



# MES

# Handbook

# 2017-2018

**environmental  
studies**

**YORK**  
UNIVERSITÉ  
UNIVERSITY



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# IMPORTANT DATES/ GRADUATE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

## June

- 6 **Registration** (accept fees) and course **enrolment** for Fall 2017 and Winter 2018 start

## August

- 15 **Last day for incoming and continuing students to register for Fall 2017** after which a \$200 late fee will apply. Course enrolment continues until October 23.

## FALL TERM

### September

- 1 Fall term begins  
4 Holiday – Labour Day (university closed)  
5 **Orientation** for incoming graduate students (Advising for continuing students by appointment with faculty)  
7 **Fall 2017 classes begin**  
15 Deadline for **Summer 2017 grades reporting**  
18 **MES Re-Orientation** (for continuing students)  
20 Last day to add a course **without** permission of instructor  
30 100% refund deadline for Fall 2017 fees

### October

- 4 Last day to add a course **with** permission of instructor  
9 Holiday - Thanksgiving (university closed)  
15 80% refund deadline for Fall 2017 fees  
19-21 Fall Convocation  
23 Last day to register and enroll for Fall 2017 (\$200 late fee applies)  
26-29 **Reading Days** (no classes, university open)  
31 40% refund deadline for Fall 2017 fees

### November

- 1 Deadline to submit **Incomplete coursework** for Summer 2017  
Deadline to submit **Thesis Research Proposal package** to OSAS for Ethics approval to begin in January 2018  
10 FGS deadline to receive **Thesis Research Proposal package** from OSAS for Ethics approval to begin in January 2018  
Last day to drop a course **without** receiving a “W” grade  
14 OSAS deadline to receive recommendation and examinable **Masters Thesis** for final examination for February 2018 degree conferral

- 15 FGS deadline to receive **Academic Petition** for Winter 2018 (e.g. leave of absence, change of status, extension of program time limits, reinstatement) from OSAS  
Deadline for course instructors to change an Incomplete grade from Summer 2017 otherwise “I” becomes a “U” (Unsatisfactory)
- 21 FGS deadline to receive recommendation for **Masters Thesis** examination from OSAS
- 30 **Deadline to submit examinable Major Paper/Project/Portfolio** to OSAS for final examination and application for award of MES degree  
Program withdrawal for failure to maintain continuous registration

## December

- 4 Fall 2017 classes end
- 5 Deadline to submit Fall 2017 coursework
- 12 FGS deadline to hold **Masters Thesis** examination in Fall 2017 term
- 14-15 **MES final examinations** for Fall 2017
- 15 **Last day to register for Winter 2018** after which a \$200 late fee applies. Course enrolment continues until January 23.
- 19 FGS deadline to upload electronic **Masters Thesis** for Fall 2017
- 23-Jan 2 Winter break (university closed)

## WINTER TERM

### January

- 1 Winter term begins
- 4 **Winter 2018 classes begin**
- 15 Deadline for **Fall 2017 grades reporting**  
FGS deadline to upload electronic **Masters Thesis** for February 2018 degree conferral (with Winter registration)
- 17 Last day to change a course **without** permission of instructor
- 23 Last day to register and enroll for Winter 2018 (\$200 late fee applies)
- 31 100% refund deadline for Winter 2018 fees  
Last day to add a course **with** permission of instructor  
Deadline to submit Teaching Assistantships **‘blanket’ application**

### February

- 15 80% refund deadline for Winter 2018 fees
- 17-23 **Reading week** (no classes, university open)
- 19 Holiday - Family Day (university closed)
- 28 40% refund deadline for Winter 2018 fees  
Program withdrawal for failure to maintain continuous registration

## March

- 1 Last day to submit **Incomplete coursework** from Fall 2017 term
- 6 Summer 2018 Registration and Enrolment opens
- 9 Last day to drop a course **without** receiving a “W” grade
- 15 FGS deadline to receive **Academic Petition** for Summer 2018 (e.g. leave of absence, change of status, extension of program time limits, reinstatement) from OSAS  
Last day for course instructors to change grades of Incomplete from Fall 2017 otherwise “I” becomes a “U” (Unsatisfactory)
- 22 OSAS deadline to receive recommendation and examinable **Masters Thesis** for final examination for June 2018 Convocation
- 29 FGS deadline to receive recommendations for **Masters Thesis** examination from OSAS for June 2018 Convocation  
**Deadline to submit examinable Major Paper/Project/Portfolio** to OSAS for final examination and application for award of MES degree
- 30 Holiday – Good Friday (university closed)

## April

- 5 Last day to submit Winter 2018 coursework
- 6 Winter 2018 classes end
- 12-13 **MES final examinations** for Winter 2018
- 16 FGS deadline to hold **Masters Thesis** examination for June 2018 Convocation
- 23 FGS Deadline to upload electronic and **Masters Thesis** for June 2018 Convocation
- 30 Deadline for all degree requirements (including final grades) for June 2018 Convocation  
Last day of Winter 2018 term

## SUMMER TERM – (More dates coming soon)

### May

- 1 Summer term begins  
**Summer 2018 classes begin**
- 15 Deadline for **Winter 2018 grades reporting**
- 21 Holiday – Victoria Day (university closed)
- 30 100% refund deadline for Summer 2018 fees

### June

- 15 80% refund deadline for Summer 2018 fees
- 30 40% refund deadline for Summer 2018 fees

## July

- 1 Last day to submit Incomplete coursework from Winter 2018
- 2 Holiday- Canada Day (university closed)
- 15 Last day for course instructors to change grades of Incomplete from Winter 2018 otherwise "I" becomes a "U" (Unsatisfactory/Fail)
- 31 **Deadline to submit examinable Major Paper/Project/Portfolio** to OSAS for final examination and application for award of MES degree

## August

- 6 Holiday- Civic Day (university closed)
- 27-29 **MES final examinations** for Summer 2018
- 31 Last day of Summer 2018 term

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Master in Environmental Studies (MES) Program at the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES) is self-directed and interdisciplinary. In place of a fixed set of curriculum offerings, the MES approach to learning supports students' ownership and responsibility for their studies, fostering program coherence and depth through the Plan of Study. The Plan of Study anchors a process-oriented learning model that allows students to define both substantive areas of study and approaches to learning with the support of their advisor. Since its inception in 1968, FES has taken an interdisciplinary approach to the study of natural, social, and built environments. For this reason, the range of subject matter addressed in plans of study over the Faculty's history has been as diverse as students themselves.

This handbook is intended to assist students in defining their MES program and finding their path through each of its stages and transitions. This document should be read in relation to academic regulations governing the MES program available by [clicking this link](#).

## **THE MES PROGRAM**

The MES program is organized around three progressive stages:

### **MES I (term 1):**

Preparation of the initial Plan of Study in parallel with coursework or other structured learning activities supporting the exploration of the area of concentration.

### **MES II (terms 2-3):**

Consolidation of essential knowledge within the area of concentration through coursework, field experiences, and other learning activities, culminating in preparation of the final Plan of Study and major research proposal.

### **MES III (terms 3-6):**

Completion of the learning outlined in the Plan of Study and completion of the major research paper, project, portfolio, or thesis, demonstrating competence and mastery within the area of concentration.

Details of each stage are presented in the following sections. A summary of the program is available in Appendix 2.



## **Credits towards the MES Degree**

The MES degree requires 72 credits. Students accumulate these credits through several means: taking scheduled courses (typically 3 credits); 6599 individual directed studies (typically between 3 to 12 credits) or 6699 field experience placements (typically, 3 to 12 credits per placement, and no more than 24 credits in total for program); 6102 transitions (for 3 credits only) and MES major paper, project, portfolio or thesis work (typically 12 credits in terms 4 to 6). 'Residual credits' are granted if a student completes all of his or her learning objectives with less than 72 credits. If applicable, a student may apply for residual credits to be approved at the MES II-III exam.

## **Timelines for Degree Completion**

The MES degree is a full-time, six-term, two-year program. Graduate students must be continuously registered (i.e., accepting fees) and be enrolled in courses during Fall, Winter, and Summer terms until completion of their program.

All incoming MES students must register as full-time students for Term 1. Students are expected to continue to be registered full-time (9 credits minimum or 12 credits maximum per term) throughout their program. Students who require more than 6 terms (2 years) of full-time study automatically become part-time for the remainder of their program.

## **Graduate Dossier System**

The record of each student's MES studies is kept in the FES Graduate Dossier system. The dossier holds Plans of Study (including Proposal) and examination reports. It also contains the student's enrolment history, and evaluations from each course and learning activity. Students will find all necessary forms related to enrolment, petition, Plan of Study, diplomas checklist, HPRC and risk assessment in the FES Graduate Dossier system. This is a link to the [FES Graduate Dossier system](#). This is a link to the [User Guide](#). Required steps to complete diverse tasks are inserted in red in what follows.

