GRADUATE PORTFOLIO PROGRAM IN SUSTAINABILITY
INFORMATION FOR PROGRAM APPLICANTS

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1. Program Description
The Graduate Portfolio Program in Sustainability provides Master and Doctoral students at the University of Texas at Austin with a trans-disciplinary framework to study and research issues related to sustainability. Sustainability is an emerging discourse that simultaneously addresses issues of economic development, environmental protection, and social equity.

The objectives of the portfolio program are to:

1. Provide a cohesive plan of study in sustainability;
2. Prepare students for leadership roles in academic and professional practice;
3. Foster trans-disciplinary research and dialogue between graduate students and participating faculty members interested in sustainability; and,
4. Assist students in publishing research on sustainability topics.

The University of Texas at Austin offers portfolio programs to introduce students to trans-disciplinary areas of academic inquiry while completing degree requirements in an established discipline. Portfolio programs are not degree programs; instead they provide an opportunity for graduate students to orient their studies to address a specific topic that overlaps several disciplines. These programs are similar to a minor area of study or a certificate program at other institutions.

To be eligible, students must already be admitted to a graduate degree program in one of the following academic units at UT-Austin:

School of Architecture
McCombs School of Business
College of Engineering
Jackson School of Geosciences
College of Fine Arts
LBJ School of Public Affairs
College of Liberal Arts
College of Natural Sciences
College of Education
2. Program Requirements
The requirements for the program include coursework, a scholarly paper, and a presentation. Each requirement is described in the following paragraphs. In addition to completing these requirements, a minimum portfolio GPA of 3.0 and a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 must be maintained while participating in the program.

**Coursework**
Each participant is required to complete four courses for a total of 12 credit hours, selected from the UT Sustainability Directory (http://www.utexas.edu/sustainability/directory/). There are no required courses – instead, coursework should reflect a thematic course of study specific to the participant’s research interests. Participants are encouraged to use the coursework to address specific thematic research questions. The following requirements apply to all program participants:

1. An independent study or conference course may be substituted for no more than one course and must be approved by the Faculty Steering Committee.
2. Masters students can substitute one course (three credits) with an internship that includes a substantial focus on sustainability issues with approval from the Faculty Steering Committee. Doctoral students cannot substitute an internship for credit.
3. Each student must include courses from at least two programs. The courses should not be cross-listed under the same program. Students are encouraged to select courses from outside their college or school.
4. Availability of enrollment space within any listed course is subject to the instructor’s permission.

**Presentation**
All participants are required to present their scholarly papers at the annual Sustainability Colloquium hosted by the Center for Sustainable Development before the end of their course of study. Participants are expected to attend the colloquium on a regular basis. The Colloquium is held once a year at the end of the spring semester.

**Scholarly Paper**
Each participant is required to complete a substantive scholarly paper on a topic related to his or her thematic course of study. Participants should write their papers for an audience familiar with the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development but should be general enough to engage scholars outside of the participant’s principal discipline. Participants are encouraged to build this paper through their selected coursework and weave these topics together for the final paper. While participants can use data and concepts from coursework and/or their theses or dissertations, the paper must be a separate, stand-alone document. *A completed thesis or dissertation is not an acceptable substitute for the paper requirement.* Papers are due a week after the participant’s graduation. The Faculty Steering Committee evaluates and accepts papers.

Doctoral participants are required to submit their papers to academic, peer-reviewed scholarly journals for publishing or to a scholarly conference for presentation. The Program Coordinator and Steering Committee will assist doctoral students in navigating the publishing and conference submission processes. Master participants are not required to submit their papers for publishing but are encouraged to do so.
3. Admission Procedures
Graduate students at UT-Austin may apply to the program at any point in their graduate study. Although applications are accepted at any time, students should submit application materials with at least two semesters remaining before their graduation. Each applicant must be in good standing in a graduate degree program. To apply, students are required to submit the Program Application Form along with the following documents:

1. **An academic summary** from the Registrar’s Office as proof of enrollment and good academic standing in a graduate degree program in one of the participating Academic Units.
2. A two-page essay describing the relationship of the program to the student’s degree program, career goals and interests, and a proposed thematic course of study. Section 6 of this document advises applicants on developing a theme.
3. A list and written rationale for the four courses (twelve credit hours) to be completed for the program.

