



Academics

[This page](#) from the OFS website already provides a good overview of sustainability in curriculum at UVA.

UVA offers over 150 undergraduate courses that tie together the three pillars of sustainability: equity, economy, and the environment. A highly acclaimed way to engage with sustainability through academics is in the Global Sustainability major. This is an interdisciplinary program that allows students to hear from professors in a wide array of industries.

Obstacles to Including More Sustainability Courses

- A major obstacle to increasing the number of sustainability-related courses is that it can be difficult to cross-list them. For this reason, students may not be able to fit it into their requirements, or may be discouraged from taking a class if it, for example, has an “ENGR” tagline. This difficulty arises from how the different departments at UVA receive their funding. Essentially, funding is allocated to departments based on numbers of students that take their classes, meaning that a department would like to keep ownership of a class if students are interested. This policy/infrastructure issue could be an

area of interest for students looking to make sustainability classes more widely accessible.

Sustainability Curriculum at UVA

- While the University has made some notable efforts to ramp-up sustainability-related courses in recent years, the curriculum is nascent compared to other universities.
- **Global Studies-Environments and Sustainability (GSVS) Major and Minor (BA):** For students looking to get a broad background in sustainability, the GSVS major or minor is for you. The GSVS program at UVA offers courses in the multidisciplinary subjects of science, economics, foreign language, policy, and equity.
 - The major is application-based.
 - The curriculum prepares students for internships and jobs in any field--government, NGOs, advocacy groups, consulting, economics, food, etc.
 - However, some students have felt that the GSVS curriculum is repetitive and fails to provide specialized experience and knowledge in certain subject areas--for example, sustainable energy. The GSVS program is rapidly evolving and improving as it grows; the University is actively trying to offer better courses and hire new professors to join the program.
 - Read more about the curriculum [here](#).
- **Environmental Science Major and Minor:** for students looking to acquire a scientific background in sustainability, the environmental science major and/or minor is for you. This environmental science curriculum offers coursework in biology, physics, chemistry, maths, and more niche, specialized electives.
 - The major is *not* application-based.
 - This major is beneficial for students aiming to get internships and jobs in more quantitative fields, like research, fieldwork, data science, etc.
 - However, the coursework could be difficult for students who struggled with maths and sciences in high school and are more liberal arts-oriented.
 - Read more about the curriculum [here](#).

- **Environmental Thought and Practice (ETP):** for students looking to get a more humanities-oriented approach to sustainability, ETP is for you. The major teaches students to comprehend and think critically about scientific information, economic analysis, and the various ethical constructs that enter into environmental decisions.
 - This major began to wind down in 2016 when the woman who ran the program left the University and the GSVS program started to pick up. The University has since stopped accepting applications for this major. However, Deborah Lawrence (dl3c@virginia.edu) is trying to restart the major.
 - The major will likely be application-based if/when it restarts.
 - More information can be found [here](#).

Study Abroad and J-Term

- There are a number of [study abroad](#) and [January Term](#) courses related to sustainability.

Influential Groups

- [Sustainability Teaching and Research Subcommittee](#) of the Committee on Sustainability.

Funding Opportunities

- Teaching and Research Seed Grants: professors can be awarded \$8,000 to develop a new or significantly revised sustainability-related course or to support a new sustainability-related research project. Requests for proposals (RFP)s go out in the fall and spring semesters.

What You Can Do

- It has been successful in the past to ask professors if they would be willing to include information about sustainability into their classes. For example, the Intro to Mechanical Engineering professor was interested in the possibility once a student brought it up to him. Emailing professors general feedback and potential improvements to courses is strongly encouraged by the University.

Sustainability Programs at Other Universities:

One of the best ways that UVA can improve the presence of sustainability in its curriculum is by following the example of other universities. Below are some colleges with interesting sustainability programs to check out if you are curious.

- [Furman University](#)
- [Colorado State University](#)
- [Stanford](#)
- [Sterling College](#)
- [University of Connecticut](#)
- [University of Washington](#)
- [Appalachian State University](#)
- [Chatham University](#)
- [Colby College](#)
- [American University](#)
- [Dickinson College](#)
- [University of California - Santa Barbara](#)
- [Oregon State University](#)
- [State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry](#)
- [Middlebury College](#)

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