



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D C

Environmental Studies (B.A.)

Department Website: <http://www.american.edu/cas/environmental/>

The B.A. in Environmental Studies is a rigorous, interdisciplinary program of study designed to provide the student with a basic understanding of the scientific and social processes that shape our environment. Students completing the program will have the fundamental knowledge and critical thinking skills to make independent, rational decisions concerning current and pressing environmental issues. Graduates of the program will be prepared for employment in natural resource fields dealing with basic and applied scientific interests, environmental management and policy-making, or for graduate level training in environmental studies and in professional programs in law, engineering, or business.

1. Learning Outcomes

- a. Define the major scientific underpinnings of emerging environmental issues.
- b. Develop and apply quantitative skills in evaluating environmental problems
- c. Be able to translate scientific information into a form useable by the general public.
- d. Describe how science can inform policy-making.

2. Assessment Plan

Measures	Target	Learning Outcomes	Cycle and Reviewers
<p>Measure 1: Position Papers: In this assignment, the student must provide a well-supported position on an environmental issue. Position papers will be assigned across the core curriculum and compiled for analyses.</p>	<p>A numerical target will be developed using a grading rubric after this assessment cycle.</p>	<p>a, b, c</p>	<p>A subset of the papers will be randomly selected from 200-, 300- and 400-level courses, and then independently evaluated by at least 2 different faculty using a standard rubric. This will be done every three years by the undergraduate committee and reported to the chair, and then discussed at the subsequent faculty meeting.</p>
<p>Measure 2: Internship & Independent Study Evaluations: All students are required to do an internship or an Independent Study. Grade for this includes an evaluation from the internship/study advisor using a standard form with questions on a numerical grading scale.</p>	<p>A numerical target will be developed after this assessment cycle.</p>	<p>a, b, c, d</p>	<p>Numerical scores from all of the evaluation forms will be analyzed at the end of each academic year by the departmental internship advisor. The advisor will report to the chair on the same schedule. The report will be summarized and presented to the faculty at a faculty meeting.</p>

<p>Measure 3: Standardized Test: A standardized set of 25 multiple choice questions on a range of environmental issues, emphasizing scientific and quantitative knowledge, will be given in two core ENVS courses: ENVS-250 and 492 (Capstones)</p>	<p>Our baseline is 53% and 62% for ENVS-250 and ENVS-492, respectively. These will be set as targets.</p>	<p>a, b</p>	<p>The test will be performed once a year when ENVS-250 and ENVS-492 are offered at the same time. The two instructors for the course will evaluate and summarize the scores and those summaries will be reported to the chair who will report summaries at the next faculty meeting.</p>
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