Department of Geology, Environment and Sustainability
Hofstra University

Master of Arts (MA) in Sustainability
Graduate Handbook

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1.0 Introduction to the Department of Geology, Environment and Sustainability at Hofstra

This section reviews the Department of Geology, Environment and Sustainability at Hofstra University. It introduces the unique vision of the department and provides a summary of the Master of Arts (MA) in Sustainability Degree Program, the Bachelor of Arts/Science (BA/BS) and MA in Sustainability Dual Degree Program, and the MA in Sustainability/Master of Business Administration (MBA) Dual Degree Program.

1.1 History of the Department

The Department of Geology, Environment and Sustainability at Hofstra University began as the Department of Geology in 1957, when Hofstra began to offer BA and BS degrees in Geology for the first time. Since then, the department has graduated hundreds of professional geologists who have gone on to work in a variety of fields from geoscience research to environmental consulting to education.

In the last decade, as evidence has accumulated on the impacts of human activity on the natural environment and critical earth systems, the Department has progressively refocused its efforts to provide not only a strong traditional geology education, but also to expand its degree options to address the human impacts on the Earth. First, the Department added a BS degree in Environmental Resources with a greater focus on applied and environmental geology. In 2013, the Department incorporated the new Sustainability Studies Program that was started in 2012 at Hofstra University, further expanding opportunities to study and research the human dimensions of earth and environmental science. This innovative pairing of geology and sustainability studies adds an important anthropogenic perspective to the traditional geology curriculum and provides a multidisciplinary natural science grounding in earth systems to our sustainability studies curriculum.

The Department compliments its innovative curriculum with a very strong record of placing students in jobs and graduate programs on Long Island and throughout the country and the world. We place strong emphasis on field experiences and one-on-one research with an academic advisor. For more information about the Department please see: https://www.hofstra.edu/academics/colleges/hclas/geol/index.html

1.2 Overview of the MA in Sustainability

Sustainability can be broadly defined as meeting the needs of all people while living within Earth’s planetary boundaries so as not to compromise future generations. The MA in Sustainability program at Hofstra delves deeper into the concept of sustainability and asks students to seek different ways of analyzing and achieving sustainability in different settings. This program also takes a balanced approach in trying to understand how to make developed countries more sustainable while also addressing the real-world
sustainability crisis that exists in the developing world. The Master of Arts program in Sustainability integrates environmental, economic, social, philosophical, and ethical themes of sustainability. The program is designed to give students real-world, hands-on experiences solving sustainability problems.

In addition to a traditional MA program, Hofstra offers two Dual Degree programs in sustainability. The dual BA/BS-MA in Sustainability allows undergraduate students to receive both their bachelors and master’s degree in a five-year program. The dual MA Sustainability/MBA program allows students to merge sustainability with their graduate business education.

Students may attend full- or part-time and either a thesis or internship is required of all students to complete the MA degree program in the traditional MA program as well as the Dual Degree programs. The specifics of each program are detailed in Section 5.0.

2.0 Admission Requirements

For the traditional MA and the MA/MBA program, applicants must hold a bachelor’s degree in a discipline that will allow them to study some aspect of the field of sustainability at an advanced level and have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or equivalent. To apply, please send a letter explaining your interests in sustainability studies and qualifications to the graduate director, Dr. Jase Bernhardt at Jase.E.Bernhardt@hofstra.edu. This letter should review your relevant achievements and curricular preparation and include your academic and career goals in the area of sustainability and how the degree will help you achieve the goals. In addition, the letter should identify the faculty member(s) (see list at the end of this document) who share your areas of interest and who might serve as faculty mentors for your area of study and research.

Students also need to submit three letters of recommendation. The letters of recommendation should be from persons familiar with your achievements, abilities, and performance. It is required that at least one of these letters be from someone familiar with your academic performance. Official undergraduate academic transcripts are also required; however, unofficial transcripts may be submitted for initial consideration.

For more information and to apply online visit this Website: https://www.hofstra.edu/graduate/apply.html

Students must also follow all rules and regulations from Hofstra University Admissions. These can be found here: https://bulletin.hofstra.edu/content.php?catoid=104&navoid=14560

International students will find the Department a welcoming place. We are very interested in international issues and global sustainable development. International students can find information about visas and other requirements on the Hofstra
International Admission website here: https://www.hofstra.edu/graduate/international-students.html

Application materials are accepted at any time. However, students are encouraged to apply by **February 28th for Fall admission** and by **October 15th for Spring admission** in order to receive priority for financial aid. Students can begin their studies during any semester, but we encourage students to start in the Fall as that is when introductory courses are offered and when most financial aid is distributed.

### 3.0 General Information and Overview of Procedures

General guidelines for the MA program follow:

1. It is the responsibility of the student to be acquainted with all requirements and regulations of the University and the Department.

