Masters of Science in Environmental Health (MSEH)
Degree Program Guidance
Matriculation Process

It is very important for MSEH students to recognize that it is the primary responsibility of the student to make sure that they meet the requirements of the ECU Graduate School and MSEH Program to complete all required coursework and research requirements for completion of a Thesis or Professional Paper (with the guidance of their Academic [curriculum] Advisor, Thesis/Professional Paper Chair and Committee members, and MSEH Program Director [Dr. Stephanie Richards; richardss@ecu.edu]).

1. Once students are admitted and are assigned a Banner ID# and student e-mail address, they may then enroll in appropriate coursework based on the course catalog and/or guidance from their assigned academic (curriculum) advisor, based on whether they have been admitted to the **MSEH Research Option or MSEH Applied Option**. The MSEH Applied Option may be completed entirely online, but the Research Option requires completion of 15 of the required minimum 35 hours in a more traditional face-to-face classroom setting.

2. MSEH students must complete a minimum total of 35 semester hours (s.h.) of course credit in order to graduate. 26 of these hours are required and 9 are elective (http://catalog.ecu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=9&poid=2092). MSEH students typically complete requirements for the catalog during the year they were admitted but can request that the requirements be updated to the current catalog. MSEH faculty recommend that EHST 6210: Topics in Environmental Health and Safety be taken three times for one credit hour each – the first time to identify a Thesis/Professional Paper topic, Committee and Committee Chair; the second time to complete a comprehensive literature review of the topic; and the third time to complete a Committee-approved Thesis/Professional Paper proposal (study objectives and methods). This would then adjust the available elective hours up to 12, allowing the student more flexibility in their course choices.

3. Alternatives to required or elective courses listed in the catalog may be approved by the student’s Academic Advisor, Committee, and other MSEH faculty based upon the student's interests and career goals. All elective courses should be related and applicable to the field of environmental health. Requests for approved course substitutions must be submitted via the SharePoint site by the MSEH Director.

4. Thesis/Professional Paper Committees must consist of two MSEH faculty members and one appropriate member external to the MSEH Program (at ECU). External Thesis Committee members must either be graduate faculty or have equivalent education and experience as determined by the ECU Graduate School. External Professional Paper Committee members may be approved by the other Committee members. Additional Committee members outside of ECU may be approved by the student’s Thesis/Professional Paper Committee.

5. ECU Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval must be sought and obtained for any Thesis/Professional Paper topic that includes human or animal subjects prior to beginning the study. Expedited IRB approval may be obtained relatively quickly if necessary.

6. Remaining credit hours required for graduation may be chosen from the catalog elective course list or electives may be proposed by the student (with an appropriate explanation).

7. All students must complete an open-source Comprehensive Exam, typically during the last year of coursework. The structure of the Comprehensive Exam is six questions covering many, although not all, of the “programmatic” or “competency” areas of environmental health, including, but not limited to; epidemiology, toxicology, occupational health/industrial hygiene, program management and law, vector control, waste management, drinking water/recreational water/wastewater management, food protection and sanitation, etc. Up to six hours is provided to complete this exam (about one hour per question) and is usually completed during one day (three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon with a one hour lunch break). While clear, concise responses are an important writing skill, acceptable answers covering all parts of one question are rarely fewer than two pages long.
8. All students must complete and should orally defend a **Thesis or Professional Paper** (either in person or via teleconferencing), which **must** be approved by their Committee Chair, Committee members and Department Chair. All theses are reviewed by the ECU Graduate School and selected Professional Papers may be reviewed. **IMPORTANT:** **Students should allow adequate time for Committee members to complete a thorough review of their Thesis/Professional Paper.** Five to ten drafts of a Thesis/Professional Paper are not unusual. Since each draft can easily take a week to review, it is strongly recommended that the first draft of a Thesis/Professional Paper be submitted at least 10 weeks before the student's proposed completion of all MSEH degree requirements.

9. MSEH students may progress through the Program as quickly or slowly as they prefer, although faculty recommend that students take at least one course during spring and fall semesters to avoid students being required to apply for readmission. Following six years, course credits earned begin to expire (expired required courses may need to be retaken). More information can be found at the ECU Graduate School Policies and Forms website at [http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/gradschool/Academic-Policies-and-Forms.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/gradschool/Academic-Policies-and-Forms.cfm).

10. Information on applying for Graduation, Academic Support and Financial issues may be found at [http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/gradschool/current.cfm](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/gradschool/current.cfm).