result of the Needs Assessment, including additional course work, must be met before the Candidacy Assessment.

Assessment Format: The Candidacy Assessment will have two components: proposal and a candidacy paper.

- 1) Proposal or Prospectus: A document that outlines progress to date, a literature review and future plans for dissertation research, followed by a meeting with the committee to present and discuss. Potential outcomes of this component include no revisions, minor revisions, or major revisions. In the case of major revisions, additional supports shall be put in place to assist the student (e.g., writing help). Competencies demonstrated: Written communication, Verbal communication, Knowledge in their field of study, Critical thinking skills.
- 2) Candidacy paper: This assessment shall be at the discretion of the supervisor and committee, taking into consideration what competencies the student has already demonstrated through the proposal/prospectus. The purpose of the candidacy paper is to demonstrate additional competencies while avoiding duplication of previous efforts in the program. Students may use work in ENVS 809 as an inspiration for their candidacy paper, but no more than 10% of the content of the candidacy paper can be from previously submitted work. Any written document will be followed up by an oral defense (typically ~ 1 hour) of the ideas presented in the document, and at least equal weighting will be placed on the student's verbal competencies.

PROPOSAL/PROSPECTUS

As part of the candidacy assessment (see above), students must select a dissertation research topic and prepare a dissertation proposal. The student will be guided in this effort by their supervisor and advisory committee. The proposal should establish the research objectives, outline the theoretical context of the research, and identify the methods to be used to meet them. The dissertation proposal is first submitted to the student's supervisor for review. Once the proposal is judged to be satisfactory by the supervisor, copies are provided to the other members of the advisory committee.

Timing: The proposal can be completed before or after the candidacy paper, but both components of the candidacy assessment must be successfully completed within a maximum of 18 months of the program start date. The dissertation proposal must be submitted to the advisory committee for review by no later than 2 weeks prior to the thesis proposal oral presentation.

The advisory committee is expected to meet for presentation of the proposal by normally no later than 3 weeks after receiving the proposal.

Format: The format and length of the dissertation proposal will vary depending on the nature of the research and the requirements of the advisory committee. However, a PhD dissertation proposal is expected to be between 5,000 to 10,000 words, excluding figures, tables, references, and appendices. A number of basic content elements should be included in all research proposals:

- Title page
- Layperson Summary (or plain language summary)
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Position statement (optional)
- Statement of research purpose, objectives, questions, and/or hypotheses
- Review of the literature/context for the proposed research
- Proposed research methods/study design/analytical approach
- Potential significance/contributions
- Potential limitations
- Proposed research communication/ dissemination
- Research timeline
- Draft research budget (if applicable)
- Literature cited
- Appendices (if applicable)

Evaluation of the dissertation proposal: The student will present the dissertation proposal orally to the advisory committee. The oral presentation should be approximately 15–20 minutes and provide an overview of the dissertation research proposal, giving particular attention to the research rationale, approach, potential contributions, and proposed timeline. The oral presentation will be followed by questions from members of the advisory committee. In assessing the dissertation proposal, the advisory committee will pay attention to such matters as:

1. Communication skills
 - readability, presentation quality
 - organization
2. Research skills
 - demonstrates originality or significance
 - exhibits critical thinking
 - is practical/feasible
 - meets ethical standards
3. Clear rationale for the research
 - clear objectives or research questions or hypotheses
 - completeness of the literature review
 - coherent conceptual framework or theory
4. Appropriateness of research design/ methods
 - fits with the rationale or a larger project (if linked to a larger research project this should be made clear)
 - the population, study area, and/or sample(s) is/are clearly specified, if applicable
 - appropriate instruments for data collection and analysis are used
 - feasibility (e.g., timeline, data availability, field site access, etc.)
5. Significance of the potential outcomes
 - potential for contribution to scholarly knowledge is evident
 - contribution to “community” is specified, if relevant

Results: The committee will determine, by consensus, if the proposal provides a satisfactory basis for dissertation research. The committee will recommend one of the following. The proposal is

1. acceptable with no revisions.
2. acceptable with minor revisions: Underlying proposed research is sound, but the proposal needs recasting or minor content addition, including additional literature review or clarification of methods/study design.
3. acceptable with major revisions. Proposal does not meet the minimum standard. In this case a revised dissertation proposal is submitted to the advisory committee within 3 months, and a second oral presentation is scheduled.

It is at the discretion of the advisory committee as to whether minor revisions (recommendation 2) can be completed by the student and approved solely by the supervisor, or whether the advisory committee will review the revised proposal prior to final

approval. In the case of recommendation 2, the revisions should be completed within 6 weeks and do not require a second meeting. (Note: If the advisory committee determines that a second oral presentation is necessary, it shall identify recommendation 3.)

CANDIDACY PAPER

Timing: The candidacy paper can be completed before or after the proposal, but both components of the candidacy assessment must be successfully completed within a maximum of 18 months of the program start date. The scope of the work is set by the advisory committee in consultation with the student (see below) but should be equivalent to 1–2 months of full-time work. A meeting shall be scheduled to discuss the candidacy paper, and the paper must be submitted to the advisory committee for review no later than 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

Some potential formats include:

- a. Candidacy paper 1—a synthetic/critical review on a topic within the broad fields of environment and sustainability but on a topic that has little overlap with their planned thesis research; the committee, in consultation with the student, will determine the type of review (e.g. systematic, scoping) as well as the formatting and word length which should be based on the style of a potential publication venue for the work.
- b. Candidacy paper 2—a critical review on one or more of the key theoretical/conceptual areas the student is using to frame their proposed research and/or frame the scholarly contributions of their work. Formatting and word length should be based on the style of a potential publication venue for the work and will be determined with the committee.
- c. Grant proposal 1—students can advance an original idea that is in the area of environment and sustainability using a template from one of the tri-agencies (NSERC Discovery, SSHRC Insight, CIHR Project). The topic does not overlap with their planned thesis research.
- d. Alternative format—the student may conduct an alternative format assessment which would be unlike options a-c but still designed to demonstrate required competencies. As examples, this could include demonstration of technical competency in the student’s core research area (e.g. modeling, thematic coding, laboratory techniques), a portfolio that illustrates how the student has developed and demonstrated competencies, or a longer-format (typically ~ 2 hours) exclusively oral exam on their theoretical/conceptual area of expertise.

Feedback: The student must complete one candidacy paper in addition to the proposal/prospectus. Following completion of the proposal/prospectus or candidacy paper (whichever comes first), the committee shall provide formative feedback to the student to identify progress towards the identified competencies. Following completion of the second component, the student is advised immediately of the committee’s recommendation.

Results: Candidacy will not be granted unless the proposal and the candidacy paper are both completed, and a pass/fail determination shall encompass student performance in both elements. A pass shall be granted by the committee by majority vote based on whether the required competencies have been demonstrated. Written communication and Verbal communication, both of which are required competencies, shall be assessed in the proposal. Knowledge in their field of study, and Critical thinking skills will also typically be assessed in the proposal/prospectus, though these are not required competencies for every student. Additional competencies that the committee deems required will be assessed in the candidacy paper. Students therefore will not be required to demonstrate every competency outlined by SENS to pass the assessment, but both written and verbal communication skills as well as a minimum of four additional competencies must be demonstrated. The table below will be in the candidacy assessment form for use by committees, to be filled out upon completion of both components. The competencies must be considered sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed research.

Table 1. Competencies to be assessed to determine candidacy. Competencies 1 and 2 (written and verbal communication skills) must be passed. Four of the remaining seven competencies must also be passed for the student to become a PhD candidate.

Competency	Pass	Fail	N/A	Evidence/Rationale
Written communication skills				
Verbal communication skills				
Critical thinking skills				
Knowledge in their field of study				
Synthesis of knowledge across disciplines and/or ways of knowing				
Technical competency				
Collaboration skills				
Leadership skills				
Ability to innovate				
A foundation in environment and sustainability				

A student who does not satisfy the requirements of their candidacy assessment is permitted a second attempt at the recommendation of the academic unit and with the permission of the Dean of CGPS or designate. The second attempt should be scheduled within two months from the date of first assessment; exceptions will be considered by the Dean of CGPS or designate. A second unsatisfactory outcome will automatically result in a requirement to discontinue from the doctoral program. An unsatisfactory candidacy assessment, and/or the denial of a second attempt at the candidacy assessment, may be appealed to the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee of CGPS on substantive grounds in accordance with Part IV of University Council's Procedures for Student Appeals in Academic Matters, or on grounds other than substantive academic judgment limited to those outlined in Part V.B.1.

DISSERTATION

As they prepare to develop and write their theses, students are strongly encouraged to consult the [THESIS ROADMAP](#) provided by CGPS.

PERMISSION TO WRITE THE DISSERTATION

Once the student has completed the data collection and analysis components of the dissertation research, an advisory committee meeting will be held to evaluate the quality of that work and to assess whether it is adequate to permit writing of the dissertation. The supervisor will determine when permission to write the dissertation should be requested from the advisory committee. In preparation for the permission to write meeting, the student will prepare a document that briefly outlines the research purpose and objectives, provides an overview of the research methods, and highlights the research findings and key observations. The document should also include a tentative dissertation table of contents.

