

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE  
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number SD2923S  
Date of Senate Approval 03/30/2023

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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

**APC Document 19 (ENVR):**                    **Remove ENVR 490, Internship and ENVR 499,  
Undergraduate Research from fulfilling the capstone  
requirement for Environmental Studies;  
Revise the course description for ENVR 490**

**Effective date: Fall 2023**

**1a. Delete:** On page 154, item III under **Environmental Studies majors must fulfill the following requirements:**

III. Other departmental requirements—28–31 hours: completion of one of the concentrations outlined below. Major competency is satisfied in ENVR 480 and either 490 or 499. These courses must be completed with a grade of C or higher.

**Add:** On page 154, in place of deleted entry:

III. Other departmental requirements—28–31 hours: completion of one of the concentrations outlined below. Major competency is satisfied in ENVR 480, which must be completed with a grade of C or higher.

**1b. Delete:** On page 155, item IV under **Earth Science with 9-12 Teacher Licensure:**

IV. Other departmental requirements—Major competency is satisfied in ENVR 480 and either 490 or 499. These courses must be completed with a grade of C or higher. The competency also can be satisfied by the completion of EDUC 456 and EDUC 455.

**Add:** On page 155, in place of deleted entry:

IV. Other departmental requirements—Major competency is satisfied in ENVR 480, which must be completed with a grade of C or higher. The competency also can be satisfied by the completion of EDUC 456 and EDUC 455.

**Impact:** Dropping the capstone designation from ENVR 490 or 499 will have no impact on faculty time, university resources, or student success in the course. We will continue to require ENVR 490 or ENVR 499 for all ENVR majors, and students who take ENVR 490 will still complete a series of academic assignments that link school and work. However, students will not need to earn a minimum grade of C in either ENVR 490 or 499 to graduate. Only in rare circumstances that involved deception, failing to complete the 100 required hours on-the-job, or not turning in their academic assignments has a student failed ENVR 490.

**Rationale:** When the Environmental Studies Department was first created in the 1980s, two capstone courses were built into the curriculum: ENVR 480 Seminar on Environmental Issues, and ENVR 490 Internship. Students needed to pass both courses with a minimum grade of C in order to demonstrate competency and receive their degree. Since we allow students to enroll in ENVR 499 Undergraduate Research in lieu of doing an internship, by default, ENVR 499 was also designated as

a capstone course. (It's estimated that 75% of ENVR majors pursue internships, and 25% choose undergraduate research).

Fast forward to 2022, after many university- and department-wide curricular changes. The ENVR Department has invested substantial time and energy into making ENVR 480 a robust course emphasizing research skills, information literacy, writing skills, and public speaking. We use ENVR 480 in our assessment of student learning, and we believe it is an appropriate measure of competency for all ENVR majors.

In contrast, we no longer believe ENVR 490 contains the elements of an appropriate capstone course. Since students work 100 hours in an off-campus setting, they do not receive nearly as much instructional time as students in 480 receive. We are one of the few departments that requires two capstone courses. Only one capstone is required, and we would like that to be ENVR 480.

2. **Delete:** On page 160, the entry for **ENVR 490, Internship:**

**490 Internship (3-6)**

A field work experience in a public agency, public interest group or industry. Participant's experience is under the supervision of the UNC Asheville ENVR internship director and on-site work cooperator. Prerequisites: junior or senior standing, declared major in one of the program concentrations and permission of the ENVR internship director. Three hours of internship credit are required for graduation. (An IP grade may be awarded at the discretion of the internship director.) Internships may be conducted throughout the United States or foreign countries. May be repeated for a total of 6 hours credit. Fall and Spring.

**Add:** On page 160, in place of deleted entry:

**490 Internship (3-6)**

A field work experience in government, a public agency, a non-profit organization, or business. The participant's experience is under the supervision of the ENVR faculty coordinator and the student's on-site work supervisor. May be repeated (with a different internship project) for a total of 6 hours of credit. An In-Progress grade may be awarded at the discretion of the internship coordinator. Prerequisites: junior or senior standing, and declared major in Environmental Studies. Fall, Spring, and Summer.

**Impact:** The course description for ENVR 490 has not been revised in many years. Revising the description will have a positive impact in that the revision is shorter and, we believe, easier to read. ENVR 490 has been taught during the summer for many years, but this has not been recognized in the catalogue – letting students know it will be taught every semester and during the summer will help them plan their schedules so they can graduate in a timely manner.

**Rationale:** Course descriptions for long-running courses should be revisited periodically to make sure the descriptions adequately reflect the course. For example, the current course description for ENVR 490 says enrollment requires permission of the ENVR internship director, which has not been the case for many years. The current description also mentions working in foreign countries, which is in part a holdover from several decades ago, before study abroad opportunities were widely available at UNCA, and at a time when UNCA paid the ENVR internship coordinator to travel abroad to meet with internship supervisors. While internships in other countries can be pursued, so few students choose to do this, it does not seem worth including in the course description.