## **MES Advisor**

Every incoming MES student is assigned a faculty advisor. Advisors help students develop their Plan of Study and begin to execute it. While much is done to match the interests of the student and the areas of expertise of faculty members, this is

not always possible. Students often change to a supervisor (see below) once they know what their final research area will be. It is also possible to change advisor after the approval of the initial Plan of Study and before the final Plan of Study and research project is identified. To change advisor, and only once the student has received approval of the new advisor, students must complete a 'Change of Advisor' form in the [FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add forms >> Request to Change MES Advisor >> \[fill\] Save >> Submit.](#)

## **Grading**

The graduate level courses in the MES Program use a Pass (P) or Unsatisfactory (U) grading system encouraging interdisciplinary exploration and creativity. Students do not receive a letter grade for their work and official York transcripts show grades of Pass (P), Withdrawn (W), or Unsatisfactory (U). A Pass grade is equivalent to a 'B+' letter grade or better; anything less is Unsatisfactory.

Course Directors must report their grades by January 15 (Fall term), May 15 (Winter term) and September 15 (Summer term). All assignments must be submitted two weeks before these dates.

If work is unfinished in one term, a student may request a short extension from the course director and will then receive a temporary grade of "Incomplete" for the course. The student must submit their work by March 1 (Fall term), July 1 (Winter term), November 1 (Summer term) so that course directors can submit a final grade by March 15 (Fall term), July 15 (Winter term) and November 15 (Summer term) otherwise the "I" will automatically change into a "U". Students may not carry more than 3 credits of incomplete work into the next academic term.

When applying for external funding or to a PhD program that requires a letter grade, MES students may request a letter grade evaluation of their dossier by contacting OSAS ([OSASinfo@yorku.ca](mailto:OSASinfo@yorku.ca)). The Awards and Academic Review Committee will then review the student's dossier and assign an overall letter grade or Grade Point Average (GPA) for their work throughout the program, based on all evaluations and progress reports.

## **Academic Honesty**

All York students are subject to policies regarding academic honesty as set out by the Senate of York University and by the Faculty of Environmental Studies. Conduct that violates the ethical or legal standards of the University community may result in serious consequences.

When submitting their initial Plan of Study, students must complete the Academic Integrity Tutorial available at [this link](#). Students are strongly encouraged to read the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty, [available here](#) in order to be very clear on the meanings of these rules.

## **ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE MES DEGREE**

Students enrolled in the MES program have the additional options of pursuing a specialized graduate program in planning or law, or a graduate diploma in environmental/sustainability education or business and the environment. **Students can only pursue one of these options.** Requirements checklists are available in the FES Graduate Dossier system.

Students interested in pursuing the Planning option or one of the diplomas must declare their interests in the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> MES Program Options/Declaration of Interest >> [fill] Save >> Submit.**

### **Planning program**

Planning in FES addresses the full range of urban, suburban, or regional environments and scales. Planning students who want their degree professionally recognized need to declare their intent to apply for OPPI membership in the Plan of Study. The title of the Plan's area of concentration must include the word 'planning.' At least one of the Plan's components must focus on planning. Planning students are required to fulfill certain planning course requirements but are also expected to take courses from the wider MES course offerings. This is a link to the [MES Planning Program Handbook](#).

Upon obtaining an MES degree in Planning, graduates may apply for provisional membership in the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) and the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), and work on completing the requirements towards full membership of OPPI/CIP. For more information, visit [OPPI](#) and [CIP](#).

The MES Planning program requirements checklist (to be submitted only after all courses have been successfully completed) is available in the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> MES Planning Program Requirements Checklist >> [fill] Save >> Submit.** The checklist is subsequently reviewed and approved by the MES Planning program Coordinator.

## **Graduate diploma in Business and the Environment**

This diploma is offered jointly by FES and the Schulich School of Business. As part of either the MES or MBA degree, the diploma in business and the environment provides the perspectives, understanding, tools, skills and recognition for York graduates to become leaders in the field of business and sustainability.

The requirements checklist for the Business and the Environment diploma (to be submitted only after all courses have been successfully completed) is available in the [FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> MES Business and the Environment Diploma Requirements Checklist >> \[fill\] Save >> Submit](#). The checklist is subsequently reviewed and approved by the MES Business and the Environment Diploma Coordinator.

## **Graduate diploma in Environmental and Sustainability Education**

The graduate diploma in Environmental and Sustainability Education is offered jointly by the York University graduate programs in Education and Environmental Studies. It is designed to provide opportunities for graduate students and educators in schools, community organizations, cultural institutions and advocacy groups to develop expertise and to participate in research, theory, and practice in the field of environmental and sustainability education.

The requirements checklist for the environmental and sustainability education diploma (to be submitted only after all courses have been successfully completed) is available in the [FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> MES Environmental and Sustainability Education Diploma Requirement Checklist>> \[fill\] Save >> Submit](#). The checklist is subsequently reviewed and approved by the MES Environmental Sustainability/Education diploma Coordinator.

## **MES/JD joint program in Environmental Studies and Law**

This unique program brings together the leadership in interdisciplinary environmental education of FES and the strength in social justice, environmental, planning and aboriginal law of Osgoode Hall Law School. The purpose of this joint program is to encourage the integration of these two critical fields of study and to prepare students for a range of opportunities in environmental affairs, law or planning.

The MES/JD joint program offers students the opportunity to complete both the MES and JD degrees in four years, approximately one year less than it would take

to complete the two degrees separately. Students must be admitted in both programs. This is a link to the [MES/JD Joint Program Handbook](#).

Other York graduate diplomas are also available to MES students. This is a link for a list of [diplomas offered at York](#).

## THE PLAN OF STUDY

The Plan of Study forms the basis of the MES learning model. Each student's individual Plan of Study is developed in consultation with their assigned faculty advisor. The Plan of Study is a statement of intent and commitment that begins in an open and exploratory way and gradually becomes more detailed as students progress through the program. The Plan of Study becomes the basis for the student's selection of courses and other learning experiences. In developing the Plan of Study, students decide on the focus of their MES program, establish what they need to learn, and propose their path to acquiring the desired knowledge, methods, skills, and perspectives necessary to complete the degree. Students can expect to produce several versions of their plan during their program. The Plan of Study is revised as necessary and its final version serves as the basis for evaluation in the student's final examination.

While the content and approaches to Plans of Study vary considerably with each student, the basic structure is consistent across all students. Alternative forms of expressing the Plan's requirements are encouraged, in discussion with the advisor. Although development of the Plan of Study is an individualized process, students at all levels can gain a great deal from interaction with others in the production and revision of their plans. Peer support will serve students best if they initiate it at the outset by forming or joining a learning group of three to five students. Peer support and collaborative learning complement individualized self-directed learning. Advising sessions can also be conducted individually or in small groups.

The Plan of Study is divided into two parts: the Plan developed initially in the MES I stage and refined in the MES II stage with your assigned Advisor, and the Research Proposal developed with your Supervisor at the end of the MES II stage. This is a link to the template of the [MES Plan of Study](#).

The structure of the plan of study is as follows:

**Title of area of concentration** (5 words or less, not counting articles or prepositions). Planning students must have the word 'planning' in their title.

**Keywords (7 words maximum)**

**Current of thought and practice (1000 words minimum, 1500 words maximum in final version)**

Students are asked to situate their interests within the relevant bodies of academic literature, theory, and practice. This section allows students to explain how their interests and area of concentration relate to broader academic conversations and the work of others, with a particular concern for how these particular ideas, theories, frameworks and methodologies frame the study area. At MES I, some key readings you think will inform your Current of Thought and Practice can be listed. This section continues to evolve at the MES II level.

**Area of concentration (200-400 words maximum)**

The statement of the area of concentration establishes the focus of the student's study area. In other words, the area of concentration is the particular environmental topic, issue, problem, or question that the student wishes to critically explore in her or his MES program. It generally synthesizes two to four components that comprise an interdisciplinary study in natural, built, and/or social environments. The area of concentration defines key concepts.

**Components of the area of concentration (usually 3 components, 300 words maximum)**

The components are the interdisciplinary and interconnected parts that comprise the sum of the area of concentration. Components help define and focus a students' program. Students usually set out components in order of importance, provide a clear description, explain the logic that underlies their selection, and describe how they combine to form the whole that is the area of concentration. In the initial Plan of Study, component descriptions will be approximately a paragraph in length, but they will grow in subsequent terms as the student's knowledge grows.

**Learning objectives (200 words maximum)**

A learning objective identifies a precise learning outcome that students want to accomplish in relation to their area of concentration or within a particular component. Objectives need to articulate the breadth and depth of their learning (some objectives require a broad overview of a particular subject

while others demand more in-depth knowledge). Students should also consider how success in reaching each learning objective will be assessed.

Objectives can be formulated to address each specific component or to address the area of concentration as a whole. Objectives are initially formulated in a future tense, but as students progress through the program and complete their objectives, the tense of verbs changes from future to past.

### **Term by term list of learning strategies (and other activities)**

Courses and other learning activities are actions taken to meet learning objectives. Examples of learning strategies include an established course within or outside of FES, individual directed study or field experience, a conference or workshop, or a non-credit course. The list of proposed courses and other learning activities covers all six terms of the program but is subject to revision in periodic meetings with the advisor.

