



SCHOOL OF COASTAL AND  
MARINE SYSTEMS SCIENCE  

---

COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science

Graduate Student Handbook

M.S. Degree in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies

Ph.D. Degree in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science

2014 - 2015

## Table of Contents

<b>School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science General Degree Requirements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 1: General Institutional Admissions Requirements</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.1 Annual Application Cycle</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.2 General Qualifications for Admission to the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Graduate Programs</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>1.2.1 Provisional Admission to the Master's Program</i>	<i>6</i>
<b>1.3 Qualifications for Admission to the Ph.D. Program in Coastal and Marine Systems Science</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>1.3.1 Students Entering the Doctoral Program Holding a Master's Degree</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>1.3.2 Students Applying to the Doctoral Program from the SCMSS Master's Degree in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>1.3.3 Students Entering the Doctoral Program Holding a Bachelor's Degree</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>1.3.4 Provisional Admission to the Doctoral Program with a Completed Master's Degree in Disciplinary Areas Related to Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science from an Accredited Institution</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>1.3.5 Provisional Admission to the Doctoral Program with a Completed Bachelor's of Science Degree in Disciplinary Areas Related to Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science from an Accredited Institution</i>	<i>8</i>
<b>Section 2: Master's Degree in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies Requirements</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.1 Enrollment Requirement</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2 Required Graduate Courses (30 Graduate Credit Hours)</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.3 Guided and Independent Research and Professional Experiences; Research Thesis or Professional Experience Internship</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>2.3.1 Thesis Track Requirements</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>2.3.2 Professional Experience Track Requirements</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>2.4 Admission to Candidacy</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>2.4.1 Thesis Track Candidacy</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>2.4.2 Professional Experience Track Candidacy</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>Section 3: Master's Degree Program Timeline: Thesis or Professional Experience Track</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3.1 Choose Master's Program Thesis or Professional Experience Track</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>3.2 Establish Major Professor for CMWS Program</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>3.2.1 Establish Major Professor for CMWS Thesis Track</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>3.2.2 Establish Major Professor for Professional Experience Track</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>3.3 Establish CMWS Graduate Advisory Committee</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>3.3.1 CMWS Graduate Advisory Committee in Thesis Track</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>3.3.2 Graduate Advisory Committee in Professional Experience Track</i>	<i>15</i>
<b>3.4 CMWS Proposal</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>3.4.1 Thesis Track Proposal</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>3.4.2 Professional Experience Track Proposal</i>	<i>17</i>
<b>3.5 Admission to Candidacy for CMWS Degree</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3.6 Completion of CMWS Course Requirements (see 2.2)</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>3.6.1 Thesis Track</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>3.6.2 Professional Studies Track</i>	<i>18</i>
<b>3.7 Submittal of Master's Thesis or Professional Experience Final Report</b>	<b>18</b>

3.7.1 Thesis Track.....	18
3.7.2 Professional Experience Internship Report.....	18
<b>3.8 Thesis Defense or Professional Experience Presentation.....</b>	<b>19</b>
3.8.1 Thesis Defense.....	19
3.8.2 Professional Experience Presentation.....	19
<b>3.9 Submittal of Documentation .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Section 4: Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science</b>	
<b>Requirements .....</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 Enrollment Requirement.....	21
4.2 Required Graduate Courses (60 Graduate Credit Hours).....	21
4.3 Ph.D. Program Comprehensive Examination .....	22
4.4 Ph.D. Program Qualifying Examination.....	23
4.5 Admission to Candidacy .....	23
4.6 Dissertation .....	24
4.7 Dissertation Defense .....	24
<b>Section 5: Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems</b>	
<b>Science Degree Program Timeline .....</b>	<b>25</b>
5.1 Establish Major Professor .....	25
5.2 Establish Graduate Advisory Committee .....	25
5.3 School Comprehensive Exams .....	26
5.4 Dissertation Proposal - Qualifying Exam.....	26
5.5 Admission to Candidacy for Degree.....	26
5.6 Completion of Course Requirements .....	26
5.7 Completion of Dissertation Research and Directed Study .....	26
5.8 Submittal of Dissertation (See Section 3.5).....	26
5.9 Defense of Dissertation .....	27
5.10 Submittal of Documentation.....	27
Appendix A: CMWS Master’s Degree Program Timeline and Degree Completion Checklist.....	28
Appendix B: SCMSS Doctoral Degree Program Timeline and Degree Completion Checklist.....	30

