

## **Program on the Environment Assessment Plan**

Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science  
Bachelor of Science in Environmental Resources  
Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies

### **1. Program Overview**

The Program on the Environment provides students with interdisciplinary training that is necessary for addressing a variety of complex environmental issues facing society. The program consists of three degrees with varying amounts of overlap. All three degrees have a shared core of fundamental, cross-cutting courses that serve students pursuing a wide-range of environmental interests.

The B.S. Environmental Science provides students with rigorous training in Earth science, chemistry, and ecology. The B.S. Environmental Resources shares many courses with the B.S. Environmental Science, but places greater emphasis on human-environment interactions and understanding the Earth from geographic and resource management perspectives. The B.A. Environmental Studies focuses heavily on human-environment interactions, including policy, philosophy, and management. Students in the B.A. Environmental Studies may choose to pursue an emphasis in Outdoor Studies. All three degrees use the natural laboratory available to students in Southeast Alaska through hands-on field exercises and guided research projects with program faculty. All program students are required to complete a capstone, through internships, an individual research project, or a capstone course. Program graduates are well-prepared for (i) employment in resource management, policy, conservation, tourism, and environmental consulting and (ii) to enter graduate programs in environmental sciences or studies, environmental education, environmental policy, political science, sociology, anthropology, geography, and related fields.

The relationships between the three degrees are illustrated graphically in the table on the next page.

### **2. Program Student Learning Outcomes**

By the time that they have finished their degree, all students in the Program in the Environment will be able to:

1. Describe the fundamental components and interactions of Earth systems, environments, and social systems, including an understanding of their relevance to Southeast Alaska.
2. Use research techniques to investigate Earth systems and environmental problems.
3. Use diverse written and oral communication skills to effectively communicate environmental issues.

**B.S. Environmental  
Science****B.S. Environmental  
Resources****B.A. Environmental  
Studies**

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Program on the Environment Core</i><br>9 credits                                                          |                                                         |                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Major Requirements</i><br>36 credits                                                                      | <i>Major Requirements</i><br>23 credits                 | <i>Breadth</i><br>9 credits                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                              | <i>Interdisciplinary and Field Courses</i><br>6 credits |                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                                              | <i>Human Environment</i><br>6 credits                   |                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Environmental Processes</i><br>17 credits (Environmental Science)<br>14 credits (Environmental Resources) |                                                         | <i>Concentration requirements</i><br><br>Environmental studies emphasis (15 credits)<br><br>or<br><br>Outdoor studies (24 credits) |
| <i>Quantitative &amp; Spatial Analysis</i><br>8 credits                                                      |                                                         | <i>Electives</i><br>30-40 credits                                                                                                  |

### **3. Assessment Strategy**

The three degrees that comprise the Program in the Environment are flexible, and program faculty often deliver unique current topics and field courses that change from year to year. As a result students may take very different pathways through the degrees. Our assessment strategy is nimble and designed to reflect the program's flexibility.

Graduating students in the Program in the Environment are asked to submit a portfolio before being cleared to graduate. The portfolio must contain:

1. One assignment/product that they think best addresses each of the PLOs, with a brief (3-4 sentence) explanation of how the assignment meets this learning outcome.
2. A pdf screenshot of their DegreeWorks showing how all requirements for the degree and graduation have been met.
3. Response to exit interview questions.

A group of 3-4 faculty will evaluate the portfolios and draft the annual assessment report. The evaluation will (i) address whether graduating students are meeting the program learning outcomes and (ii) evaluate the student pathways through the degree programs in order to better understand how courses relate to each and to improve advising across these interdisciplinary degrees.

### **Appendix: Exit Interview Questions (part of portfolio)**

All graduating students in the Program on the Environment, which consists of the B.S. Environmental Science, the B.S. Environmental Resources, and the B.A. Environmental Studies, are required to respond to these exit interview questions before graduating. Respond to each question either as pertains to the Program on the Environment in general or specifically to your degree program.

1. What attracted you to the UAS Program on the Environment?
2. How many years did you spend in the program?
3. What were the strongest or most effective aspects of the program?
4. Can you think of specific ways that we could improve the Program on the Environment for future students?
5. Are there any courses that were not offered that you feel would have strengthened the program?
6. Did you feel that you received effective academic advising in the course of completing your degree?
7. Did you feel courses were available when you wanted to take them?

8. Did you participate in an undergraduate research project during your degree, and If so, in what capacity?
9. What are your career or graduate school plans after you leave the program?
10. Are there ways that the Program on the Environment could have better prepared you for your expected career pathway?
11. Any other comments?