### **Bibliography**

Students should compile an exhaustive list of references (books, journal articles, reports, etc.) cited in and related to their plan. These should be presented in a standard bibliographic format.

The Research Proposal is part of the Plan of Study and is completed at the end of the first year or very early in the second year under the guidance of a selected supervisor. Its structure presented below might vary slightly depending on the type of research (major paper, major project, or portfolio). Theses are regulated by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and therefore have particular requirements.

### **Statement of Research Topic (400 words maximum)**

What is the focused research topic that you wish to examine? Why is this issue important and worth researching?

### **Specific Research Question (250 words maximum)**

What is the specific question, thesis, or argument guiding your research inquiry?

### **Theoretical Framework and/or Literature Review (1000-1500 words maximum).**

What is the theoretical framework for your research? What have other scholars said about your research topic or problem?

### **Research Design and Methodology (1000 words maximum)**

What methods will you use to gather and analyze the data required to respond to your research question?

### **Timeline**

Provide a detailed breakdown of your research activities (fieldwork, interviews, writing sections, revisions, submission).

### **Tentative Outline**

Provide a tentative table of contents.

### **Bibliography**

Compile an exhaustive list of complete academic references related to your proposal.

For research involving human participants, students must complete a Human Participants Research Review package (and risk assessment if applicable) available in the Graduate Dossier system. Human participants research cannot proceed until written approval is received from the FES Research Committee. If you are conducting a thesis, you must refer to the Faculty of Graduate Studies requirements and research ethics forms and procedures [available here](#).

## **Examinations**

There are different types of examination for students progressing well through the program: the MES I to II exam, general exams, the MES II to III exam, and the final examination. A Dean's Exam might be called by the Advisor, MES Program Coordinator or the Graduate Program Director if a student is experiencing academic difficulties.

The **MES I to II Exam** is held after the submission of the initial Plan of Study (in the first term of the program) with the student's advisor and a reader assigned by the Graduate Program Director.

**General Examinations** are advising sessions in which the student and faculty advisor discuss the substance, clarity, and conceptual grounding of each progressive iteration of the Plan of Study, as well as the student's learning activities for the upcoming term(s). Students need to submit an updated Plan of Study to the advisor in advance of each general exam, and come prepared with advising and other enrolment questions. After each general exam, the advisor will fill in an exam report in the Graduate Dossier system to detail the discussion and



outcome of the general exam, including a specific date for the next Plan of Study revision and examination. Enrolment will be blocked if the student does not submit a revised Plan of Study on schedule.

The purpose of the **MES II to III Exam** is to discuss and approve the student's final Plan of Study, along with his or her proposal for MES III research (Major Paper, Project, Portfolio or Thesis). The exam is attended by two faculty members: the student's advisor and the supervisor of the MES III research work, or another faculty member if the same person is both advisor and supervisor. The exam is normally held in term 3 or 4 of the program. A later date will seriously jeopardize the completion of the program within the prescribed 6 terms.

The **MES Final Examination**, once the Research Paper/Project/Portfolio or Thesis has been submitted, provides an opportunity for the student to discuss her/his program and MES III research with faculty members, who assess how the student has met their learning goals as set out in the Plan of Study.

A **Dean's Exam** is a general exam held with a student in serious difficulty. Normally, the examiners include the student's advisor, the Graduate Program Director or representative, and a Dean's representative, who chairs the exam. A Dean's exam may be called if a student receives an evaluation of Unsatisfactory in a course (3 credits), does not have an approved Plan of Study in place, or has otherwise failed to meet program requirements as specified in the Academic Regulations. The result of a Dean's exam is either withdrawal from the program or clearly defined steps and a timeline towards addressing the particular condition that led to the Dean's exam.

## **Submission of the Plan of Study**

While iterations of your initial Plan of Study will be exchanged with your advisor in the first term using the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> MES Draft of Plan of Study >> [upload] Save >> Submit**, the final initial plan is due on **Thursday November 1, 2017**. Students are required to upload their plan in the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> MES Plan of Study for I-II Exam >> [upload] Save >> Submit**.

Before all other general exams, students may revise their plan and exchange it with their advisor. At the general exam, the advisor will approve the plan which the student will then upload in the **FES Graduate Dossier system>> MES Plan of Study for General Exam >> [upload] Save >> Submit**.

For the MES II-III Exam, the plan and proposal section will be presented to the advisor and supervisor, and once approved, the plan (including the proposal) will be

uploaded in the Graduate Dossier system. Plans of study for general examinations and the MES II to III examination should be submitted a week before to provide ample time for the advisor/supervisor to read them. Once approved, students are required to upload their plan in the [FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> Documents for MES II-III Exam >> \[upload\] Save >> Submit](#).

The MES Final Exam requires the submission of the plan (including proposal) and major research in hard copies to OSAS, in addition to uploading all that material to the [FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> Documents for MES Final Examination >> \[upload\] Save >> Submit](#). See MES III Research and Program Completion below.

## **MES I STAGE: INITIAL PLAN OF STUDY**

In the first term of their program, students will meet with their respective advisors to discuss and receive feedback on the different sections of the Plan of Study. Students are expected to provide draft sections of the Plan of Study prior to each advising session so that the advisor can review and comment. Please inquire with your Advisor on the preferred submission format (through dossier, by email or paper copy). Advising sessions can be individualized or in a group. After a student has worked through several drafts of their Plan of Study and with the approval of the Advisor, they will upload the final version of the initial Plan to the Graduate Dossier System. The Advisor will review the initial plan and pass it along to a Second Reader appointed by the Graduate Program Director to ensure that the plan meets the interdisciplinary standards of FES.

If the Advisor and the Second Reader agree that the plan is satisfactory, then the advisor schedules a MES I-II examination with the student. If the Advisor and/or the Second Reader have substantial concerns about the plan, a general examination with both faculty members will provide the feedback necessary for the student to rework the plan. Once the initial Plan of Study is accepted by the Advisor and Second Reader, and approved by the MES Program Coordinator, the student officially moves from MES I to MES II. Students are expected to advance to MES II by the end of the first term.

If a student does not complete the initial Plan of Study on time or the initial Plan is assessed by either the Advisor or the Second Reader as NOT ready for MES II, a general exam with the advisor and the second reader will take place. There are two possible outcomes:

The faculty members are persuaded that the student will be able to produce an acceptable MES II Plan of Study during the second term, and the student is therefore allowed to maintain registration. Specific revisions and timeline are set out for the re-submission of the plan to the advisor during the second term and these must be strictly adhered to. Otherwise the student will be withdrawn from the program. If an acceptable Plan of Study is produced, the grade for ENVS 5100 is changed from an 'Incomplete' to a 'Pass';

or

The faculty members are persuaded that the student will not be able to produce an acceptable Plan of Study even if given more time. The student will be withdrawn from the MES Program and the grade for ENVS 5100 will be changed from 'Incomplete' to 'Unsatisfactory'.

## **MES II STAGE: FINAL PLAN OF STUDY AND RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

In the MES II stage, students take courses, revise their Plan of Study, and develop a proposal for their major research. At the end of the MES II stage, students will have an MES II-III exam to assess both the final Plan of Study and the Research Proposal.

As students pursue their programs, elements of the Plan of Study become more specific and detailed. Particularly suitable methods of inquiry become evident; learning objectives evolve to express more specific aims and means of actualization; and the main currents of thought and practice section expands to reflect new learning. Students may find that their intent and focus change as they move through the program. Students may discover a new interest, another angle or a different way of looking at issues. Changes in focus and direction should be discussed with the Advisor and will be reflected in revisions to the Plan of Study, followed by a general exam.

In working towards the final Plan of Study, it is recommended that students revise each section of their plan. Students should be confident that their currents of thought and practice section is updated to reflect the key literature and practices that inform their area of concentration. Students should ask themselves if their learning objectives accurately reflect what they have learned and, if not, revise them. At the time of the MES II to III exam, most of the learning objectives should be in the past tense, leaving only those pertaining to the MES III research in the present tense.

Students should meet regularly with their Advisor during the MES II stage in order to review their program and progress on their Plan of Study. A general exam near the end of each term allows students and Advisors to review the work completed, to discuss appropriate changes and course selection, and to complete enrolment paperwork for the following term.

## **Selection of a supervisor**

MES students are required to identify their Major Research Supervisor by the beginning of the second year (or fourth term) at the latest. Once a Supervisor has agreed to supervise, the student will nominate this supervisor in the [Graduate Dossier System >> Add Forms >> Nomination of a MES Supervisor >> \[fill\] Save >> Submit](#). This nomination must take place prior to the MES II-III exam.

All full-time and joint-appointed members of FES are eligible to supervise students at the MES III level -- depending on their availability. In any given term, a number of faculty members will be unavailable due to sabbatical and other leaves, or for workload reasons, or they may have already taken on their full allocation of MES III supervisees. If a student would like to ask a professor from outside FES or an individual who does not hold a university appointment to supervise his or her MES III work, this option should be discussed with the Advisor and with the Graduate Program Director to ascertain the person's suitability and the procedure to be followed for their appointment as Supervisor.

