

Central European University Private University
Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy
Doctoral Program
Student Handbook and Regulations

Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Sciences and Policy
Academic Year 2026-2027

Central European University Private University
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Dept URL: <https://www.ceu.edu/departments/environmental-sciences-policy>

Doctoral Program URL: <https://www.ceu.edu/academics/degrees/phd-environmental-sciences-policy>

CEU PU URL: <https://www.ceu.edu/>

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2. Program Details

Title of Program: Environmental Sciences and Policy
Date of Program Establishment: 2002
Length of Program: 48 months
Date of Start and End of the Teaching cycle: September - August

Qualification Awarded: Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Awarding Body and Accreditation: Central European University Private University,
Accreditation by AQ Austria, 2020 and

Central European University, Registered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York (US) for and on behalf of the New York State Education Department, last accredited 2023

3. Program Aims and Learning Outcomes:

The environment is a quintessentially interdisciplinary field that requires an integrated understanding of complex natural histories; ecological processes; scientific evidence; social and cultural contexts; contemporary political debates; legal and policy frameworks; modeling, technical, and management options; and social justice implications for people and communities.

The CEU PU Environmental Sciences and Policy PhD program (referred to as the Program throughout this document) is led by faculty from various disciplines with research experience in diverse thematic and geographic contexts, which fosters an environment conducive to interdisciplinary research. The Program aims to combine breadth and depth of interdisciplinary learning about the environment with professional development skills. The Program begins with an introduction to a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches, which allows students to choose the most appropriate combination for their research and continues with custom-tailored theory and methods classes to facilitate in-depth research skills for their empirical projects. Teaching and research practica facilitate opportunities to develop teaching, presentation, and publication skills.

Graduates from the Program will:

Possess the **knowledge** to:

- Engage the epistemological diversity of natural and social science disciplines in environment-related debates;
- Understand the complex interdisciplinary connections between scientific, ethical, economic, social, cultural, and political aspects of environmental issues and create new knowledge in their chosen field of in-depth research;
- Learn and apply state-of-the-art pedagogical theories to their own teaching and communication.

Apply **skills** to:

- Think critically and analytically to understand environmental issues; identify and formulate a research problem; and design, implement, and manage sophisticated theoretical, policy and field research and data analysis, both as an independent researcher and a team member;
- Communicate scientific results professionally both in writing and orally, and participate in professional networks;
- Practice student-centered teaching and learning approaches.

Uphold **values** that:

- Advance a sustainable and open society, self-reflective critical inquiry, research ethics, and environmental and social care.

4. Program Eligibility Requirements for Admission

Applicants for the Doctoral Program are required to possess a master's degree or equivalent in an environment-related field, such as natural or social sciences, engineering, economics, law or management. They must also meet the relevant language proficiency and [CEU PU admissions requirements](#). The Department's admission criteria include intellectual excellence and the potential for making original contributions to knowledge in the field through rigorous research.

In addition to standard CEU PU admissions requirements, the department requires applicants to submit a (max 2,000 word) research proposal as well as a statement of purpose (max 500 words). In your statement of purpose, it is advisable to name the potential supervisor.

5. Program Description

The Doctoral Program is comprised of three main components: 1) knowledge acquisition in **theory and methodological applications** in the field of environmental sciences and policy, 2) teaching/research and professional advancement **practica**, and 3) **dissertation milestones** involving in-depth research formulation, implementation and publication. The standard length of the program is four years. Students may submit their dissertation within a maximum of four years after enrolment (possible extension in exceptional cases for 1+1 more years, as described in the CEU Doctoral Regulations).

A total of 240 ECTS credits is required for graduation. Table 1 summarizes the year-by-year structure of the Program. Syllabi of individual courses are available on the [CEU Study Guide](#) and at the [Department Moodle learning site](#).

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

YEAR	REQUIREMENTS
Year 1 (60 ECTS credits)	Summary: Coursework (22 ECTS credits total) Teaching and Research Practicum (8 ECTS credits minimum) Dissertation Milestones (22 ECTS credits total) Comprehensive Exam (8 ECTS credits) <i>Detailed overview:</i> FALL and WINTER terms (44 ECTS Credits total) Coursework: Mandatory (10) • ENVS6001 Theoretical Debates on Environmental Problems, FALL term, Guntra Aistara (6) • ENVS6014 Departmental Colloquium I, FALL and WINTER, Guntra Aistara (2 total) • ENVS6101 Academic Writing for doctoral students, FALL and WINTER, Center for Academic Writing, Sharon McCulloch (2) Mandatory Electives (12), WINTER term • ENVS6009 Theory Study Courses Interdepartmental or 6006 Theory Study Courses with Independent Study (4) • ENVS6012 Methods Study Courses Interdepartmental or 6007 Methods Study Courses with Independent Study (8) Teaching and Research Practicum, FALL and WINTER (8 minimum): (See the TA/RA Handbook on Moodle for details and more advanced options with additional electives.)

FALL

- ***EITHER Getting Started as a TA - Part 1 (YELC 6001) (1 cr/2 ECTS)*** [May also be taken in the Winter as long as it does not conflict with the Dept. Teaching Assistantship] This may also be taken with ***Dept. Research Assistantship (RAship) (ENVS6272) (2 cr./4 ECTS)*** in the event that you arrange a learning-focused Research Assistantship with a Dept. Faculty Mentor.
- ***OR Foundation of Teaching in Higher Education Seminar (YELC 6101) (2 cr/4 ECTS).***
- **Session(s) with TA/RA Coordinator:** Introduction to TA/RA Practicum, Master's Student Conference Presentation Assessment guidance and support.
- **Master's Student Conference Presentations Assessment** in which you will be involved in providing feedback and assessing master's student conference presentations (in December).

WINTER

- ***EITHER Getting Started as a TA - Part 2 (YELC 6002) (1 cr/2 ECTS)***
- ***OR Learning by Design: Course and Assessment Creation (YELC 6105) (2 cr./4 ECTS)*** [May also be taken in Spring. Note: Please inform the TA/RA Coordinator if this course conflicts with your dept. teaching practicum.]
- ***Dept. Teaching & Research Practicum (ENVS6033) (2 cr/4 ECTS)*** Teaching Assistantship with a Dept. Faculty Mentor (credit hours include Master's Student Conference presentations assessment/feedback, and sessions with the TA/RA Coordinator).
- **Session(s) with TA/RA Coordinator:** TA Plan proposal, implementation, and reflection.

Mandatory Milestones (14):

- DRAFT Problem Statement and Research Questions (part of 6002) due October 31
- ENVS6002 Revised Problem Statement, and Research Questions, and Preliminary Literature Review, FALL - Supervisor (6), due December 20
- ENVS6106 Dissertation Prospectus Draft, WINTER - Supervisor & Internal Dissertation Committee Member (8), due April 10

Administrative Deadlines:

- Theory & Methods Study Plan: September 18
- Registration Deadline: September 21
- Confirmation of Primary Supervisor: October 15
- Revised Theory & Methods Study Plan: December 15
- Winter term Registration Deadline: January 11
- Confirmation of Internal Committee Member: April 1

SPRING and SUMMER TERMS (16 ECTS credits)

- **ENVS6999 Comprehensive Exam** - Examination Committee (8)

Milestones (8):

- ENVS6107 Dissertation Prospectus Finalization, Supervisor & Dissertation Committee (8) – Final prospectus due by July 31

Administrative Deadlines:

- Completed Theory & Methods Study Report: April 15
- Confirmation of External Committee Member: June 15

