



Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society
Oregon State University, 321 Richardson Hall, Corvallis, Oregon 97331
T 541-737-2244 | F 541-737-5814

Oregon State
University

November 13, 2017

Introduction to the Master of Natural Resources (MNR) program

The MNR degree is designed to provide opportunities for natural resource professionals around the world to engage with university scientists and other students in a program that integrates diverse perspectives to address natural resource challenges at the state, regional, national, or international levels. The MNR degree strives to assist agency and industry personnel in meeting their educational and career goals, but also accepts students from other backgrounds

The MNR is a 45-credit interdisciplinary program taught entirely online through Oregon State University's Extended Campus (Ecampus). The MNR is a professional degree offered only as a non-thesis option, similar to the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Agriculture, or the Master of Forestry.

The curriculum is designed for professionals who work in settings that require cross-disciplinary competency to find solutions to natural resource problems. Integration of multiple disciplines occurs through the curriculum, assignments, and a final case study (capstone) project supervised by a faculty advisor.

Guide to MNR Faculty Advisors

As a graduate degree program, every student enrolled in the MNR program will have a major (topic) advisor who will guide his/her program of study throughout the degree program. Advisors must be members of the MNR Graduate faculty. Duties include:

1. Check in with the student at least quarterly by email, Skype, or other form of communication.
2. Guide the student in preparing the program of study and assembling the remaining members of the graduate advisory committee (GAC). The student's GAC consists of the major advisor and two other faculty members. The other faculty members should have expertise in the topic of the student's capstone project. These members can be tenured/tenure-track, courtesy, affiliate, or adjunct faculty. Each student should have her/his MNR program of study on file with the Graduate School before completing 18 credits.
3. Advise the student in identifying and formulating capstone project study questions. The MNR 560 Master's Case study project (9 credits) provides a practical problem-solving experience. It must be completed by all MNR students as the culmination of their academic program at OSU. Capstone projects provide students with experience that approximates future work environments while also providing client organizations with

solutions to complex natural resource issues or useful products. Project ideas may be generated by faculty, students, or the student's organization or agency (see MNR 560 course syllabus). The advisor is expected to mentor the student in collecting, analyzing and synthesizing data and information to answer capstone project questions. Capstone projects can be based on original data, a synthesis of existing data, or both.

4. Guide the student through any compliance requirements, such as Institutional Review Board approval for human subjects or Animal Care and Use.
5. Guide and mentor the student in preparing the final capstone project report. Students complete a detailed project report that demonstrates their basic understanding and integrative knowledge of sustainable natural resource management for the site or situation that they have selected. Students are expected to devote 120-200 hours to the capstone project and prepare a 30-50 page final product report (double-spaced, not including figures, tables, and references).

The case study project report is due during the last term of the MNR program of study. Elements essential to the written case study report are found in the MNR 560 course syllabus.

Advisors should provide feedback on 2-3 drafts of the final project report prior to the student's final oral examination.

6. Oversee the student's final oral examination with the full Graduate Advisory Committee, with the help of audio or video conferencing. (Faculty Senate policy allows remote participation by any or all of the committee members and the student, with the minimum acceptable equipment being a two-way audio and video. Skype, Webex or video polycom are potential options to link students with their GAC). The student will make an oral presentation about his/her capstone project and the committee will ask questions that arise from the capstone project work and the student's theoretical knowledge about sustainable natural resource management. The student's major advisor will report the result of the exam to the Graduate School and MNR program.
7. Expect to spend fewer hours in the beginning quarters (to provide advice and feedback to the student) than during the last few quarters as the student finalizes his or her project and prepares for the oral examination. Because many MNR students are working professionals, the length of time required to complete the 45-credit program will vary; the average time it has taken past students to complete is 3 years. Please keep in mind that each student is different and will require different help, just like students in any other program.

The MNR program appreciates the contributions of the MNR advisors in mentoring and guiding students. Upon completion of the MNR degree, the program will transfer \$2,000 of discretionary funds (from tuition from MNR 560) to an OSU index to acknowledge the contributions of the MNR student's advisor. Discretionary funds can be used for many things, including research expenses, attending a conference, or purchasing supplies.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Misty Magers, Office Manager, Forest Ecosystems and Society, if you have further questions. I look forward to working with you all.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Badege Bishaw". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'B'.

Badege Bishaw, Ph.D., Program Director
Master of Natural Resources