



UNIL | Université de Lausanne

Faculté des géosciences
et de l'environnement

Maîtrise universitaire ès Sciences en sciences
de l'environnement

Master of Science (MSc) in Environmental Science

Faculty of Geosciences and Environment

University of Lausanne

Regulations

Applicable from | 17 septembre 2024



Faculty of Geosciences and Environment | www.unil.ch/gse

Maîtrise universitaire ès Sciences en sciences de l'environnement

Master of Science (MSc) in Environmental Science

Note: This document is a translation from the original document in French. In case of discrepancies, only the original version in French is binding.

Chapter 1 - General information

Article 1 - Object

The Master of Science (MSc) in Environmental Science offered by the Faculty of Geosciences and Environment at the University of Lausanne is designed to provide cutting-edge university-level training while at the same time offering a more in-depth orientation.

Article 2 - Objectives of training

1. The training objectives should enable students to :
 - Describe, understand and model physical and/or chemical processes of natural or anthropogenic origin
 - Master and know how to use quantitative methodologies in the environmental sciences (field measurements, laboratory, data analysis)
 - Choose appropriate techniques for assessing and monitoring environmental problems
 - Problematiser a subject on theoretical and empirical bases in the natural sciences
 - Decode, analyse and evaluate scientific articles
 - Formulate a research problem
 - Take into account the complexity, uncertainties and limits of knowledge concerning environmental processes
 - Know how to write and present a scientific or technical paper
 - Communicate environmental issues to non-specialists
 - Be prepared to work in a multi-disciplinary working group
 - Understand the role of an environmental specialist in a multidisciplinary team.

2. The additional learning objectives for each area of study are described in the study plan.

Chapter 2 - Management and organisation

Article 3 - Scientific Committee

1. The curriculum is the responsibility of the Dean's Office, which may delegate certain tasks to a Scientific Committee.
2. The Scientific Committee is made up of the teaching staff (professors, senior lecturers and assistant lecturers) taking part in the compulsory courses in the programme. It also includes three student members, one from each orientation, elected among the students taking part in the orientation's programme, as well as two representatives of the teaching assistants. A member of the GSE School Board is appointed as a permanent invitee.
3. The Scientific Committee proposes a coordinator from among its members. The appointment of the coordinator is validated by the Faculty Council on the advice of the School Council. The coordinator's term of office is two years, renewable.
4. The Scientific Committee's tasks include:
 - a. drawing up regulations and a study plan for the Master's programme and submit them to the relevant authorities for approval;
 - b. advising the competent authorities on the admission of candidates in accordance with the CUS directives of 4 December 2003; the final decision is taken by the University's Registration and Enrolment Service (SII);
 - c. coordinating the courses and other activities set out in the Study Plan, as well as the assessment process;
 - d. notifying the competent authorities of cases of force majeure justifying a derogation from these regulations or the study plan.

5. The Committee may delegate some of its duties to one of its members. The Committee shall draw up a list of the tasks delegated to one or more of its members and shall formally approve it at the beginning of each academic year and each time the Committee is renewed.

Chapter 3 - Admission requirements

Article 4 - Admission

1. Admission to the Master of Science [MSc] in Environmental Science is open to students who meet the conditions for admission and enrolment in a Master's programme at the University of Lausanne, and who hold a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Geosciences and Environment, majoring in environmental sciences or geology, awarded by the Faculty of Geosciences and Environment of the University of Lausanne.
2. Students who meet the conditions for matriculation and enrolment in a master's programme at the University of Lausanne, and who are in possession of the following documents, may be admitted:
 - a. Bachelor's degree in one of the fields of study (swissuniversities) in environmental sciences or earth sciences at a Swiss university;
 - b. a Swiss or foreign university bachelor's degree, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Registrar's Office, obtained in another field of study.
3. The students referred to in paragraph 2 must submit an application file, on the basis of which the Scientific Committee will establish a personalised preparatory course in line with the basic curricula. If the preparatory programme exceeds 60 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits, admission to the Master's programme will be refused.
4. A so called integrated preparatory course with a maximum of 15 ECTS credits enables the student to be admitted to the Master's programme while completing the preparatory course at the same time. The degree is not awarded until the preparatory programme has been successfully completed.
5. A so called prerequisite preparatory course with more than 15 ECTS credits will need to be completed prior to the admission to the Master's programme. Its successful completion constitutes an additional condition for admission to the programme. This preparatory course cannot exceed 60 ECTS credits.