2. New students must attend a new student orientation at the start of the semester.

3. Students receiving scholarships and other financial support must take a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester.

4. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0. In addition, students must attain at least a B in all required core courses. No grade below a “C” will be accepted toward a graduate degree but all grades will be counted in computing the overall grade point average.

5. Thesis students must complete 6 hours of thesis credits and internship students must complete 6 hours of internship credits.

6. A grade of incomplete may be awarded at the discretion of the faculty member only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade and only if the incomplete is due to circumstances beyond the control of the student or instructor. Students are advised to complete a written contract for completing work to satisfy the course requirement and remove the incomplete grade. The contract should include a description of the work to be completed and the date by which the work is to be submitted. The instructor will specify a default grade based on work completed by the end of the semester. If the work required to satisfy the incomplete is not submitted by the contract deadline, the incomplete grade will be changed to the default grade.

7. Any student who is finishing an incomplete and plans to graduate but is otherwise not enrolled has to pay a matriculation fee to maintain standing. You need not enroll for credit if you do not require any more classes. However, if you are taking up a professor’s time, you should sign up for independent study or some other type of
course. For more on the Maintain Matriculation Fee, see: http://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/bursar/bursar_tuition.html

8. If you are taking a break from the program and are not graduating that semester (in other words you are really taking a break) you will need to fill out a leave of absence request here: http://www.hofstra.edu/academics/academics-bulletin-graduate-academic-policies-procedures.html If you are taking a leave but plan to graduate in the same semester, you will have to pay the matriculation fee.

4.0 Advising

The Director of Sustainability Studies will appoint a faculty member as an initial advisor (major professor) for each student accepted into the MA program in Sustainability. The advisor will advise the student in selecting appropriate courses and overall program planning in consultation with the Director. A student is encouraged to change their advisor if academic interests become more closely aligned with the interests of another faculty member and if that faculty member can accommodate the student. All changes in advisors must be approved by the Director of Sustainability.

Guidelines for advising are:

1. Each student will select, or be provided with, a major professor, who will also serve as the student’s Supervisory Committee Chair and Academic Advisor.

2. The major professor should be a faculty member on the list at the end of this document with whom the student is willing to work. The major professor should be willing to give thoughtful direction with respect to the selection of courses and for directing a thesis or internship. Students with a particular interest in mind but unsure of which faculty member to approach should consult with the Director of Sustainability Studies.

3. Each student, in consultation with his or her selected major professor, must select two additional members to complete the Supervisory Committee. At least one of the members of the Supervisory Committee must be a faculty member in the Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability. It is in the student’s best interest to consider potential committee members early by seeking out faculty who work in areas relating to their interests.

4. A completed Supervisory Committee Appointment Form must be signed by all members of the Committee and submitted to the Director of Sustainability Studies for approval. Students may change committee members by submitting a Change of Supervisory Committee form for approval.

5. Thesis students are expected to present a research proposal to their Thesis Committee shortly before or after the completion of 18 credit hours. The Committee will be
given two weeks to review the written proposal after which the Committee will meet with the student to discuss the proposal. This meeting must take place at least one semester before the semester in which the student plans to graduate.

6. Internship students should meet with their committee before the start of their internship to discuss expectations for the final internship presentation to the Committee.

7. Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Expectations of Conduct: There are rarely any problems with supervisory committees. However, the following expectations will be followed by all participants involved in a Thesis or Internship Committee including student, advisor (major professor), and committee members:

   • Regular communication of research between the student and committee members.
   • If major changes occur to the proposed study, the student in consultation with his or her advisor is responsible to call a committee meeting to discuss the changes.
   • If concerns arise either with regards to what can be considered major changes between committee members or other matters pertaining to the pursuit of the proposed study, these will be resolved by the Director of Sustainability Studies or the Chair of the Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability if the student’s advisor is the Director.

5.0 MA Degree Requirements

5.1 MA in Sustainability Degree

The MA in Sustainability requires 30 semester hours of coursework. As part of these 30 hours, students must complete 6 semester hours of internship or 6 semester hours of thesis credits.

Required Core Courses (15 hours)
SBLY 201 Sustainable Development 3 s.h.
SBLY 206 Sustainability Theory and Practice 3 s.h.
GEOL 251 Readings 3 s.h.

SBLY 340 Sustainability Internship 6 s.h.
Or
SBLY 301 Sustainability Thesis 6 s.h.

Students can take either the thesis or the internship for credit. Only six hours of one of those courses counts for the degree. Students must take SBLY 201, SBLY 206, and GEOL 251 before or concurrently with SBLY 340 or 301. Thesis hours should be taken in the final year of study with 3 s.h. taken in the Fall and 3 s.h. taken in the Spring.
semesters. The first 3 s.h. will result in a proposal with completion of the thesis in the Spring (see Section 6). The six credits of internships may be split into two semesters or completed in one semester and will be decided once the student obtains an adviser and secures an internship.