This document must be submitted to the advisory committee at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date. The advisory committee meeting should be scheduled by normally no more than 3 weeks after receiving the document. At the time of the Permission to Write Meeting, the student will present to the advisory committee an overview of the dissertation results and a timeline for completion of the dissertation. The key criterion for consideration by the advisory committee is whether the student has obtained sufficient data and whether sufficient, preliminary analysis of those data has been completed to proceed with writing the dissertation. Permission to write must be indicated in writing and placed in the student's file by the committee chair.

DISSERTATION

The dissertation must be based on original research and demonstrate judgment and scholarship on the part of the candidate. It must represent a worthwhile contribution to environment and sustainability which would warrant publication, in whole or in part, in a recognized scholarly form. The quality of the dissertation is evaluated by an examining committee, consisting of the advisory committee and an external examiner from another university who is knowledgeable about the dissertation topic. Students and advisory committee members should consult [Appendix B: Guidelines for Evaluating a Thesis](#).

The graduate student will develop a dissertation under the guidance of the supervisor. Once the supervisor is satisfied with its quality, copies are provided to members of the advisory committee for review. The advisory committee should provide comments, normally within 3 weeks, and recommend any revisions in substance or format before the dissertation can be presented for defence. Once the advisory committee has approved the dissertation manuscript, the student will prepare final copies of the dissertation for submission to the examining committee. A final copy of the dissertation will be reviewed by the committee member assigned to do so to ensure that it conforms to the standards of CGPS before it is given the final review by the advisory committee.

On approval of the dissertation manuscript, the advisory committee will make recommendations to the Graduate Chair on the appointment of an external examiner, a University examiner (if needed) and the scheduling of the defence. CGPS requires the thesis at least 5 weeks prior to proposed defence date, and the Academic Programs Advisor needs time prior to that to compile the pieces to go to CGPS. For more detail, please consult. <https://cgps.usask.ca/operational-info/policy-procedure/advisory-and-defence-changes.php>

The Graduate Chair will recommend to CGPS on behalf of the School that the dissertation examination be scheduled. At least six weeks prior to the intended defence date, the supervisor must advise the Graduate Chair and the Academic Programs Advisor via email (sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca) that the student is ready to defend. A final copy of dissertation, CV for first choice of external, names of 1 alternate external, and the name of a University examiner (if needed) must be provided at this time. The Academic Programs Advisor will prepare the necessary paperwork for CGPS, and the Grad Chair will approve it to be sent forward, indicating the date, time, and proposed name of external examiner and University examiner (if needed). Faculty must allow 2–3 working days for the forms to clear the School office. The forms are reviewed at CGPS and approved within 1 week—this includes a review of the dissertation by the Associate Dean, CGPS. In the interim, neither the student nor any member of the advisory committee can provide the external examiner with a copy of the dissertation. Once approved, at least 4 weeks must be provided for reading of the dissertation and preparation for the defence. These timelines are strictly enforced.

DISSERTATION FORMAT

Students may prepare a dissertation by manuscript or a dissertation by traditional format. General guidelines for the dissertation format requirements are provided in the [Thesis ROADMAP](#). SENS does allow for alternative format theses; students interested in this option should consult with the Graduate Chair as early as possible.

SENS requires a minimum of three articles suitable for peer-reviewed publications, or equivalent scholarly outputs (e.g., book chapters) as per disciplinary standards, be completed for the dissertation by manuscript. At least one article should be submitted at the time of defence. The Dissertation by Manuscript is evaluated based on the same standards as the traditional thesis. These papers must be approved by the supervisor and advisory committee, the same as for a dissertation document. The student must be the first author on all papers associated with the dissertation. A footnote or other text explaining author roles is also required.

Further information about formatting is available [HERE](#).

PERMISSION TO DEFEND

Following the guidelines of CGPS, the supervisor will review the completed dissertation. When both the student and the supervisor believe it is ready, the dissertation will be submitted to the advisory committee, who will have 2 weeks to review it. Prior to defending the dissertation, the student must obtain Permission to Defend from the committee members. The committee may require further revisions and additional time for review. Once the committee is satisfied that the dissertation is ready, it will grant its permission to defend. This decision must be recorded and submitted to the Graduate Chair and the Academic Programs Advisor, who will then advise CGPS. Following approval of the advisory committee for examination, an examining committee will be struck. The examining committee is given 6 weeks to review the thesis, and a date for the defense will be set. The student will present and defend the research in an open forum.

APPOINTMENT OF THE DISSERTATION EXAMINING COMMITTEE

The dissertation examining committee for a PhD student consists of the advisory committee, a University Examiner, and an External Examiner. The University Examiner may be from within SENS but must be arm's length from the student's research. The External Examiner must be external to the University. Guidelines for selecting the University Examiner and External Examiner can be found in the [CGPS Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

EXAMINATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The examination of the dissertation is a public, oral examination conducted by the dissertation examining committee. It is usually 2–3 hours in length and limited to work done by the candidate for the dissertation and to knowledge of directly related material. At the conclusion of the examination, the dissertation examining committee meets to determine if the dissertation and its defence by the student meet the requirements for the degree.

The examining committee members will decide by consensus or majority vote whether the written dissertation and oral defence is:

1. passed without revisions,
2. passed with revisions (major or minor),
3. to be re-examined, or
4. rejected.

The student is advised immediately of the dissertation examining committee's recommendation.

AFTER THE DEFENCE

An electronic copy is to be submitted to the University's Electronic Thesis and Dissertation site. Information about submitting to this site can be found [HERE](#). The student is responsible for submitting the dissertation electronically.



SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THESIS-BASED PROGRAMS

The research and the selection of courses are done under the direction of the advisory committee. The supervisor is responsible for calling meetings of the advisory committee. The chair keeps minutes of the meetings and distributes those minutes to the student and advisory committee members. Advisory committee meetings are held at least once per year, and as required to evaluate and assist the student in the program of study. A graduate student is entitled to attend all advisory committee meetings.

When supervisors are away from the University for an extended period (i.e., sabbatical leave), they are expected to arrange for another member of the advisory committee to act in their absence, and to advise the Admissions and Awards Committee and Executive Director in writing of this arrangement. Students can expect their supervisors to ensure that adequate provision has been made for continued supervision during their own absence or leave of any kind. All such arrangements will be communicated to the Dean of CGPS with a copy to the student. The Graduate Chair will advise the Dean if these arrangements are not considered satisfactory by the School. Faculty members should recognize that it is imperative to make an appropriate reduction in supervisory and advisory responsibilities prior to and during sabbatical and similar types of leave.

See **Appendix A** for the graduate student-supervisor agreement which articulates the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and graduate students.

For the thesis-based programs, the roles of the supervisor and the student are as follows:

Role of the Supervisor: The supervisor is a mentor, advisor, and senior colleague, and provides an atmosphere of respect for the student. As the senior partner, the advisor must encourage commitment on the part of the student. The supervisor's responsibilities toward the student are to:

- guide the choice of the advisory committee, program of studies, thesis topic, timeline to completion, and milestones,
- be accessible for and help establish regular meetings with the student,
- provide expectations, criteria, and evaluation for written work, including the dissertation, in a timely fashion,
- explore, inform about, and provide funding opportunities,
- inform of policies, regulations, expectations and standards of the School, CGPS, and the University with respect to course work, research, scholarship, intellectual property, academic integrity, safety, ethics, thesis, collaborative work, authorship, acknowledgements, conference presentations, and professionalism,
- convene the advisory committee at least once yearly,
- provide the student with the opportunity to present research at a conference,
- ensure the eligibility of the thesis for examination, to provide the names of potential suitable external examiners, and to prepare the student for defence,
- provide letters of recommendation on request, in a timely fashion, and
- arrange for suitable supervision during absences.

Role of the Student: The Master's or PhD student is a junior partner and colleague in a relationship of mutual respect with the supervisor and advisory committee. The student makes a commitment to the program and is dedicated to the completion of the program within an acceptable timeframe and in accordance with the policies and regulations of the School and the University. The student is entitled to mentorship, advising, guidance and monitoring and yearly evaluation of progress by the advisory committee. The student has the following responsibilities:

- be accessible for and maintain regular and frequent communication with the supervisor and advisory committee
- be aware of the many other commitments the supervisor will have and schedule meetings and document review in a responsible manner that respects these commitments. The student and the supervisor should schedule regular meetings.
- know and adhere to policies, regulations, expectations and standards of the School, CGPS, and the University with respect to course work, research, scholarship, intellectual property, academic integrity, safety, ethics, thesis work, collaborative work, authorship, acknowledgements, conference presentations, professionalism, and obligations tied to funding.

- be aware of and to meet deadlines for registration, course work, research, applications, reporting, defence, and convocation preparations.
- strive for excellence in and to take full responsibility for course work and research.
- establish and adhere to a timeline and milestones for completion.
- record research systematically, completely, and honestly.
- report on progress and to prepare a yearly report for the advisory committee.
- submit work for evaluation, allowing reasonable time for review, and consider advice from the supervisor and the advisory committee.
- make thoughtful, considerate, frugal and responsible use of resources.
- maintain, keep clean, and return to order the workplace.
- advise the supervisor of absences due to vacation, illness, or other reasons.⁴

SCHOLARSHIPS

Students who receive SENS scholarships will be required to apply for other scholarships as eligible. Students who receive other scholarships, fellowships, or financial awards (prior to or upon starting their programs) must provide notice of the award to the Academic Programs Advisor, SENS's Financial Office, and their Supervisor(s) immediately upon receipt. This notification should clearly explain the amount, duration, and source of funding. The current SENS ceiling is \$40,000 and \$35,000 for PhD and MES students, respectively. If a student receives new or additional funding that would see their stipend surpass these stated ceiling amounts, then the portion of stipend coming through SENS-managed project funds or scholarships will be reduced proportionately. Again, it is the responsibility of the student and supervisor to inform SENS Academic Programs Advisor and Finance Office about such funding changes. SENS will look to recoup monies owed through a failure to notify, with a hold potentially placed on program completion (i.e., graduation) until such matters are resolved.