Article 5 - Equivalences

1. A student who has previously received a recognised Master's degree in a field of study close to that of the Master of Science in Environmental Science, or who holds a recognised university degree in another field of study, may obtain a certificate of equivalence. The programme's Scientific Committee proposes criteria and rules of procedure that the Dean's Office, responsible for certificates of equivalence, applies on the basis of the candidate's file.
2. In all cases, at least 80 ECTS credits (including the 40 ECTS credits for the Master's thesis) out of the 120 required must be acquired as part of the Master of Science in Environmental Science programme.

Article 6 - Mobility

The Faculty establishes the rules for setting up mobility programmes as well as for the recognition of courses taken as part of these programmes. Within the framework of the programme described above, credits acquired through mobility may be recognized in the programme up to a maximum of 30 ECTS credits.

Article 7 – Admission procedure

1. Candidates must submit their applications to the Admissions Office of the University of Lausanne by the specified deadline. After examining the administrative requirements, the Admissions Office will decide on the formal admissibility of each candidate and forward its decision to the Dean's Office of the Faculty, if applicable.
2. The Dean's Office forwards all formally admissible applications to the Master's Scientific Committee.
3. After examining the applications, the Scientific Committee decides which candidates will be admitted to the Master's programme. The Scientific Committee sends its detailed decision to the Dean of the Faculty.
4. On the basis of the Scientific Committee's advice, the Dean's Office sends its decision of acceptance or refusal to the candidate along with the underlying reasons and, where applicable, an indication of the preparatory program required, as well as the procedures and deadlines for appeal.
5. If the application is accepted, the Dean's Office will specify the period of validity of the registration authorisation.

Chapter 4 - Duration of studies

Article 8 - Duration

1. The normal duration of the course is 4 semesters for full-time studies and 8 semesters for part-time studies.

2. The maximum duration of the course is 6 semesters for full-time studies and 10 semesters for part-time studies. Exceeding this limit will result in exclusion from the programme.
3. At the written request of the student, and for justified reasons recognised as such, the Dean of the Faculty may grant a derogation from the maximum duration of studies. This derogation may not exceed two semesters.

Article 9 - Leave

Articles 92 to 97 of the RLUL apply. Students who wish to interrupt their studies temporarily may request a leave of absence from the Dean of the Faculty. This leave may not exceed 2 semesters.

Chapter 5 - Organisation of studies

Article 10 – Orientation

When applying, candidates choose one of the three options:

- aquatic sciences
- natural hazards and risk
- land surface processes in mountain environments.

Article 11 - ECTS credits and course structure

1. The number of ECTS credits required to obtain the Master's degree is 120 ECTS credits: 80 ECTS credits are awarded for the courses and 40 ECTS credits for the Master's thesis.
2. The awarding of ECTS credits is conditional on the successful completion of assessments as specified in the Study Plan.
3. The course consists of four parts. The first part is made up of two modules: Module 1 Fundamentals of Environmental Sciences for 10 ECTS credits and Module 2 Analysis of Environmental Data and Systems for 20 ECTS credits. The second part consists of an orientation module for 30 ECTS credits:
 - a. Module 3A: Aquatic sciences
Or
 - b. Module 3B: Natural hazards and risk
Or
 - c. Module 3C: Land surface processes in mountain environments.

The third part consists of teachings focused on the Master's thesis, divided into two modules 4 and 5 of 6 and 14 ECTS credits respectively. Module 4 takes the form of a closed list of optional courses. Module 5 is made up of free-choice courses for 14 ECTS credits, in which the student can carry out an internship in a company or administration. The fourth part consists of Module 6, the Master's Thesis, for 40 ECTS credits.

