

# AGROECOLOGY, MS

Created in 2007, the Agroecology MS program at UW–Madison trains students to research and analyze agricultural systems within a broader environmental and socioeconomic context. Housed in the Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences, the agroecology program achieves through working with affiliated faculty members from nearly 20 departments across campus.

A typical cohort consists of 8–12 incoming students with diverse backgrounds and undergraduate majors. Agroecology MS students work with faculty on focused projects across a wide range of the traditional departments of the academy. Our core curriculum brings together these students for a multidisciplinary, agroecological analysis of agricultural systems in a broadened context.

The agroecology program is supported by the interdisciplinary agroecology cluster, which hired three faculty members in 2002: Michael Bell in community and environmental sociology, Claudio Gratton in entomology, and Randall Jackson in agronomy. These faculty, all still active in the program, were the catalyst for what is now a group of more than 50 faculty affiliates who advise agroecology students and participate in program governance.

The cluster concept is an innovation of the University of Wisconsin in which a core group of faculty is hired into an interdisciplinary area but have tenure homes in traditional departments.

## PROGRAM PATHWAYS

- The public practice pathway trains facilitators to enable broader discussion and negotiation at the interfaces of agriculture and other sectors of society. The goal of this "action-in-society" pathway is to train analysts to increase understanding about the roles of agricultural systems in multi-functional landscapes, and the public policy that shapes these roles.
- The research pathway addresses the need for continued research and scholarship in order that discussions and negotiations are well informed. Students will have the opportunity to obtain experience in the scholarship of original research, culminating in the writing of a thesis.

## ADMISSIONS

### ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).** Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 1
Spring Deadline	The program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/</a> ).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

## ADMISSIONS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Agroecology program accepts applicants from a wide range of undergraduate majors, not limited to the social and natural sciences. Because the admissions process is highly competitive, applicants should have a record of strong grades, agroecology-relevant interests and experience, and a commitment to learning in a multidisciplinary program. The deadline for fall semester applications is indicated above.

The initial application process is outlined below. Prospective applicants should keep in mind, however, that this document-based application is only the first step in the admissions process. Applicants who are deemed admissible on the merits of these documents must then identify an academic advisor and a plan for funding to be fully admitted. The Agroecology program will assist admitted applicants in this endeavor. More information on the process of seeking out funding and an advisor is available in the program's Student Handbook (<https://agroecology.wisc.edu/documents/agroecology-handbook/>). Applicants who are interested in applying should contact the program administrator.

### SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING TO THE UW–MADISON GRADUATE SCHOOL:

- Online application and application fee.
- International degree-seeking applicants must prove English proficiency using the Graduate School's requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>).
- Three letters of recommendation
  - When completing the online application, submit the names and email addresses of three people who will provide letters of recommendation. They will receive instructions on how to upload their letters.
- Statement of Purpose (submit electronically; one-page)
  - a. Describe interests and goals and which UW–Madison faculty members student would like to work with.
  - b. Identify which program pathway applicant plans to pursue—Research or Public Practice—and state why applicant is interested in this option. Knowing applicants' intentions will help the program better understand their academic and career goals.
  - c. Indicate if applicant intends to pursue a PhD degree after completing the master's in Agroecology. Although funding isn't guaranteed, some fellowships require that students intend to continue at the PhD level.

- Electronically, a curriculum vitae.
- An unofficial copy of transcripts for all undergraduate work (and graduate, if relevant).
  - If recommended for admission, the Graduate School will send an email to the applicant to give directions on how to submit official transcripts.

Frequently asked questions regarding the graduate program are available on the Agroecology website (<https://agroecology.wisc.edu/apply/>).

## FUNDING

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### GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

[The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student.](#) [Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid.](#) [Further funding information is available from the Graduate School.](#)

Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

## REQUIREMENTS

## MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirementstext>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiestext>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

## MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

### MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

#### Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

## CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	34 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	23 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/</a> ). Please refer to Agroecology Learning Plans.
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/</a> ).
Other Grade Requirements	Students must earn a B or above in all core curriculum coursework.
Assessments and Examinations	The research pathway requires a formal thesis and public defense; the public practice pathway requires a comprehensive report and public presentation.
Language Requirements	No language requirements.