Year 2 (60 ECTS credits)	Coursework (20 ECTS credits total): Mandatory: - ENVS6014 Departmental Colloquium II, Guntra Aistara (Fall and winter, 2 total) Mandatory Electives: - ENVS8015 Data Collection and Analysis, Supervisor (10) choose Fall or Winter or Spring - ENVS8014 Research Update Presentation: Guntra Aistara & supervisors (6) choose Fall or Winter to present - ENVS6015 Article Incubator, Aleh Cherp (2) WINTER (can also be taken in year 3, as agreed with supervisor) Dissertation Milestones (40 ECTS credits total): - ENVS7108 Dissertation Prospectus Defense, Dissertation Committee (10), defense due by October 15 (Mandatory in FALL) - ENVS7921 Year Two Dissertation Research and Writing, Dissertation Committee (30) in Winter or Spring Term Administrative Deadlines: - Progress Reports – October 1 and April 1
Year 3 (60 ECTS credits)	Coursework (14 ECTS credits total) Mandatory: - ENVS6014 Departmental Colloquium III, Guntra Aistara (Fall and winter, 2 total) Mandatory Elective - ENVS8013 Analytical Chapter Presentation: Guntra Aistara & supervisors, (10 credits to be granted for first presentation, but at least one chapter should be presented per year while enrolled in years 3 and beyond) choose Fall or Winter to present - ENVS6922 Topical Debates in Environmental Sciences and Policy, Fall and Winter: Michael LaBelle & dept. faculty (2) (can be taken in year 2, as agreed with supervisor) Practicum (10 ECTS credits total): - ENVS8040 Professional Advancement Practicum, Supervisor (10) Advanced Dissertation Milestones (36 ECTS credits total): - ENVS8108 Year Three Dissertation Research and Writing, Dissertation Committee (36) Administrative Deadlines: - Progress Reports – October 1 and April 1
Year 4 (60 ECTS credits)	Coursework (2): Mandatory: - ENVS6014 Departmental Colloquium IV, Guntra Aistara (Fall and winter, 2 total) Advanced Dissertation Milestones (58 ECTS credits total): - ENVS8012 Dissertation Finalization, Dissertation Committee (38)

	• ENVS9100 Dissertation Defense, Dissertation Committee (20) Administrative Deadlines: • Progress Reports – October 1 and April 1 • Pre-Defense usually scheduled 1-2 months before final submission)
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6. Doctoral Program Structure: First Year

The curriculum in the first year of the Doctoral Program is designed to support the development of the student's research through the acquisition of valuable knowledge, skills, and experience.

It is important to note that first year doctoral students demonstrating outstanding performance in their coursework and the comprehensive exam may be nominated by the Doctoral Program Committee for the Academic Achievement Award (500 EUR). For more information, please see: <https://www.ceu.edu/academics/academic-awards#doctoral-award>.

NB: Descriptions of key elements are organized chronologically below. Please note that if one element continues over several terms, its description will only be listed at the instance it first appears.

6.1. FALL TERM

6.1. a. Mandatory Core Courses

Please note that the registration deadline for courses in the academic year 2026/27 is **September 21**. The next deadline of January 11, 2027 will be available to finalize registration for Winter & Spring courses.

The mandatory courses consist of 1) *Theoretical Debates on Environmental Problems*; 2) *Departmental Colloquium I*. 3) *Academic Writing*. Students may also begin taking relevant theory and methods courses in other departments to satisfy the Theory and Methods study course requirement (see below).

(1) The ENVS6001 *Theoretical Debates on Environmental Problems* (6 ECTS credits) is a core course in the doctoral curriculum designed to contextualize PhD students' understanding of the intersections of the ecological, social, and political dimensions of environmental problems. The course explores how theoretical frameworks at multiple levels can be used to analyze environmental issues from various epistemological and disciplinary perspectives. This course helps prepare students for doctoral candidacy by working toward developing their theoretical frameworks, the successful completion of their comprehensive exams, and prospectus defense. Students will receive a letter grade for this course.

(2) ENVS6014 *Departmental Colloquium (Fall+ Winter, 2 ECTS credits total)*: A regular research colloquium will be held as a forum for faculty and doctoral students to engage each other's research on various topics related to the environmental field. These will be organized by various departmental research clusters and involve presentations of work-in-progress by PhD students and sometimes faculty. The purpose of the seminar is to establish a forum for productive inter-disciplinary scholarly debate and exchange of ideas. All first-year students are expected to make a brief introduction of their preliminary dissertation proposal in the middle of their first term. All enrolled students in residence in Vienna are expected to attend student Research Update and Analytical Chapter Presentations, which will be held during the colloquium. Topical debates sessions organized by students enrolled in the Topical Debates class, as well as Dissertation Prospectus and Dissertation Defenses **in both fall and winter terms**. Students with a time conflict should inform the departmental coordinator in advance.

(3) The ENVS6101 *Academic Writing for doctoral students* course (2 ECTS credits) provided by the Center for Academic Writing of CEU aims to clarify some of the key distinguishing features and challenges of doctoral-level research writing, both in regard to content and process. The course will include a prospectus writing workshop and starts with a session in the Fall.

Supplementary Coursework: In addition to the standard core courses, students may be required to take certain master's level courses during the year should their curricular history indicate gaps in core areas of environmental sciences and policy and basic methods. In such cases, the Doctoral Committee will discuss with the student in advance of the start of teaching which MSc course(s) he/she should be taking.

6.1.b. Theory and Methods Study Plan

The student, in consultation with the supervisor, must develop a plan of study for the fall and winter terms in the areas of theory (4 ECTS credits) and methods (8 ECTS credits) connected with his/her specific research topic. The plan for intended course registration should be submitted by **September 18** and revised by **December 15** if necessary. It should include a summary and reflection on the methods and theory study conducted to date, and justification for how the proposed theory and methods courses will further the student's progress towards the prospectus. The form to be completed for the Theory and Methods Study Plan is provided on the Moodle E-learning site.

Students should conduct research on courses of interest offered throughout the University as described in the Study Guide and list the proposed courses. Theory and methods courses are offered during fall and winter terms by various faculty members in different departments. Optional courses in theory and methods within the Department may run if a minimum of 1 student opts to take it. Students must report to the PhD coordinators any changes made in course registration after submission of the form. Students electing to take Masters' level courses must provide evidence that they have agreed with the instructor to add additional work that will bring the course up to PhD level.

By **April 15** students must complete a second form on Moodle certifying that they have completed the chosen courses.

6.1.c. Departmental Teaching and Research Assistantship (TA/RAship) Practicum

[please see TA/RA Practicum Handbook for further details.]

Effective teaching approaches, skills and experience are fundamental to developing concrete knowledge, understanding, and practical skills for the advancement of a professional career in academia, consultancy, and other private and public institutions. The *Teaching Practicum* specifically aims to build these professional capacities for doctoral students at the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy with pedagogical experts at the Yehuda Elkana Center for Teaching and Learning (YELC) as well as participate in a mentored TAship or RAship within the Dept. Upon completion of the TA/RA Practicum, doctoral students become eligible to apply for paid TAships within CEU.

In order to enhance doctoral students' pedagogical or research skills and experience, **all doctoral students** must enroll in one of the following options based on their teaching experience and professional/career aspirations. Option 1 with 8 ECTS credits is the required minimum (including a 4 ECTS TA position).

OPTION 1. (4 cr. /8 ECTS total) Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn: Students who need teaching skills and experience and wish to qualify for paid TAships at CEU but are not necessarily planning a career in academia or acquiring a YELC Teaching Certificate at this time (you can still pursue a Teaching Certificate later!) may choose to pursue this option.

First Year, FALL (1 cr./2 ECTS)

- ***Getting Started as a TA - Part 1 (YELC 6001) (1 cr/2 ECTS)*** [May also be taken in the Winter as long as it does not conflict with the Dept. Teaching Assistantship]
- **Session(s) with TA/RA Coordinator:** Introduction to TA/RA Practicum, Master's Student Conference Presentation Assessment guidance and support.
- **Master's Student Conference Presentations Assessment** in which you will be involved in providing feedback and assessing master's student conference presentations (in December).

