

# **Master's Program Assessment Report**

Academic Year: 2012-13 and 2013-14

Department: Ecology

Program(s): All programs/options

## **1. Results of the comprehensive exams and defenses**

13 passes

## **2. Summary of ethics training among Masters' students who have finished their degrees.**

Ethics training is required of all graduate students funded by the National Science Foundation. This is uncommon for M.S. students, but the one M.S. student requiring the exam complied and passed.

## **3. What Was Learned**

The pass rates on exams and defenses that the graduate program is generally functioning well. However, the faculty felt that generally students didn't express as broad an understanding of the discipline as desired, but were rather narrow and focused on just their research. In addition, some struggled to express themselves verbally effectively.

## **4. How We Responded**

We initiated new requirements in the MS graduate curriculum where all student have to take two specific courses: Foundations of Ecology & Management and Communication in Ecological Science. The outcome has been especially noteworthy in both cases, where students are now much broader in context, and express themselves significantly better.