

Environmental Science in Wisconsin

Teacher licensure, high school graduation, and university admissions requirements

Teacher Licensure

There are two types of environmental science licenses teachers can obtain. Environmental Science (615) – prior to PI 34 was called Environmental Studies Life and Environmental Science (606) – new under PI 34

As of 2006, there were 384 educators (varying K-12 areas of emphasis) licensed to teach subject area 615 (environmental science). There were 11 educators (varying K-12 areas of emphasis) licensed to teach subject area 606 (life and environmental science). This is more than either physics or chemistry.

University Course Requirements

Per PI 34 each institution of higher education has the latitude of developing the specific courses needed to meet the licensure requirements. A set of content guidelines provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction assist universities in determining what course requirements are needed for a particular license.

Teacher Licensure and High School Graduation Credit

If a course is being offered for graduation credit, the teacher must hold a license in the subject being offered for credit. No Child Left Behind further asks that in order for a teacher to be highly qualified, he/she should have a major in the subject he/she is teaching. In situations where a teacher is teaching a course without a license the Department of Public Instruction asks that the district apply for an emergency license and the teacher obtain the appropriate license.

High School Science Requirements

State statute PI 118.33 requires students receive instruction that incorporates the biological sciences and the physical sciences. A minimum of two science credits are needed for graduation from a Wisconsin high school. State statutes do not identify the specific courses needed to fill the requirements. Each school district determines what science courses are required for graduation and what courses count as electives. An environmental science course could count toward graduation if it incorporates biological and/or physical sciences.

University Admission for High School Students

The UW system requires applicants have 3 credits in the natural sciences. The UW system is not specific about what the sciences should be. There are no references to "lab science" in the actual citations. One of the credits could be an environmental science course. It is possible that a Wisconsin private college may have more specific requirements. Out of state institutions have various science requirements for admission.

Useful Links

PI 34: <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/watsnew.html>

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: <http://dpi.wi.gov/index.html>

UW-System: <http://www.wisconsin.edu/>