## REQUIRED COURSES

### Research Pathway <sup>1</sup>

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Core Curriculum</b>		
AGROECOL 720	Agroecology Field Study	1
AGROECOL 701	The Farm as Socio-Environmental Endeavor	3
AGROECOL 702	The Multifunctionality of Agriculture	3
AGROECOL 710	Seminar in Agroecology <sup>2</sup>	3

### Cross Training Electives

Students will select courses to fulfill their cross-training electives in the categories below. Per Graduate School requirements, at least 5 of the 12 cross training elective credits must be from UW–Madison courses numbered 700 or above OR UW–Madison courses numbered 300–699 that have the Grad 50% attribute. By time of graduation, the student will have taken courses in:

#### Ecology

The following are examples of courses in this category:

BOTANY/ F&W ECOL/ ZOOLOGY 460	General Ecology
ENVIR ST 506	Modeling and Analysis of Environmental Systems
AGROECOL 370	Grassland Ecology

#### Social Science

The following are examples of courses in this category:

C&E SOC or A A E courses on food systems, agricultural technology, the agricultural environment, or agricultural policy

#### Data Analysis

The following are examples of courses in this category:

Graduate-level GIS, statistics, or qualitative methods course

#### *Agricultural Science*

The following are examples of courses in this category:

PLANTSCI 300 Cropping Systems

SOIL SCI 301 General Soil Science

#### **Research and Thesis**

AGROECOL 990 Research 12

**Total Credits 34**

<sup>1</sup> These pathways are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Pathway names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

<sup>2</sup> The AGROECOL 710 Seminar in Agroecology is offered both fall and spring semester for 1 credit. Students are encouraged to enroll every semester, but must complete at least 3 credits.

#### **Public Practice Pathway<sup>1</sup>**

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Core Curriculum</b>		
AGROECOL 720	Agroecology Field Study	1
AGROECOL 701	The Farm as Socio-Environmental Endeavor	3
AGROECOL 702	The Multifunctionality of Agriculture	3
AGROECOL 710	Seminar in Agroecology <sup>2</sup>	3

#### **Cross Training Electives**

Students will select courses to fulfill their cross-training electives in each of the four categories below. Per Graduate School requirements, at least 11 of the 18 cross-training elective credits must be UW-Madison courses numbered 700 or above OR UW-Madison courses numbered 300-699 that have the Grad 50% attribute. By time of graduation, the student will have taken courses in:

#### *Ecology*

The following are examples of courses in this category:

BOTANY/  
F&W ECOL/  
ZOOLOGY 460

ENVIR ST 506 Modeling and Analysis of Environmental Systems

AGROECOL 370 Grassland Ecology

#### *Social Science*

The following are examples of courses in this category:

C&E SOC or A A E courses on food systems, agricultural technology, the agricultural environment, or agricultural policy

#### *Community Process*

The following are examples of courses in this category:

PUB AFFR/  
POLI SCI/  
URB R PL 874

URB R PL/A A E/  
REAL EST 520

#### *Agricultural Science*

The following are examples of courses in this category:

PLANTSCI 300 Cropping Systems

SOIL SCI 301 General Soil Science

#### **Project**

AGROECOL 990 Research 6

**Total Credits 34**

<sup>1</sup> These pathways are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Pathway names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.

<sup>2</sup> The AGROECOL 710 Seminar in Agroecology is offered both fall and spring semester for 1 credit. Students are encouraged to enroll every semester, but must complete at least 3 credits.

## POLICIES

### GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

### MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

#### PRIOR COURSEWORK

##### Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

##### Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

##### Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

##### Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

### PROBATION

The status of a student can be one of three options:

1. Good standing (progressing according to standards; any funding guarantee remains in place).
2. Probation (not progressing according to standards but permitted to enroll; loss of funding guarantee; specific plan with dates and deadlines in place in regard to removal of probationary status).

