

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 3619S  
Date of Senate Approval 04/04/19

-----  
Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 29:**                    **Change requirements for the Environmental Studies Minor**

**Effective date: Fall 2019**

**1. Delete:** On page 151, the first paragraph under **Minor in Environmental Studies:**

At least 19 hours in Environmental Studies consisting of ENVR 130, 241; two courses from ENVR 234, 282, 334 or ECON 337 (prerequisite ECON 102); two ENVR electives at the 300-400 level.

**Add:** On page 151, in place of deleted entry:

At least 18 hours in Environmental Studies: ENVR 130; one course from ENVR 234, 282, or 334; and four additional ENVR courses with at least 6 hours at the 300-400 level. Students should consider that ENVR 105 and 241 are prerequisites for some upper-level courses.

**Impact:** This change will have a positive impact on staffing in our department. Currently, all majors and minors must take ENVR 241 (Ecology and Field Biology), which has become so heavily enrolled that the instructor has had to teach a 3-hr course overload in three of the last four fall semesters (this is in addition to one fully-enrolled section taught every summer). At least 10 students in the course each fall have indicated they are minoring in ENVR (half of one lab section). Although we want all ENVR majors to continue taking 241, we don't think it is necessary for all minors to take it. For example, some minors are primarily interested in earth science courses, and would be better served by taking ENVR 105 (Physical Geology), which currently does not count towards the minor, but is a prerequisite for some upper-level earth science courses.

Giving students greater choice regarding courses they can use for their minor will spread enrollment out over a greater number of courses in our department, leading to greater overall efficiency rather than overloading ENVR 241 every year. There may be a small loss of students enrolling in ECON 337, but so few students choose that option that any impact on the ECON department will be negligible.

**Rationale:** The proposed changes to the ENVR minor include several components:

1. Minors will no longer be required to take ENVR 241, for the reasons noted in our Impact statement. Students interested in taking upper-level ecology courses may still elect to take ENVR 241, but students could take another course instead. This might result in a net loss of one credit hour, as ENVR 241 is a 4-credit course, and students might choose a 3-credit course instead.
2. The proposed changes bring the requirement for an ENVR social issues course in line with what is now required for our majors: one course chosen from ENVR 234 (Energy and Society), ENVR 282 (Environmental Geology), or ENVR 334 (Environmental Policy). We dropped ECON 337 from this list, as it is no longer required for our majors, and has a prerequisite of ECON 102, so few students took it anyway (perhaps with the exception of a few ECON majors who used it towards the minor).

3. Instead of choosing just two upper-level ENVR electives, students will now choose four ENVR electives for their minor. Of these, two will be upper-level electives, so there will be no net loss of upper-level courses. The other two courses will be chosen from any level, allowing students to take ENVR 105 (Physical Geology) and/or 106 (Earth History), both of which are popular courses and inspire some students to major or minor in ENVR. At present, students who take either of these courses are not able to use them towards a minor, even though 105 is a prerequisite for upper-level earth science courses.