First Year, WINTER (3 cr./6 ECTS)

- ***Getting Started as a TA - Part 2 (YELC 6002) (1 cr/2 ECTS)*** [Note: Please inform the TA/RA Coordinator if this course conflicts with your dept. teaching practicum.]
- ***Dept. Teaching & Research Practicum (ENVS6033) (2 cr./4 ECTS)*** Teaching Assistantship with a Dept. Faculty Mentor (credit hours include Master's Student Conference presentations assessment/feedback, and sessions with the TA/RA Coordinator).
- **Session(s) with TA/RA Coordinator:** TA Plan proposal, implementation, and reflection.

OPTION 2. (6 cr. /12 ECTS total) Advancement toward a Teaching Certificate: Students planning to pursue a career in academia, obtain a YELC Teaching Certificate and qualify for paid TAs at CEU are strongly encouraged to pursue this option.

First Year, FALL: (2 cr./4 ECTS)

- ***Foundations of Teaching in Higher Education Seminar (YELC 6101) (2 cr/4 ECTS)*** This course forms the basis of a comprehensive professional teaching development practicum for CEU doctoral students hosted by the Yehuda Elkana Center for Higher Education (YELC).
- **Session(s) with TA/RA Coordinator:** Introduction to TA/RA Practicum, Master's Student Conference Presentation Assessment guidance and support.
- **Master's Student Conference Presentations Assessment** in which you will be involved in providing feedback and assessing master's student conference presentations (in December).

First Year, WINTER (4 cr./8 ECTS)

- ***Learning by Design: Course and Assessment Creation** (YELC 6105) (2 cr./4 ECTS)*** [May also be taken in Spring]
- ***Dept. Teaching & Research Practicum* (ENVS6033) (2 cr./4 ECTS)*** Teaching Assistantship with a Dept. Faculty Mentor (credit hours include Master's Student Conference Presentations Assessment, and sessions with TA/RA Coordinator).
- **Session(s) with TA/RA Coordinator:** TA Plan proposal, implementation, and reflection.

OPTION 3. (6 cr. /12 ECTS total) Research and Teaching Skills and Experience: Students who have the opportunity to conduct a research assistantship with their supervisor and would like to strengthen their research skills and experience in addition to garnering teaching skills and experience may choose this option.

First Year, FALL term: (3 cr./6 ECTS)

- ***Getting Started as a TA – Part 1 (YELC 6001) (1 cr/2 ECTS)***
- ***Dept. Research Assistantship* (RAship) (ENVS6272) (2 cr./4 ECTS)*** Research Assistantship with a Dept. Faculty Mentor.
- **Session(s) with TA/RA Coordinator:** Introduction to TA/RA Practicum, Master's Student Conference Presentation Assessment guidance and support, RA Plan proposal submission.
- **Master's Student Conference Presentations Assessment** in which you will be involved in providing feedback and assessing master's student conference presentations (in December).

First Year, WINTER term: (3 cr./6 ECTS)

- ***Getting Started as a TA – Part 2 (YELC 6002) (1 cr/2 ECTS)***
- ***Dept. Teaching and Research Practicum (ENVS6033) (2 cr./4 ECTS)*** includes a Teaching Assistantship with a Dept. Faculty Mentor, Master's Student Conference Presentations Assessment and sessions with TA/RA Coordinator).
- **Session(s) with TA/RA Coordinator:** TA Plan proposal and implementation and reflection.

IMPORTANT: Students must register for the course *Teaching Assistantship ENVS6901* in the term they wish to be a teaching assistant in order to be assigned for a given course as TA. They should not register for the course where they are acting as a TA. In case of multiple assistantships in a term they can register for ENVS6902, 6903 as well – one for each course they TA for. This process applies not only to the mandatory, but to the paid TAships as well.

***Dept Teaching and Research Practicum/Assistantship:** Doctoral students are advised to consult with faculty, especially their advisors/supervisors on TA/RA learning opportunities that prioritize maximum learning opportunities. Additionally, the TA/RA Coordinator may be consulted for exploring teaching and research opportunities. TA/RA assignments are based on the specific opportunities available, and the student's learning needs and interests that are subsequently articulated in a TA/RA Plan.

**** “Learning by Design” (YELC) course (2 cr.)** This course is hosted by the Yehuda Elkana Center for Higher Education (YELC) and focuses on syllabus and assignment design. Students may acquire the opportunity to work closely with a faculty mentor or supervisor on the actual design of a syllabus for a course or may use their dissertation conceptual framework based on their emerging dissertation literature reviews to design their own course. This should be clarified in the TA Plan.

Faculty mentors and students develop a TA/RA Plan (approx. 1 page) that consists of concrete tasks and expectations (deliverables) as well as a timeline for completion as aligned with the TA/RA practicum learning outcomes and credit hours.

The TA Plan is due no later than two weeks after the start of the term in which the student is conducting their TAship (submit on TA/RA Practicum moodle site). TAs may engage in multiple or single teaching assignments, for example:

- helping to design a course syllabus;
- developing and monitoring e--learning forums;
- delivering a lecture or leading class discussions or small--group activities;
- observing student learning and providing helpful feedback on a course; and
- designing and/or applying assessment approaches and tools with mentor support and guidance.

The RA Plan is due no later than 4 weeks after the start of the term in which the student is conducting the RAship (submit on TA/RA Practicum moodle site). RAs may engage in multiple or single research assignments, for example:

- designing and writing research proposals
- conducting a literature review or preparing a literature review
- collecting and/or analyzing data

Sessions with the TA/RA Coordinator to assert TA/RA Plans are held in the Fall (RAships) and Winter (TA/RAships) terms in order to share and discuss TA/RA Plans and, later in the Winter term, to reflect on their implementation.

6.1. d. 6002 Preliminary Literature Review, Problem Statement, and Research Questions

Dissertation Milestones: DRAFT of PROBLEM STATEMENT and RESEARCH QUESTIONS DUE OCT 31; REVISED, INCLUDING PRELIM. LIT REVIEW DUE DECEMBER 20

In the course of the first term, the student is expected to begin developing a detailed knowledge of the state-of-the-art of literature on his/her chosen research topic. This will allow students to identify relevant gaps in the literature and to define their specific research problem and research questions in dialogue with the literature.

In the beginning of the first term, students should, in consultation with their supervisors, identify three relevant areas of literature to review and begin to develop bibliographies of relevant literature. Students should first develop their problem statements and research questions in the beginning of first term of the first year, in consultation with supervisors and the Center for Academic Writing. The problem statement and research questions should be no more than 750-1,000 words. A preliminary literature review should

be submitted by December 20. The preliminary literature review should be approximately 3,500-4,000 words in length. Further guidelines are available on the Moodle site.

Credits are awarded for this element on a pass/fail basis when the assignment has been approved by the supervisor. Students will receive feedback from their supervisors on how to improve the preliminary literature review, research problem statement, and research questions as a first step towards the dissertation prospectus.

6.2. WINTER TERM

6.2. a. ENVS6009 Theory Study Courses Interdepartmental or ENVS6006 Theory Courses with Independent Study (4 ECTS credits)

In the second term, the student should develop knowledge of the theory or theories that will directly inform his/her research work. A review of relevant theories and a proposed theoretical framework should be included as part of the draft prospectus due **April 10**. The student must submit the Completed Theory and Methods Study Program report by **April 15**. Credits for the Theory Study Courses are awarded when the supervisor approves the Completed Theory and Methods Study Program form.

6.2. b. ENVS6012 Methods Study Courses Interdepartmental or ENVS6007 Methods Course with Independent Study (8 ECTS credits)

In the second term, the student should also develop knowledge of the methods that he/she will need to apply in the course of his/her doctoral research. A description of the proposed methodology and research methods should be included as part of the draft prospectus due April 10. The student must submit the completed Theory and Methods Study program form by April 15. Credit for the Methods Study Program is awarded when the Completed Theory and Methods Study program form has been approved by the supervisor.