THE GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The supervisor, in consultation with the student, invites others to serve on the advisory committee. The advisory committee has the primary responsibility for directing and evaluating the student. The advisory committee recommends a Program of Studies for the graduate student and may recommend revisions to that program. The role of the advisory committee is to assist the student in completing program requirements. Members are brought together for their substantive expertise in the research area.

MES committees are composed of a minimum of 3 members:

- 1 chair—must be SENS core faculty or a secondary-joint appointment with approval of the Graduate Chair, where they have strong knowledge of SENS procedures,
- 1 research supervisor (or two co-supervisors) – must be SENS core faculty or secondary-joint appointments. If associate or adjunct faculty, there must be a co-supervisor who is SENS faculty. If the student is co-supervised, the co-supervisors function as a single member, with a single vote,
- 1 or more committee members
- Supervisor will NOT chair the committee

PhD committees are composed of a minimum of 4 members:

- 1 chair—must be SENS core faculty and ideally versed in the subject matter. Secondary-joint appointments may also be selected with approval from the Graduate Chair, where they have strong knowledge of SENS procedures,
- 1 research supervisor (or two co-supervisors) – if associate or adjunct faculty, must be co-supervisor with SENS faculty,
- At least one regular member – can be from within SENS
- 1 Cognate member (**Cognate or regular member must be from a different principal unit (not SENS)*)

Advisory Committee Approval:

- Advisory committees must be submitted to the SENS Academic Programs Advisor and Graduate Chair for approval, prior to the first advisory committee meeting. The proposed committee structure shall indicate if the chair is a voting member of the committee or if the chair is normally a non-voting member except in circumstances of a tie.

⁴ "Role of the Faculty Advisor" and "Role of the Student" adapted from University of Saskatchewan. CGPS 1995. "Guidelines for Various Parties in Graduate Student Project and Thesis Research"

- The Graduate Chair will review the structure to ensure the required roles are fulfilled and avoid any situations of conflict of interest or possible perceptions of conflict of interest. Note that CGPS approval is also required in cases where a proposed committee member is not a member of graduate faculty.
 - This approval will be kept in the student's records.
- MES advisory committees should be struck within the first semester and PhD advisory committees should be struck within the first two semesters, ideally within the first six months of the student commencing their program. At the proposal stage, the committee composition shall be re-evaluated to ensure that it meets the needs of the student.
- Any changes in the advisory committee must similarly be submitted to the Graduate Programs Advisor and Graduate Chair for approval and will be kept in the student's records.
- Where a temporary change in committee structure is required (e.g., in case of a leave for a committee member), this change may be made by the supervisor (or co-supervisors) without formal approval.

Role of the Advisory Committee: The advisory committee provides the student with mentorship, guidance, advice, evaluation, and feedback in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The advisory committee should be chosen early in the program by the student and the supervisor, in consultation, to reflect diverse expertise in the chosen field of research. The advisory committee has the following responsibilities toward the student:

- establish a program of studies in consultation with the student, at the beginning of the program, with clear course requirements, expectations, and a projected timeline with milestones,
- remain familiar with the research project and the student's progress,
- meet with the student at least once yearly to review the student's progress, and then to report to CGPS,
- be prepared to recommend withdrawal or alternatives if progress is unsatisfactory,
- be available for consultation with the student on academic or research-related matters, as well as other matters which may arise, including but not limited to, supervision, intellectual property, ethics, authorship, best practices, academic integrity, acknowledgement, medical or compassionate situations, conflict, disputes, harassment, and discrimination,
- provide feedback on the suitability of material for publication, and to suggest relevant journals for submissions,
- determine what member of the advisory committee will review the thesis to ensure compliance with formatting requirements of CGPS,
- examine the thesis/dissertation for defence in a timely manner,
- provide opportunities for the student to present the research at a conference, and
- be willing to provide letters of reference upon request.⁵

Role of the Chair of Advisory Committees: The role of the chair of the advisory committee is to maintain the standards, fairness, and integrity of the process for both the student and faculty. The chair or designate is required to attend all meetings where a decision is made. The chair of the advisory committee may serve as a full voting member, if desired by the committee. This arrangement will be determined by the committee at the Program of Studies meeting. The chair completes the minutes of each meeting, records votes, and files the records with the graduate secretary. It is a collective responsibility of all faculty members with standard or joint appointments in the School to participate in chairing committees.

Note the chair of the advisory committee cannot pass judgment on matters that are not normally addressed by the committee, such as academic integrity. Matters that cannot be addressed by the committee must be referred to the Executive Director of the School and the Dean of CGPS for resolution. The chair should provide all the relevant information in such a situation.

For PhD committees, the chair of the advisory committee will chair the final dissertation defence. The chair of the advisory committee is entitled, although not required, to ask questions. If the committee is able to come to a consensus about the quality of the dissertation, the chair need only record the consensus decision. If consensus cannot be reached among the committee and a vote must be taken, the chair must record the outcome of the vote. If the vote is tied, or where the committee and the external examiner do not agree on the vote, the chair must vote. In this case, abstention by any member of the examining committee, including the chair, will be interpreted as a negative vote. The student must be informed of the decision immediately after the examination. Should further work by the candidate be required, the chair of the examining committee must see that the committee states clearly, for the candidate and CGPS, what work is to be done and whether or not the examining committee shall meet again before the dissertation can be accepted.

⁵ "Role of the Advisory Committee." adapted from University of Saskatchewan. CGPS 1995. "Guidelines for Various Parties in Graduate Student Project and Thesis Research"

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

A number of scholarships, awards, and bursaries are available that students may wish to apply for. SENS manages several institutional awards, listed below:

- **75th Anniversary Recruitment Scholarships**
Awarded to incoming thesis students only, to the amount of \$30,000 for PhD and \$25,000 for MES. A very limited number of these scholarships will be available each year and require a nomination letter from the thesis supervisor. These scholarships are applied for prior to the start of a students program.
- **MES and PhD Graduate Scholarships** (MGS and PGS, respectively)
These scholarships will provide one-half of the applicable baseline funding for the top qualifying students each year in our thesis programs. There is no nomination process. Incoming students' application files will be assessed by SENS' Admissions and Awards Committee, and successful students (and their supervisors) will be notified.
- **Professional Master's Programs Scholarships**
Up to six scholarships of \$1,500 may be awarded per year to the top incoming students in the MSs (Regenerative Sustainability) and/or MWS programs.
- **Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Awards**
To honour the achievements of its most outstanding graduates, SENS provides the Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Awards. These awards go to the most distinguished graduates in the MSs, MWS, MES and PhD programs, and are adjudicated based on students' coursework, thesis or project work, and professional performance—depending on the nature of their program. For more information, speak to your supervisor or program director. See Appendix D for the Nomination Form.

There are other awards that the University of Saskatchewan manages. Details on these, and other awards, can be accessed at: <https://grad.usask.ca/funding/scholarships.php#Programspecificfunding>. Tri-Agency (NSERC, CIHR, or SSHRC for thesis students) scholarships, and scholarships awarded by national professional, or industry organizations are among the options to explore and consider. Please note that some students will be required to apply for scholarships as a condition of their funding.

For thesis students, we recommend they speak with their current or prospective supervisor about scholarship opportunities, processes, and what support might be available for developing an application.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL STUDENTS

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Students are required to attend and participate in the course in the delivery mode for which they are registered (on campus or remote). Any changes must be approved by the instructor prior to the class and may be done for reasons of health, family, or other accommodation. On campus students are expected to attend the classes in person in the classroom during the synchronous times. Remote students are expected to be engaged online and have their cameras on during the classes (Note: remote students will require sufficient bandwidth to participate fully.) Students can reach out to the instructor if they have questions or concerns.

ETHICAL APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

According to the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Office website, “the University requires that all research conducted by its members conform to the highest ethical standards in the use of human subjects, animals and biohazardous materials. Any research or study conducted at University facilities, or undertaken by persons connected to the University, involving human subjects, animals or biohazardous materials must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board (REB) or Committee.”⁶

The USask has three ethics review boards: the Biomedical Research Ethics Board, the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, and the Animal Research Ethics Board. All research conducted at the University of Saskatchewan must receive ethics approval before the research begins. The official website of the [Ethics Office](#) has complete and current information.

Review is required even if a similar project has been approved elsewhere.

Research permits may be required before fieldwork can commence. Obtaining these permits is the responsibility of the graduate student in consultation with their faculty advisor/supervisor. Students who work with animal research with potential environmental impacts, and/or in parks or protected areas are also responsible for obtaining the necessary permits or permissions before undertaking their research.

TRAVELLING OUTSIDE OF CANADA AS A USASK STUDENT

Students who will be travelling outside of Canada to attend a conference or to conduct research must notify the International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC) prior to the trip. A complete description of the processes involved with international travel for students can be found on the [Study Abroad website](#). All students should review this information well in advance of planned travel, as some actions may be required up to 60 days in advance.