This handbook is subject to change, and it is strongly encouraged that students maintain frequent interactions with their Major Professor, Graduate Advisory Committees, and the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

## School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science General Degree Requirements

Both the Master's Degree Program in Coastal Marine and Wetland Science and the Ph.D. Program in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science are designed to develop future coastal scientists, researchers and professionals through:

1. Course work. A slate of core courses is required to provide all students a common basis for the study of the complex and interdisciplinary nature of coastal systems, processes and resources. Each student will complete additional coursework that supports his or her particular research or academic need and
2. Guided and independent professional and research experiences to promote the students' academic and professional development. This work results in: 1) the production of a formal thesis or internship completion for students in the Master's Degree Program or 2) Dissertation and peer reviewed publication for the Ph.D. Program.

A few terms in this handbook:

SCMSS: School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science

CMWS: Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies (master's degree)

Major Professor: Graduate student's primary faculty mentor. Also referred to as Major Advisor, Advisor, Dissertation Advisor, and Thesis Advisor.

Graduate Advisory Committee: student's committee to help guide the pursuit of the graduate degree. Also referred to as Dissertation Committee, Thesis Committee.

Graduate Programs Committee: a committee comprised of graduate faculty from the SCMSS and the College of Science, charged with managing the SCMSS graduate programs.

## **Section 1: General Institutional Admissions Requirements**

Students may apply to the Ph.D. program in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science and/or the Master's Degree Program in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies through Coastal Carolina University's Office of Graduate Studies (<http://www.coastal.edu/graduate/index.html>).

### **1.1 Annual Application Cycle**

Students are encouraged to apply to the program for a planned start in the fall semester. The main application deadline for the program is January 15. The Graduate Programs Committee will evaluate applications and notify applicants of acceptance or rejection by March 1 for matriculation starting in the following fall semester. Students may be considered for beginning graduate work on an alternate schedule, typically spring semester, at the discretion and recommendation of the Graduate Programs Committee and Director.

Students proposing to enter the program on an alternate schedule or with need for any other special consideration affecting matriculation should contact the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Graduate Programs Coordinator prior to submitting an application.

All students applying to the program are encouraged to contact individual faculty members about their research interests and strongly consider visiting the School either individually or at scheduled Open Houses offered by the School. The School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science will only admit a finite number of students annually on a competitive basis. Doctoral students are required and master's students are expected to have identified a faculty research advisor/mentor to be admitted to the program and include a recommendation by a SCMSS faculty member agreeing to serve as the student's research mentor with their application.

### **1.2 General Qualifications for Admission to the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Graduate Programs**

All applicants to the Graduate Programs in the School of Coastal and Marine System Science (M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Science and Ph.D. in Coastal and Marine Systems Science) must meet the requirements for graduate admission to Coastal Carolina University and the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science.

This includes:

1. Successful completion of a bachelor's degree (for the Master's program) and either a master's or bachelor's degree (for the Ph.D. Program) from a regionally accredited institution in a program appropriate to support graduate work in the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science.
2. Completion of CCU application form.