Chapter 6 - Conditions for successful assessments

Article 12- Knowledge control

1. Each course is examined. This may take the form of a written or oral exam or validation (continuous assessment, practical work: individual work, seminar, oral presentation, practical laboratory or field work, work placement, site work, etc., provided as part of the studies). A single examination may cover several courses (integrative assessment).
2. The examination procedures are defined in the Study Plan.
3. The grades awarded for an examination range from 1 to 6. The 0 (zero) is a penalty reserved for cases of fraud, attempted fraud, plagiarism or unjustified absence. Grades are expressed to the nearest quarter point.
4. In the case of non-graded validation, the following remark is applied: "passed" or "not passed".
5. The results of the examinations are notified to the students by the Dean's Office.

Article 13 - Registration, withdrawal and failure to take part in assessments

1. Students register for courses within the deadlines set by the Dean's Office and the periods set by the UNIL Direction. Registration for courses automatically entails registration for the corresponding assessments. The deadlines are published at the beginning of the academic year.
2. Assessments are normally carried out at the examination session immediately following the course, i.e. the winter session for autumn semester courses and the summer session for spring semester courses.
3. A candidate who fails to attend an assessment for which they are registered will receive a 0 unless they justify their absence without delay to the Director of the School of GSE in the case of examinations or to the teacher in the case of validations. Only valid reasons will be accepted (illness, accident, death of a relative, etc.). In the event of illness or accident, a relevant medical certificate must be submitted to the Faculty within 3 days, unless there is a major impediment duly attested by an official written document.

Article 14 - Conditions for successful completion of modules and examinations

1. The Study Plan sets out the pass requirements for courses with assessments that must be passed independently and for modules that are passed on the basis of an average.
2. A course that must be passed independently is acquired if the grade is greater than or equal to 4.00. The ECTS credits associated with this course are then awarded.
3. A module consisting exclusively of graded examinations is deemed to have been passed if the ECTS credit-weighted average of the grades obtained is greater than or equal to 4.00. In this case, no examination may be submitted for a second attempt.
4. In the case of a module comprising graded examinations and one or more non-graded validations, the average is calculated on the basis of the graded examinations weighted by the corresponding ECTS credits. The module is passed if the average of the grades weighted by the ECTS credits of the graded examinations is greater than or equal to 4.0 and if at least 80% of the total credits for the module correspond to grades of at least 4.0 or to "passed" validations.
5. In the event of failure of a module, any examination grade equal to or higher than 4.00 or "passed" validation is retained.
6. Students who fail a module are entitled to a second attempt. Students must resit failed written and oral exams, as well as graded validations with a grade of less than 4.0 or an examination of "not passed".
7. In the event of failure of an examination that must be passed independently, the student is entitled to a second attempt. In the event of a second failure in an examination that must be passed independently, the student is authorised to take and have assessed another course whose assessment must be passed independently, subject to compliance with the maximum duration of studies.
8. A second failure in a module will result in permanent failure.
9. If a student has to resubmit certain examinations, the grades obtained in the second attempt are taken into account.

Article 15 - Conditions of successful « Mise à niveau » or preparatory programme

1. Unless a waiver is granted by the Dean's Office based on the advice of the Scientific Committee, the integrated preparatory programme or "mise à niveau intégrée" (maximum 15 ECTS credits) must be taken and passed during the first year of the Master's programme. In all cases, the integrated preparatory programme must be passed before the student can be admitted to defend the Master's thesis.
2. The prerequisite preparatory programme or "mise à niveau préalable" (more than 15 ECTS credits) must be taken and passed before entry to the Master's programme. Successful completion is a condition for enrolment in the Master's programme.
3. Students attend the regular winter and summer sessions. The autumn session is reserved for make-up sessions.
4. The assessments of the preparatory programme (integrated or pre-requisite) are passed if the average weighted by ECTS credits is equal to or greater than 4.0.
5. If a student fails the integrated or prerequisite preparatory program, they are entitled to a second attempt. Grades of 4.0 or above and successful assessments are retained. Grades from the second attempt are retained.
6. In the event of a second failure of the preparatory programme, the student is in final failure and cannot be admitted to the Master's programme. In the event of a second failure at the integrated preparatory programme, the student will fail the Master of Science in Environmental Sciences programme.