These requirements are in place for all university-related travel outside of Canada, even if a student is returning to his or her country of origin. For example, a student from Denmark who travels to Denmark to conduct research must complete the travel requirements.

REQUESTING EXTENSION OF TIME LIMIT

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

SENS recognizes that extenuating short-term circumstances or on-going needs may affect the ability of students to participate fully in some aspects of their program. Students may seek accommodation to help meet their needs and support success. Students are encouraged to speak to their supervisor, grad chair, or anyone they are comfortable with about any accommodations that will help aid success.

⁶ University of Saskatchewan. “Ethics.” <https://ypresearch.usask.ca/contacts/our-offices/research-services-and-ethics-office.phpindex>. Website accessed August 27, 2018.

This set of principles below guides the process by which an accommodation can be determined. Situations relating to health or disability are also addressed by separate University policies. [Access and Equity Services](#) is the unit on campus that students should consult if they have needs related to physical health, mental health, disability, religion, family status and/or gender identity.

Principles

1. Recognizing the diversity of situations, each situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
2. Accommodation is a three-way responsibility involving the student, faculty and, if necessary, the Graduate Chair. All policies of CGPS will be respected. When a student seeks accommodation, the associated faculty members (e.g., supervisor/ graduate chair/ program director / instructors) will be involved.
3. When possible, the student must raise any request for accommodation with sufficient time such that a fulsome discussion, negotiation, and accommodation request can be addressed whenever possible. Students with a need for accommodation must raise this need when research or course expectations are discussed or upon acceptance of entry into the program, whichever comes first.
4. Accommodation does not constitute a demand for a specific outcome. Hence, all parties are invited to discuss a range of possible alternative arrangements to address any issues or concerns arising from their duties.
5. Where accommodations address situations related to travel or expense claims related to research, SENS will be guided by University of Saskatchewan and Tri-Agency policies. Tri-Agency policies will apply only to awards made through the Tri-Agencies.
6. Where accommodations relate to teaching or classroom activities, SENS will be guided by University of Saskatchewan policies.
7. Accommodations outside of teaching and research will be based on the best judgment of all parties. Where resolution cannot be determined readily, the persons involved will seek assistance from Human Resources or CGPS, if applicable. In all disputed cases, the final determination of whether an accommodation is reasonable or constitutes undue hardship for SENS will be made by the Executive Director of SENS, seeking guidance from Human Resources and/or CGPS as necessary. The type and duration of the accommodation for each student will be set out in writing and filed with the student's record (e.g., Annual Progress Report).
8. All actions must be consistent with current and applicable collective agreements, legislation, and university policies. These principles will be reviewed as necessary to reflect any policy or legislative changes.

LEAVES

Leaves of absence are available to students for compassionate, health, parenting, educational, and "Co-op Program"/Industry reasons.

The Dean of the CGPS, or designate, will consider any petitions from students whose request for leave or extension of leave has been initially denied by the academic unit. If the leave request remains denied, the student may formally appeal under the procedures for appeals of standing in program.

The leave period is not included in the time period for completion of the degree, and tuition is not assessed during the leave. Nominal student fees are assessed during the leave period. While a student is on leave, all supervisory processes are suspended. Unless otherwise permitted by the source of funding, financial support offered to a full-time, fully qualified student is not available to a student on leave. Students are advised to refer to the terms of the funding agreement. Students are advised to discuss with their academic unit the implications of financial support when a leave is necessary. Note: for students considering a parental leave, those in a funded program (e.g., thesis-based programs) are encouraged to reach out to their supervisor(s) to discuss their leave as soon as possible. In some cases, funding arrangements may support paid parental leaves (but can require advance planning).

Information can be found on CGPS website under [Leaves of Absence](#).

GWENNA MOSS CENTRE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Gwenna Moss Centre is committed to supporting and improving teaching and learning at the University of Saskatchewan. We have a variety of programming and resources to help faculty, instructors and grad students. The Gwenna Moss Centre supports teaching and learning through a variety of events, workshops, and ongoing programs. Much of our programming is customized to the academic unit we work with.

Our mission is to support the achievement of the University's Learning Charter and our mandate by

- Responding to needs and opportunities with our institutional and community partners.
- Ensuring effectiveness in our programs and services.
- Being strategic in our priorities.
- Inspiring and enabling indigenization and inclusivity across the University Modeling our values and the practices we promote.
- Supporting professional learning and development.

Our mandate is to

- Support instructors in the continuous development of scholarly (discovery-led), inclusive, teaching and learning practices.
- Support the provision and use of learning technology to achieve local and institutional aspirations in teaching and learning.
- Facilitate curriculum development and renewal at the course and program level including implementation of high impact practices.
- Provide opportunity for personal and professional learning for groups of faculty, graduate students and staff.
- Contribute to the creation of an environment that fosters professional learning and continuous enhancement of teaching and learning.



TEACHING COURSES delivered by the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning (GMCTL)

GPS 989: Introduction to University Teaching - For grad students preparing to teach.

GPS 982: Mentored Teaching - PhD students who have received a Teacher-Scholar Doctoral Fellowship from CGPS.

GPS 986: Teaching Preparation Certificate - For students already completed GPS 989 or GPS 982, or those who already have prior teaching experience.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS COURSES delivered by Career Services

GPS 984: Thinking Critically - Interactive multidisciplinary course; required for GPS 974

GPS 974: Graduate Professional Skills Certificate - Create goals and document your professional growth as you work to meet them.

The GMCTL delivers non-credit courses, workshops, and resources for graduate students and postdocs who are new to teaching or those who already have some experience but want to learn more.

TA SUCCESS - Events and sessions focused on developing specific skills and knowledge relevant to Teaching Assistant (TA) roles.

INSTRUCTIONAL PREPARATION CERTIFICATE

Competency-based teaching certification for graduate students.



[VIEW COURSES](#)



TEACHING.USASK.CA

QUESTIONS?

Don't hesitate to ask!

Graduate co-Chairs

Markus Hecker, PhD

Tel: 306-966-5233

E-mail: markus.hecker@usask.ca

Edmond Sanganyado, PhD

Tel: 306-966-7443

E-mail: edmond.sanganyado@usask.ca

MSs Regenerative Sustainability Program Director

Graham Strickert, PhD

Tel: 306-966-2403

E-mail: graham.strickert@usask.ca

MSs Energy Security Program Director

Oscar Zapata, PhD

Tel: 306-966-1617

E-mail: oscar.zapata@usask.ca

MWS Program Director

Saman Razavi, PhD

E-mail: saman.razavi@usask.ca

SENS General Office

Room 326 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-4331

E-mail: sens.info@usask.ca

Graduate Programs Assistant

Conique Facey

Room 326 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-4331

E-mail: sens.info@usask.ca

I work closely with SENS other graduate program staff to support the administration of graduate programs, including admissions, registration and student records, scholarships and awards administration, student inquiries, and the coordination of key graduate program processes and activities.

Academic Programs Advisor

Sandra Betancur Vesga

Room 328 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-1985

E-mail: sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca &
sens.professional.admin@usask.ca

As Academic Advisor for all of our programs, my role is to support and advise students throughout their program, from the time they officially become students through to graduation. I am here to provide academic guidance, answer questions, help you navigate program requirements and milestones, and support you through each stage of the graduate student life cycle.

Manager, Academic Programs

Carolyn Pytlyk, PhD

Room 338 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-8755

E-mail: carolyn.pytlyk@usask.ca

I provide oversight for the design, implementation, coordination, and promotion of all the academic programs in SENS. I also oversee the recruitment and admissions services in the School.

Strategic Business Advisor (Finance)

Karen Yang

Room: 305 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-1927

E-mail: sens.finance@usask.ca

Executive Officer

Jennifer Milburn

Room: 327 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-8431

E-mail: jennifer.milburn@usask.ca

Financial and Administrative Assistant

Maria Luisa Cerna De Hernandez

Room: 305 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-6949

E-mail: maria.hernandez@usask.ca

Research Services Specialist

Graham Fairhurst, PhD

Room 306 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-7134

E-mail: graham.fairhurst@usask.ca

Online Instructional Support Specialist

Tyson Brown

Room 5D40.22 Health Sciences

Tel: 306-966-7887

E-mail: tyson.brown@usask.ca

Communications Specialist

Amy Janzen

Room 306 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-1019

E-mail: amy.janzen@usask.ca

Strategic Initiatives Coordinator

Sarah Werner

Room 306 Kirk Hall

Tel: 306-966-1019

E-mail: sarah.werner@usask.ca

My primary role is to provide strategic oversight of financial management, including budgeting, planning and forecasting. I am also here to support students by answering questions and guiding you through university financial processes you may encounter during your time in the program.

As Executive Officer, Jennifer Milburn provides leadership in administration, planning, and partnership coordination to support the Executive Director and advance the strategic priorities of the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS). With extensive experience at the University of Saskatchewan and a long-standing role within SENS, she is also available to assist with time-sensitive student matters involving SENS leadership, including those requiring the attention of the Executive Director.

As the Financial and Administrative Assistant, Maria Luisa supports faculty, students and staff in navigating financial processes and handles the day-to-day financial tasks for the School. She also acts as a liaison with Connection Point, monitors operating and research funds, and provides general office support.

