Master of Environmental Management
Project Guidelines

Project Overview:
The culminating experience of students seeking a Master of Environmental Management (MEM) degree is completion of a project. This element of the curriculum serves to integrate coursework, further develop skills required to function effectively in a professional setting (e.g. communication, presentation and project management) and provide an opportunity to participate in the solution of a real environmental problem. Working with local agencies or/and organizations and an Environmental Science & Management (ESM) faculty advisor, the student identifies a problem, formulates a project with the community partner, formally proposes a project, completes the scope of work detailed in the proposal, and documents and presents the results of the project to an appropriate audience.

Project Committee:
MEM students will choose a project committee comprised of the following members:

• **Faculty Advisor** – ESM faculty member or approved ESM-associated faculty member. The faculty advisor is charged with reviewing and approving the student’s choice of coursework and project. The advisor may also assist the student with technical issues as they arise and reviews the student’s project elements for completeness and correctness.

• **Community Partner** – appropriate representative of the local participating entity. The community partner assists the student with technical issues as they arise and reviews the student’s project elements for completeness and correctness. To the degree necessary, the community partner acts as the “day-to-day” manager of the project.

• **Third Member** – PSU faculty member or community professional. The third member may assist the student with technical issues as they arise and reviews the student’s project elements for completeness and correctness.

• **Additional member (optional)** – at the approval of the faculty advisor, the student may choose one additional member to serve on the committee. This member should be chosen to assist the student with technical issues.

At least one member of the committee must be an ESM faculty member.

The entire committee has the responsibility to review the student’s work and the student-developed project documentation. The committee also will attend the student’s project presentation and approve or not approve the student’s work for completion of that degree requirement (using the GO-17 form).

MEM Project Elements

Proposal
Once the MEM student has decided on an area of focus for his/her project, s/he will work with the advisor to identify potential community partners. The student will meet with the selected
community partner and discuss the area of focus and identify a specific project that fulfills both the student’s and community partner’s needs.

The student will write a proposal that has the following components:
- General background on the issue/problem
- Identification of the specific community partner’s needs
- Scope of Work that details how the student will perform the project tasks (specific methods should be identified)
- Deliverables
- Timeline for project
- Detailed project budget (including an estimate of hours of work and materials for each task)

Project
Because the MEM project is meant to serve the community partner, the projects will range in scope. For instance, past projects have ranged from a review and recommendations of statewide wetland policies to recommendations for a site-specific restoration. Despite the diverse nature of the projects, they do have the following common elements:
- projects are applied to a real-world problem or issue
- projects require student knowledge and thinking at a level that is substantially above an undergraduate senior internship
- projects require a detailed analysis of a problem/issue and recommendations
- students work independently on the project
- most projects take between 4 to 9 months to complete (proposal acceptance to presentation of the final project to the committee)

Project Documentation
It is recognized that the diverse nature of the MEM projects will result in end products that vary from implemented, on-the-ground projects to in-depth reports. That being said, each student is required to prepare a report describing, in detail, the project they performed. The report must include, at a minimum, the following elements:
- Cover page containing the title and the student’s name
- An abstract
- A statement of the problem or subject of the project
- Background and importance of the issue
- Methodology used in the project
- Summary of Results of the project
- Description of interaction with community partner
- Appropriate attachments showing the end products of the student’s work

It is envisioned that the report, excluding the attached end products, will be at least 20 pages in length. Three copies of the final project report and a digital copy of the report in PDF format must be submitted.