Optional Ph.D. Emphasis in Economics and Environmental Science (EES)

The EES emphasis is a joint undertaking of the UCSB Department of Economics and the Bren School, administered through the Bren School. The goal of the emphasis is to provide a new model for doctoral training in environmental and resource economics. EES students receive Ph.D.-level training in economics and a companion area of natural science (climate, hydrology, applied ecology, and marine science are examples). Students who pursue this option acquire a deep and expert knowledge of economics, as well as an understanding and appreciation of the research questions and methods of a natural science that complements their economics research.

Only currently enrolled UCSB students in the Department of Economics or the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management may apply for admission into the Economics and Environmental Science emphasis. A prerequisite for admission to the emphasis is the successful completion of the core sequence in microeconomics and econometrics (Econ 210 A-B-C, 241 A-B-C) and the achievement of a Ph.D.-pass on the preliminary examination in these areas.

Once admitted and in consultation with their respective faculty advisor, students are expected to begin defining an area of natural science in which they will establish competency. Typically, a student will complete 4-6 formal classes, seminars and directed readings, ideally supplemented with lab meetings and summer research.

Procedurally, students identify a natural science faculty member to serve as a mentor and then identify an area of natural science consistent with the interests and expertise of that mentor. Examples of specialization areas include applied ecology, climate, hydrology, and marine science. A student’s area of natural science specialization and his/her plan for establishing competency should be approved within a year of being admitted to the EES emphasis.

The dissertation is the most important product of a student’s Ph.D. program and should be an original contribution to knowledge. Although the expectation is that a student’s dissertation be a contribution to economics, the specific subject of the dissertation is a matter between the student and his or her Ph.D. committee.

Students who petition to add the EES emphasis must fulfill the following requirements in addition to the requirements for the Ph.D. in their home department:

- Complete the three-course graduate sequence in environmental and natural resource economics, as defined by the Department of Economics;
- Establish proficiency in a second field of economics (in addition to environmental and natural-resource economics) as defined by the Department of Economics, or alternatively, design a custom field with the following components: the existence of a significant body of economic literature, sufficient breadth to be recognized as a field for teaching or research, and the availability of Ph.D.-level coursework in support of the field;
• Fulfill the student’s proposed (and approved) plan for establishing competency in an area of natural science.
• Complete at least one quarter in the cross-disciplinary, problem-based Bren Ph.D. seminar ESM 595PB;
• Complete four quarters in the Economics Ph.D. seminar in environmental and resource economics, Econ 594ER.

For more information, visit the program website at http://www.bren.ucsb.edu/academics/about_ees.htm.