As the Research Services Specialist, my primary role is to support faculty with their funding applications, and I do this in a variety of ways. However, if you have questions about sources of funding for your graduate studies or need a second set of eyes on a funding application or cover letter, then get in touch.

As the Online Instructional Support Specialist, Tyson is responsible for assisting SENS instructors in developing, maintaining and delivering their online and/or hybrid-delivery courses. Tyson also has a keen interest in ensuring that SENS students learning online have the knowledge and skills to be successful in their courses and program.

As the Communications Specialist, Amy supports SENS faculty, staff, and leadership in implementing SENS communication and marketing strategies, developing stories that highlight the work of researchers and students, and promoting SENS events to the broader USask community and beyond.

As the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Sarah supports the planning, implementation, and coordination of strategic initiatives within SENS. This includes professional development programming, the SENS Eco Camps for kids, coordination of student-partner projects and partnership development activities aligned with SENS strategic priorities.

APPENDIX A: STUDENT-SUPERVISOR AGREEMENT

The Student-Supervisor Agreement is an important document that lays out the expectations for both students and their supervisors during work on the MES or PhD program. This helps to provide the framework for decisions made regarding the student's program and is intended to help create a healthy relationship. You can access the most up-to-date PDF-fillable agreement here ... [Student-Supervisor Agreement](#) form.

NOTE: CGPS and SENS require that this agreement is completed and signed by the student and supervisor within the first semester of their program (start date), and submitted to the Graduate Programs Advisor, Irene Schwalm (sens.thesis.admin@usask.ca).

APPENDIX B: ADVISORY COMMITTEE STRUCTURES



Advisory Committee Structures for MES and PhD Students in the School of Environment and Sustainability

Committee function and composition is governed by the University of Saskatchewan, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) and the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) policies and procedures, including conflict of interestⁱ, student supervision and defenceⁱⁱ and other areas. In addition, the SENS Graduate Handbook articulates detailed roles of a thesis graduate student, supervisor, committee and chair.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: This policy is in effect from its approval date onwards.

(Revised from the CGPS policy at: <https://cgps.usask.ca/operational-info/policy-procedure/advisory-and-defence-changes.php>)

- *All thesis-review and defence procedures, as described in this policy will be immediately applicable to all students, irrespective of their start date in the program with the possible exception of the requirement to have a University Examiner*. *As per current CGPS guidance (March 22, 2023): At this time, the University Examiner is an optional member of the examining committee for defences where (1) the student began their program in a Catalogue year prior to 2022-23 (i.e., prior to May 1, 2022); and, (2) where the examining committee chair, the supervisor and all members of the advisory committee and external examiner would equal at least six members.*
- *Existing advisory committees (for students who started their programs prior to policy implementation) are normally expected to meet or exceed these criteria in terms of numbers of members. Any committees that do not fulfil current policies should be amended, or discussed with the graduate chair to pursue an exemption. Any supervisors/students wishing to change their committees in light of the rule changes should similarly seek approval of the graduate chair prior to any changes.*

Structure of all proposed committees will be subject to approval of the SENS Graduate Chair.ⁱⁱⁱ

MES Advisory Committee

- Chair – must be SENS core faculty, or a secondary-joint appointment with approval of the Graduate Chair, where they have strong knowledge of SENS procedures. See endnote for information on the role of the chair.^{iv}
- Supervisor(s) – must be SENS core faculty or secondary-joint appointments. If associate or adjunct faculty, there must be a co-supervisor who is SENS faculty. If the student is co-supervised, the co-supervisors function as a single member, with a single vote.
- At least one additional member.
- Supervisor will NOT chair the committee.

MES Defence Committee

- Advisory Committee.
- Arm's-length Examiner.^{vi}

PhD Advisory Committee

- Chair – must be SENS core faculty and ideally versed in the subject matter. Secondary-joint appointments may also be selected with approval of the Graduate Chair, where they have strong knowledge of SENS procedures. See endnote for information on the role of the chair.^{vi}
- Supervisor(s) – if associate or adjunct faculty, must be co-supervisor with SENS faculty.
- At least one regular member – can be within SENS.
- Cognate member.

**Cognate or regular member must be from a different discipline.*

**Minimum of 4 members (Chair, supervisor, cognate, and one other).*

PhD at Defence

- Advisory Committee.
- University Examiner – may be from within SENS but must be arm's length from the student's research).
- External Examiner – external to USask.

KEY PROCESSES AND APPROVALS

Advisory Committee Approval:

- Advisory committees must be submitted to the SENS Graduate Programs Advisor and Graduate Chair for approval, prior to the first advisory committee meeting. The proposed committee structure shall indicate if the chair is a voting member of the committee, or if the chair is normally a non-voting member (except in the circumstance of a tie).
 - The Graduate Chair will review the structure to ensure the required roles are fulfilled, and avoid any situations of conflict of interest, or possible perceptions of conflict of interest. Note that CGPS approval is also required in cases where a proposed committee member is not a member of graduate faculty.ⁱⁱ
 - This approval will be kept in the student's records.
- MES advisory committees should be struck within the first semester and PhD advisory committees struck within the first two semesters, ideally within the first six months of the student commencing their program. At the proposal stage the committee composition shall be re-evaluated to ensure the committee meets the needs of the student.
- Any changes in the advisory committee must similarly be submitted to the Graduate Programs Advisor and Graduate Chair for approval and will be kept in the student's records.
- Where a temporary change in committee structure is required (e.g., in case of a leave for a committee member), this change may be made by the supervisor (or co-supervisors) without formal approval.

** Examining committee and defence approvals are governed by CGPS policy.ⁱⁱ*

MES Defence Committee and Defence:

- The advisory committee shall be given at least 2 weeks to review the thesis and determine whether to approve it to move forward for examination.
- Once the advisory committee has agreed the thesis is acceptable for examination, this conclusion is to be sent via email to the Graduate Chair, and SENS Graduate Programs Advisor, with copy to all members of the committee indicating approval.

- An arm's-length examiner should be recommended by the committee at or shortly after that time with notification sent to CGPS of the examiner. CGPS must also be notified of the date and result of defence. Note that if the arm's-length examiner is not a member of graduate faculty at USask, this will require approval of CGPS and can require additional time for processing.
- The defence can be scheduled by the unit and should normally be scheduled for 2 or 2.5 hours, inclusive of the student presentation, and an estimated 30-minute period for deliberations by the committee. If a room is required (i.e., in person or hybrid defence), the supervisor and SENS Graduate Programs Advisor must coordinate this.
- Defences in SENS are expected to be open to public participation. In select circumstances, e.g., associated with concerns of health or other factors, the defence may be closed, with approval of the Graduate Chair, although in such cases, the presentation should remain public wherever possible with only the questioning being closed.
- The CGPS Program Advisor must also be notified so that CGPS can ensure that the student's program requirements (all but thesis & thesis defence) have been met.
- The arm's-length examiner must have the thesis for a minimum of two weeks prior to defence. The defence version of the thesis will also be distributed to the committee at that time.
- The student must still submit the final, approved electronic version of the thesis to the Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) site.

PhD Examining Committee and Defence:

- The advisory committee shall be given at least 2 weeks to review the thesis and determine whether to approve it to move forward for examination.
- Once the advisory committee has agreed the thesis is acceptable for examination, this conclusion is to be sent via email to the Graduate Chair, and SENS Graduate Programs Advisor, with copy to all members of the committee indicating approval.
- The committee will recommend a university examiner and external examiner for approval as described below.
 - The university examiner shall have an "arm's length" relationship with the PhD dissertation research, and is approved by the Graduate Chair, Head, Dean/Executive Director (non-departmentalized colleges/schools) or designate according to CGPS rules stated (see policy and procedures handbook)ⁱⁱ. Note that if the arm's-length examiner is not a member of graduate faculty at USask, this will require approval of CGPS and can require additional time for processing.
 - The external examiner must be approved by the Associate Dean, CGPS and shall have an "arm's-length" relationship with the student, the supervisor and members of the advisory committee.
- SENS Graduate Programs Advisor will notify CGPS that the dissertation is ready for defence, identifying the university examiner and recommending at least one external examiner. This must be done at least 5 weeks prior to desired defence date.
- Once the external examiner is approved by the Associate Dean, the CGPS program advisor will send the invitation and dissertation to the university examiner and external examiner.
- The unit (supervisor and SENS Graduate Programs Advisor) will coordinate the defence date, time and venue, with all participants following the official invitation being sent by CGPS to the university and external examiners. The PhD defence should normally be scheduled for 3 or 3.5 hours, inclusive of the student presentation and an estimated 30-minute period for deliberations by the committee.

- Defences in SENS are expected to be open to public participation; however, in select circumstances, the defence may be closed, with approval of the Graduate Chair. Defences may be online, in person, or hybrid based on the needs and preferences of the student and committee.
- The student must still submit the final, approved electronic version of the thesis to the Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) site.

[†] – Situations where the private interests of a prospective member(s) conflict with, or could reasonably be perceived to conflict with, their obligations to provide impartial advice, support, and to exercise independent judgment on an advisory committee, must be avoided. Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest to the Graduate Chair, Head, Dean/Executive Director (non-departmentalized colleges/schools) or designate must occur, and consideration of their implications should occur in the process of constituting advisory committees and at the first full advisory committee meeting with the student. ([see USask Conflict of Interest Policy](#))

[‡] CGPS policy and procedures: <https://cgps.usask.ca/policy-and-procedure/index.php#ACADEMICS> and specifically: <https://cgps.usask.ca/policy-and-procedure/Academics/Programs/supervision.php#3.1ADVISORYCOMMITTEEFORTHEISISANDDISSERTATIONBASEDPROGRAMS> and <https://cgps.usask.ca/policy-and-procedure/Academics/defence.php>.

