About ESPP

The Environmental Science and Policy Program (ESPP) at Michigan State University (MSU) is an umbrella for interdisciplinary environmental research and graduate education at the University. Building on a tradition of strength, ESPP draws flexibility, creativity, and knowledge from many fields to build the pathways that create better policy.

ESPP offers a graduate education that combines interdisciplinary breadth with disciplinary depth.

Doctoral Specialization Philosophy

In the 21st century, environmental professionals will need both interdisciplinary breadth and disciplinary depth. This is the model that some have called the “T-shaped” graduate student. Disciplinary depth is the pillar of the “T” that provides command of a research area and the meticulous skills required to conduct sound research. Interdisciplinary breadth is the crossbar of the “T”, providing language and conceptual frameworks that allow communication across disciplines. Together, these develop professionals who understand the context of their research and can work effectively in multidisciplinary teams.

For more information

ESPP staff always welcomes your questions and suggestions.

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Doctoral students pursue a PhD in one of MSU’s many existing doctoral programs that have an environmental focus. In addition, they complete the coursework for the Specialization in Environmental Science and Policy. The Specialization provides students with an understanding of the diverse disciplines brought to bear on contemporary environmental problems. It is designed to provide an understanding of how various disciplines conceptualize environmental issues and how scientific information can be brought to bear on environmental decision-making and environmental policy.

**Overview**

- **Course Options**
  - **ESP 800, Principles of Environmental Science and Policy.** This team-taught course provides a broad overview of scholarship areas and key research questions in the environmental science and policy.
  - **A course addressing the environmental natural sciences and policy.**
    - Choices are:
      - ESP 801: Physical, Chemical and Biological Processes of the Environment
      - ENE 801: Dynamics of Environmental Systems
      - ZOL/FW/PLB 897: Ecosystem Ecology and Global Change
  - **A course addressing the environmental social sciences and policy.**
    - Choices are:
      - ESP 802: Human Systems and the Environment
      - SOC 869: Community and Conservation
      - FW 810: Human Dimensions of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Management
  - **Capstone Experience involving the key elements of interdisciplinarity, policy-relevance and collaboration/teamwork.**
    - Choices are:
      - ESP 804: Environmental Applications and Analysis
      - FW 868: Water Policy and Management
      - Other options include an internship, collaboration, white paper or another course. Pre-approval is required.

- **Travel Funding**
  - ESPP provides funding for graduate students to present at interdisciplinary environmental conferences and meetings. Deadlines are quarterly and up to $500 for domestic travel and up to $750 for international travel is available per request. Travel funds are available for all graduate students. In addition, each ESPP specialization student is eligible for $1000 in additional travel funding, after completing two of the specialization courses.
  - More information is available on the ESPP Website, www.environment.msu.edu

- **Application and Eligibility**
  - An application for the specialization is available on the ESPP Web site. The specialization is open to any student enrolled in an MSU doctoral program. Students- Master’s and doctoral - may also take ESPP courses without enrolling the specialization.

- **Doctoral Recruitment Fellowships**
  - ESPP annually offers multiple Doctoral Recruiting Fellowships for students about to begin their doctoral studies at MSU. The goal of these fellowships is to attract the strongest possible cohort of students to pursue doctoral education focused on the environment. The annual deadline is in January; more information is available on the Website.

- **Other Student Resources**
  - ESPP’s mandate is to support interdisciplinary environmental education for all MSU graduate students. In addition to providing funding, ESPP:
    - Compiles information about MSU environmental work – events, projects, and researchers.
    - Provides regular roundups of external funding opportunities.
    - Organizes a student seminar series, and student meetings with environmental leaders.
    - Provides a space for student collaboration.
    - Maintains Greenboard, the ESPP blog, as a space to showcase student and faculty work.