6.2. c. ENVS6106 Dissertation Prospectus Draft, DUE APRIL 10

During the second term, students will continue to revise and expand their literature review, problem statement, and research questions, and begin to incorporate sections detailing their proposed theoretical framework and methodology. A dissertation prospectus draft including all of these elements should be submitted by April 10.

Feedback received on the literature review and course assignments may be useful in completing the first full draft of the *Dissertation Prospectus*. The prospectus should be no longer than 10,000 words, excluding references.

[CEU PU Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines](#) should be adequately considered by the student and approved by the supervisor as part of the Prospectus. The student must complete the [CEU PU Research Ethics Checklist](#) and include it as an appendix to the prospectus, outlining what measures will be taken to minimize any risks to researchers and research subjects during fieldwork.

Please attach an AI declaration to your draft according to the [CEU PU AI Policy](#) and consult also CEU's [Intellectual Property Policy](#). Unauthorized use of Generative AI (GenAI), misuse of GenAI, and lack of sufficient transparency surrounding use of GenAI all constitute forms of academic misconduct that fall within the scope of the Student Plagiarism Policy.

Credit for the draft prospectus is awarded on a pass/fail basis when it has been approved by the Supervisor. **Students must successfully complete all other required first-year program elements, including core courses, literature review, theory and methods courses, and draft prospectus, prior to taking the Comprehensive Exam and continuing in the program.**

6.3. SPRING and SUMMER TERMS

6.3.a. ENVS6999 Comprehensive Exam (8 ECTS credits)

The Comprehensive Exam, held in May and/or early June of the first year, is intended to test the student's overall level of achievement during the first year of the program. It contributes to the student's grade in

the first year. Students must successfully complete all other required first-year program elements, including the literature review and draft prospectus prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

Further details about the exam are provided on the Moodle E-learning site.

The comprehensive exam will use the department's standard grading scheme, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Departmental Grading Scheme

Grade	Percent	Category	Grade	Percent	Category
A	94 – 100	Outstanding	B	71-79	Fair
A-	88-93	Excellent	B-	63-70	Satisfactory
B+	80-87	Good	C+	58-62	Minimum pass
			F	0-57	Fail

The DPC has the right to detract 1% late penalty per hour for the first 24 hours past the required submission time. Comprehensive exam essays will not be accepted more than 24 hours late (unless there are mitigating circumstances).

Students must achieve a grade of B+ or above in the comprehensive examination in order to proceed in the Program. In the event that a student does not pass and must retake any of the two comprehensive exam questions, the highest grade that can be given is a minimum pass (80%). Under CEU PU rules only one retake is allowed.

6.3.b. ENVS6107 Dissertation Prospectus Preparation/Finalization (8 ECTS credits)

After receiving feedback on the draft prospectus and the comprehensive exams students should agree with supervisors on additional reading, research, and writing necessary during the summer months to prepare the final prospectus draft for defense. **The final prospectus is due July 31** of the first year in the program.

7. Program Structure: 2nd, 3rd and 4th Years (60 ECTS credits per year)

7.1.a. ENVS7108 Dissertation Prospectus Defense by October 15

Guidelines for the prospectus can be found on the PhD progress Moodle site. The draft prospectus should be handed in to the committee for feedback by April 10, and a final version submitted by July 31 of the first year. In order to defend the Prospectus, a Dissertation Committee comprised of the Supervisor, an Internal Committee Member, and an External Committee Member should be in place at least one month before the intended defense date. The student may receive one final round of feedback from all committee members after the July 31 submission, in order to prepare for the defense. The prospectus should be defended by October 15th of the second year. Students may agree with their committees to submit a final version and hold a defense prior to this date.

The prospectus is defended before the Dissertation Committee in public during a PhD Faculty/Student Seminar. The entire PhD student body and the faculty of the Department are invited to the *Prospectus Defense*.

One week before the scheduled defense at the latest, the student must receive confirmation by email from all the committee members that the student is ready for a defense, which must be forwarded to the program coordinator (Tunde Szabolcs) before a defense will be confirmed. The External Committee Member must submit written comments on the prospectus two to four working days before the defense. The student will have access to these comments and be able to consider them before the defense.

The Prospectus Defense may result in any of the following outcomes: pass without amendments; pass with minor amendments; pass with major amendments to the satisfaction of the committee; or re-defend. In case of the need for revisions or a new defense, students will be informed by the Committee of the timeframe in which the changes need to be made or the new defense scheduled.

Students unable to comply with the above prospectus submission date and defense schedule should submit a request for extension, approved by the supervisor, to the DPC no later than July 15 explaining the reasons for the delay and proposing a schedule for completion and defense of the prospectus. Students who do not defend the prospectus by November 1 of the second year may have their stipends stopped until they do, at the discretion of the DPC (please see section 12.2 on failure to demonstrate progress).

Doctoral candidates with a 3.5 or higher grade point average and who have demonstrated sufficient and noteworthy progress on their dissertation may be nominated by the Doctoral Program Committee for the Award for Advanced Doctoral Students (800 EUR). For more information, please see: <https://www.ceu.edu/academics/academic-awards#doctoral-award>. Departmental criteria for the award are posted on the PhD Progress Moodle site.

7.1.b. ENVS8015 Data Collection and Analysis

After the *dissertation prospectus* has been successfully defended, the student embarks on data collection and analysis, as agreed in the prospectus and in consultation with the dissertation committee. At the end of the first term of data collection and analysis the student provides a summary of data collected and analyzed to the dissertation committee together with a description of any problems encountered. Credit for Data Collection and Analysis is awarded when the summary report has been approved by the supervisor. Further details can be found on the PhD Progress Moodle site.

7.1.c. ENVS7921 Year Two Dissertation Research and Writing

After the *dissertation prospectus* has been successfully defended, the student moves from probationary status to doctoral candidacy and the main focus is on conducting research, writing and subsequently defending the doctoral dissertation. The student receives credit for achieving progress towards the dissertation when approved by the supervisor.

7.1. d. ENVS6014 Departmental Environmental Colloquium – see above -

7.2. ENVS6015 Article Incubator, 2nd (or 3rd) year

The aims of this course are to discuss the role of academic publications in the disciplinary organization of modern science to discuss students' ideas for the first articles, including its positioning and collaborations. The course will begin with a short discussion of writing processes, devote the remaining time entirely to discussing concrete next steps for students' first - or next - article.

7.2.a. ENVS8014 Research Update Presentation

Students are required to present an update on their dissertation research after their initial data collection phase **at the end of their second year or early in the third year**. Students should plan an approximately 20-minute presentation of their research progress, including any changes in the project that took place since defending the prospectus, data collection and analysis, and any problems encountered to date, allowing for about 10 minutes of questions. Ideally the supervisor and/or committee members attend the presentation and provide feedback. Further details can be found on the PhD Progress Moodle site.

7.2.b. ENVS8013 Analytical Chapter Presentation

When in the writing phase, students are required to circulate a written draft of one analytical chapter (i.e. a chapter analyzing the data, not the introduction, methods, literature review, theoretical framework or conclusion) to be presented and discussed at the PhD/Faculty seminar in the third year. Draft chapters should be circulated at least one week before the planned seminar. Written drafts should not exceed 10,000 words excluding references. All attending the seminar should read the chapter in advance, therefore students should give only a brief, 10-minute summary, including situating the chapter within the broader dissertation and discussing any issues they are struggling with in the chapter. They may ask one or two other students to serve as discussants, giving brief 5–10-minute comments and questions in the chapter before opening discussion to all attending. The entire discussion of the chapter should last about 45 minutes. Ideally the supervisor and/or committee members attend the presentation and provide feedback. Students receive credit for this once but **should present at least one analytical**

chapter per year while still enrolled in the program. Further details can be found on the PhD Progress Moodle site.