[§] Committee members who are not members of graduate faculty (and/or who do not hold a PhD) must be approved by CGPS (a CV and brief rationale are required) - please reach out to the Graduate Secretary in these cases.

[¶] The chair's role through the student's degree is to help ensure adherence to SENS and University policies, acting as a designate of the graduate chair. The chair is a key point of contact in the event of any student difficulties, acting as a liaison to the graduate chair, and helping direct the student to appropriate people to consult and/or appropriate policies. The supervisor(s) and student are responsible for organizing advisory committee meetings. As per CGPS rules, the supervisor(s) are responsible for ensuring a record of those meetings are maintained and filed, with the minutes customarily being prepared by the chair. Chairs often contribute as equal members of the committee; however, they may also have a solely administrative role and their role as a voting or non-voting member should be agreed upon by the committee at the outset. The role of the chair is further articulated in SENS and CGPS policy documents. In the thesis defence, the chair traditionally manages the questions, assigning the sequence of examiner questions and managing time, and may choose to also ask questions. Following defence, the chair will help ensure those present sign necessary forms, and will forward those forms to SENS graduate staff.

[¶] Members of the committee must be reviewed for conflict of interest (see conflict of interest policy). Where members are in conflict, this should be declared to the grad chair, and the graduate chair may allow the committee to proceed, but may assign specific rules, for example, requiring only one of the members in conflict be voting members of the committee, and the grad chair may designate additional requirements regarding allotment of time for questions or other areas.

^{¶¶} Defined by CGPS as an examiner who has not been directly involved in the student's thesis research and may be from within or outside the unit. See: <https://cgps.usask.ca/policy-and-procedure/Academics/defence.php#:~:text=The%20arm's%20length%20examiner%20must,in%20the%20student's%20thesis%20research.>

SENS Faculty Council Approved

March 31, 2023

APPENDIX C: GUIDANCE FOR EVALUATION OF A THESIS/DISSERTATION

Each criterion is important for evaluating a thesis. Questions posed offer some guidance for evaluating the criterion. Students and faculty can use this document as guidance when evaluating a thesis prior to or at the point of defence.

Organization

- Is the thesis clearly guided by the research questions, hypotheses, or objectives as appropriate to the methodology?
- Does the structure of the thesis bring clarity to the work?

Literature

- Is there sufficient engagement with relevant research literature? Is it sufficiently focused?
- Is the method of engaging with the literature appropriate to the chosen methodology?

Theoretical, Conceptual, or Analytical Framework

- Is the theoretical/conceptual or analytical framework appropriate for the study?
- Does the thesis demonstrate sufficient depth of understanding in description and application of theoretical framework?
- Is the work sufficiently situated within research traditions associated with environmental or sustainability science or studies?

Methodology and Methods for Data Collection, Analysis and Discussion

- Is the methodology appropriate for the study questions?
- Does the methodology adopt sufficiently acknowledge research traditions applicable to the field of study?
- Are the methods well-selected and executed?
- Are the data collection methods adequate? Are they clearly explained?
- Are the methods of analysis appropriate to address the questions?
 - Where relevant, is epistemological framing of the work congruent with the research questions and subject matter?
- Are the results and discussion clearly presented? Do they relate back to the framework?

Presentation

- Is the form of presentation appropriate given the topic, methodology, epistemology and ontology represented by the study?
- Is the purpose of the thesis clear?
- Comment on the quality of any figures, tables, maps, photographs, and general formatting.
- Is referencing complete, clear, and appropriately formatted using an acceptable style?
- Is the quality of the writing sufficient?

Overall Thesis

- Does the thesis demonstrate original work/thought (original contribution to knowledge)?
- Are the conclusion(s) and/or policy and research recommendations relevant to the thesis aims?

General/other comments, justification for overall assessment. Please include a brief comment on whether the thesis attempts to achieve or achieves interdisciplinarity.

APPENDIX D: STUDENT MAKING SATISFACTORY PROGRESS GUIDELINES

What does it mean for a student to be making satisfactory progress?

All students are expected to conduct themselves professionally within and outside of program requirements. Guidelines for professional conduct are indicated in the expectations and responsibilities set out in the SENS Graduate Student Handbook, and College of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies and University policies related to academic and non-academic conduct.

Students who receive scholarships, assistantships, bursaries or other funds from or administered by the University of Saskatchewan, the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS), or their supervisors must continue to make satisfactory progress and demonstrate their commitment to their program of study to continue to receive funding. A student making satisfactory progress is expected to, at a minimum, meet all of the following conditions:

Administrative: A student making satisfactory progress must be registered, and have all relevant paperwork (committee meeting minutes, progress reports, documentation of key milestones) up to date (filed with the Graduate Programs Advisor). This is the joint responsibility of the Supervisor(s), Student, and Advisory Committee Chair.

Progress in program: Progress is determined by several indicators that include, but are not limited to, at least acceptable progress in coursework (minimum GPA to retain scholarships and demonstrate competence, also meeting degree and program-specific requirements); consistent progress in meeting all program requirements; demonstrated progress in data collection, analysis, write-up; active participation in the learning process; and meeting on-going professional expectations and obligations (e.g., presentations upon request, relationships with research partners [if applicable]). These indicators are demonstrated by meeting program and research deadlines throughout each year of the program, and meeting commitments to research partners. These may be summarized during the annual required progress reports made to the committee. However, general progress throughout the year is monitored by the student supervisor(s). If the supervisor(s) has concerns about progress in program, they should first be documented and reported to the student and to the Graduate Chair. See below for details.

Student-supervisor relationship: A student making satisfactory progress is expected to maintain regular communication with their supervisor(s), interact regularly with their supervisor(s) on a reasonable schedule, and respond to requests for updates, in a collegial manner, with their supervisor and committee. A student making satisfactory progress takes responsibility for their program and its requirements as described in the Graduate Student Handbook. A student making satisfactory progress provides advance notification of planned absences and negotiates the timing of vacation with their supervisors in advance to ensure time away does not impede progress in program. A student making satisfactory progress will ensure that when situations arise that compromise their ability to complete required work or achieve key milestones or meet deadlines s/he will proactively address these issues with their supervisor(s) (and committee, if applicable) to manage these situations and permit continued progress in their program or research. If an agreed path forward cannot be determined, the student supervisor(s) document the situation and will seek help from the Graduate Chair to mediate a reasonable solution. If the demands of the supervisor are unreasonable, the Graduate Chair will intervene and call a meeting of the student's advisory committee.

Professional conduct: A student making satisfactory progress conducts him/herself as a professional in ways that include open and direct communication; responding to communication in a timely manner; being responsive to professional critique; and demonstrating accountability for actions and behaviours.

What happens when a student is determined to NOT be making satisfactory progress?

Students often take longer to complete their research than originally planned. When this happens, a student making satisfactory progress will discuss the challenges s/he is facing and work with their supervisor(s) and committee members to plan for contingencies. Determining "not making satisfactory progress" overall suggests that the student is failing to meet expectations across a range of categories in the progress form and/or has failed to perform in a professional and ethical manner. An overall determination of not making satisfactory progress is not given lightly. It does not arise when a single deadline is missed. It is reserved for situations where the behaviour or inattention of the student places in jeopardy the completion of their program of study.

If a student appears to not be making satisfactory progress, the student's advisory committee members with the supervisor will review the student's actions. This review will include meeting with the student, if feasible, to gather required information. Upon review and deliberation, the supervisor and committee members will make one of the following recommendations to the Graduate Chair of the program:

- a. Student is making satisfactory progress, but some changes need to be made in committee structure (e.g., new supervisor) or expectations made of the student.
- b. Student is not making satisfactory progress but could make progress with a different supervisor or set of working conditions.
- c. Student is not making satisfactory progress and should be required to discontinue.
- d. Student progress is challenged by extenuating circumstances (e.g., health, family, personal) and a leave is recommended.

Upon receipt of the recommendations, the Graduate Chair will confer with the Executive Director to determine next steps. If the student is making satisfactory progress (Category A), the Graduate Chair will oversee a transition to different arrangements (if necessary).

If the student is not making satisfactory progress (Categories B and C), funding will be immediately suspended. For Category B, the student must receive advice relating to expectations to resume satisfactory progress. This will involve discussion with the Graduate Chair and may involve the Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The student will work with the supervisor(s), and the student's committee to identify, in writing, terms by which the student's satisfactory progress may be achieved. A return to satisfactory progress will also mean that funding to the student may be resumed if conditions determined by the funding party permit. The funding party may suggest a "probationary" period before funding is recommenced.

For Category C, the student will be offered the opportunity to withdraw voluntarily. If the student refuses to withdraw voluntarily, the Graduate Chair will inform the College of Graduate Studies that the student is required to discontinue.