Supervision rests on the quality of communication between students and their supervisor so students are expected to respectfully and effectively communicate with their supervisor to maximize the quality and completion of their research.

The main role of the Supervisor is to offer substantive comment and advice on the form and content of the MES III research. The Supervisor is not an editor; if a student requires assistance in editing their major research work, they will need to find someone to act in this role. Students should also acknowledge the people who provide editorial assistance in the Acknowledgements section of their final paper, thesis, report or assignment.

## **Major research options**

There are four options for MES III Major Research work: Major Paper, Major Project, Portfolio and Thesis.

### **MES Major Paper (ENVS 7899)**

The Major Paper synthesizes the area of concentration or explores one or more of its components in depth. The Major Paper is expected to contribute to a student's knowledge and may also make a contribution to knowledge in general.

### **MES Major Project (ENVS 7799)**

A Major Project represents an applied activity. The output or representation of a major project will be determined by the nature and form of the activity; it may be written, oral, performed or graphic. A Major Project report accompanies the activity and reiterates the activity's objectives, describes the problems or issues addressed, outlines what was done and learned, and connects back to fulfillment of the plan of study. A Major Project is expected to make a contribution to knowledge similar to that of a Major Paper.

### **MES Portfolio (ENVS 7798)**

The MES Portfolio option in MES III is a compilation of works (written and/or other media) that are integrated into a coherent whole. It offers students the opportunity of producing pieces (normally 2 to 4) in different media and for different audiences. A Portfolio can include any one of a number of possible combinations, for example:

- a series of academic essays initially produced for courses, but developed into cohesive aspects of an overall theme;
- a combination of material produced for a popular audience (e.g., a manual or a narrative) as well as for an academic audience (e.g., the theoretical foundation of the manual);
- a combination of visual media, such as a video and a complementary academic paper;
- a combination of academic paper and performance-oriented work;
- a series of articles aimed at publication in specific journals or presentations at specific conferences.

The components of the MES Portfolio are usually introduced through a short synthesis paper, which reflects their interrelationship and relationship to the plan of study.

FES policy establishes a maximum length for Major Papers, Major Project or Portfolio reports to 30,000 words. These word limits exclude the bibliography, tables, charts and appendices.

### **MES Thesis (ENVS 7999)**

Like the Major Paper option, the thesis synthesizes the area of concentration or explores one or more of its components in depth. The thesis is expected to contribute to a student's knowledge and may also make a contribution to knowledge in general. However, the requirements for a Thesis are different than a Major Paper, Major Project or Portfolio because a Thesis proposal is submitted to both FES and the Faculty of Graduate Studies. An initial Thesis Proposal must be submitted, as part of the final revision of the plan of study, by the end of the third term (i.e., at least 12 months before the student's expected time of completion). Students should be aware that due to university timelines, those writing theses may take longer to complete the MES degree.

A Master's Thesis Supervisory Committee must be nominated and consists of a minimum of two faculty members appointed to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, at least one of whom must be from FES and acts as the supervisor. For additional information, [click here](#).

This is a [link to a database of titles of MES major papers](#), major projects, portfolios and theses. For major papers and projects selected for the FES Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Series, [click here](#).

### **MES II-III Examination**

Prior to the MES II-III exam, the student and Adviser should review the dossier and check that the information is accurate and complete (grades, credit, enrolment).

The MES II-III examination considers the substantive aspects of the final Plan of Study, including the proposal for the MES III Major Research work. Students are expected to demonstrate a substantive command of the area of concentration and achievement of the learning objectives, and to have a solid understanding of the major issues and currents of thought and practice related to the area of concentration. The intent of this exam is to make sure that the student is ready to tackle the final research stage of the program. At this exam, a student may be asked to explain any significant changes in the Plan of Study, and may be questioned closely on the learning objectives and the currents of thought and practice. After a student's research proposal is approved in the MES II-III exam, the student enrolls in the specific course of the chosen Major Research work option

(ENVS 7799 Major Project, 7899 Major Paper, 7798 Portfolio or 7999 Thesis) for independent research work.

The MES II to III examiners are generally the MES II Advisor and the MES III Supervisor. If the Advisor and Supervisor are the same person, a second faculty member must be present at the MES II-III exam. After the MES II-III exam, the Supervisor generally acts as the student's MES III Advisor. However, if the Supervisor is not a FES faculty member, the student's MES II Advisor will continue in that role during MES III. If students are having difficulty finding a Supervisor, they should discuss this issue first with their Advisor and, if needed, with the Graduate Program Director.

## **MES III - RESEARCH AND PROGRAM COMPLETION**

Generally students are enrolled in MES III in terms 4, 5 and 6 of their program (or as early as term 3). Students must complete their Major Research work by the deadline in Term 6. Because faculty members often travel to conferences, do research, and go on holiday in the summer term, students should set up a schedule of meetings with their Supervisor for submitting drafts and getting feedback on their work. Supervisors require at least two weeks for reading drafts. Students need to allow sufficient time for revisions, as well. Students should aim to have submitted a final draft at least one month prior to the deadline. Students can file their Major Research work with OSAS anytime during the term, before the term deadline.

Deadlines for submissions of Major Paper/Project/Portfolio are:

**Fall term: Wednesday November 30, 2017** (for examination on December 14-15, 2017)

**Winter term: Thursday March 29, 2018** (for examination on April 12-13, 2018)

**Summer term: Monday July 31, 2018** (for examination on August 27, 28, 29, 2018).

Note: MES Theses have different deadlines so students should refer to the Graduate Academic Calendar and/or inquire directly with OSAS.

Within one week after the final exam, every student is required to upload the major research (with or without revisions) one last time in the [FES Graduate Dossier >> Add Forms >> MES Submit Major Paper/Project/Portfolio >> \[upload\] Save >> Submit.](#)

The title page of the Major Research work must contain specific information: the title of the Major Paper, Major Project or Portfolio; the name of the student; the date of submission; the statement "A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada."

The MES Major Paper, Project, or Portfolio must contain an abstract (500 words maximum) and a foreword that explains the nature and role of the major research work in fulfilling the requirements of the MES degree. Numerical pagination starts on the first page of the introduction; every page before shall receive a roman numeral. For Thesis requirements and guidelines, [click here](#).

## **MES Final Examination**

FES students must pass a final oral examination that addresses the totality of their program. The Major Research work constitutes a written submission for the final exam. (A thesis is examined separately, as outlined below). The MES final examination will be scheduled only after the submission of three (unless stated otherwise) copies of the Plan of Study (including the Proposal) and of the actual Major Paper, or Major Project report, or Portfolio. The same set of document must be uploaded to the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Documents for MES Final Examinations >> [fill/upload] Save >> Submit**. The documents are forwarded to the Supervisor to officially confirm that the Major Research work is examinable (to avoid any surprise, students must receive the go-ahead from the Supervisor prior to uploading).

The MES final examination committee usually consists of 3 faculty members, including the Supervisor, the Advisor and a Chair appointed by the Graduate Program Director. In some circumstances, the committee may consist of only 2 faculty members. The final exam is about 1-hour long. Its purpose is to evaluate the student's general understanding in environmental studies along with their substantive competencies in the area of concentration. The final examination also pays considerable attention to the Major Research work. A thesis is defended and examined separately, according to FGS procedures, usually immediately prior to the FES final exam but no earlier than five weeks after the final version is submitted to OSAS.

At the final exam, students have the option to make a short opening statement (10 minutes maximum). The opening statement is not to summarize their Plan of Study



or the Major Research work but rather to synthesize its successes and challenges. Students should prepare this oral statement in advance. In addition to preparing their statement, students should review their Plan and try to anticipate questions on their learning objectives, on the key definitions and concepts of their area of concentration and on key authors in the main currents of thought and practice. They should also review their Major Research work and be ready to answer epistemological, conceptual and methodological questions.

At the final exam, the Chair will first ensure that the student is familiar with the Faculty regulations governing final exams, either by reviewing them or simply by asking if the examinee has any questions regarding the exam. The student then briefly leaves the room while the examiners review the student's dossier and determine the nature and order of questions on the Plan of Study and Major Research work. Questioning (first on the Plan and then on the research work) continues until the examiners have sufficient information to make their determination. If during this time the student needs a break, encounters difficulty, or wishes to consult with the Supervisor, they may request a recess or adjournment. The examining members can also call for recess or adjournment. Once examiners agree that no further questions are needed, the Chair will ask if the student has anything further to add and will ask the student to leave the room while the committee deliberates.