7.3. ENVS8040 Professional Advancement Practicum

All students are required to participate in both presentation of their work in progress at scholarly conferences and in academic publishing. This may be completed at any time after the first year. The purpose of this unit is to provide students with opportunities to:

- Increase professional competitiveness
- Gain concrete and relevant experience producing a research-based document
- Engage their research in a public forum generating feedback, comments, reviews, etc.
- Build scientific writing experience; including co-authorship of papers
- Improve their curriculum vitae

The specific requirements to fulfil this unit will differ according to the specific career aspirations of each student and are to be negotiated and agreed upon with the student's supervisor. Additional requirements will apply for students writing an article-based dissertation (see in Annex).

Publishing Requirements

All PhD students are expected to engage in scholarly publishing during their PhD regardless of which model they choose, as part of their Professional Advancement Practicum. Appropriate journals and publishing venues should be discussed with the supervisor and committee.

The minimum publishing requirement is:

- At least one first-authored or sole-authored article must be published or accepted for publication in a Q1 or Q2 journal* or as a chapter in a peer-reviewed edited volume published in a high-quality academic press by the time of the defense.

* "journals are ranked [...] and divided into four equal groups (Quartiles), with Q1 representing the highest value and Q4 the lowest. See in [SJR: Scientific Journal Rankings](https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php) <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php>

Students pursuing monograph-based dissertations are also encouraged to submit further articles for publication and/or work on a book proposal to send to a high-quality academic press, and/or policy-related writing relevant to their respective fields.

Students pursuing article-based dissertations have further publishing requirements, as outlined in Doctoral Dissertation Format Annex.

Professional Advancement Practicum activities can be undertaken at any point during the student's doctoral studies, and students and supervisors will be asked to comment on their recent and planned Professional Advancement activities in each Research Progress Report. If a supervisor indicates concern over a student's lack of progress in this area, the student will be asked to meet with the supervisor and Program Director to determine where the problems lie and what can be done to help the student to meet this requirement. Credit is awarded based on the Supervisor's approval, which can be given any time prior to final dissertation defense when he/she judges that the conditions have been met. Further details can be found on the PhD Progress Moodle site.

7.4. Courses to register for Advanced Dissertation Milestones (Years 3 and 4):

ENVS8108 Year Three Dissertation Research and Writing

ENVS8012 Dissertation Finalization

ENVS9100 Dissertation Defense

All second-year students and beyond must **submit progress reports on October 1 and April 1 every year**, attaching the latest example of their written work, to be reviewed by their supervisor and the DPC. Further details can be found on the PhD Progress Moodle site.

7.5. ENVS6922 Topical Debates in Environmental Sciences and Policy 3rd year (or 2nd)

This course serves as a structured forum for interdisciplinary scholarly exchange among faculty, doctoral students, and invited guest speakers on key issues in the environmental field. PhD students will take an active role in organizing and leading debates aligned with their research interests within one of three thematic clusters: Climate, Energy and Resource Management (CERM); Transformative Society, Politics and Justice (TSPJ); and People and Ecosystems (PE).

8. The Doctoral Dissertation (MAXIMUM 4 YEARS TO COMPLETION)

The final stage of the Doctoral Program is the production of a dissertation which presents in detail the student's research work and contribution. The exact format of the dissertation will depend upon the subject area and requirements of the research.

Students, in consultation with the committees, must decide whether to pursue an article-based dissertation or a monograph.

Monograph

The length of the dissertation monograph varies, but it is generally recommended that the dissertation not exceed 80,000 words (including tables, graphs and footnotes; excluding bibliography and appendices) and should follow the [CEU PU Doctoral Regulations](#). For dissertations that exceed 80,000 words, students must petition the DPC for an exception at least one month before the final submission.

Article- Based Dissertation

Guidelines for the article-based dissertations are available in the Annex or on the departmental Moodle site.

The completed dissertation must be submitted to the dedicated departmental Moodle page **by the thesis submission deadline (last day of enrollment)** and meet all formatting and plagiarism check requirements as described in detail on the Dissertation submission Moodle and CEU's Thesis Submission SharePoint pages.

After a successful defense it needs to be uploaded asap also to CEU's ProQuest ETD Administrator repository of the library. The dissertation submission process needs to be completed within 6 months after the defense.

8.1. Dissertation Committee

Doctoral students will be guided by a Dissertation Committee that is responsible for mentorship and during the process of writing the dissertation.

After the student's Dissertation Prospectus Defense, the Doctoral Program Committee approves the Dissertation Committee, and may make changes as appropriate. Dissertation Committees are appointed by the University Doctoral Committee, based on the recommendation of the Doctoral Program Committee. Students must submit the final composition of their Dissertation Committee to the Doctoral Program Coordinator no later than two months before they expect to defend their dissertation. The head of the Dissertation Committee is the Primary Supervisor. A Dissertation Committee includes:

- Primary Supervisor (and Associate Supervisor where applicable)
- Internal faculty member(s) from the ENVSCI Dept. or another CEU PU department
- External member(s) (must comprise one-third of the total Committee members and have no contractual relation with CEU PU at the time of the submission of the dissertation and the defense)

In order to facilitate the timely completion of all first-year doctoral program milestones, and receive feedback as appropriate from all committee members, students are encouraged to confirm committee members by the dates below in the first year of the program. **The supervisor and PhD student must sign a Supervision Agreement in the student's first term (found on the PhD Progress Moodle site), and revise and update as necessary.**

Deadlines (1st year of the program):

Confirmation of primary supervisor: October 15

Signed supervision agreement submission by October 31

Confirmation of Internal Committee Member: April 1

Confirmation of External Committee Member: June 15

The Dissertation Committee includes:

- at least three voting members (e.g., supervisor, internal and external members);
- at least one third external voting member(s); and
- at least two examiners (one external to CEU PU, should not be the supervisor, and may or may not be voting members) who are asked to write a written report of the dissertation prior to the defense.

For more details on the composition of the Dissertation Committee, please refer to the [CEU PU Doctoral Regulations](#).

Preliminary Advisor and Primary Supervisor:

The student's Preliminary Advisor is appointed (provisionally) until a Primary Supervisor is confirmed. In most cases, this will become the student's Supervisor, though a change is permitted. In initial phases of the studies, the Preliminary Advisor advises the student on issues related to the Program. The student's Primary Supervisor is confirmed by October 15 of the 1st year. The responsibilities of the Primary Supervisor include:

1. Approves student completion of required first year program elements, as detailed in this handbook;
2. Guides the student through the dissertation process;
3. Regularly monitors the progress of the student on the dissertation, assisted by regular meetings while the student is in residence, and by regular communication while the student is conducting field work;
4. Makes recommendations to the Doctoral Committee for additional members of the Dissertation Committee;
5. Makes recommendations whether the student is ready to defend his/her prospectus;
6. Otherwise assists and advises the student as necessary and appropriate.

If a student wishes to change supervisor, the student may make a written request to the Doctoral Program Committee providing reasons for such a request. The Doctoral Program Committee is required to address the request within 15 days.

Associate Supervisors to replace the Primary Supervisor in case of sabbatical or other changes may be appointed in line with the [CEU PU Doctoral Regulations](#).

A detailed description of the duties of the Primary Supervisor can be found in the [CEU PU Doctoral Regulations](#).

8.2. Dissertation Defense Procedures

Pre-Defense: Once the Doctoral Candidate has completed the dissertation, the supervisor has judged that it is ready for pre-defense, and all committee members have sent a confirmation email to the program coordinator that the pre-defense can be scheduled; the student gives an oral presentation of the dissertation (in max. ½ hour) to his/her Dissertation Committee members, who then raise questions and make comments with the intent of assessing and strengthening the preparedness of the student for a final public defense. The Dissertation Committee then recommends that the student:

- 1) proceeds to a public final defense without changes to their dissertation; OR

- 2) proceeds to a public final defense with minor or major amendments; OR
- 3) prepares for a second pre-defense after significant revisions to the dissertation are made and approved by their supervisor. A student may not pre-defend their dissertation more than twice and consequently will be unenrolled from the Program.

