

Geography, MS

Department: Environment and Society Department

College: S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Natural Resources

Overview

About This Degree

Formed in 2002, the Department of Environment and Society is the first of its kind in a college of natural resources in the country and has served as a model for the development of similar departments at other institutions of higher learning. The master's program in geography is centered on exploring how the geographic perspective informs our understanding of human-environment relationships. Broadly, geographers are concerned with the relationship between people and place and why place matters, the spatial patterns of human activity across the earth and the processes underlying those patterns, and the linkages among places in a globalizing world.

Geography is a diverse field, covering a wide range of issues, including the social aspects of natural resource management and conservation, land-use and environmental change, international and rural development, map making, planning, natural disaster response, and more. The geography degree combines technical training in geographic/information systems, remote sensing, and quantitative and qualitative analysis with the study of the human-environment relationship.

Career Options

Graduates can work in the following areas:

- GIS specialist
- Natural resource management
- International conservation
- Non-profit/non-governmental organization work
- Education
- Planner
- Cartographer
- Environmental consulting
- International development

What it takes

Admissions Requirements

Applicants from various undergraduate backgrounds may be considered. Depending on the student's desired area of research, certain prerequisite courses may be required.

To be accepted to the program, it is recommended that applicants first contact a specific faculty member with whom they are interested in working. If the faculty member is accepting graduate students and agrees to work with the student, the student can then apply by completing the following application requirements:

Application Requirements:

- Complete the [online application](#)
- Pay the \$55 application fee
- Score at or above the 40th percentile on in the GRE
- Have a 3.0 or higher GPA on your last 60 semester or 90 quarter credits
- Provide transcripts of all college/university credits
- Provide three contacts for letters of recommendation

International students have [additional admissions requirements](#).

Admissions Deadlines

The department has the following deadline:

- Fall semester – February 15

The degree programs in the Department of Environment and Society have rolling admission, meaning the department will continue to consider and accept applications until the program is full. The time it takes to process an application is primarily dependent on the speed with which the School of Graduate Studies receives letters of recommendation, transcripts, and test scores. For most students, this process may take six to eight weeks. Applicants should plan accordingly.

Master's International Program: Students wishing to complete the Peace Corps program must apply early. Once they are accepted to USU, they must apply to the Peace Corps. This application process can take longer than expected, so students should apply to USU in January to get the process started in time.

Master's Degree Plan Options

Students can receive the MS by pursuing one of two options:

- In the **Plan A** option, students complete graduate-level coursework and must write a thesis.
- The **Plan B** option requires the production of a paper or creative work of art and is expected to reflect equivalent scholarship standards as a thesis.

Financial Assistance

The Department of Environment and Society provides funding for most of its graduate students through [research assistantships](#), available through professors having contracts, grants, or other awards.

A variety of additional funding opportunities are available, including [fellowships](#), [scholarships](#), [tuition awards](#), and [travel support](#). Additionally, students may be eligible for subsidized [health insurance](#) through qualifying assistantships.

Program Requirements

[Click here](#) to see course requirements for the **Master of Science**.

Contact

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Get Involved

Professional Organizations, Honor Societies, and Clubs

Association of American Geographers: AAG is a nonprofit scientific and educational society founded in 1904. For 100 years, the AAG has contributed to the advancement of geography.

International Association for Society and Natural Resources: IASNR is an interdisciplinary professional association open to individuals who bring a variety of social science and natural science backgrounds to bear on research pertaining to the environment and natural resource issues.

Labs, Centers, Research

Ecology Center: The Ecology Center is an administrative structure in the university that supports and coordinates ecological research and graduate education in the science of ecology and provides professional information and advice for decision makers considering actions that affect the environment. The Ecology Center at USU has had a string of directors known nationally and worldwide as premier scientists in the field of ecology, and students graduating with a degree in ecology are able to make important contacts with influential faculty that can help them go on to prestigious post-doctoral programs and faculty positions at universities around the world.

Energy Dynamics Laboratory: EDL bridges the gap between academia and industry, confronting the challenges of prototyping, deployment, and commercialization of enabling technologies for renewable and advanced energy systems. USU researchers originate projects to derive energy from non-fossil fuels, such as biofuels, wind, and solar power. With EDL's collaboration, research develops through pilot projects to commercial application.

Institute for Natural Systems Engineering: The INSE is a recognized leader in the development, testing, and application of multi-disciplinary assessment methods for aquatic ecosystems and instream flow assessment methodologies.

Remote Sensing/Geographic Information Systems Laboratory: The RS/GIS advances knowledge in the application of geospatial technologies in ecosystem science and natural resource management. The lab conducts research to meet the requirements of contracting agencies, which include the USDI Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Defense, the National Guard Bureau, the U.S. Geological Survey, NASA, and various state and international agencies and organizations.

S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney Natural Resources Research Library: The Quinney Library maintains collections of materials pertaining to natural resources and the environment in a number of formats that support the programs of

study and research in the College of Natural Resources and several partnering centers. The library has more than 60,000 items, both print and electronic, as well as videos, images, and more.

Utah Center for Water Resources Research: The UCWRR facilitates water research, outreach, design, and testing elements within a university environment that supports student education and citizen training.

Utah Climate Center: The UCC facilitates access to climate data and information and uses expertise in atmospheric science to interpret climate information in an accurate and innovative fashion for the public. The mission includes the design of new products to meet present and future needs of agriculture, natural resources, government, industry, tourism, and educational organizations in Utah and the Intermountain region.

Utah Water Research Laboratory: The UWRL works on nearly 250 water-related projects a year and has projects in all of Utah's 29 counties and more than 40 countries. The lab is one of the go-to places that addresses the technical and societal aspects of water-related issues, including quality, quantity, and distribution of water.

Water Initiative: Utah State University supports a broad community of students and faculty engaged in water education, research, and outreach. The USU Water Initiative provides an overarching umbrella for the activities of this community aimed at fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and collegial sharing of ideas related to water across the departments and colleges of USU.