The MES final exam requirement is met when the majority of members of the examining committee agree that the student has satisfactorily completed the requirements of the MES program. When the committee is ready, the Chair will call the student back into the room and read the committee's decision from the examination report. The Chair reports the outcome of the final exam in the FES Graduate Dossier for OSAS to process. The committee may recommend that exceptional research work be published in the web-based FES Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Series. However, if the final exam committee's decision is unfavourable, there are two potential next steps:

**Recess:** If the additional work required to meet the committee's requirements is fairly minor, the exam will be recessed, with the student's agreement, for a period not exceeding four weeks. A date will be set for the reconvened exam. The committee will specify in writing why the exam was recessed and the conditions that must be satisfied by the student before the final exam resumes.

Adjournment: Either the student or the committee may adjourn the exam. The student then has eight months to apply for reconvening of the final exam. This usually involves another general exam to revise the Plan of Study and to identify further, more significant work required. A second final exam will occur no later than a month after the student's re-application.

Recess and adjournment of final exams are rare occurrences. Faculty regulation C3.33 provides for student appeals to decisions of final exam committees. An appeal can be based only on procedural irregularity, i.e., students cannot appeal simply because they disagree with the committee's decision.

## **HUMAN PARTICIPANTS RESEARCH AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Faculty of Environmental Studies is governed by the York University Senate policy for the *Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants*. Students undertaking research that involves human participants are required to submit an application and receive approval prior to undertaking such research. This review applies to research conducted in graduate courses, individual directed studies, and/or MES major research work (paper, project, thesis, or portfolio). If a student's MES III Major Research work is unfunded and if it involves human participants, they must submit the proposal for human participants research review, including consent forms and specific research protocols (e.g. interview questionnaires and list of interviewees) to the FES Graduate Dossier system. As part of the submission, students are also required to complete the Tri-Council Policy Statement tutorial, [available here](#). The record of completion with their Plan/Proposal and relevant ethics forms are uploaded to the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> Research Ethics/Human Participants Research >> [fill multiple pages and upload supporting documentation] Save >> Submit.**

Students conducting funded research or writing a thesis must complete the FGS research ethics requirements and forms [available here](#).

FES also requires students to provide evidence of proper preparation for field study or risk assessment and mitigation. Risk in field study and/or research includes, but is not limited to, risks to physical health, emotional well-being and personal safety. Risk may arise because of the nature of the research itself; or from the climate, the political, social, economic and cultural environment in the field study location; from the race, gender, religious or cultural background of the researcher; or from the

travel, living and working conditions required for the field study. FES may require the student to agree to follow certain field study risk assessment and approval procedures, to agree to abide by guidelines for behaviour in the field, to take specified training or undertake preliminary research, to undergo immunization, to obtain accident and health benefits insurance and necessary or desirable travel documents, and may require the student to sign (with a witness) a waiver of liability.

Students requiring field research for their Major Paper, Major Project, Portfolio or Thesis must upload their risk assessment application to the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> HPR Package and/or Risk Assessment Package >> [fill multiple pages] Save >> Submit** at least two months prior to the beginning of the research. Incomplete or missing documentation will delay processing.

## **REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT**

MES students are expected to 1) register (i.e., to accept fees) in York Registration and Enrolment Module (REM) and 2) to enrol in courses in both REM and FES Graduate Dossier system for each term (Fall, Winter and Summer) throughout the program. **It is the responsibility of the student to register/accept fees in REM prior to the registration deadline to avoid a \$200 late registration fee.**

Registration/accepting fees in REM is done using your [Passport York](#) account. You will be asked to verify your student status and accept the responsibility of paying your tuition fees.

After discussing course selection with your supervisor, enrolment is achieved by logging into: 1) REM, as you did when you registered, and 2) in the FES Graduate Dossier system. The REM system will take you to “add/drop courses” once you accepted your fees for that term. You will be expected to enter the course catalogue # for each course. Catalogue numbers are not provided for ENVS 6102, 6599, 6699, 7599, 7699, 7798, 7799, 7899 and 7999 as these courses require manual input by OSAS. You will be enrolled in these courses once OSAS receive complete paperwork with appropriate approvals.

You then need to enroll in the same courses in the FES Graduate Dossier system - making sure that your enrolment in REM and FES Graduate Dossier system matches perfectly. A MES Course Advising form will be issued to you in the FES Graduate Dossier system (in your Task Bar) to allow you to enroll in courses. To enrol, **FES Graduate Dossier system >> MES Course advising form >> [select/fill FES**

**Grad Courses and/or other courses] Save >> Submit.**

Students should check the FES website regularly for updates to the timetables and course offering [available through this link](#).

## **Registration and enrolment block**

A student's registration and enrolment may be blocked because of financial debt, an admissions requirement, or a problem with enrolment paperwork from a previous term, or per the request of a faculty advisor or supervisor. Students may inquire about the reason for any block by contacting OSAS.

## **Withdrawal and leave of absence**

Students may petition for withdrawal or can be withdrawn from the program at any time. A student may petition for voluntarily withdrawal but only if their academic record is in good standing would they be eligible to for reinstatement or readmission into the program.

Petitions for withdrawals using the Faculty of Graduate Studies' "Academic Petition" form (available in the FES Graduate Dossier system and on [this link](#)) must be submitted (and accompanied by documentation) to OSAS by particular deadlines for FES and FGS approvals.

Under exceptional circumstances, students may petition to take a leave of absence. There are two types of leaves: compassionate and elective. A compassionate leave of absence can be taken anytime after the first term of study for medical, personal or family reasons. An elective leave can be taken for one term only following the first term of study and prior to Term 5 of the MES program. Students applying for an elective leave of absence do not have to provide grounds for their request as long as it is submitted in a timely fashion. Students cannot have any incomplete grades or outstanding course work from previous terms in order to petition for an elective leave of absence. Students cannot use an elective leave for activities which form part of a plan of study (such as a field experience, individual directed study, or individual research), or for which any form of residual program credit might otherwise be requested.

## **COURSE OPTIONS AND ENROLMENT PROCEDURES**

The list of course offerings is [available online](#). While most courses are offered every year, some specialized courses are offered only in alternate years. It is also

possible for students to enroll in a course outside of FES, to take an existing FES course for extra credits, or -- when the necessary course does not exist -- to design their own course. Some independent (non-scheduled) courses such as ENVS 6599 Individual Directed Studies and ENVS 6699 Field Experience require a description because they are courses that you will design yourself with a selected faculty member/instructor.

Various forms for enrolment are available in the FES Graduate Dossier System. All enrolment forms should be submitted in the Graduate Dossier System. Incomplete enrolment forms or packages will delay processing.

### **Individual directed study (IDS)**

If students' Plan of Study requires them to acquire specific knowledge or skills that cannot be acquired through an existing graduate course at York or another nearby university, then the student may propose to enrol in ENVS 6599: Individual Directed Study. To enroll in an IDS course, the student will need to submit a detailed description of the work to be undertaken in the term (as well as the name and contact information for the instructor, the form and frequency of the proposed contacts with the instructor, a description of the expected final output for the course, and the basis for evaluation of student performance by the instructor, as well as a bibliography). In addition to be listed on your MES Course Advising form, the student needs to submit the IDS description in the [FES Graduate Dossier System >> Add Forms >> MES Independent Directed Study >> \[fill\] Save >> Submit.](#)

### **Field experience**

A 'field experience' course (ENVS 6699) earns students credit while they work or volunteer in the field. Field experience placements must be related to the Plan of Study and must be approved by the student's advisor. Students require an on-site field supervisor at the placement as well as an FES faculty instructor who will evaluate their field experience report. Field experience can be taken for 3 to 12 credits per term for a maximum of 24 credits during the MES program. A work placement of 8-10 hours per week for 12 weeks is equivalent to 3 credits.

A student wishing to enroll in this course must first secure a field experience position (received an email confirmation from the on-site field supervisor) and discuss it with their faculty advisor/instructor. In addition, to be listed on your MES Course Advising form, the student needs to submit the IDS description in the [FES Graduate Dossier System >> Add Forms >> MES Request for Enrolment in Field Experience >> \[fill\] Save >> Submit.](#)

Students completing field experience courses must submit their field experience report to their FES faculty instructor by the last day of classes in that term. Guidelines for the [MES Field Experience Report](#).

## **York Courses Outside of FES**

Students can take courses in other graduate programs at York. To enrol in a graduate course outside of FES, students must fill out a 'Request to Take a Course in another Graduate Program at York' form ([available online](#) or in the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> Request to Take a course in Another Graduate Program**). Please note: This form is fillable but must be printed and submitted to OSAS to be approved by the Graduate Program Director. OSAS will then directly send the form to the graduate program in which the student wishes to take the course and obtain additional approvals. Upon approval, the student can enroll in the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> MES Advising Course form >> Other Courses [fill] Save >> Submit**.

## **Changes in course enrolment**

Before the deadline to change enrolment, students can change the courses they are enrolled in through the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> MES Petition to Change Course Registration >> [fill] Save >> Submit**. You must also make that change (add/drop courses) in the REM, using Passport York, before the deadline.