Final Public Defense: Before a final public defense is confirmed, one external and one internal member of the student's Dissertation Committee (preferably not the Supervisor) must indicate in writing whether the dissertation can be submitted for defense. These written statements should be sent to the PhD coordinator, the supervisor, and the Chair of the defense, and may be sent to the student.

For the final public defense, the candidate makes an oral presentation of the dissertation (max. 30 minutes) before their Dissertation Committee, a chair (usually from another CEU PU department), and a designated Opponent, and the public. The Opponent should be an expert in the field who has not previously reviewed and advised on the dissertation. The Opponent is required to provide the Chair, the candidate, and the Dissertation Committee members written comments and questions regarding the dissertation in advance of the defense, to which the candidate must respond during the defense. The candidate should also field any questions and comments that may be offered by their Dissertation Committee members and others in attendance. At the end of the defense, the Dissertation Committee, the Chair, and the Opponent meet privately to discuss whether the dissertation can be accepted for a doctoral degree. The Dissertation Committee decides by consensus (or if consensus is not forthcoming, by voting). Voting members include the Supervisor, the Internal committee member and the Opponent.

According to the [CEU PU Doctoral Regulations](#), to satisfy the degree requirements, the dissertation must make a significant and original contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the subject and must demonstrate the capacity of the candidate to carry out independent quality research. Two members of the Dissertation Committee are asked to indicate in writing whether:

- the dissertation makes a significant contribution to the knowledge and to the understanding of the subject with which it deals;
- the dissertation demonstrates the candidates' capacity to carry out quality independent research;
- the dissertation contains material worthy for publication; and
- knowledge of the state of the art in the specific subject.

The Dissertation Committee and Opponent may also designate revisions to be made to the final dissertation before its final uploading to the library's electronic thesis database. The committee must decide the date by which these revisions are to be uploaded and who is to approve their completion. Failure to comply with the proposed revisions will necessitate a second defence or submission beyond enrolment, in case all available enrolment time has been used.

8.3. Submission of Dissertation beyond Enrolment

The departmental policy for Submission of the Dissertation beyond Enrolment is available on the Moodle site. Submission beyond Enrolment is allowed but support from the Supervisor and internal committee member is curtailed.

9. Program and Graduation Requirements

Satisfactory completion of all Doctoral Program requirements results in the awarding of a doctoral degree. These requirements are listed in a more detailed Checklist available on the Departmental web site, and include, inter alia:

1. Compliance with the University and Departmental Doctoral Program regulations;
2. Satisfactory comprehensive exam grade;
3. Successful completion of the dissertation prospectus defense;
4. Satisfactory continuous research progress;
5. Successful dissertation submission, defense, and acceptance; and

6. Satisfactory completion of all program elements.

In order to qualify for an MPhil degree the student's requirements are

1. Compliance with the University and Departmental Doctoral Program regulations;
2. Satisfactory comprehensive exam grade and completion of all coursework;
3. Successful completion of the dissertation prospectus defense;
4. Completion the professional advancement practicum milestone;
5. Participate in the departmental seminar but use this to provide a research update – NOT an analytical chapter
6. NOT required to obtain credit for data collection or further milestone elements connected to dissertation completion.

10. Residence, Participation in Departmental Events, and Maintaining Contact

Doctoral students must reside in Vienna or the vicinity during the four years of their study, excepting periods of research and study at other institutions which are approved by the supervisor, DPC or UDC. Students are expected to attend the departmental colloquium and topical debates sessions every term they are enrolled in the program, as well as attend defenses, guest lectures, workshops, field trips, or other planned events. Attendance is regarded as part of the Program, and sanctions for non-attendance can be severe. More than three absences from any of the program requirements may result in stopping of the stipend or withdrawal from the Program. Exemption from the residency requirement can be granted by the Doctoral Program Committee for research periods. Requests for exemption from the residency requirement should be submitted to the Doctoral Program Committee in writing. Reasons for requesting an exemption might include field work trips, family circumstances, and mitigating circumstances described in point 11.2.

Doctoral students are responsible for maintaining contact with the Department, keeping up with their CEU emails, as well as providing updated contact information. They are expected to remain in contact with campus academic life and to respond to any communication from the Department and/or the Doctoral Program. Not maintaining contact with the Department and/or unjustified absence can lead to stopping stipend payments, termination of the student's enrolment status and/or other financial aid.

Students in employment outside of CEU PU are required to present a letter from their employer(s) indicating that the employer is aware of the student's participation in the Program and consents to it. ***Students should be aware that their doctoral studies take priority over employment demands.*** This is clarified in the Policy on Student Employment.

11. Demonstration of Progress in the Program

Assessment of students' progress and performance is undertaken through evaluating core course work, the comprehensive exam, and practicum achievements; evaluating class attendance and participation; and monitoring the progress of students' research through evaluations communicated by the supervisor (and, in some cases, an internal doctoral committee member) and student reporting.

Supervisors give students feedback on milestone documents no later than 1 month after they are submitted. Feedback or a final "grade" on any revisions is also one month (excluding July and August).

The Doctoral Program Committee monitors the progress, work and attendance of all students. This is for the benefit of the students and helps to ensure that students are maintaining a satisfactory grade level and managing to make sufficient progress toward completion of the dissertation milestones (i.e. Comprehensive Exams, Prospectus Defense, and Dissertation Pre-Defense). The Doctoral Program Committee discusses opportunities (and identifies barriers, if applicable) that may impact a student's ability to make progress towards successfully completing the program and achieving their doctorate. Students should feel free to consult their supervisors or others in the Department on ways to overcome the expected

challenges associated with getting a Ph.D. Additionally, seminars can be organized to discuss and address particular challenges common to all PhD students.

11.1 Attendance

The Attendance Policy is as follows:

1. Attendance requirements. Attendance is **mandatory** for all parts of all courses for which Doctoral students are registered, unless the Program Director or a course instructor explicitly state that certain elements of the course are optional. Additionally, those Doctoral students who have been required to take certain elements of the MSc core course must attend **all** classes of those units/courses.
2. Exemptions from attendance requirements. The only grounds for absence which are usually automatically accepted are (1) illness documented by a doctor's note and (2) bereavement. In all other cases, ***students must request permission for absence in advance from their advisor/supervisor, the lecturer(s) whose class(es) they would be missing,*** and the Doctoral Program Director explaining why they are making the request. Note that other work obligations not related to the student's studies are NOT an excuse for missing class. Explanations for absence which are given after the event will not normally be considered.
3. Sanctions for unauthorized absence. Students who absent themselves from required classes without permission according to the terms of section (2) above can expect to face one or more of the following sanctions:
 - i. *Requirement to pass the MSc course exams.* As stated in point 1, students who are required to attend elements of the MSc mandatory program must attend all classes of the units they have been told to take. Should they miss any of these classes, they will be required to take the MSc course exams. Failure to pass this exam and the re-sit would mean automatic termination of the student's Doctoral status.
 - ii. *Failure of individual courses.* Individual professors may determine their own sanctions policy for the Doctoral courses they run, which should be set out in writing at the start of the course. This may mean deducting a certain percentage of the overall course grade for missed classes or even **automatic failure** of the course. In the latter case the Doctoral Program Committee will decide whether to terminate the student's Doctoral status or allow him/her to continue given certain conditions (e.g. retaking the course or taking an extra course or courses in lieu). Whether or not individual professors take their own sanctions for non-attendance, the Doctoral Committee will act under point iii) below if the student's overall record shows poor attendance.
 - iii. *Enrolment Termination.* Poor attendance may result in termination of program enrolment.

11.2 Grading, Deadlines, and Extensions

All grades, unless noted otherwise, are calculated according to the departmental grading scheme:

Grade	Percent	Category	Grade	Percent	Category
A	94 – 100	Outstanding	B	71-79	Fair
A-	88-93	Excellent	B-	63-70	Satisfactory
B+	80-87	Good	C+	58-62	Minimum pass
			F	0-57	Fail

Students must produce coursework and milestones by the specified deadlines as required in the Program, and attendance at all examinations is compulsory.