3. Unsatisfactory progress (not progressing according to standards; not permitted to enroll, dismissal, leave of absence or change of advisor or program).

## ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Refer to the Graduate School: Advisor (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232/>) and Graduate School: Committees (Doctoral/Master's/MFA) (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201/>) policies.

## CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credit maximum. Refer to the Graduate School: Maximum Credit Loads and Overload Requests (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1228/>) policy.

## TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

## GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employee disabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

## College of Agricultural and Life Sciences: Grievance Policy

In the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs), any student who feels unfairly treated by a member of the CALs faculty or staff has the right to complain about the treatment and to receive a prompt hearing. Some complaints may arise from misunderstandings or communication

breakdowns and be easily resolved; others may require formal action. Complaints may concern any matter of perceived unfairness.

To ensure a prompt and fair hearing of any complaint, and to protect the rights of both the person complaining and the person at whom the complaint is directed, the following procedures are used in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Any student, undergraduate or graduate, may use these procedures, except employees whose complaints are covered under other campus policies.

1. The student should first talk with the person at whom the complaint is directed. Most issues can be settled at this level. Others may be resolved by established departmental procedures.
2. If the student is unsatisfied, and the complaint involves any unit outside CALs, the student should seek the advice of the dean or director of that unit to determine how to proceed.
  - a. If the complaint involves an academic department in CALs the student should proceed in accordance with item 3 below.
  - b. If the grievance involves a unit in CALs that is not an academic department, the student should proceed in accordance with item 4 below.
3. The student should contact the department's grievance advisor within 120 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment. The departmental administrator can provide this person's name. The grievance advisor will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, in discussions with the student and the person at whom the complaint is directed.
  - a. If informal mediation fails, the student can submit the grievance in writing to the grievance advisor within 10 working days of the date the student is informed of the failure of the mediation attempt by the grievance advisor. The grievance advisor will provide a copy to the person at whom the grievance is directed.
  - b. The grievance advisor will refer the complaint to a department committee that will obtain a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed, providing a copy to the student. Either party may request a hearing before the committee. The grievance advisor will provide both parties a written decision within 20 working days from the date of receipt of the written complaint.
  - c. If the grievance involves the department chairperson, the grievance advisor or a member of the grievance committee, these persons may not participate in the review.
  - d. If not satisfied with departmental action, either party has 10 working days from the date of notification of the departmental committee action to file a written appeal to the CALs Equity and Diversity Committee. A subcommittee of this committee will make a preliminary judgement as to whether the case merits further investigation and review. If the subcommittee unanimously determines that the case does not merit further investigation and review, its decision is final. If one or more members of the subcommittee determine that the case does merit further investigation and review, the subcommittee will investigate and seek to resolve the dispute through mediation. If this mediation attempt fails, the subcommittee will bring the case to the full committee. The committee may seek additional information from the parties or hold a hearing. The committee will present a written recommendation to the dean who will provide a final decision within 20 working days of receipt of the committee recommendation.
4. If the alleged unfair treatment occurs in a CALs unit that is not an academic department, the student should, within 120 calendar days of the alleged incident, take his/her grievance directly to the Associate

Dean of Academic Affairs. The dean will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If this mediation attempt does not succeed the student may file a written complaint with the dean who will refer it to the CALS Equity and Diversity Committee. The committee will seek a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed, subsequently following other steps delineated in item 3d above.

## OTHER

All students must have full funding. Please contact the program administrator.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Analyze tradeoffs of different agricultural systems embedded within the greater complexity of socio-ecological systems.
2. Consider and synthesize concepts of systems, ecology, and public process.
3. Learn to engage in careful consideration of the social, economic, and environmental outcomes of different industrial and biological processes.
4. Understand the potential of inclusive participatory processes in research and analysis of agroecological systems.
5. Recognize and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct in their coursework, research, and communications in the field of agroecology.