In order to withdraw from a course after the change of enrolment deadline has passed, students are required to fill in a course withdrawal petition in the **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> MES Petition to Withdraw from Course >> [fill] Save >> Submit**. A grade of 'Withdrawn' will be assigned for courses dropped after the deadline with no approval. A student cannot carry more than 3 Ws during their program otherwise they will be withdrawn from the MES program.

## **Request to take an FES course for additional credits**

Students can request to take a FES graduate course for additional credits with the course director's permission. To do so, **FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> MES Request to take a course for Additional Credit >> [fill/ specify the number of additional credits] >> Save >> Submit**.

## **Letter of Permission for a Graduate Student to Enroll in a 4xxx-level Undergraduate Course**

Under exceptional circumstances and if directly related to their Plan of Study, a student can request to enroll in one 4xxx-level undergraduate course by filling and printing the [‘Letter of Permission’ form](#) or in the [FES Graduate Dossier system >> Add Forms >> Letter of Permission - Graduate Student to Enroll in an Undergraduate Course](#). Please note: This form is fillable but must be printed and submitted to OSAS for approvals and processing. Upon approval, the student can enroll in the [FES Graduate Dossier system >> MES Advising Course form >> Other Courses \[fill\] Save >> Submit](#).

## FUNDING

MES students are encouraged to apply for entrance, internal and external research scholarships and grants, as well as paid employment in the form of graduate assistantships, research assistantships and/or teaching assistantships. For more information about financial assistance and funding, [click on this link](#).

### Graduate assistantships (GAs)

A stipend may be paid to a full-time degree candidate for various types of activity, such as library work for a research group, administrative, clerical and research work. Full time graduate student is not permitted to accept more than ten hours of paid work per week through the University. Please contact OSAS for more information.

### Research Assistantships (RAs)

A stipend may be paid to a full-time degree candidate for research or academic activities relevant and related to the student's field(s) of study within the academic program. Please contact OSAS for more information.

### Teaching assistantships (TAs)

MES students may apply for Teaching Assistantships. A few teaching assistantships are available to MES students within FES, and there are many additional opportunities throughout the University. In order to be considered for these positions, students should complete a CUPE Unit 1 ‘blanket application’ and submit it to each department they are interested in working for. [Information and a blanket application online form](#).

### Internal funding

The FES Awards office provides information on applying for student funding (scholarships, research grants or financial aid bursaries). For more information, [click on this link](#).

## **External funding**

External awards include Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) scholarships and Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS). The FES Awards office provides information to current students regarding the availability of funds that may assist them in completing their programs. For more information, [click on this link](#).

## **Research activities and conference travel funding**

MES students are encouraged to seek funding to support travel to conferences and other research activities through the Graduate Environmental Studies Student Association (GESSA) located in HNES 136B and the Graduate Student Association (GSA) located in 325 Student Centre.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) also maintains a database of fellowships, assistantships, scholarships, awards, and prizes ([available online](#)).

Other funding opportunities are offered through York University's [Office of Student Financial Services](#) and [York International](#) for international students.

## **RESEARCH AT FES AND AT YORK**

FES has over many years established itself as a leader in interdisciplinary teaching and research. In its dual commitment to research diversity and interdisciplinary research collaboration, FES has claimed a leading position in environmental studies scholarship. Research in FES extends across natural, built, and social environments. Interdisciplinarity in FES is characterized by a vibrant intellectual and academic life where research and teaching activities are complementary. The involvement of graduate students in research projects is a vital part of faculty's research and, conversely, students benefit from the faculty's innovative and creative research projects. For more information on research in FES, see our [Research Page](#).

For more information on faculty research interests, projects, and publications, [link to profiles of full-time faculty in the Faculty of Environmental Studies](#).



## **FES Seminar Series**

The Faculty of Environmental Studies typically organizes an annual Seminar or Workshop Series intended for everyone at FES and beyond. MES students are strongly encouraged to attend sessions, which are a focal point of intellectual life in the faculty.

## ***UnderCurrents* Journal**

*UnderCurrents* is an independent non-profit journal of critical environmental studies produced by students in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. *UnderCurrents* publishes creative and critical writing and artwork that explores the relationships between nature, society, and self. It also provides space for work which challenges the conventional boundaries and assumptions of academic and environmental debate. *UnderCurrents* is produced annually by an editorial collective, which maintains non-hierarchical principles and a collaborative editing and publishing process. If you are interested in joining the *UnderCurrents* editorial collective or if you would like to submit writing or artwork to the journal, please contact [currents@yorku.ca](mailto:currents@yorku.ca).

## **Las Nubes Centre for Neotropical Conservation and Research**

Las Nubes is a Costa Rican cloud forest donated to York in 1998 by Dr. Woody Fisher. York's EcoCampus (Lilian Meighen Wright Centre) is dedicated to promoting education and research on neotropical conservation, community well-being and sustainable livelihoods, eco-health and the creation of a biological corridor from Las Nubes to the Alexander Skutch Reserve. The Fisher Fund for Neotropical Conservation supports FES faculty and student research at Las Nubes and in the surrounding region on a wide range of issues such as tropical deforestation, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity conservation. For more information, contact Dr. Felipe Montoya or click on [this link to the Las Nubes website](#).

## **Sustainable Energy Initiative**

The Faculty of Environmental Studies' Sustainable Energy Initiative (SEI) builds and strengthens the teaching, research and partnerships needed to create new green energy economies in Canada and around the world. Focused on energy efficiency and conservation, renewable energy sources and combined heat and power, the Initiative is designed to advance sustainable energy solutions through research, to educate and train the new cohort of sustainable energy practitioners needed to

respond to the demand created by the Ontario Green Energy Act and similar initiatives in other jurisdictions, to build sustainable energy partnerships among educational institutions, government agencies, business and industry, and non-governmental organizations, and to enhance learning opportunities for professionals working in the sustainable energy industry. For more information, click on this [link to the Sustainable Energy Initiative website](#).

## **York Research Centres and Institutes**

York University is home to many Research Centres and Institutes. FES faculty members are particularly active in three interdisciplinary Research Institutes:

### **The City Institute at York University (CITY)**

The City Institute at York University conducts leading-edge research and critical analysis of the city/region. In addition to contributing to the knowledge base of academics, policymakers and civil society, the Institute seeks to open new intellectual and political spaces in which counter-discourses may be created to challenge received wisdom as the city of the 21st century takes shape. For more information, [this is a link to the City Institute website](#).

### **The Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC)**

CERLAC is an interdisciplinary research unit concerned with the economic development, political and social organization, and cultural contributions of Latin America and the Caribbean. For more information, [this is a link to the website for the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean](#).

### **The Centre for Feminist Research (CFR)**

The Centre for Feminist Research/ Le Centre de recherches féministes is an internationally recognized Centre for research on gender, race, class, indigeneity, disability, sexuality, and women's issues. Its mandate is to promote feminist activities and collaborative research at York University by working to establish research linkages between York scholars and local, national, international and transnational communities. For more information, [visit CFR's website](#).

**President's Sustainability Council** has been chaired in different periods by FES Professors Martin Bunch (current chair), Ilan Kapoor and Jennifer Foster as a means of developing strategic new initiatives that highlight and support

sustainability research and practice at York University. For current activities, see [Sustainability York's website](#).

For information on additional Research Centres and Institutes at York University, please visit the [York's Research listing online](#).

## **SERVICES, FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN FES**

During the MES program, students have access to a network of academic and other resources that are housed both within the Faculty and within the broader York University community.

### **FES/MES Student Lounges**

The FES Student Lounge is located on the first floor near OSAS (HNES 137). MES students have two student lounges available for their use: one is located on the main floor of HNES outside of OSAS (HNES 137), and the other -- for MES students' exclusive use -- is in HNES 204.

### **MES Listservs**

FES offers two MES listservs: an official listserv (fes\_mesinfo) and a dialogue listserv (fes\_mes\_alt). Postings on the official listserv are made only by the listserv administrator and by sending information to [fespost@yorku.ca](mailto:fespost@yorku.ca). MES students must subscribe to this listserv in order to ensure that they receive all official announcements regarding the MES program. Postings to the dialogue listserv are made directly. Subscription information on both listservs is available [here](#).

### **OSAS -- Office of Student and Academic Services (HNES 137)**

OSAS, the administrative office for your program requirements, provides information and resources, and manages issues related to registration, enrolment, funding, scholarships, TA contracts, student dossiers, FGS communication and convocation. OSAS is open for student inquiries Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm. Section 15 below lists the individual responsibilities of OSAS staff.

### **Faculty Mailboxes**

Faculty mailboxes are located in the reception area of OSAS (HNES 137).

## **FES Computing Services (FEScomp)**

FEScomp operates three computer labs on the second floor of the HNES Building that are available for use by MES students. Wireless service is available in the HNES building and the wider York campus. For more information on computing services, click this [link to the Faculty of Environmental Studies' computing services webpage](#).

## **Student Resources (HNES 133)**

Student Resources provides information to current students regarding the availability of funds (internal and external) that may assist them in completing their programs. For more information, click this [link to the Faculty of Environmental Studies' financial support webpage](#).