Students may request extensions on program milestones by first consulting with their supervisor, and second, writing a letter of request to the DPC at least two weeks prior to the deadline.

On all graded coursework, penalties for late assignment submissions will be 5% per working day, except in exceptional circumstances with the prior approval of the course instructor(s).

For comprehensive exams or take-home exams, the DPC and/or instructors have the right to detract 1% late penalty per hour for the first 24 hours past the required submission time. Comprehensive exam essays will not be accepted more than 24 hours late (unless there are mitigating circumstances).

11.3. Reporting Requirements

Doctoral Candidates must update their status with the Doctoral Program Coordinator (cc'ing their Supervisor and the Doctoral Program Director) **October 1st and April 1st of each year**. The status report form is available and downloadable from the e-learning (Moodle) site. New Doctoral Candidates in their second year of study should submit their first status report by April 1st. Failure to submit a status report on time can be considered a violation of [CEU PU Doctoral Regulations](#). Further, if the Doctoral Program Committee finds the report unsatisfactory, it will recommend appropriate action.

11.4. Failure to Demonstrate Progress and Mitigating Circumstances

In the event that the Doctoral Program Committee determines that a student is not making adequate progress, it may consider the particular circumstances of the student and make specific recommendations. Possible grounds for mitigation are considered generally as follows:

- Significant illness or injury
- The death or critical illness of a close family member
- Family crises or major financial problems leading to acute stress
- Absence for jury service or maternity, paternity or adoption leave

Note: While pregnancy is not in itself grounds for mitigation, issues may arise during a pregnancy which might constitute mitigating circumstances and will need to be judged on an individual basis.

Mitigating circumstances aside, the Doctoral Program Committee may suggest, for example, that:

- 1) the student engages their colleagues in a PhD Faculty/Student Seminar to work through complex and difficult theoretical, methodological or empirical issues;
- 2) the student acquires other assistance or targeted mentorship;
- 3) the student withdraws temporarily from the program or “stop the clock;”
- 4) the student’s financial aid be suspended; or
- 5) enrolment be terminated.

Students who fail to demonstrate progress jeopardize support (e.g., CEU PU-based scholarships and tuition waivers), and/or their enrolment status.

A student’s enrolment in the Program may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- unsatisfactory coursework grades;
- unsatisfactory research progress;
- enrolment period is past the six-year deadline and no withdrawal or extension has been granted; or
- failure to comply with the University and Doctoral Program regulations.

11.5 Enrolment Time, Leave of Absence and Withdrawal

Standard enrolment time in the program is 48 months. A student may petition to the DPC to request extensions of enrolment for up to one year due to extended field research, two weeks prior enrolment ends. Additional extensions for up to one more year and in every case beyond five years of enrollment may be granted only by the University Doctoral Committee.

In the event that unforeseen circumstances prevent a student from making progress, the student (with the support of their supervisor) should request a leave of absence or withdrawal from the Program for a definite period of time, but no more than two years.

Such requests, sent to the Doctoral Program Director and Coordinator, should be properly justified, and the period of withdrawal clearly indicated (dd/mm/yy - dd/mm/yy). Some of the reasons that entitle to a withdrawal include parental duties, medical reasons, pressing family circumstances and other full-time obligations that prevent the student from making progress with their dissertation. A leave of absence of up to six months may be granted by the Doctoral Program Committee. A leave of absence longer than six months, or a leave of absence of any length for students beyond the fifth year of enrolment, can be granted by the University Doctoral Committee. During the leave of absence, both enrolment and stipend payments are suspended.

Withdrawals are usually granted in cases in which the student experiences new and pressing family circumstances or incurs other full-time obligations that prevent the student from making progress on their dissertation. Note that the period of the withdrawal is NOT counted toward the four-year completion time.

12. Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Definitions

Academic dishonesty involves acts which may subvert or compromise the integrity of the educational process at CEU. This includes any act by which a student succeeds or attempts to gain an academic advantage for themselves or another person by misrepresenting their or another person's work or by interfering with the completion, submission or evaluation of work. These include, but are not limited to, accomplishing or attempting any of the following acts:

1. Altering of grades or official records.
2. Using any materials that are not authorized by the instructor for use during an examination.
3. Copying from another student's paper during an examination.
4. Collaborating during an examination with any other person by giving or receiving information without the specific permission of the instructor.
5. Stealing, buying or otherwise obtaining restricted information about an examination to be administered.
6. Collaborating on laboratory work, take-home examinations, homework or other assigned work when instructed to work independently.
7. Substituting for another person or permitting any other person to substitute for oneself in taking an examination.
8. Submitting as one's own any theme, report, term paper, essay, other written work, speech, totally or in part by another author.
9. Submitting work that has been previously offered for credit in another course, except with prior written permission of the instructors of both courses.
10. Plagiarizing, that is, the offering as one's own work the words, ideas, or arguments of another person without appropriate attribution by quotation, reference or footnote. Plagiarism occurs both when the words of another are reproduced without acknowledgement or when the ideas or arguments of another are paraphrased in such a way as to lead the reader to believe that they originated with the writer. It is the responsibility of all university students to understand the methods of proper attribution and to apply those principles in all materials submitted. Students should refer to and be familiar with the [CEU Policy on Student Plagiarism](#).
11. Sabotaging of another student's work.
12. Falsifying or committing forgery on any university form or document.
13. Submitting altered or falsified data as experimental data from laboratory projects, survey research, or other field research.
14. Committing any wilful act of dishonesty that interferes with the operation of the academic process.
15. Facilitating or aiding in any act of academic dishonesty.

Please note that AI tools may only be used to a limited extent for research purposes but not for writing, and all use must be disclosed. For further information, please refer to the CEU Policy on Student Plagiarism and the University's Code of Ethics.

Academic dishonesty may be a reason for disciplinary action as specified in relevant CEU policies. Such action can include failure of the course, a warning appearing on the student's record, and even immediate expulsion from the program in serious cases.

The Department uses 'Turnitin' plagiarism prevention software to detect plagiarism in written papers including doctoral theses. All graded written assignments (including those that are required to pass a class that is pass/fail) are submitted to Turnitin. Any submission with a similarity rating of 25% or above on Turnitin will be handed over to the academic dishonesty committee. Faculty may send an assignment with a Turnitin rating below 25% on to the academic dishonesty committee if they deem this to be necessary.

Appeals

Assessment for all courses is subject to moderation procedures assuring the objectivity of marking. Students have a right to feedback on all assessed work which should include explanation for the grade awarded. The grades approved by the Examination Board (consisting of the whole faculty) are final and cannot be subject to appeal on academic grounds. Appeals on other grounds (e.g. personal discrimination) are covered by [CEU's Code of Ethics](#) and should follow the procedures set out there.

13. Program and Departmental Management

13.1 Academic Organization of the Doctoral Program

Within the Department, the management of each doctoral student's studies will be the responsibility of: the student's advisor, student's primary supervisor; the student's Dissertation Committee; and the Departmental Doctoral Committee. The role and functioning of each of these is outlined briefly below.

Doctoral Program Director: Guntra Aistara

Doctoral Program Committee: Guntra Aistara, Laszlo Pinter, Diana Urge-Vorsatz, and one doctoral student representative.

The Doctoral Committee is a committee organized at the departmental level to steer the Doctoral Program. This includes: passing special regulations, specific to the department's Doctoral Program, in accordance with the [CEU PU Doctoral Regulations](#); administering the comprehensive exam and admissions process at the program level; and other tasks as set out by the [CEU PU Doctoral Regulations](#). It has at least four members: one is the Doctoral Program Director, who is an ex officio member; a minimum of two resident faculty members who are delegated from the resident departmental faculty members; and a student representative elected by the departmental doctoral student body. The student representative represents the doctoral students in the Doctoral Program Committee meetings and provides feedback to the Doctoral Program Director. The Doctoral Program Committee may decide that the student should not be present at discussions of certain topics, such as individual student grades, etc.

