

Guidelines to Apply for NRELP Thesis Environmental and Natural Resources LLM Program

Students participating in the Environmental and Natural Resources Law LLM Program may apply to undertake the preparation of a thesis (6 credit hours). The application should be submitted in the semester preceding the semester in which the thesis is to be credited. Registration for the course is not automatic and requires the pre-approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. Not all applications for a thesis are approved. The following guidelines are provided to facilitate your application.

Step 1. Meet with the Director of Graduate Studies (Prof. Otto), to discuss whether your research idea is sufficiently related to the field of environment and/or natural resources law to be considered for thesis credit. Bring to this meeting a thesis proposal. This proposal should be 3 to 4 pages in length and should be organized in the following sections:

Section 1. Objective of research

In a maximum of three sentences state either 1) a question (or questions) that you will seek to answer in your research paper, or 2) a hypothesis that you will attempt to prove or disprove. Note: a general objective such as “I intend to look into global warming” is not acceptable.

Section 2. Justification

Describe how the proposed research will prepare you for a career in, or is in some other way related to, natural resources and/or environmental law.

Section 3. Major topics and issues

List the major topics and issues that you think will be addressed in the thesis. Explain the purpose of each topic and issue and how each is pertinent to the thesis objective (section 1).

Section 4. Methodology

Describe how you intend to go about your research effort. Is it to be based on interviews, on library research, etc? Be specific as possible.

Section 5. Proposed dates and milestones

Specify key milestones to be completed in the research process and the dates on which you expect them to be achieved. For example: initial library search – Sept 25, initial outline of thesis - Oct 20; initial draft of paper – Nov 5; completion of references – Nov. 15; completion of final paper Dec 2.

Section 6. Identification of Supervising Professor

Identify which professor you want to supervise your research effort. It may be useful to talk with that professor before meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies. Note: only full-time members of the faculty (i.e. not Adjunct Professors) are eligible to supervise a thesis.

At the conclusion of the proposal meeting, the Director of Graduate Studies may accept the proposal, ask for revisions, or reject it. This decision is not subject to appeal.

Step 2. Meet with the proposed Supervising Professor and obtain his/her agreement to supervise the work. Have that professor notify the Director of Graduate Studies by email or written memo that he/she so agrees.

Step 3. If the proposal meets the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and a supervising professor has been identified (and he/she has agreed to supervise), complete a course add form and submit the signed form to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Step 4. The Director of Graduate Studies will then notify the Registrar, and you will be registered for the thesis.

Step 5. The thesis must be completed within the semester for which you are registered for thesis credit. The continuation of thesis work past that semester on an “incomplete” basis will be as per the normal incomplete course policy of the College of Law.

Note: The three required bound copies of the completed thesis must be submitted to the supervising faculty member no later than the last day of exams of the semester in which the student is registered for the thesis. The grading of the thesis is by committee and will be done in the semester following the semester in which the thesis was submitted.