Electives
15 hours of graduate courses from the Departments of Biology; Computer Science; Community Health; Engineering; Geology Environment, and Sustainability; Management; Philosophy; Public Health; or Sociology with the approval of the advisor. Other courses may count with the approval of the Graduate Director.

2000 Level Converted Undergraduate Courses
Up to 6 hours of undergraduate upper level (100 or above) courses may be counted with the approval of the Director of Sustainability Studies. Undergraduate courses must be converted to 2000 level graduate courses by completing additional work for graduate credit. This must be arranged with the instructor of the course prior to the beginning of the semester when the course is taught. No more than two 2000 level converted courses may be counted toward completion of MA degree requirements.

5.2 Sustainability Studies (MA) and Master of Business (MBA) Dual-degree Program

Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Frank G. Zarb School of Business offer this combined MA and MBA dual-degree program. Qualified graduate students can elect to enroll in this dual-degree program, combining a Master of Arts in Sustainability Studies (MA) and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) allowing for a full body of course work and skill development within a variety of MBA concentrations, along with a broad and deep exposure to the field of sustainability studies.

The MA in Sustainability Studies requires the successful completion of 30 s.h., of which 15 credits consist of courses taken within the MBA Program, subject to advisement from the MA and MBA Program faculty advisers. The Hofstra MBA requirements are the same as described for all students in the Hofstra University Graduate Studies Bulletin for the MBA program, except for the course MGT 228 - Organizational Strategy for Sustainability, which is a required course as part of the MBA concentration in this dual program. For the MBA portion, students must select an MBA major from the following areas:

- Accounting, MBA
- Business Analytics, MBA
- Finance, MBA
- Full-Time Day Master of Business Administration Program, MBA
- Health Services Management, MBA
- Information Systems, MBA
- International Business, MBA
- Management, MBA
• Marketing, MBA
• Online Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program
• Accounting, Professional Accountancy, MBA
• Quality Management, MBA
• Sports and Entertainment Management, MBA
• Taxation, MBA

More information can be found in the Hofstra Graduate Bulletin at:
https://bulletin.hofstra.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=104&poid=17990&returnto=14554

5.3 Sustainability Studies (BA or BS) and Sustainability (MA) Dual Degree Program

Qualified undergraduate students may elect to enroll in a dual-degree program, combining their undergraduate BA or BS degree in sustainability studies with a Master of Arts degree in sustainability. The dual-degree program requires successful completion of a total of 145 s.h., including at least 115 s.h. at the undergraduate level and 30 s.h. at the graduate level. The dual-degree program can be completed in five years, including at least one summer session. Students who are admitted to the MA portion of the dual-degree program may apply the graduate courses SBLY 201, SBLY 206, and GEOL 251 toward both the BA/BS and MA degree requirements. These 9 s.h. will apply to the undergraduate degree in addition to the required 115 s.h. of undergraduate course work, for a total of 124 s.h. for the BA/BS.

GEOL 251 must be taken before being enrolled in SBLY 301 or 340 thesis or internship courses. SBLY 201 and SBLY 206 may be taken at any time but are recommended for either the student’s junior or senior year. These two courses must be completed prior to the fifth year when students enroll in thesis or internship classes.

More information on the dual degree programs in sustainability can be found in the Hofstra University Undergraduate Bulletin:
https://bulletin.hofstra.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=103&poid=17565

6.0 Master of Art Degree Requirements: Thesis and Internship Requirements

Thesis option:

1. The student must complete a thesis proposal as outlined above in consultation with their advisor and committee.

2. When the thesis is complete, the thesis must be defended by the end of the semester of graduation. The defense is scheduled and organized by the student’s advisor. The defense, which must include a presentation of the research, must be
advertised in the Department and on the Department’s web and social media pages at least one week before the defense.

3. A copy of the thesis must be available in the Department for review at least two weeks prior to the defense.

Internship option:

The Internship provides an opportunity for the student to explore real-world work with a host institution. The student must complete the following requirements for the Internship:

1. A Work Plan. The Work Plan should include a review of the work to be completed at the host institution. The student’s advisor and advisory committee are responsible for ensuring that the Internship has appropriate rigor and duration for 6 academic credit hours (minimum of 28 hours off campus per credit hour). It is expected that the Work Plan will include a statement as to the significance of the Internship to applied issues in sustainability. It must also include a literature review.

