

Soil and Water Science Distance Education

Online Orientation

Welcome to our graduate program! Please carefully read the following document and click the Submit button when you are confident you understand the material. This will complete your online orientation.

If you have any questions, you may contact:

Distance Education Coordinator:

Dr. Sabine Grunwald, sabgru@ufl.edu, (352) 392.1951 x 204

Graduate Coordinator:

Dr. James Jawitz, jawitz@ufl.edu, (352) 392.1951 x 202

Student Services:

Rhiannon Pollard, rhiannon-pollard@ufl.edu, (352) 392.1803 x 341

Registration Online registration for SWS courses is available at: <http://soils.ifas.ufl.edu/distance/registration.htm>, or you may contact the Soil and Water Science Department Student Services: Rhiannon Pollard, rhiannon-pollard@ufl.edu. (352) 392.1803 ext. 341

Gatorlink Account You **must** have a Gatorlink account (which can be obtained through the CIRCA HelpDesk at 392.HELP or at <http://gatorlink.ufl.edu/>) in order to access the e-learning tools for all distance education courses. Additionally, all UF-related emails will be sent to the email address you establish through Gatorlink, so it is imperative that you check it frequently.

Computer Requirements The following is the official UF policy on the student computer requirement: Access to and on-going use of a computer will be required for all students to complete their degree programs successfully. Effective with the Summer B 1998 term, the University of Florida expects each student new to the university, to acquire computer hardware and software appropriate to his or her degree program. Competency in the basic use of a computer is a requirement for graduation. Class assignments may require use of a computer, academic advising and registration can be done by computer, and official university correspondence is often sent via email.

Students are expected to purchase or lease a computer that has a high-speed internet connection (DSL, cable or satellite modem or similar), graphical access to the World Wide Web, and productivity functions such as word processing and spreadsheet calculation, Power Point, Adobe Acrobat or Reader (pdf). The computer should have a CD and DVD drive and enough harddrive space to store course material.

Transfer of Credits into your MS Program For students pursuing a non-thesis MS degree, only graduate-level coursework taken at the University of Florida and earned with a grade of B or better will count towards the 34-letter graded credits required for the degree. The maximum number of UF credits which can be transferred is 15. Students pursuing a thesis MS may transfer up to 9 credits from approved academic institutions, however, these credits *will not be letter-graded* and thus will compete for space in the degree requirements with SOS 6971, Master's Research. It is recommended that only UF graduate-level courses be transferred, as a result. (See the [Graduate Student Guide](#) for more information.) PhD students may transfer a total of 30 credits from UF or other approved academic institutions, with an additional 15 credits allowed from previous UF Master's or non-degree seeking work.

Acceptance of transfer credit requires the Transfer of Credit form, a copy of the student's transcript, and approval of the student's supervisory committee, the college dean, and the Graduate School. At the master's level, the graduate coordinator may approve the request for transfer in lieu of the supervisory committee. Such requests for transfer of credit must be made during the student's first term enrolled in the Graduate School. No course work that exceeds the 7-year time limit will be counted toward degree requirements.

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| Credits from other Academic Institutions | If you plan to take course work at another institution subsequent to enrollment in a degree-seeking program at the University of Florida, you should receive permission for transfer before taking such course work. If the course work is to be taken at another State University System (SUS) institution, the student should complete request Student Services assist with completing a Traveling Scholar form. Students who plan to pursue international study should contact the University of Florida International Center http://www.ufic.ufl.edu/ to obtain the Graduate Academic Advising form. |
| Campus Tour | Take a virtual tour: (1) The University of Florida (UF): http://www.ufl.edu/ (2) UF Distance Learning: http://www.distancelearning.ufl.edu/ (3) The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS): http://ifas.ufl.edu/ (4) The Soil and Water Science Department: http://soils.ifas.ufl.edu/ |
| Gator1 Card | Every student is encouraged to get a Gator1 Card. Follow the link http://www.bsd.ufl.edu/idcard/ to learn more about how to obtain one. If you plan to use the online library access, you will need the library number assigned on your Gator1 Card. |
| Course Catalog | Develop a schedule of courses to accumulate 30 credits (thesis option) or 34 letter-graded credits (non-thesis option) and discuss the list with your advisor and co-advisors. Check the list of SWS distance education courses regularly. The list is subject to change. You can complement the SWS distance education courses with other graduate courses from UF or other academic institutions. A complete listing of all offered courses in Soil and Water Science can be found here . |
| Critical Dates | Critical dates for registration and other are listed at: http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/adhub.html . Do not miss important deadlines. It might delay your progress towards earning the degree. |
| Tuition | All Soil and Water Science distance students, degree-seeking and non-degree seeking, are considered "off-book" unless they meet one of the following conditions: 1) state employment, 2) receiving assistantship funding, 3) affiliated in any way with Research and Education Centers. The current off-book tuition rate for Soil and Water Science distance students is set at \$400.00 per credit hour . These rates are subject to change. Out-of-state students pay the same amount for tuition as students in Florida. |

Library Access To get access to the University of Florida libraries got to: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/ct/dltop.html>. Distance education and on-campus students have access to the UF library system.

University of Florida Libraries <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/> provides online access to all University of Florida Libraries.

Guide to Remote Library Access <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/access.html> is a guide for students on how to access available library services from a home computer.