Applications are reviewed by the Faculty Steering Committee twice per academic year – once at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Admission to the program is selective and the Faculty Steering Committee reserves the right to admit or reject applicants based on evaluation of applications and program capacity. The program is administered by the Center for Sustainable Development. If you have questions about the program requirements, contact Dr. Allan Shearer, Faculty Advisor for the Graduate Portfolio Program in Sustainability (ashearer@austin.utexas.edu) or Program Coordinator Patrick Russell [patrickrssll@utexas.edu].

4. Affiliated Faculty Members
The following is the list of faculty members who are affiliated with the program. These individuals are familiar with the intent of the program and have agreed to have their sustainability courses included in the Approved Course List.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School or Department</th>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Engineering</td>
<td>Jeffrey Siegel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Dean Almy, Michael Garrison, Michael Holleran, Steven Moore, Stephen Ross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art &amp; Art History/Design</td>
<td>Gloria Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Richard Richardson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>David Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>Kara Kockelman, Daene McKinney, James O’Connor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Regional Planning</td>
<td>Sarah Dooling, Talia McCray, Steven Moore, Elizabeth Mueller, Michael Oden,</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Robert Paterson, Bjorn Sletto, Frederick Steiner, Patricia Wilson, Ming Zhang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Erika Bsumek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Environment of Business</td>
<td>David Spence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Don Fullerton, Robertson Williams</td>
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5. The UT Sustainability Portal and Directory—Approved Course List Information
Students are encouraged to use the UT Sustainability Portal and Directory to search for and select their four courses (http://www.utexas.edu/sustainability/about.php). The Directory enables robust searches of courses, degree programs, centers, research, and faculty and staff working on environmental and sustainability initiatives at the University.

6. The Thematic Course of Study
The thematic course of study is specific to each portfolio program participant’s research interests. Participants are encouraged to address a testable research question with their chosen theme and consider the new knowledge and skills they will demonstrate by the end of the program. Participants should aim to connect specific thematic objectives to outcomes or demonstrations. Each student must include courses from at least two programs in their thematic course of study.

If you have questions about developing a thematic course of study, contact Dr. Allan Shearer, Faculty Advisor for the Graduate Portfolio Program in Sustainability (ashearer@austin.utexas.edu) or Program Coordinator Patrick Russell (patrickrssll@utexas.edu).

The following examples illustrate the wide range of thematic courses of study available to participants. Program participants are not limited to these themes and are encouraged to develop individual themes that reflect their specific academic interests in conjunction with their faculty advisor.

Example 1 - Sustainable Low-Income Housing Design
ARC 386M Sustainable Design & Development Workshop
CE 389 Design of Energy-Efficient and Healthy Buildings
CRP 388A Affordable Housing Development and Design
SOC 395D Economic Development and Social Change

Example 2 - Sustainable Water Management
CE 397 Transboundary Water Resources
CRP 387C Infrastructure Planning
GRG 384C Watershed Systems and Environmental Management
GEO 391 Cross-Border Water Management
Example 3 - Sustainable Business Theory
CRP 385C Sustainable Urban Economic Development Planning
ECO 384N Natural Resource Economics
LEB 380 Environmental Regulation of Business
P A 388K Business, Government and Public Policy

Example 4 - Sustainable Development Issues in Latin America
GRG 396T Land Use/Land Cover Change Practicum
LAS 381 Evaluation of Social Politics in Latin America
P A 388K International Economic Development
SOC 395D Citizenship and Social Policy in Latin America

