



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

University Council

October 10, 2025

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2025-2026

Susan Sanchez, Chair

Agricultural and Environmental Sciences – Julie Campbell

Arts and Sciences – Casie LeGette (Arts)

Paula Lemons (Sciences)

Business – Andrew Miller

Ecology – Amanda Rugenski

Education – Amy Murphy

Engineering – David Stooksbury

Environment and Design – Katherine Melcher

Family and Consumer Sciences – Melissa Landers-Potts

Forestry and Natural Resources – Richard Chandler

Journalism and Mass Communication – Yan Jin

Law – Joe Miller

Medicine – Erica Brownfield

Pharmacy – Duc Do

Public and International Affairs – Ryan Powers

Public Health – Heather Padilla

Social Work – Jennifer Elkins

Veterinary Medicine – Paul Eubig

Graduate School – Rodney Mauricio

Ex-Officio – Provost Benjamin Ayers

Undergraduate Student Representative – Ella Colker

Graduate Student Representative – Yaw Buabeng

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources to offer the existing Master of Natural Resources (M.N.R.) online will be an agenda item for the October 17, 2025, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

cc: Provost Benjamin Ayers

Dr. Marisa Anne Pagnattaro

PROPOSAL FOR AN ONLINE PROGRAM

Date: August 22, 2025

College/School: Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

Department/Division: Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

Program (Major and Degree): Master of Natural Resources (M.N.R.)

Will any approved areas of emphasis be offered under this major? No

CIP: 03010105

Proposed Effective Date: Fall 2026

1. Assessment

A needs assessment demonstrating a sufficient pool of qualified applicants.

The proposed online Master of Natural Resources (M.N.R.) aims to provide resource management professionals currently working for resource management agencies, regulatory agencies, resource management NGOs, or environmental consulting firms with additional knowledge, communication skills, and management skills that will assist them in managing projects and programs in their organizations and provide credentials for career development. This degree will be delivered online so that members of the target audience do not have to interrupt their careers to pursue this M.N.R. degree. The program will provide courses on technical and scientific issues at the forefront of resource management as well as courses that build skills in communication, professionalism, and management.

A market analysis has indicated substantial interest in an online M.N.R. degree. It is expected that in a few years this program should attract approximately 35 students per year for a two-year program, resulting in approximately 70 students enrolled at any given time. Furthermore, the general outline of this proposed curriculum has been shared with agency contacts at the district, branch chief, and assistant chief levels who confirm that such a program would appeal to young professionals in their institutions.

2. Admission Requirements

All requirements for admission to an Online Academic Degree Program will be the same as those for the same degree at an authorized unit.

The requirements for the online M.N.R. program are the same as the requirements for the on-campus M.N.R. program. Applicants must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher or appeal this requirement. An application must include:

1. Statement of Purpose. This personal statement should express reasons for seeking the degree, interest in the field, and expectations for the future.
2. CV/Resume.
3. English Language Proficiency Requirement (international applicants only). International applicants whose native language is not English must submit TOEFL or IELTS scores that are not more than two years old to Graduate Admissions directly from the testing agency.

- Minimum TOEFL score requirement: overall score of 80 with a minimum of 20 on speaking and writing
 - Minimum IELTS score requirement: overall band-width of 6.5 with no single band (score) below 6.0
 - Minimum Intensive English Program requirement: successfully complete Level 6 and provide confirmation from Intensive English Program Director (iep.uga.edu)
4. Transcripts. Submit unofficial transcripts from all institutions attended.
 5. Three letters of recommendation. This is a departmental requirement.

3. Program Content

The basic curriculum of the program will be equivalent to the authorized unit's approved program. The criteria for electives or substitutions for specific requirements will be equivalent online.

Each student selects classes in consultation with a major professor who chairs that student's advisory committee and is their mentor through the program. The M.N.R. degree requires a minimum of 33 semester hours of graduate-level course work (6000-level or above).

Master of Natural Resources (M.N.R.) – Program of Study

Choose 12 credit hours from the following:

Courses at the 6000+ level taken in the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources (COFA, FANR, FISH, FORS, GISC, PRTM, WASR, WILD prefixes)

Choose 9 credit hours from the following:

Courses outside the chosen study area

Choose 11 credit hours from the following:

Electives

Students enrolled in the online M.N.R. will complete a core sequence consisting of a capstone class required for all students, plus any 5 classes chosen from a set of 7 core courses applicable to the broad scope of natural resources management. Students in the required capstone develop a resource management project in their final semester.

Master of Natural Resources (M.N.R.) – Online

Required (18 hours)

FANR XXXXE, Capstone Project in Natural Resources (3 hours)

Choose five of the following courses:

FANR 6800E, Renewable Resources Policy (3 hours)

FANR 6820E, Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and Wildlife Conservation (3 hours)

FANR 7630E, Statistical Software for Natural Resource Management (3 hours)

FANR 8300E, Scientific Communication in Forestry and Natural Resources (3 hours)

FANR XXXXE, GIS Applications in Natural Resources (3 hours)

FANR XXXXE, Principles of Natural Resources Management (3 hours)

FANR XXXXE, Wildlife Habitat Management (3 hours)

These 18 required credits will be supplemented by more specialized electives or by unused core courses as chosen by the student and their advisory committee to make up the required 33 credits.