All relevant information relating to these decisions will be conveyed to the student, the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the Executive Director of the School. A student may appeal the decisions to the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

APPENDIX E: SENS POLICY STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM



SENS Policy Statement on Plagiarism: Determination, Required Pathways, and Pathways for Resolution

A. Determination of Infraction Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism)

The University established new regulations and procedures for academic misconduct in January 2022, which all units **must follow**. According to these regulations (2022, p. 7), plagiarism is currently defined as:

"Presentation of the work or idea of another in such a way as to give others the impression that it is the work or idea of the presenter. Adequate attribution is required. What is essential is that another person has no doubt which words or research results are the student's and which are drawn from other sources. Full explicit acknowledgement of the source of the material is required. Examples of plagiarism are:

- (i) *The use of material received or purchased from another person, website, or other source or prepared by any person other than the individual claiming to be the author. The use of material received through purchase is also known as "contract cheating."*
- (ii) *The verbatim use of oral or written material without adequate attribution.*
- (iii) *The paraphrasing of oral or written material of other persons without adequate attribution"*

The University has determined two levels of infraction – minor and major. All cases of plagiarism, however, are context specific. Faculty should refer to the University's webpage (<https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/academic-misconduct.php#About>) on Academic Misconduct for more details.

B. Pathways for Resolution

For minor infractions that potentially warrant an informal resolution

If a minor infraction is suspected, the complainant (typically a course instructor but could also be a supervisor/advisor or program director) is to speak to the student, where possible, to discuss the allegation. They then consult with the Academic Administrator to determine whether an informal resolution would be appropriate in the circumstances. In the case of graduate students, the role of Academic Administrator for *Informal Resolutions* has been delegated to the Assistant Director Academic (Internal) at SENS. Please see Appendix I for further details about this delegation of authority from CGPS to SENS. In the case of undergraduate students, the role of Academic Administrator for *Informal Resolutions* is held by the Executive Director of SENS (or designate).

Deliberations and decisions are to be guided by USask *Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct* (<https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/academic-misconduct.php>). Determination of

whether the resolution will be informal or formal will be made by the Academic Administrator, in consultation with the complainant. This determination will also consider whether the student has had prior infractions, through consultations with the SENS Executive Assistant who maintains records of plagiarism cases over time (see below) If it is agreed that the infraction is minor, the instructor must inform the student in writing of the allegation and the penalty, using the *Informal Resolution Form* (see). For each such resolution, a completed and signed form must be sent to the Academic Affairs Specialist at CGPS (), where they will be kept on file along with others from across CGPS. A copy of the form must also be sent to the Executive Assistant at SENS () who will keep these on file to help with the tracking and analysis of plagiarism cases among SENS students over time. PLEASE NOTE that staff and faculty at CGPS and SENS who work on admissions and awards and program delivery will not have access to this information.

****Students have the right not to sign the form, in which case they may proceed to enter the formal procedure, should they disagree with the finding of academic misconduct or with the penalty imposed. However, before confirming this decision, the student will be provided information about the process and the supports/advocates available to them by the relevant Academic Administrator at SENS: Assistant Director Academic (Internal) for graduate students, and Executive Director for undergraduate students.**

For major (or minor) infractions that warrant a formal procedure / hearing

If the complainant considers the infraction serious enough to warrant a formal hearing, they can directly submit the allegation in writing (with specific details of the incident) to the Academic Administrator. For graduate students at SENS, the role of Academic Administrator for formal procedures remains with the Associate Dean, CGPS, who is responsible to handle academic misconduct allegations in adherence to the University's current regulations. For undergraduate students at SENS, the Executive Director at SENS plays the role of Academic Administrator.

At this point, the matter becomes a CGPS rather than unit responsibility. However, upon notification that a formal hearing has been put into motion, the student in question will be provided information about the process (and the supports/advocates available to them) by the Academic Affairs Specialist at CGPS, with the Assistant Director Academic (Internal) or Executive Director at SENS an intermediary, depending on whether the respondent is a graduate or undergraduate student. The allegation is heard by a 'Hearing Board' convened by the University, with the allegation dismissed or sanctions imposed. For graduate students, the course instructor(s) will be asked to attend the hearing, along with the student and their representative. SENS Graduate Chair will only be invited to attend if they are also the complainant. For undergraduate students, the course instructor(s) would attend the hearing, and SENS would request that the Chair of its Undergraduate Programs Committee would also be present. Depending upon the outcome, appeals by the student are received and considered by the University Secretary.

One or more of the Assistant Director Academic, Graduate Chair, and Executive Director of SENS will be notified of the outcome of any formal hearing, along with the complainant and the respondent (student). At this point, the student's supervisor(s) (if they have one) will be notified of the outcome.

The [Flow Chart](#) (page 3) provides a step by step, visual representation of these informal and formal resolution pathways, highlighting who is responsible to take actions at key moments in these processes.

C. Implications for Student Funding and Reporting to Funding Agencies

As noted, while the respondent (student) can share information about the charge and any decision with their supervisor, it is ultimately the responsibility of the Executive Director to notify the supervisor of the outcome of any investigation/hearing into a minor or major plagiarism charge. Supervisors should be aware that the *University Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct* (2022: p. 19) state:

"When the alleged misconduct involves academic work supported by external funds, and if the student has been deemed guilty of misconduct after all avenues of appeal under these Regulations have been exhausted, the final outcome of the case shall be provided to the external agency responsible for providing the said external funds as required by that agency's requirements for disclosure by the Dean of the College, or Executive Director of the School, in which the student is registered."

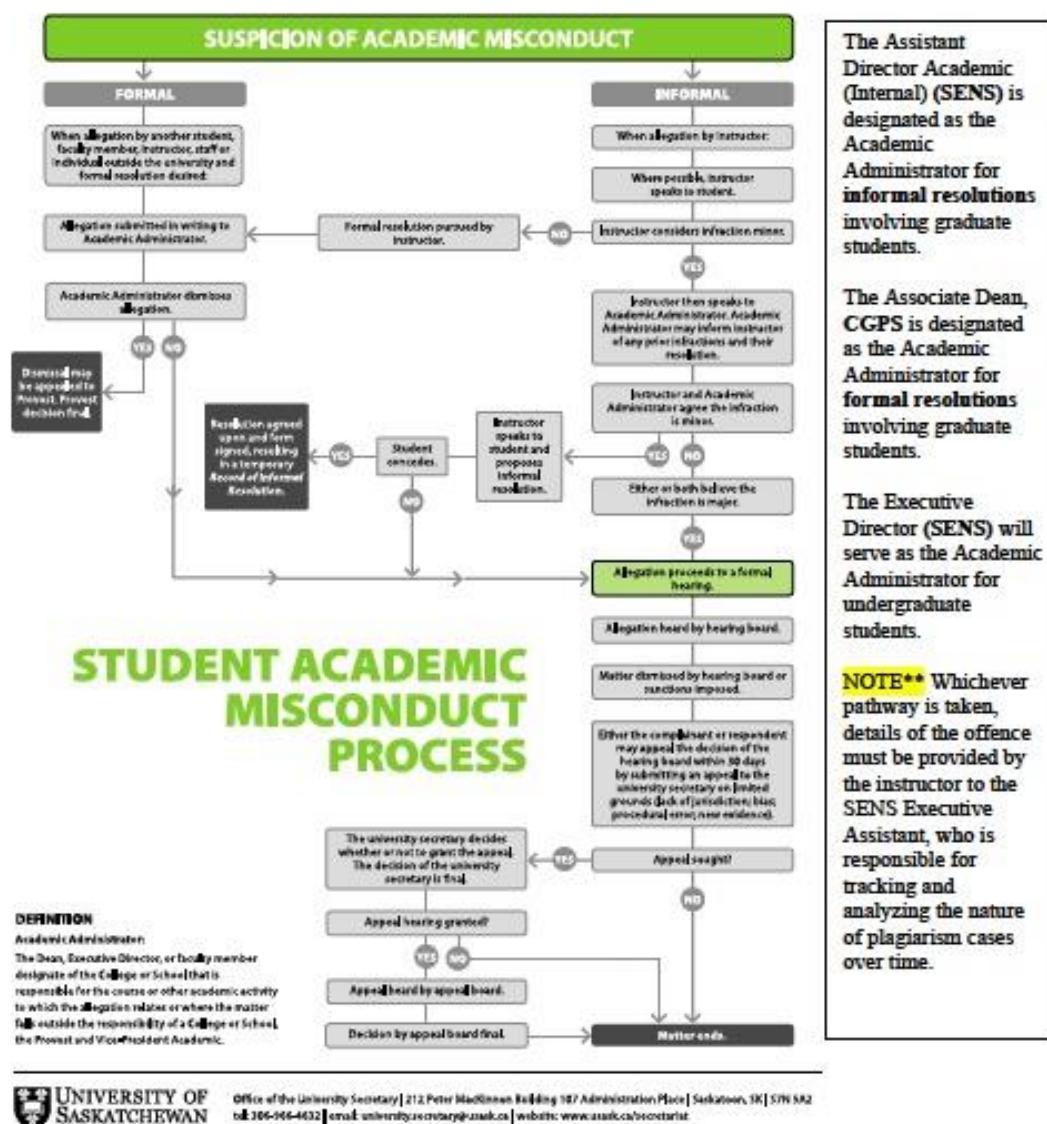
For internal funds (granted by the University), there is no similar mechanism in place. As these are normally paid through the unit (SENS), the Executive Director is responsible to follow up. Similarly, if CGPS are paying out a scholarship to the respondent (student), the Dean of CGPS would be responsible for making decisions on whether that scholarship can continue to be paid.

