

# Bachelor's of Science in Sustainability Studies at UCR

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is sustainability studies?

The Sustainability Studies B.S. program at UCR strives to build knowledge that will guide us towards a livable world in the face of serious global environmental degradation. Today's critical issues related to sustainability include climate change, energy demands, deforestation, pollution, biodiversity conservation, depletion of agricultural land, and food and water scarcity. With the understanding that these issues affect the most vulnerable populations more gravely, our program maintains a social justice approach to sustainability.

### What is the difference between sustainability studies and environmental science majors?

The sustainability studies B.S. is a major in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS), while the environmental science major is offered by the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (CNAS). Students in the environmental science major choose a concentration from three options: natural science, social science, and environmental toxicology. Whereas the environmental science major focuses on the scientific study of the environment and environmental issues, the sustainability studies B.S. major approaches environmental changes as social issues and covers sustainability more broadly as a subject.

### Why is sustainability studies housed in the Gender & Sexuality Studies Department?

There are institutional and substantive reasons.

The institutional answer is that Gender & Sexuality Studies Department is home to a critical mass of faculty members with research and teaching interests in sustainability.

Substantively speaking, sustainability is inherently a gendered issue in many parts of the world because of how environmental changes affect men and women differently based on their division of labor and social statuses. Gender also is a critical element in devising and implementing sustainable practices around the world. Gender & sexuality studies as a discipline have a long tradition of developing research methods aligned with social justice that can be applied to studies of sustainability issues.

### What can I do with a degree in sustainability studies?

According to [sustainabilitydegrees.com](http://sustainabilitydegrees.com), "sustainability professionals may help their employers conserve resources (from energy to water to dollars) and improve efficiency; create new, more environmentally and socially responsible technologies or services; educate stakeholders about environmental and social issues and engage them in planning and programming accordingly and more. Regardless of job title, the work of all sustainability professionals focuses on the intersection of environment, economics and social and cultural issues." Careers that require a rigorous understanding of broader issues around sustainability are increasing in government, industry, education, and non-profit sectors. Sustainability Studies B.S. at UCR prepares students with a solid foundation to enter a career or pursue a graduate degree in related fields.

### What are the requirements for the major?

The major requirements have been put together with specific goals in mind.

First, we aim to equip students with the research methods, analytical tools, and social theories developed within the field of gender studies to reinforce the social justice approach to sustainability. Students are required to take introductory and advanced courses (including ones that are specific to gender and sustainability) as well as a capstone series from the department of gender and sexuality studies.

Second, we believe that familiarity with scientific approaches and research on environmental problems and the ability to converse with scientists are an important set of skills for professionals who are tasked with the development of programs and policies around sustainability. Our majors are required to take two additional lower-level science courses applicable to sustainability and one quantitative methods course in order to fortify scientific literacy.

Third, we seek to provide students with interdisciplinary training in sustainability. Students are required to select from a variety of courses that are offered by UCR faculty members across campus in areas of policy and politics, health and medicine, science technology, and other sustainability related topics such as environmental ethics, eco-humanities and media. Students have the option of focusing on one area or taking courses from multiple areas in accordance with their particular academic and career interests.

### Are internships encouraged?

Yes. The majority of sustainability professions are action driven jobs that require creative problem solving as well as organizational and leadership skills in

addition to a broad knowledge base and training in analytical ability and critical thinking. Many classes will challenge students to develop solutions and work in teams. However, experiences of working in real world settings are irreplaceable and tremendously important in developing the above skills. Our program encourages students to do internships with existing organizations focused on sustainability. Internships can earn academic credits when it is conducted in conjunction with enrollment in GSST 198.

Getting involved in on-campus sustainability initiatives or multi-campus student-led projects are also great ways to acquire hands-on experience.

### I am transferring from CNAS and have taken a lot of science courses. Would I be able to apply some of them to this major?

Yes. This major is designed to accommodate transfers from CNAS to CHASS. On a case-by-case basis, the program director may substitute one or more requirements with a course taken in CNAS. If a student has fulfilled the pre-requisites for upper-level CNAS courses related to sustainability issues, they may take up to two courses from the approved list to substitute the major's upper-level course requirements.

For more information, complete major requirements, and hypwerlinks, go to: [gsst.ucr.edu](http://gsst.ucr.edu). Questions? Contact: [chikako.takeshita@ucr.edu](mailto:chikako.takeshita@ucr.edu)