Warnell already offers a variety of intense field experiences and practicums outside of the traditional semester calendar. To strengthen the cohort and offer hands-on exposure to management techniques, faculty plan to make 3-4 such opportunities available for online M.N.R. students, in some cases supporting a class in the adjacent semester. For example, a section of FORS 7610, Prescribed Fire in the Forest Ecosystem, or FORS 6080, Management and Restoration of the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem, would be open to students who have just completed the new Habitat Management course in the online M.N.R. core.

4. Student Support Services

Each proposal must describe how students will have access to appropriate learning and student support services to ensure full participation in the learning experience. Services to be considered include academic advising or an advisory committee, technology support, financial aid advising, career planning, and disability services. Any special accommodations made for distance education students must be described.

The online M.N.R. and its students will be supported by a Program Administrator as well as by the Graduate Program Administrator and Assistant and the Director of Graduate Studies. Each student will have a faculty supervisory committee composed of a mentor and two committee members. Classes will be supported by ELC and software specific to classes. University student support services (CAPS, Accessibility and Testing, libraries, career center, etc.) will be communicated and shared with all students.

5. Resident Requirements

Residency requirements will be identical to those established for the on-campus M.N.R. degree.

6. Program Management

Each proposal must contain a specified plan for program maintenance and program quality. This plan will provide contact persons at cooperating units, a detailed timetable, and complete plans for application and matriculation of students. In addition, specific plans should be provided concerning the schedule of courses, the duration of the program, program review, and possible duplication with other programs in the immediate area.

The faculty have created a committee to oversee and manage the development of courses and the delivery of the first two years of classes. The Chair of this committee (Dr. Duncan Elkins, Senior Lecturer) and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Dr. Rhett Jackson, John Porter Stevens Distinguished Professor of Water Resources) are the responsible parties for the launch of the online M.N.R. The Committee will work in concert with the school's Curriculum Committee. The online M.N.R. will be under the governance of the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources faculty. The school has recruited faculty to develop the first year of courses, hired two 50% Teaching Assistants to assist with course development, and have established a collaboration with the Office of Online Learning to assist with course development. During the first two years of program development, the school will hire a Program Administrator who will teach some of the classes, manage recruiting and onboarding of new students, and pair the students with mentors and committee members. The Program Administrator will be supported by the school's graduate program office. As with all of the school's graduate programs, the faculty will conduct exit interviews with graduating students and students leaving the program to get feedback on their experiences.

Schedule:

Fall 2025 – Program approval. Develop four classes and a GradFirst seminar for delivery in Fall 2026.

Spring 2026 – Develop four classes and a GradFirst seminar for delivery Spring 2027.

Summer 2026 – Continue course development.

Fall 2026 – First cohort begins. Deliver the first four classes and the GradFirst seminar. Develop four classes for delivery Fall 2027.

Spring 2027 – Deliver the second set of classes and develop four classes for delivery Spring 2028.

Summer 2027 – Recalibrate the offerings. Revise first-year courses as necessary.

Fall 2027/Spring 2028 – Deliver second year of offerings. Graduate first students.

Summer 2028 – Committee will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the first two years of class offerings and develop plans for revisions and new classes.

The program goal is to reach an enrollment of 70 students, with approximately 35 entering and graduating each year. The faculty anticipate it will take five years to reach this goal.

There is no similar online graduate offering within the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources or within UGA at this time.

7. Library and Laboratory Resources

The proposal must include a review of existing library and laboratory resources (or other specialized resources) at the host location. If deficiencies exist, the proposal must include a plan, including timetable and budget, for alleviating the deficiencies.

Classes will be developed so that the only required UGA library resources will be accessible online through the UGA library GIL system for students enrolled at UGA.

8. Budget

The budget must provide a realistic estimate of the costs of developing and implementing a quality program. Consequently, each program budget must contain detailed estimates—specified separately for authorized and cooperating units—concerning faculty and staff positions, library, laboratory, and other specialized facility resource requirements, travel and other significant operating expenses. If the support for the program is the result of an internal reallocation of resources, explicit details should be included in the proposal. The budget must reflect the start-up costs of the program, projected costs for completion of the first cycle of students, and additional costs associated with any future cycles of students.

Funding has already been secured for the development of the program from the Provost's Office for startup costs including course online conversion, new course development, and marketing. Most of the courses proposed have an in-person equivalent and faculty have already worked on converting several for online delivery. The faculty anticipate the program will be self-sustaining by FY2029 with an e-rate of \$275 and continuous enrollment of 35 students. Courses will be developed by existing faculty, supplemented by over-load agreements in FY2026 and the first half of FY2027, but will be taught in-load by existing faculty and a new instructor to be hired in FY2027.

9. Program Costs Assessed to Students

Any costs beyond those normally associated with the program on campus must be spelled out and justified.

The faculty do not anticipate costs beyond those normally associated with the existing M.N.R. program.

10. E-Rate

If an e-rate will be charged, an approved e-rate form must be submitted through the Office of Online Learning.

An e-rate of \$275 will be charged for students in this program and an e-rate form is being transmitted to Online Education.

Documentation of Approval and Notification

Proposal: Proposal to offer the existing Master of Natural Resources (M.N.R.) online

College: Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

Department: Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

Proposed Effective Term: Fall 2026

School/College:

- Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources Associate Dean, Dr. Rhett Jackson, 8/21/2025
- Graduate School Associate Dean, Dr. Anne Shaffer, 9/22/2025