3. A minimum GPA of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale) documented by official transcripts for all collegiate course work.
4. Final transcripts for bachelor's and master's degrees (if applicable) are required to be received before formally beginning the program.
5. Successful completion of at least two semesters of college level calculus, physics and chemistry (Ph.D. only) and advanced coursework in scientific disciplines related to the student's proposed research area.
6. Copies of official scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The University expects successful applicants to have a score of no less than 150 on both the verbal and quantitative portions.
  - a. International students whose native language is not English must also submit scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) with a score of at least 575 (paper-based test) or 89 on the TOEFL (internet-based test) or 6.5 on the IELTS with no subscore lower than 5.0 on the IELTS or students may complete the ELS Centers level 112 English language training program.
  - b. Scores on the GRE and TOEFL or IELTS must be less than three years old.
7. Three letters of recommendation outlining the applicant's past work and preparation and potential for successful completion of masters or doctoral studies.
8. Identification of a faculty research mentor.
9. Submission of a written statement of educational and career goals, how this degree will fulfill those goals and the subject area of research interest while completing this degree.
10. Submission of a resume.

### **1.2.1 Provisional Admission to the Master's Program**

Applicants may receive provisional admission to the School of Coastal and Marine System Science Master of Science Program in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies degree program if they do not meet the stated admission requirements and are entering the University for the first time or are returning to the University after an extended absence. Students on provisional admission are limited to 12 hours of course work.

To remove provisional status the student must, within the first two academic semesters (either Fall, Spring, or Spring, Fall):

- a. Earn a B or better in two core courses;
- b. Maintain a 3.0 GPA in all graduate courses taken;

- c. Earn a B or better in all undergraduate prerequisites required as specified in the provisional acceptance letter.

### **1.3 Qualifications for Admission to the Ph.D. Program in Coastal and Marine Systems Science**

Students applying for admittance to the Ph.D. Program in Coastal and Marine Systems Science should meet the general qualifications to the School's Graduate Programs and the following as applicable.

#### **1.3.1 Students Entering the Doctoral Program Holding a Master's Degree**

Applicants entering the program with a master's degree from a regionally accredited institution may be awarded up to 30 credit hours for M.S. work completed prior to admission to this program (see required elements of the curriculum below). The Graduate Programs Committee will review the application materials submitted by each applicant to determine what graduate course credit may be applicable to the program's coursework requirements.

#### **1.3.2 Students Applying to the Doctoral Program from the SCMSS Master's Degree in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies**

Students applying to the doctoral program from the School's CMWS Master's Degree program, or already enrolled in, the University's CMWS Master's Degree program with interests in the Ph.D. program should discuss their interest in the Ph.D. program with potential research mentors. These students are expected to first complete their master's degree in CMWS and then be directly admitted to the Ph.D. program through the regular admissions process.

Highly qualified CMWS students may apply to the Graduate Programs Committee to bypass the master's degree and progress directly into the doctoral program. To do so students should:

1. Formally apply, in writing, to the Graduate Programs Committee for consideration of the transition in status.
2. Have successfully completed the CMWS core curriculum requirements.
3. Provide a written recommendation by a CMSS faculty research mentor outlining the student's work completed to date and potential for transition to doctoral work.
4. Provide a CV highlighting professional accomplishments, documented achievements relevant to proposed doctoral work and outline of the proposed dissertation research.
5. Provide recommendations by the Graduate Programs Coordinator and CMWS Graduate Programs Committee supporting the transition.

Upon recommendation of the Graduate Programs Committee and approval of the Director the student may transition from the master's to Ph.D. program track. The student

and Graduate Advisory Committee will then update the student's program plan and follow the Ph.D. program track including setting up Comprehensive Exams at the earliest appropriate date.

### ***1.3.3 Students Entering the Doctoral Program Holding a Bachelor's Degree***

Highly qualified applicants entering the program from a regionally accredited bachelor's degree program may be provisionally accepted into the program through the general admission procedure outlined above. As part of the admission process, the student will have identified a CMSS faculty research mentor. Students should include with their application a written recommendation by a CMSS faculty member who agrees to serve as their research mentor.