## **Career Services**

FES Career Services facilitates employment, field experience and volunteer opportunities for FES students by cultivating partnerships with employers and FES alumni members. FES Career Services offers job listings, sample environmental career profile, job search tips and links, a resource library for you to research prospective employers, various workshops as well as individual career guidance. For more information, visit [our career page](#).

## **FES Graduate Writing Centre (HNES 286)**

The Centre's mandate is to help graduate students develop their own writing skills, and a writing process that works for them. The Centre offers support, advice, strategies, and troubleshooting on specific writing projects. The Centre can also provide students with a variety of text, internet, and in-person resources that can improve their writing. Open workshops are offered during the fall term; thirty-minute individual and small group sessions are available throughout most of the year and must be booked in advance by emailing Ray Bennett at [rbennett@yorku.ca](mailto:rbennett@yorku.ca).

## **The Wild Garden Media Centre (HNES 266)**

The Centre is a valuable resource for all members of the FES community who wish to use media arts for research, course projects or teaching and learning. Named in memory of the late Dian Marino, a former FES faculty member, the Media Centre offers video and still cameras (and accessories) and a digital editing system.

Workshops are offered throughout the year. The Centre also organizes the annual Eco-Art and Media Festival, a showcase of multidisciplinary creative work.

## **Eco-Art and Media Festival**

The Eco-Art and Media Festival is a remarkable showcase of multidisciplinary creative work done in FES and beyond. The Festival is a time to celebrate and share diverse forms of creative expression intended to inspire reflection, engagement, dialogue and building of community among students, staff, faculty and alumni. The Festival is developed and coordinated by the Wild Garden Media Centre team of Graduate Assistants, staff, faculty and a host of volunteers. All students are invited to participate. Please watch for announcements in October/November. For more information, visit [Wild Garden Online](#).

## **Crossroads Space (HNES 283)**

The Crossroads Space is a creative resource for all members of the Faculty. It is used primarily by the BES certificate program in Community Arts Practice (CAP) as a rehearsal, performance and exhibition space, but can be booked by others for similar activities. For more information, contact Professor Lisa Myers, the CAP coordinator (lismyers@yorku.ca).

## **Accessibility, Community, Equity Committee (ACE)**

ACE is comprised of students at FES who organize around issues of equity, specifically along the lines of race and marginalization in its many forms. Over the past three years, ACE has organized workshops, seminars and peer mentorship sessions, all geared at offering students some of the necessary social and emotional supports needed for their success. See the ACE website for more information.

## **Maloca Garden**

The Maloca Garden is an official club registered with the Office of Student Affairs. Along with its community building goals, Maloca strives to foster sustainable living practices (e.g., organic farming, composting) and to create an environment for multicultural and intergenerational learning and sharing. In so doing, Maloca provides York University with significant environmental, educational, and social

benefits, while creating a rare meditative space for the cooperative growing of nutritious foods. [This is a link to the Maloca Garden website.](#)

## **HNES Native Plant Garden**

The HNES Native Plant Garden was founded by FES Professor Emerita, Gerda Wekerle, and is maintained with the volunteer labour of faculty, students and staff.

## **York Academic and Support Services**

In addition to the FES services and resources listed above, York offers a range of academic and support services. For more information on academic support services available to York graduate students, see the [Academic Resources website](#).

For more information on various campus services, visit the [Current Students webpage](#).

## **OSAS AND QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE**

Here is a list of key people and responsibilities that will likely be useful to most MES students. Key references are highlighted in bold.

### **Office of Student & Academic Services (OSAS), HNES 137**

Josephine C. Zeeman, Director, [josecamp@yorku.ca](mailto:josecamp@yorku.ca), ext. 66453

- Manager of OSAS staff, which includes, reception and secretarial support
- Academic Integrity policy and procedures
- Approval for course-related expenditures
- Academic issues such as grade appeals, special cases, liaison for Centre for Persons with Disabilities
- Non-academic student issues such as student conduct
- Responsible for CUPE 3903 contracts and follow-up
- Funding issues and liaison with FGS regarding funding for graduate students, including Minimum Guaranteed Funding enquires
- Graduate course and classroom scheduling
- Room booking approval for HNES

Lisa Bunker, Graduate Program Advisor, [bunklis@yorku.ca](mailto:bunklis@yorku.ca), ext. 33254

- Provide support to the Graduate Program Director, the MES Program Coordinator and PhD Program Coordinator

- Inquiries regarding graduate program (i.e. course offering list, outlines, grades, credits, petitions, enrolment blocks, leave of absence)
- Course registration/enrollment
- Financial problems (i.e. registering and enrolling in courses, reading student account statement)
- Graduate Convocation
- Graduate student advising
- Attends committee meetings and Council of Instruction

Teresa Masucci, Graduate Program Assistant, [teresam@yorku.ca](mailto:teresam@yorku.ca), ext. 22602

- Inquiries regarding graduate program
- Process online enrollment registrations on REM (Registration Enrolment Module)
- Update student dossiers in GEM (Graduate Enrolment Module) after committee meetings
- Process grades
- Receive Thesis Proposal and other FGS package
- Receive and distribute Thesis prior to oral examination (defense)
- Schedule Thesis defenses, books room, orders refreshment - liaise with FGS on defense paperwork

Joseph Cesario, Student Resource Assistant, SARC, [jcesario@yorku.ca](mailto:jcesario@yorku.ca), ext. 33196

- Inquiries regarding funding
- Accepting and initial processing of Scholarship Applications - OGS, SSHRC, Trudeau, Vanier, Trillium, GFAD, Elia, Enbridge, Caccia, Lewis and Bennett
- Researches additional funding opportunities
- One-on-one career and funding advising
- Workshops on resumes and job searching, internship/fieldwork support
- Supports various Faculty events

Sharon Cicciarella, Secretarial support, [sharonc@yorku.ca](mailto:sharonc@yorku.ca), ext. 40366

Jordan Tanaka-Kelyana, Secretarial support, [jantam@yorku.ca](mailto:jantam@yorku.ca), ext. 33012

- Provide secretarial support to faculty
- Assist in preparation of course material (printing and photocopying of course syllabi, readings, etc.)
- Book audio-visual equipment
- Handle textbook and course kit orders
- Organize class field trips
- Assist with other duties as required

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE AND INVOLVEMENT**

MES students in FES are represented through the Graduate Environmental Studies Students' Association (GESSA) which represents all FES graduate students with the rest of the university and through the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) which represents the majority of graduate students at York.

**GESSA** is the student-run organization for graduate students in FES, and is an associate member organization of the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) at York. All graduate Environmental Studies students are automatically members of GESSA and are entitled to the use of its resources and services. The Executive coordinates the general activities of the association and provides information on Faculty policy issues and events to the student body. Members also act as liaisons between the Faculty and students as needed. Elected delegates represent MES students on various FES committees and at other levels of governance on campus. GESSA holds general meetings at which students are encouraged to participate and share ideas.

Each semester, GESSA also sponsors social events and other community building activities. Funding for conferences and research is available through both the GESSA Research and Travel Fund and the GSA. For more information on how to become actively involved in GESSA, click on this link <http://gessa.ca/> or write to *gessa@yorku.ca*.

**The Graduate Students' Association (GSA)** represents the majority of graduate students at York University and provides support with issues such as health-care coverage, conference and research travel, as well as advocacy on issues such as tuition and university governance. Representatives from GESSA sit on the GSA council and participate in university-wide initiatives. For more information about the Graduate Students' Association, visit <http://www.yugsa.ca/>.

### **MES representation on FES and other governing committees**

MES students serve as representatives on FES governing committees. Representation on FES committees helps ensure that the interests of MES students are considered in decision-making processes. GESSA nominates representatives on Faculty and University committees each September. The following committees require MES student representation:

**Faculty Council** (twelve MES representatives) establishes policy in all matters relating to the Faculty through its standing committees. All Faculty



Council meetings are open to the FES community, and all MES students are encouraged to attend (designated MES representatives may vote).

**Executive Committee** (Chair of GESSA is a member) - prepares agendas for Faculty Council meetings and carries out any business as delegated by Faculty Council

**Committee of Instruction** (one MES representative) advises the dean on all matters related to the implementation of academic programs in FES, and frequently makes major policy recommendations to Faculty Council.

**MES Program and Curriculum Committee** (two MES representatives)

**MES/LLB Program Committee** (one MES/JD student representative)

**Planning Programs Committee** (one MES Planning student representative)

**Research Committee** (one MES representative)

**Faculty Appointments Advisory Committee** (one MES representative)

**Tenure and Promotions Committee** (one MES representative)

**Appeals Committee** (one MES representative)

**Equity Committee** (one MES representative)

Outside of FES, the following two committees require MES representation:

**Faculty of Graduate Studies Council** (Chair of GESSA is a member)

**York University Senate** (2 GESSA representatives; normally one is an MES student and one is a PhD student). The Senate is the senior academic policy-making body of York University.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE and EQUITY**

FES is committed to social justice. There are many opportunities for students to get involved in promoting equity in the daily life of the Faculty: becoming a student representative on governing committees; joining pan-university efforts toward more equitable practices through campus organizations, unions, and the Senate Committees on Equity, Teaching and Learning, Recruitment and Admissions, and Research; organizing seminars and workshops within the Faculty to address equity issues.

