

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES - ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and attributes gained through every work, educational, volunteer and life experience.

UVic students in the [Environmental Studies](#) program develop the following program-specific competencies.

The Major and Minor in Environmental Studies provide students with an understanding of key issues in and research about social-ecological systems. The curriculum also helps students to develop specific skill that allow them to contribute to efforts to solve contemporary environmental problems and plan for the maintenance and restoration of social, cultural, and ecological integrity and resilience.

We worked with the Department of Environmental Studies to develop this document.

KNOWLEDGE

Graduates of Environmental Studies at UVic should:

- + Understand how unprecedented anthropogenic changes threaten global and local ecosystems, and how social, political and ecological research can be brought to bear on these problems
- + Understand why and how social, economic and political systems are degrading the biophysical systems that sustain us
- + Understand the processes through which social, economic and political systems can be reshaped to respect biophysical limits and nurture ecological resilience and flourishing
- + Understand the nature and complexity, as well as limitations, of indigenous and local knowledge systems, and their potential contributions to efforts to solve environmental problems
- + Understand why and how social and biophysical knowledge must be brought together to solve the most challenging ecological restoration problems, and explain how successful restoration projects are conducted from the ground up
- + Understand the basic principles of complex systems theory and their application to both social and biophysical domains
- + Understand the need for and challenges of interdisciplinary research into environmental issues;
- + Be familiar with the principles and practice of participatory research
- + Be familiar with the importance of, and differences between, native and non-native species, as well as current and novel ecosystems
- + Understand the concept of biodiversity, its various components across space and time, and the numerous threats to it

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SKILLS

Graduates of Environmental Studies at UVic should be able to:

- + Critically analyse and integrate environmental research across the humanities, natural and social sciences
- + Integrate and apply multiple and diverse forms of knowledge
- + Apply theoretical insights to contemporary environmental challenges
- + Design and conduct basic studies to address environmentally-based questions using appropriate research methods
- + Use quantitative methods to present and analyse data commonly encountered in Environmental Studies
- + Write clearly and effectively in a range of formats and for a variety of audiences
- + Develop and deliver effective presentations for both academic audiences and the general public
- + Think independently and creatively about contemporary environmental problems and research
- + Work effectively in diverse teams, including a range of stakeholders, to address issues of common concern

VALUES

Graduates of Environmental Studies at UVic should:

- + Value and respect the complexity inherent in cultural-ecological interactions
- + Recognize and respect the diversity of perspectives and values inherent in environmental issues
- + Appreciate the value of interdisciplinary research, as well as research across a range of disciplines
- + Sustain a commitment to collaborative research and practice, including community engagement, respecting a range of knowledge holders and perspectives
- + Respect scholarly integrity in all aspects of research and practice
- + Appreciate the tensions and differences between research, advocacy, and activism
- + Understand the limitations of their environmental knowledge and skills, and inherent uncertainties embedded in environmental research
- + Engage the world as an ecological citizen, one who recognizes a responsibility to others and to future generations, to equity and environmental justice