UF Library Number Activation Request <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/distreg.html> is an online form that allows students to activate their library number on their Gator1 Card. The library number must be activated before requesting articles or checking out books from University of Florida libraries.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism

As a distance education student you agree to the same rules of academic honesty as on-campus students. As a results of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may results in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University". *We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.*

If you take an online exam, write a project or assignment report, or compute results from a statistical analysis you should comply with the standards of academic honesty which are followed by all scientists and teachers around the globe. Do not plagiarize. Remember if you plagiarize you only embarrass yourself. Many instructors at the University of Florida use antiplagiarism software. Simply - do not plagiarize. It is not worth it.

Information about Academic Honesty & Plagiarism and Consequences
<http://itl.chem.ufl.edu/honor.html>

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/>

Correct Referencing

As a distance education student you will write assignment reports, project reports, and / or a thesis. Correct referencing is expected from you. If you copy material from a textbook, journal article, or the Internet without correct referencing the original source, you plagiarize. Don't do it! Give credit to the authors who wrote material and cite them correctly.

Examples / Correct Referencing

Referencing of books:

Goovaerts P. 1997. Geostatistics for natural resources evaluation. Oxford University Press, New York.

Referencing of book chapters:

Reddy K.R., White J.R., Wright A. and Chua T. 1999. Influence of phosphorus loading on microbial processes in the soil and water column of wetlands. pp. 249-273. In Phosphorus Biogeochemistry in Subtropical Ecosystems, Reddy KR, O'Connor GA, and Schelske CL

(eds.) Lewis Publ., New York.

Referencing of journal articles:

Grunwald S., Barak P., McSweeney K. and Lowery B. 2000. Soil landscape models at different scales portrayed in Virtual Reality Modeling Language. *Soil Science*, 165(8):: 598-614.

Referencing of proceeding papers:

Choi J.-Y., Engel B.A., Theller L., and Harbor J. 2003. Internet based SDSS for watershed management using web-GIS capabilities. ASAE Annual International Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada, July 27-30, 2003. Paper No. 03-3033.

Referencing of Internet resources:

Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL). 2003. Available at: <http://www.fgdl.org/> (verified: 8/8/2003)

Graduate Student Guide

Study the [Graduate Student Guide](#) in your first semester or even before you enroll in the Distance Education Graduate Track in Environmental Science. It is your responsibility to make yourself familiar with rules and regulations related to your MS program.

E-Technologies

All SWS distance education courses are interactive. There are numerous media which provide you with effective communication tools to interact with your instructor and/or TAs which include email, phone, chatrooms, message boards, and other. We seek to provide you with a scientific stimulating environment to enhance your learning outcomes. Learning should be fun, shouldn't it?

Most of our SWS distance education courses use the Internet to provide you with course material. Make sure that you have access to a reliable (and fast) Internet connection.

Different SWS courses use different types of course material. Power Point slides with notes, voice support, and / or animations are commonly used. Hyperlinks provide you with additional resources. Some of our courses use Flash animations and digital videos to provide you with all you need to understand complex course material. Supplementary reading material is provided in some courses in form of pdf files. Recommendations for textbooks or other supporting material are given by your instructors to make learning most efficient.

Virtual Computer Lab

Some of the SWS distance education courses use a virtual computer lab.

The virtual computer lab provides students with 24 hour access to the course material, software, datasets, assignments, and interactive tools. You will be given a login, password and instructions to access the virtual computer lab. The virtual computer lab can be accessed from UF or home computers via an Internet connection. The advantage is that you do not need to purchase any software because the virtual lab provides you with everything you need to study. All course related material is hosted at one central place (a server). In short, the virtual computer lab is a terminal application which lets you focus on course content instead of wasting time for solving technical computer problems. For example, SOS 5720 GIS in Land Resource Management uses the virtual computer lab.

Distance Education Courses

The student is responsible for contacting the instructor via email after registering for a distance education course.

Distance Education Coordinator

Contact the SWS Distance Education Coordinator Sabine Grunwald sabgru@ufl.edu (Phone: 352-392-1951 ext. 204) for questions related to the SWS Distance Education Track in Environmental Science. She is available to help if you would like advice about SWS distance education courses, admission, transfer of credits, how to find an advisor, the virtual computer lab, rules and regulations of the program, etc.

Learn more about the SWS Distance Education Coordinator: <http://grunwald.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

For questions related to application forms or to register for courses please contact Student Services: Rhiannon Pollard, rhiannon-pollard@ufl.edu, (352) 392.1803 ext. 341.

Graduate Coordinator

Contact the SWS Graduate Coordinator James Jawitz jawitz@ufl.edu, (352) 392.1951 ext. 203 for questions related to the admission into the SWS Distance Education Track in Environmental Science.

Select & Contact your Advisor

Prior to admission, each distance education graduate student is assigned a graduate advisor who normally becomes the Chair of the student's Supervisory Committee (<http://soils.ifas.ufl.edu/personnel/faculty.htm>). In cases where it is not appropriate or possible for a student to pre-select an advisor, a prospective advisor will be assigned. A student cannot be admitted if a graduate advisor cannot be found. The SWS Distance Education Coordinator and Chair of the SWS Department will assist you to select an advisor. Detailed information about the selection guidelines can be found in the [Graduate Student Guide](#).

We encourage to work closely with your advisor. Your advisor can guide you through your M.S. program and your thesis project.

To confirm that you successfully completed the virtual orientation for the SWS Distance Education Track in Environmental Science click the button below.

Submit