D. Sources Cited

University of Saskatchewan. 2022. *Regulations on Student Academic Misconduct*.
<https://governance.usask.ca/documents/2022-regulations-on-student-academic-misconduct.pdf>

University of Saskatchewan webpage on 'Academic Misconduct': <https://governance.usask.ca/student-conduct-appeals/academic-misconduct.php#top> (accessed on Aug 3, 2023)

E. University Flow Chart (revised August 2023), noting SENS roles and pathways



Updated
December 1, 2023

APPENDIX F: EXCELLENCE IN ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY GRADUATE AWARDS—TERMS OF REFERENCE AND NOMINATION FORM



Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Awards Nomination Form

To honour the achievements of its most outstanding graduates, the School of Environment and Sustainability is pleased to provide the Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Awards. This nomination form should be completed by the student's committee chair at the time of defence (MES and PhD) or faculty advisor (Project-Based MSs and MWS) or Program Director (course-based MSs) and considered in conjunction with the [terms of reference](#) for the award.

Name of Student: _____ Weighted Average at Graduation: _____

Program: ☐ PhD ☐ MES ☐ MSs Regenerative ☐ MSs Energy ☐ MWS

Date of Defence (MES and PhD): _____

Results of Advisory Committee Vote (MES and PhD):

Number in Favour of Nomination: _____

Number Opposed to Nomination: _____

Please provide a brief rationale for the nomination:

Submit this form to the SENS Executive Assistant, room 327 Kirk Hall. The nomination must also include the following documents:

1. An abstract or summary of the thesis (MES & PhD) or project (MWS & MSs), written in language suitable for non-specialists. This summary should be no more than 250 words.
2. A letter from the student's supervisor (MES and PhD), faculty advisor (MSs and MWS), or Program Director (MSs Regenerative and MSs Energy Security course-based) describing the significance of the work and how it exemplifies the values and ideals of scholarship practiced in the School. See [terms of reference](#) for more detailed information on requirements of the nomination letter.

All program requirements must be completed and nomination materials submitted by May 1 for the Spring convocation or October 1 for the Fall convocation.

Page 1 of 4



To honour the achievements of its most outstanding graduates, the School of Environment and Sustainability is pleased to provide convocation awards entitled the Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Awards. SENS will provide annual awards to the most distinguished graduates in the MScs, MWS, MES, and PhD programs. The Awards Committees may select more than one graduate in each category in a year or may elect not to grant an award in any given year.

To be considered, candidates must have completed all of their course work and, for the thesis-based programs, all requirements for their degree, have submitted their thesis to the library or SENS no later than 1 May for the Spring convocation or 1 October for the Fall convocation. All nomination form and attachments must also be received by the SENS Executive Assistant no later than 1 May for the Spring convocation or 1 October for the Fall convocation.

The terms of reference for the awards are given below:

MES Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Award

This award is intended to recognize a MES graduate who has achieved at least 80% in each of their coursework and completed a thesis that makes an outstanding contribution to the field of environment and sustainability. To be considered for the award, the nomination form must include the following:

1. The nomination for the award must be determined by majority vote of the student's defense committee (examiner's vote included) and recorded by the committee chair at the time of the defence. A brief rationale for this nomination must be provided at the time of nomination on the form provided by the School;
2. An abstract or summary of the thesis, written in language suitable for non-specialists. This summary should be no more than 250 words.
3. A letter from the student's supervisor describing the significance of the work and how it exemplifies the values and ideals of scholarship practiced in the School of Environment and Sustainability. SENS values research that demonstrates expertise and impact, and recognizes that "impact" may be measured through a range of factors including (although not restricted to) acceptance or citation of associated articles in peer-reviewed journals; novelty in co-generation of knowledge, presentation or dissemination of research results (such as through social media, Internet, YouTube, etc.); use of knowledge generated to stimulate changes in policies, practices, or norms of scientists, stakeholders, rights holders, citizens, public and private sectors, decision-makers, advocates, or others.

The award recipient will be announced at convocation and the recipient's name will be added to a plaque in the School of Environment and Sustainability to commemorate their achievement.

The award recipient will be determined by the SENS Executive Director, Assistant Director – Academic and the Graduate Chair. Those with a conflict of interest should step back from the decision making.

PhD Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Award

This award is intended to recognize a PhD graduate who has achieved at least 80% in each of their coursework and has completed a dissertation that makes an outstanding contribution to the field of environment and sustainability. To be considered for the award, the nomination form must include the following:

1. The nomination for the award must be determined by majority vote of the student's defense committee (external examiners vote included) and recorded by the committee chair at the time of the defence. A brief rationale for this nomination must be provided at the time of nomination on the form provided by the School;
2. An abstract or summary of the thesis, written in language suitable for non-specialists. This summary should be no more than 250 words.
3. A letter from the student's supervisor describing the significance of the work and how it exemplifies the values and ideals of scholarship practiced in the School of Environment and Sustainability. SENS values research that demonstrates expertise and impact, and recognizes that "impact" may be measured through a range of factors including (although not restricted to) acceptance or citation of associated articles in peer-reviewed journals; novelty in co-generation of knowledge, presentation or dissemination of research results (such as through social media, Internet, YouTube, etc.); use of knowledge generated to stimulate changes in policies, practices, or norms of scientists, stakeholders, rights holders, citizens, public and private sectors, decision-makers, advocates, or others.

The award recipient will be announced at convocation and the recipient's name will be added to a plaque in the School of Environment and Sustainability to commemorate their achievement.

The award recipient will be determined by the SENS Executive Director, the Assistant Director – Academic and the Graduate Chair. Those with a conflict of interest should step back from the decision making.

MSs Regenerative Sustainability Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Award

This award is intended to recognize the MSs graduate whose professional attributes best exemplify the values and ideals of scholarship practiced in the School of Environment and Sustainability. All MSs program graduates receiving degrees in the previous calendar year are eligible.

Students will be considered if they hold an overall average of at least 80% in *all* of their coursework. For **project-based MSs Regen students** (those taking ENVS 992) to be considered for an award, the nomination must include an assessment of the student's professional performance in their project placement as judged by the faculty advisor and the partner organization (if applicable). For **course-based MSs Regenerative Sustainability students** (those not taking ENVS 992) to be considered for an award, the nomination must include an assessment of the student's professional performance in their program as judged by the Program Director in consultation with instructor(s). The nomination must detail how the candidate exemplifies any one or more of the Core Competencies for Professional Programs in the School of Environment and Sustainability: 1) Leader, 2) Integrator for influencing organizational culture and change, 3) Critical and change oriented thinker, 4) Collaborator, communicator, and bridge builder, and 5) Reflective practitioner and adaptive manager.

The award recipient will be announced at convocation and the recipient's name will be added to a plaque in the School of Environment and Sustainability to commemorate their achievement.

The award recipient will be determined by the SENS Executive Director, the Director of the MSs program and the Graduate Chair. Those with a conflict of interest should step back from the decision making.

MSs Energy Security Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Award

This award is intended to recognize the MSs Energy Security graduate whose professional attributes best exemplify the values and ideals of scholarship practiced in the School of Environment and Sustainability. All MSs program graduates receiving degrees in the previous calendar year are eligible.

Students will be considered if they hold an overall average of at least 80% in *all* of their coursework. For **project-based MSs Energy Security students** (those taking ENVS 992) to be considered for an award, the nomination must include an assessment of the student's professional performance in their project placement as judged by the faculty advisor and the partner organization (if applicable). For **coursed-based MSs Energy Security students** (those not taking ENVS 992) to be considered for an award, the nomination must include an assessment of the student's professional performance in their program as judged by the Program Director in consultation with instructor(s). The nomination must detail how the candidate exemplifies any one or more of the Core Competencies for Professional Programs in the School of Environment and Sustainability: 1) Leader; 2) Integrator for influencing organizational culture and change; 3) Critical and change oriented thinker; 4) Collaborator, communicator, and bridge builder; and 5) Reflective practitioner and adaptive manager.

The award recipient will be announced at convocation and the recipient's name will be added to a plaque in the School of Environment and Sustainability to commemorate their achievement.

The award recipient will be determined by the SENS Executive Director, the Director of the MSs program and the Graduate Chair. Those with a conflict of interest should step back from the decision making.

MWS Excellence in Environment and Sustainability Graduate Award

This award is intended to recognize the MWS graduate whose professional attributes best exemplify the values and ideals of scholarship practiced in the School of Environment and Sustainability. All MWS program graduates receiving degrees in the previous calendar year are eligible.

Students will be considered if they hold an overall average of at least 80% in *all* of their coursework. To be considered for an award, the nomination must include an assessment of the student's professional performance in their program as judged by the faculty advisor and the partner organization (if applicable). The nomination must detail how the candidate exemplifies any one or more of the Core Competencies for Professional Programs in the School of Environment and Sustainability: 1) Leader, 2) Integrator for influencing organizational culture and change, 3) Critical and change oriented thinker, 4) Collaborator, communicator, and bridge builder, and 5) Reflective practitioner and adaptive manager.

The award recipient will be announced at convocation and the recipient's name will be added to a plaque in the School of Environment and Sustainability to commemorate their achievement.

The award recipient will be determined by the SENS Executive Director, the Director of the MWS program and the Graduate Chair. Those with a conflict of interest should step back from the decision making.

SENS Faculty Council Approved

February 19, 2016

Amended

May 5, 2023

September 8, 2023