At a personal level, MES students have the responsibility and opportunity to design their own plans of study, and to incorporate equity concerns into the substantive content as well as the methodological approaches. Consider the following questions: How does the framing of an area of concentration reflect the histories, experiences, and issues of groups marginalized by disabilities, sexual and gender

diversity, Aboriginal identity, class and poverty, race and ethnicity, and gender? Are there ways that students can challenge dominant modes of analysis or privileged practices by bringing in alternative perspectives on environmental and social issues? How can students integrate other ways of knowing, learning, and communicating into their learning strategies? What forms of communication (verbal, visual, performative, etc) would be most appropriate for the area of interest, audience, and intent of the student's studies?

## **Accommodation**

A student needing special support in assignment and assessment procedures to accommodate any particular disabilities or needs based on socio-economic status, sexual and gender diversity, Aboriginal identity, race, ethnicity, religion, should talk to their academic advisor and course directors at the beginning of the course. Course directors are required to accommodate any student who is a registered client of Counseling & Disability Services.

The office of Counseling & Disability Services provides information, support, and advocacy on behalf of students, staff, and faculty with mobility, hearing, visual, and invisible disabilities. For more information, see <http://cds.info.yorku.ca/>.

## APPENDIX 1: MES PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES

	Graduate Degree Level Expectations	Program Learning Objectives	Appropriate Degree Requirement + Assessment
<b>1. Depth and Knowledge</b>	<p>A systematic understanding of knowledge, including, where appropriate, relevant knowledge outside the field and/or discipline, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice.</p>	<p>Demonstrate general and interdisciplinary knowledge of theoretical and methodological approaches in environmental studies;</p> <p>Demonstrate a specialized knowledge and critical understanding of the social, political and economic interactions shaping current debates, problems and issues in environmental studies;</p>	<p>Completion of an individualized Plan of Study and major research;</p> <p>Mandatory course ENVS 5100 Interdisciplinary Research in Environmental Studies;</p> <p>Coursework (participation and assignments);</p> <p>Individualized Directed Studies;</p> <p>Successful defense of major research in an oral examination with 3 faculty members.</p>
<b>2. Research and Scholarships</b>	<p>A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that: a) enables a working comprehension of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; b) enables a critical evaluation of current research and advanced research and scholarship in the discipline or area of professional competence; c) enables a treatment of complex issues and judgments based on established principles and techniques; and,</p> <p>On the basis of that competence, has shown at least one of the following: a) the development and support of a sustained argument in written form; or b) originality in the application of knowledge.</p>	<p>Demonstrate critical comprehension and evaluation of current research in environmental scholarship and practice;</p> <p>Demonstrate proficiency in conceptualizing, designing and conducting original interdisciplinary research that interprets and combines various research approaches and methods used in environmental studies;</p>	<p>Completion of an individualized Plan of Study, major research proposal and major research;</p> <p>Transition coursework (final plan of study and development of a research proposal) to be successfully defended in oral examination with 2 faculty members;</p> <p>Successful defense of major research in an oral examination with 3 faculty members;</p> <p>Coursework (participation and assignments);</p> <p>Methodology coursework (participation and assignments)</p> <p>Individualized Directed Studies;</p> <p>Research lecture series and special presentations.</p>

<p><b>3. Application of Knowledge</b></p>	<p>Competence in the research process by applying existing body of knowledge in the critical analysis of a new question or a specific problem or issues in a new setting.</p>	<p>Formulate original research questions and evaluate the appropriateness of relevant theoretical and methodological approaches;</p> <p>Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking, quantitative and/or qualitative analysis, and written and oral communication needed to conduct advanced interdisciplinary research and professional work;</p>	<p>Completion of an individualized Plan of Study, major research proposal and major research;</p> <p>Transition coursework (final plan of study and development of a research proposal) to be successfully defended in oral examination with 2 faculty members;</p> <p>Successful defense of major research in an oral examination with 3 faculty members;</p> <p>Coursework (participation and assignments);</p> <p>Methodology coursework (participation and assignments)</p> <p>Individualized Directed Studies;</p> <p>Field experience course;</p> <p>Research lecture series and special presentations.</p>
<p><b>4. Professional Capacity and Autonomy</b></p>	<p>a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: i) the exercise of initiative and of personal responsibility and accountability; and ii) decision-making in complex situations; b) the intellectual independence required for continuing professional development; c) the ethical behavior consistent with academic integrity and the use of appropriate guidelines and procedures for responsible conduct of research; and d) the ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.</p>	<p>Demonstrate initiative and responsibility in the production of new knowledge by applying research theories, methods, and ethical principles;</p> <p>Demonstrate the ability to acknowledge and respect different ways of knowing and to recognize and negotiate power dynamics in research and collaborative work;</p>	<p>Coursework (participation and assignments);</p> <p>Workshops and field courses;</p> <p>Field experience course;</p> <p>Student representation in governance committees;</p> <p>Completion of major research – major paper or major project or portfolio or thesis;</p> <p>Completion of academic integrity tutorial;</p>
<p><b>5. Scholarly Communication</b></p>	<p>The ability to clearly communicate ideas, issues</p>	<p>Assess and communicate various forms of</p>	<p>Completion of an individualized Plan of</p>

<b>Skills</b>	and conclusions clearly.	<p>knowledge and research results in different discursive, performative or technical formats;</p> <p>Engage with academic and non-academic and/or professional audiences about particular environmental debates and issues;</p>	<p>Study, major research proposal to be successfully defended in oral examination with 2 faculty members;</p> <p>Completion of major research and successful defense of major research in an oral examination with 3 faculty members;</p> <p>Coursework (participation and assignments);</p> <p>Research lecture series and special presentations;</p>
<b>6. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge</b>	Cognizance of the complexity of knowledge and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.	<p>Demonstrate a specific awareness of the limits of knowledge, modes of analyses and research results associated with environmental research;</p> <p>Demonstrate a general awareness of the social, cultural and historical contingency of the processes of knowledge construction, use and exchange.</p>	<p>Completion of an individualized Plan of Study, major research proposal, and major research;</p> <p>Coursework (participation and assignments);</p> <p>Research lecture series and special presentations;</p> <p>Successful defense of major research in an oral examination with 3 faculty members.</p>

Source: Adapted from Council of Ontario Universities, Quality Assurance Framework (2010)

## Appendix 2: MES PROGRAM SUMMARY

<i>terms</i>	1 fall	2 winter	3 spring	4 fall	5 winter	6 spring
<i>enrolment</i>	The MES program requires continuous registration. Please refer to Important Dates/Graduate Academic Calendar for deadlines. Registration (accepting fees) and course enrolment in both REM and the FES Graduate Dossier must be completed each term.					
<i>MES stage (duration)</i>	<b>MES I</b> (Term 1)	<b>MES II</b> (Term 2 and 3)		<b>MES III</b> (Term 2 to 6)		
<i>Plan of study</i>	<b>Develop initial plan</b> (with advisor)	<b>Revise plan</b> (with advisor)	<b>Revise/finalize plan</b> (with advisor)  <b>Nomination of Supervisor</b>  <b>Prepare/finalize proposal</b> (with supervisor)	Latest term for <b>Nomination of Supervisor</b> and <b>Prepare/finalize proposal</b> (with supervisor)  <b>Major research</b> (with supervisor)	<b>Major research</b> (with supervisor)	<b>Finalize and submit major research</b> (with supervisor)
<i>Submission</i>	Upload initial plan of study to FES Graduate Dossier by <b>November 1, 2017</b>	Upload revised plan of study for General Exam to FES Graduate Dossier by end of term	Upload revised plan of study to FES Graduate Dossier before end of term.  Nominate supervisor in FES Graduate Dossier. MES II to III Exam:  Upload plan/proposal and HPRC and risk assessment forms to FES Graduate Dossier.	Nominate supervisor in FES Graduate Dossier.  MES II to III exam: Upload plan/proposal and HPRC and risk assessment forms to FES Graduate Dossier	Follow up on research.	Upload final plan/proposal and major research to FES Graduate Dossier  Submit 3 copies of plan/proposal and major research to OSAS by <b>July 31, 2018</b>  Upload post-exam revised major research to FES Graduate Dossier.
<i>Examination</i>	<b>MES I to II exam</b> with advisor and reader  An unacceptable plan leads to program withdrawal or	<b>General Exam/</b> Advising session	<b>General Exam/</b> Advising session  or <b>MES II to III exam</b> with advisor + supervisor	Latest term for <b>MES II to III exam</b> with advisor + supervisor  or <b>No exam</b> required if already at MES	<b>No exam</b> required if already at MES III.	<b>Final exam</b> with supervisor, advisor + chair scheduled on official exam days by OSAS

	Dean's Exam.			III.		
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