2. Internship Report. Like the thesis, the Internship Report is submitted to the Committee for evaluation and must be defended by the end of the semester of graduation. The defense is scheduled and organized by the student’s advisor. The defense, which must include a presentation of the internship work, must be advertised in the Department and the Department’s web and social media pages at least one week before the defense.

3. A copy of the Internship Report must be available in the Department for review at least two weeks prior to the defense.

7.0 Financial Support

For information about Hofstra University Financial Aid or Loan Packages, see: Financial Aid [https://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/financialaid/index.html](https://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/financialaid/index.html) There are also a number of Hofstra University scholarships available. You can find out about them here: [https://www.hofstra.edu/academics/grad/grad_fa_scholarships.html](https://www.hofstra.edu/academics/grad/grad_fa_scholarships.html).

The Department does have a limited number of partial scholarships available through the support of the University and the National Center for Suburban Studies. Please send a letter stating your interest in a scholarship along with your application letter to Dr. Jase Bernhardt, Graduate Director of Sustainability Studies. Include a resume.
8.0 Faculty and Affiliated Offices

Students are encouraged to select a mentor from the list of faculty in the Department of Geology, Environment and Sustainability or from the list of Affiliated Faculty in other academic departments. Your faculty mentor will help you select the appropriate electives to reach your goals and assist you with developing a thesis or with finding a suitable internship. Note: at least one committee member must be from the list of core faculty.

Core Faculty

J Bret Bennington (Chair), Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability: paleoecology, conservation paleobiology, glacial geomorphology, geologic history of Long Island, coastal sedimentology

Jase Bernhardt, Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability: Human impacts on climate, environmental history, climatology, climate change, meteorology, geographic information systems (GIS) applications

E. Christa Farmer, Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability: paleoclimatology, paleoceanography, climate change, trace metals in soils and sediments

Sandra Garren, (Graduate Director and Director of Sustainability Studies), Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability: sustainability and environmental policy, environmental management, energy management, greenhouse gas management, geoscience/geographic information systems (GIS)

Antonios Marsellos, Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability: structural geology, mineralogy, geochemistry, remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS)

Annetta Centrella-Vitale, Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability: sustainable food and agriculture

Affiliated Faculty

Ralph Acampora, Department of Philosophy: Ethics, animals, embodiment

Alan Bailin, Hofstra Library: research methods, research strategies, critical assessment of research, thesis preparation

Kevin Bisceglia, Department of Chemistry: environmental and analytical chemistry, water quality, chemical cycling in the built environment, sewage epidemiology

Meena Bose, Department of Political Science: presidential studies, executive politics, leadership and governance policy making, American politics
**Russell Burke**, Department of **Biology**: wildlife, ecology, urban ecology, reptiles, mammals

**Daniel Devine**, Department of **Art**: fine arts, sculpture, sustainability in art, environmental sculpture, earth art, social art

**Christopher Eliot**, Department of **Philosophy**: philosophy of ecology and conservation biology, history of ecology and environmentalism, scientific reasoning, environmental ethics and aesthetics, urban ecology/ornithology

**Martine Hackett**, **Health Sciences**: public health, health promotion, childhood obesity, community based participatory research methods, environmental justice

**Margaret Hunter**, Department of **Civil Engineering**: environmental engineering, environmental chemistry, organic pollutants, pesticides, soil and water quality

**Zilkia Janer**, Department of **Geography and Global Studies**: food culture

**Javier Izquierda**, Department of **Biology**: renewable energy, waste management, agriculture

**Katrina Fischer Kuh**, Department of **Law**: climate law, regulating individual behaviors, clean water act, endangered species act, environmental review

**Linda Longmire**, Department of **Geography and Global Studies**: environmental politics, ecofeminism, sustainability and political theory, environmental racism

**Cheryl Mwaria**, Department of **Anthropology**: health, Africa and the African Diaspora, women, ethics, indigenous practices

**Christopher Niedt**, Department of **Sociology**: suburbs, housing, redevelopment, labor, equity

**Ying Qiu**, Department of **Geography and Global Studies**: economic geography, environmental sustainability, eco-efficiency, green growth, sustainability indicators

**Steve Raciti**, Department of **Biology**: urban ecology, plant and soil biology, forest ecology, biogeochemistry, global environmental change

**Ron Sarno**, Department of **Biology**: urban ecology, conservation, behavior

**Charles Smith**, Department of **Management**: organizational strategies for sustainability; social/technical innovations for sustainability; ethics, corporate responsibility/accountability; and consciousness/spirituality and activism
Geri Solomon, Hofstra Library: preservation, history, research

Mary Anne Trasciatti, Department of Rhetoric: advocacy, communication, community activism, public memory

Kathleen Wallace, Department of Philosophy: ethics, weak and strong sustainability concepts, environmentalism

Jason Williams, Department of Biology: marine biology, invertebrate zoology, parasitology