Example 5 - Sustainable Energy Policy
ECO 384N Environmental Economics
GEO 391 Texas Energy Policy
EER 396 Energy and Environmental Policy Challenges
P A 388K Energy Law

Example 6 - Sustainable Technological Development
ARC 386M Society, Nature, and Technology
CHE 384 Engineering Sustainable Technology
MAN 385 Topics in Sustainable Development
PHL 386 Philosophy of Science: Decision Theory and Practice

Example 7 – Civic Environmentalism
ARC 386M Sustainable Design and Development Workshop
BIO 384K Natural Resource Management
CRP 381 Introduction to Urban Ecology
CRP 384 Participatory Methods in Community Planning

7. Frequently Asked Questions

1. When should I submit an application for the program?
   You should submit an application at least two semesters before you intend to graduate. The Faculty Steering Committee reviews applications at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters each academic year. Application due dates are posted on the website prior to the start of each semester.

2. If I meet the program requirements, will my application automatically be accepted?
   Not necessarily. This is a competitive program and not all applications will be accepted due to administrative limitations and University policies. However, the Faculty Steering Committee will attempt to include all students who meet the program requirements and demonstrate a strong interest in sustainability and sustainable development issues.

3. Can I apply courses to the program that I have completed in previous semesters?
   Yes. You can fulfill the program’s course requirements with courses you have successfully completed in previous semesters in the same degree program. However, these courses must be approved by the Faculty Steering Committee as part of your Thematic Course of Study.
4. *I’m interested in a course not currently in the UT Sustainability Portal Directory – is it possible to have it approved as part of my Thematic Course of Study?*
Yes. Since sustainability is a rapidly developing and expanding field, there are many new courses related to sustainability added each semester at UT Austin. If you find a course that has a substantial focus on sustainability or sustainable development, please send the course title and description to the Program Coordinator [patrickrssll@utexas.edu] and request that it be considered by the Faculty Steering Committee. If you are a new applicant to the program, you can also include the course title and description in your application materials.

5. *Are there other portfolio programs at UT?*
Yes, there are several other portfolio programs available at UT in a variety of subjects. Students interested in this portfolio program may also be interested in programs such as Integrated Watershed Science and the Societal Impacts of Science & Technology. The Graduate School maintains a current list of all portfolio programs at [www.utexas.edu/ogs/docport/index.html](http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/docport/index.html).

6. *Will my participation in the program be reflected on my diploma or transcript?*
Students who successfully complete the program requirements will have a statement added to their transcript that reads, “With Certification in the Graduate Portfolio Program in Sustainability”. Portfolio Program certification will not appear on your diploma.

7. *If accepted, what are there deadlines for completing the program requirements?*
All program requirements must be completed by a week after your graduation date from UT. If you do not complete the program requirements in this time period, you will be dropped from the program. Students must present at the Colloquium, which is held at the end of the spring semester.

8. *What is sustainability anyway?*
Sustainability is interpreted in various ways and it is not necessarily helpful to provide a rigid definition. However, advocates of sustainability and sustainable development would probably agree that the concepts involve the simultaneous consideration of interrelated issues in the long-term. The intent of this program is to engage students and faculty members from across campus in a broad discussion of how long-term, holistic perspectives can be employed to solve social, environmental, political, and economic problems in ways that are equitable and effective.

9. *Where can I find out more about sustainability activities at UT?*
See the Center for Sustainable Development’s website at [http://soa.utexas.edu/csd/](http://soa.utexas.edu/csd/) and the Office of Sustainability’s website at [http://www.utexas.edu/sustainability/](http://www.utexas.edu/sustainability/) for more information on sustainability and sustainable development research at UT.

10. *If I have further questions, who can I contact?*
Contact Patrick Russell, Graduate Portfolio Program in Sustainability Coordinator, at [patrickrssll@utexas.edu](mailto:patrickrssll@utexas.edu).