

RSENR Graduate Program Policy Change of Program

Purpose: Clarify the process to change from the NR M.Sc. program to the NR Ph.D. program – or vice versa - in the Rubenstein School. [This policy does *not* apply to the M.S. or Ph.D. in Sustainability Leadership.]

Rationale: Although there is a general statement in the Graduate Catalog to address this situation, the Rubenstein School has no stated policy or process. Any student who currently applies to our Masters or PhD programs is evaluated by three Rubenstein School faculty for entry to the program. To be admitted at least one faculty member must agree to advise and two must support this decision. Currently we have no similar review when a student wants to change from one program to another. For the benefit of the student and the quality of our programs, these changes should be reviewed with the same rigor as a new application. This is especially the case when a student wants to or is advised to change from a Ph.D. to the Master's program or when a student wants to change advisors (or vice versa) when changing programs. The intent of this policy is to create a process for a fair but simple to review.

Process:

1. The student should send the Graduate Coordinator a statement describing their justification for wanting to move from the M.S to the Ph.D. program (or vice versa) and why they do not feel they can attain their goals within the current program framework. They should briefly but clearly describe the new research plan they propose (either increased or decreased in scope) consistent with the change in program they propose. (Suggest <2 pages)
2. The student's current advisor should send the Graduate Coordinator a statement confirming their support (or lack of support) for the student's requested change. This statement should indicate why they think the student is a suitable candidate for the Ph.D. program if opting to move from the M.Sc. program or why it is advisable that they move to the M.Sc. program if they are currently in the Ph.D. program. In addition, they should state whether they intend to provide support (stipend, tuition, research funding) for the student's new, proposed efforts. The faculty member should also confirm that coursework completed by the student to date will be relevant and applicable to the new program requirements. (Suggest <1 page)
3. In the event that a student proposes to change their program *and* their advisor, the both the current and the new advisor should provide a statement addressing the components outlined in 2, above.
4. The Graduate Coordinator will provide all statements to the Graduate Standards Committee who will review them and provide a recommendation to the Graduate Coordinator to approve or deny.
5. The Graduate Coordinator will communicate all documentation and the Graduate Standards Committee recommendation to the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development who will make a final decision and inform the student, advisor, and GSC. The decision of the Associate Dean, whether to approve or deny, is final and may not be appealed.
6. If approved, the Graduate Coordinator will provide an updated appointment letter for processing by the Rubenstein School, the Graduate College, and student.

7. In the event that a student wants to move from the NR M.Sc. or Ph.D. program to the M.S. or Ph.D. program in Sustainability Leadership, they will be required to apply directly to those latter programs as a new applicant.

Adopted 3/18/2022