Environmental Concentration Student FAQs

Paperwork and advisers

Q: I was just accepted into the concentration. What do I do next?

A1: Set up a meeting with your concentration adviser (email Joanne Benkley – jbenkley@smith.edu- if you don’t remember who your adviser is) so you can complete and submit a declaration of your concentration to College Hall. Once you are in the system the concentration will pop up on your banner web account (ECX for Climate Change, EFX for Sustainable Food).

A2: When you meet with your adviser you should discuss your interests within your concentration topic and begin planning how you will fulfill the requirements. You can use the concentration checklist as you do this to record what you have already completed.

A3: If you have already lined up or completed practical experiences for the concentration, you will also need to start on the paperwork to document them. A first step is to complete the Practical Experience Approval Forms with your adviser and submit it to Joanne Benkley in CEEDS.

Q: I was assigned an adviser for this concentration. Can I request someone else?

A: You can always ask! If you’d like to change your adviser you should be in touch with Joanne Benkley.

Practical Experiences

Q: What must a practical experience include in order to be considered?

A: There are several considerations:

- It must take place after your senior year in high school and within 2 years of matriculating at Smith
- You must be able to articulate critically the connection between the experience and the study of sustainable food/climate change, not just describe what the experience will entail
- It must comprise a minimum of 100 hours
- It must draw upon your intellectual capacities (e.g. waiting tables could be argued to relate to sustainable food, but is not appropriate)
- Must be well supervised with someone with enough relevant expertise to ensure that the internship will be an educational experience

Q: How many experiences do I need?

A: You need 2 practical experiences.

Q: How many practical experiences can I complete before I am accepted into the concentration?

A: One. If your experience is accepted please retroactively complete a Practical Experience Approval Form with your adviser right away and get it to Joanne.
**Course Guidelines**

**Q:** How do I determine if a course can be counted towards the academic core?

**A:** You must be able to clearly and critically articulate the connection between the course and your focus within the concentration to your adviser.

**Q:** How many courses may be taken prior to acceptance into the concentration and counted towards the requirements?

**A:** The gateway and a maximum of 2 out of the 4 electives may be taken prior to joining the concentration.

**Q:** Can courses that count for my major also count for the concentration?

**A:** Yes. Up to three can count for both.

**Q:** Should the core courses I choose for the requirements be from different departments?

**A:** Yes. Core courses must span at least 2 divisions.

**Q:** What if I can’t find food/climate-related courses at Smith, or ones being offered do not fit into my schedule, etc.?

**A:** The five-college consortium is a great resource.

**Have other questions? You are always welcome to email Joanne Benkley ([jbenkley@smith.edu](mailto:jbenkley@smith.edu)) or stop by CEEDS (Wright Hall garden-level, room 005) for a chat.**