Article 16 - Change of orientation

1. Requests for a change of major must be sent to the Admissions Office within the deadlines set by the Department. The Admissions Office forwards the request to the Dean's Office, which submits it to the Scientific Committee for approval. The change is authorised if the student meets the admission requirements for the new major. The duration of studies provided for in article 8 must be respected.
2. If the first attempt is unsuccessful, the student is entitled to a second attempt at the failed assessments of the module making up his/her new major.
3. In the event of a second failure in the orientation module, it is no longer possible to change majors, as the student is in a situation of final failure.
4. Only one change of majors is possible within the programme, subject to the maximum duration of studies (art. 8).

Article 17 - Internship in a company / administration

1. Within the framework of the study plan, a work placement in a company or administration entitles the student to a maximum of 14 ECTS credits, as part of the module 5 of the 'Teaching focused on the Master's thesis' section. The number of credits awarded depends on the length of the placement and the content of the job description.
2. Students propose a project for their work placement in a company or administration to a teacher. If the teacher supports the project, it is submitted to the Committee for approval.
3. An agreement is drawn up between the student, the teacher in charge and the person in charge of the project in the company/administration, setting out in particular the terms of employment, remuneration

and objectives of the work placement in the company or administration, as well as the number of ECTS awarded.

4. The work placement and the corresponding ECTS credits are validated by the Scientific Committee on the basis of a report written by the student, accompanied by a certificate of activity drawn up by the host organisation and the documents produced by the student, an oral presentation for a work placement of more than 3 months (or 10 ECTS) and an assessment by the signatories of the agreement. The oral presentation is made in the presence of the Master's thesis supervisor and the person in charge of the project at the host organisation.

Chapter 7 - Master's thesis

Article 18 - Master's thesis

1. The Master's thesis is a personal research activity carried out under the responsibility of a teaching member of the Scientific Committee (professor, lecturer, assistant lecturer) as Master's thesis supervisor.
2. A private lecturer from the Faculty who is responsible for optional teaching in the curriculum and has a stable contract at the FGSE may also supervise a Master's thesis, with the agreement of the Scientific Committee.
3. A lecturer (professor, senior lecturer, assistant lecturer) from the Faculty may also supervise a Master's thesis, with the agreement of the Scientific Committee.
4. A lecturer (professor, senior lecturer, assistant lecturer) from another faculty or university may also supervise a Master's thesis, with the agreement of the Scientific Committee, which appoints, with the approval of the Dean's Office, a rapporteur who is a member of the Scientific Committee.
5. A person holding a doctorate or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Dean's Office may be authorised to supervise a Master's thesis with the agreement of the Scientific Committee, which appoints, with the approval of the Dean's Office, a rapporteur as defined in paragraph 1.
6. The quality of the Master's thesis is judged on the basis of a number of criteria reflecting the quality of the personal research carried out.
7. Students must complete the Master's thesis in their chosen field.
8. Instructions for writing, formatting and defending the Master's thesis are set out in a guideline published on the Master's website.