14. Additional Departmental Policies

14.1 Health and Safety

In any laboratory or field visits and practical research projects students will come across potential hazards. To minimize the risks to themselves and others, students must follow the guidelines laid down in any relevant health and safety requirements. Fieldwork and project work must be carried out according to the particular guidelines for that project.

14.2 Teaching Schedule

The provisional teaching schedule will be made available to all students before the beginning of each term. All efforts will be made to notify students of any changes to the schedule at least a week in advance. The most current version of the schedule will be available on the [CEU Study Guide](#) and at the Department Moodle learning site <https://ceulearning.ceu.edu/>

14.3 Academic Writing

The resource for the development of academic writing is the CEU PU Center for Academic Writing (<http://caw.ccu.edu/>), which provides support and guidance in academic writing to students. The Department also offers the course by CAW instructor Sharon McCulloch [ENVS6101 *Academic Writing for doctoral students* (2 ECTS credits)] in the Fall term. Students are also encouraged to work with their supervisors.

14.4 Desk Space and Computer Use:

First year students and students writing up their dissertations generally have priority use of the desk and computer space in the PhD Study Rooms (lab A-603 and B-110B). However, please be ready to share.

Computers are available to PhD students in the Ph.D. Study Rooms, but please note that the computers in these rooms are not for individual use only, therefore please do not protect them by passwords, or exclude others from using any of their software.

Academic Calendar
Environmental Sciences and Policy Department
Doctoral Program
2026/2027

Important Deadlines

<i>First Year Timetable:</i>	
September	• Appointment of Preliminary Mentor • Election of Doctoral Committee Student Representative • Theory and Methods Study Plan – September 18 • Registration deadline for courses – September 21
October	• Confirmation of Primary Supervisor - October 15 • DRAFT Problem Statement and Research Questions, October 31 • Supervisor Agreement submission, October 31
November	• Topic Presentation in the Departmental Colloquium– 1st week of October
December	• Revisions to Theory and Methods Study Plan – December 15 • Preliminary Literature Review, Problem Statement, and Research Questions– December 20
April	• Confirmation of Internal Committee Member - April 1 • Draft Dissertation Prospectus– April 10 • Completed Theory & Method Study Report – April 15
May – June	• Comprehensive Exam – May • Confirmation of External Committee Member – June 15
July - August	• Dissertation Prospectus Preparation • Dissertation Prospectus Submission Deadline - July 31
<i>Second Year Timetable:</i>	
October 15	• Dissertation Prospectus Defense Deadline
November - August	• Data Collection and Analysis
<i>Third- and Fourth-Year Timetable:</i>	
September – August	• Year Three Dissertation Research and Writing • Analytical Chapter Presentation • Dissertation Pre-Defense and Final Defense
<i>From the 2nd year</i>	
October 1 and April 1 each year	• Progress report submission

ANNEX

Doctoral Dissertation Format

1. Procedural Notes

- Students from the 2025-26 academic year can decide whether to follow the **article-based** or **monograph-based** dissertation format at the **prospectus defense stage**.
- Students who initially choose one track may change their chosen format with the approval of their Ph.D. committee, no later than the **pre-defense stage** in case fulfilled all the requirements listed below.

2.. Expected Length and Structure

Monograph-based dissertations are expected to be approximately 70,000- 80,000 words, excluding references and appendices. Students wishing to submit longer dissertations (up to 100,000 words maximum) must first seek written approval from their supervisors and committees, and then the DPC, latest at the pre-defense stage.

Article-based dissertations may have a lower overall word-count, depending on the word limits of the various accepted and submitted articles. A similar upper word-limit of 80,000 words and approval process for longer submissions must be followed as described above for monograph-based dissertations.

3A. Monograph-based Dissertations

Monograph-based dissertations will be structured as a book, including the following chapters:

Introduction:

- Clearly states the research problem, emphasizing its relevance and significance.
- Situates the research within the broader field of environmental sciences and relevant literatures.
- Presents the overarching research questions and objectives or hypotheses that guided the work.

Theory and methods chapter(s):

- Explain the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches used in the research and explain their relevance.
- These should be organized according to disciplinary standards and agreed upon in consultation with the supervisor and committee.

Analytical chapters:

- The body chapters of the dissertation present the results and analyzed data with a discussion of the relation to the research questions, relevant literatures, and chosen theoretical and conceptual frameworks. should be organized according to disciplinary standards and agreed upon in consultation with the supervisor and committee.

Conclusions:

A final chapter synthesizes insights from all analytical chapters, with a coherent narrative showing how the individual research questions and resulting analytical chapters relate to and complement each other, and how they jointly contribute to environmental science and relevant fields and/or policy fields. It should:

- Integrate findings from the individual analytical chapters.
- Situate the results within and discuss contributions to relevant literatures, broader theoretical frameworks, and real-world contexts.
- Reflect on the overall significance of the research for both science and policy.
- Identify future research opportunities and potential applications of the work.

3B. Article-based Dissertations

Article-based dissertations will consist of three to four scholarly articles, bookended with integrating introduction and conclusion chapters. Such dissertations should include the following chapters:

Introduction / Integrating Chapter

The dissertation begins with an introduction that functions as an integrating chapter linking all included articles. This chapter should:

- Situate the research within the broader field of environmental science, emphasizing its relevance and significance.
- Present the overarching research questions and objectives or hypotheses that guided the work.
- Explain the theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches used across the articles.
- Provide a coherent narrative showing how individual studies relate to and complement each other.
- Synthesize the contributions of each article, demonstrating how they collectively address the central research question.
- Highlight the dissertation's significance for environmental science, related disciplines, and relevant policy domains.

Core Chapters (3–4 Articles)

The central part of the dissertation comprises **3–4 scholarly articles** based on the candidate's Ph.D. research.

Authorship Requirements:

- A minimum of **two articles** must be **first-authored** by the candidate.
- At least **one sole-authored article** in disciplines where this is the accepted standard (agreed with supervisor and committee).

Status Requirements:

- At least one article must be published or accepted for publication.
- At least one article must be accepted, pending minor revisions.
- One article may be under review (and not rejected) at the time of dissertation submission.

Publication Standards:

- A minimum of **two articles** must be under review, accepted, or published in **Q1 or Q2-ranked journals**.*
- **One may be a book chapter** in a highly ranked university press or journal with another ranking.

Thematic Coherence:

- All articles must address distinct aspects of the same overarching research question based on the student's PhD research.
- The studies must be **interlinked thematically** and collectively advance the dissertation's central argument.
- Articles are typically presented in their published or accepted form.

Discussion & Conclusions Chapter

The final chapter synthesizes insights from all articles, showing how they jointly contribute to environmental science and its policy implications. It should:

- Integrate findings from the individual articles.
- Situate the results within broader theoretical frameworks and real-world contexts.
- Reflect on the collective significance of the research for both science and policy.
- Identify future research opportunities and potential applications of the work.

PhD students on the article-based track should closely work with their supervisors and Dissertation Committee members to ensure that they have a realistic strategy for publishing or submitting the required number and quality of publications. At the time of pre-defense, the Dissertation Committee decides on whether the number and type of publications, their stage of publication, the quality of the outlet and the role of the student meet the requirements of the Department taking into account disciplinary specifics. In making this judgement, the Dissertation Committee could weigh the standing of the outlets (e.g. journal ranking), the stage in the review process (e.g. minor or major revisions required) and the role of the student in case of multi-authored publications. In determining the latter, the committee may ask for a statement from the student or other co-authors and be guided by the [CREDIT system](#).

* "journals are ranked [...] and divided into four equal groups (Quartiles), with Q1 representing the highest value and Q4 the lowest. See in [SJR: Scientific Journal Rankings](#) <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php>