Article 19 - Conditions for successful completion of the Master's thesis

1. To be admitted to defend the Master's thesis, students must have passed the assessments of the three teaching modules in parts 1 and 2 of the curriculum (module 1, module 2 and module 3A, 3B or 3C), and obtained the corresponding 60 ECTS credits. Where applicable, students must have successfully completed their integrated refresher programme.
2. The jury is made up of at least the Master's thesis director, the rapporteur if applicable, and an internal or external expert.
3. The jury awards a grade based on the scientific quality of the Master's thesis presented, the quality of the oral defence and the candidate's knowledge of the discipline in question.
4. The Master's thesis is passed and the 40 ECTS credits acquired if the grade reflecting the quality of the research, the quality of the writing of the Master's thesis and the oral defence is equal to or higher than 4.00.
5. Any changes to the Master's thesis requested by the jury are recorded on the defence protocol, and the candidate has a maximum of 10 days - from the day of the defence - to correct his/her Master's thesis.
6. Submitting a Master's thesis after the deadline, a thesis that is judged to be insufficient, or non- respect of the corrections requested during the defence, will result in failure. In the event of failure, the student is entitled to a second attempt, which must take place before the end of the following semester at the latest, subject to article 8 al. 2 of these regulations. Cases of force majeure must be justified in writing to the Dean of the Faculty.
7. Cases of fraud, attempted fraud and plagiarism are governed by the Faculty Regulations (FGSE - Chapter 8, Organisation of studies). The procedure applicable to students in the event of plagiarism is described in Directive 3.15 on the handling of cases of plagiarism in teaching.

Article 20 - Code of ethics

At the beginning of their course, students enrolled in the Master of Science in Environmental Science programme must complete and sign the document relating to compliance with the Code of Ethics of the University of Lausanne concerning the borrowing, citation and use of various sources as well the Charter of the University of Lausanne. This document is placed in the student's file at the Dean's Office.

Chapitre 8 – Exclusion

Article 21 – Exclusion

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1. Students will be excluded from the Master of Science in Environmental Science programme at the University of Lausanne if they can no longer fulfil the conditions for the acquisition of credits in accordance with the Regulations and the Study Plan, in particular as a result of :
 - a) a final failure in the assessment of a module in the curriculum or the Master's thesis;
 - b) exceeding the duration of studies provided for in these regulations ;
 - c) a second failure in an integrated preparatory programme.
2. Exclusion is decided by the Dean of the Faculty, who may take account of exceptional situations in the cases described in letter b) above.

Article 22 – Exclusion, dismissal, ex-matriculation

Articles 89, 90 and 91 of the RLUL apply to exclusion, expulsion or ex-matriculation.

Chapter 9 – Appeals

Article 23 – Appeal

1. Appeal procedures are subject to the laws and regulations of the University of Lausanne and the Faculty of Geosciences and Environment.
2. First instance appeals must be submitted, in French, in writing to the Dean, who chairs the Faculty Appeals Committee.
3. If the first instance decision is contested, a second instance appeal may be submitted in accordance with the rules in force at the University of Lausanne (art. 83 LUL).

Chapter 10 - Award of the degree and Diploma Supplement

Article 24 - Title of grade

On the basis of the regulations in force, the title of the grade is as follows:

Maîtrise universitaire ès Sciences en sciences de l'environnement / Master of Science (MSc) in Environmental Science

- « Orientation sciences aquatiques » *ou*
- « Orientation dangers naturels et risque » *ou*
- « Orientation processus de la surface terrestre en environnements de montagne »

Master of Science (MSc) in Environmental Science

- « Orientation Aquatic Science » *or*
- « Orientation Natural Hazards and Risk » *or*
- « Orientation Earth Surface Processes in Mountain Environments »

Article 25 - Award of degree and diploma supplement

1. The degree is awarded to students who have obtained the required ECTS credits in the teaching modules and the Master's thesis, in accordance with the Study Plan and within the set deadlines.
2. The Dean of the Faculty applies to the University's administrative bodies for the degree and diploma supplement to be issued.

Chapter 11 - Coming into force and transitional provisions

Article 26- Entry into force

These regulations come into force on 17 September 2024. They repeal and replace the corresponding regulations dated 19 September 2023 and apply to all students.

Article 27 – Transitional provisions

The regulations of 19 September 2023 continue to apply, on a transitional basis, to students who began the programme no later than the start of the academic year on 19 September 2023, but no later than the expiry of the regulatory period for obtaining the Master's degree.

Chapter 12 - Suppletive law

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Article 27 - Suppletive law

The RLUL, RGE and RFGSE apply in addition.

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Approved by the Faculty Council at its meeting of 11 April 2024.

Adopted by the Management Board at its meeting of 28 May 2024.