### ***1.3.4 Provisional Admission to the Doctoral Program with a Completed Master's Degree in Disciplinary Areas Related to Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science from an Accredited Institution***

The Graduate Programs Committee will review the student's application and determine if there are any deficiencies in prior courses or other preparatory work for doctoral studies. If deficiencies are identified, the Graduates Program Committee may recommend the student be provisionally accepted to the program and assign specific courses or work (typically in consultation with the students' dissertation advisor) to be successfully completed in preparation for the program. Upon successful completion of any specified preparatory work and successfully passing the Comprehensive Examination, the student may petition to be fully admitted to the program. Any graduate coursework completed applicable to the program course requirements while in provisional status will be applied to program requirements.

### ***1.3.5 Provisional Admission to the Doctoral Program with a Completed Bachelor's of Science Degree in Disciplinary Areas Related to Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science from an Accredited Institution***

For students applying to the Ph.D. program holding a Bachelor of Science with deficiencies identified by the Graduate Programs Committee that would impede progress for doctoral studies, the Graduate Programs Committee may also recommend the applicant be admitted to the Master's Degree program and be assigned specific courses or work (typically in consultation with the students' dissertation advisor) to be appropriately prepared for the program. Upon successful completion of the specified preparatory work the student may petition for admission to the Ph.D. program through the process for students in the Schools Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies program (See Section 1.3.1.1) Any graduate coursework completed applicable to the program course requirements while in provisional status will be applied to program requirements.



## Section 2: Master's Degree in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies Requirements

The Master's Degree in Coastal Marine and Wetland Science consists of two distinct degree tracks:

- A track culminating in an original research thesis or
- A professional track culminating in a professional internship experience.

### General Program Requirements

*Students must complete the Master's Degree Program Timeline and Degree Completion Checklist (Appendix A)! Review this list with the Major Professor often and complete milestones/tasks in a timely manner.*

1. Successful completion of an approved program of study with a minimum of 30 graduate hours.
2. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B) on all course work.
3. Completion, presentation, and successful defense of a thesis; or, completion of an internship followed by an oral presentation and written report summarizing the internship experience.
4. Admission to Candidacy.
5. All work applied toward the degree must be earned in the six years immediately preceding the completion of the graduate program.

**Note:** Transfer credit(s) cannot be used to raise the GPA at CCU

### 2.1 Enrollment Requirement

Students in the Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies Master's Degree Program must be continuously enrolled during all phases of graduate work. This includes fall, spring and at least 1 credit during summer terms. Registering for a minimum of one graduate credit in each term typically satisfies this requirement. However, the situation may arise where students have completed all course requirements except for the thesis or internship report. In this case, students must enroll in CMWS 702 Project Completion in order to satisfy the continuous enrollment requirement. Registering in CMWS 702 maintains email and library privileges and also allows access to university facilities and faculty advisers. CMWS 702 does not count toward degree requirements and does not substitute for the 6 credit hour requirement in CMWS 700 Thesis Research or for the 6 credit hour requirement in CMWS 701 Internship.

### 2.2 Required Graduate Courses (30 Graduate Credit Hours)

The Master of Science in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies requires the successful completion of an approved program of study with a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours.

Within the approved program are three core courses, three seminar courses, electives, and a required thesis or internship.

**CORE COURSES (9 credit hours)**

CMWS 601: Coastal Marine and Wetland Processes.....	3
CMWS 602: Coastal Marine and Wetland Ecology .....	3
CMWS 603: Coastal and Wetland Policy and Management .....	3

**GRADUATE SEMINAR COURSES (3 credit hours)**

CMWS 697: Graduate Seminar I.....	1
CMWS 698: Graduate Seminar II.....	1
CMWS 699: Graduate Seminar III .....	1

**ELECTIVES (12 credit hours)**

(Choose 12 credit hours).....12  
Electives must be 500 level or above courses from BIOL, CHEM, CMSS, CMWS, MATH, MSCI, PHYS, or STAT.  
A maximum of 6 credit hours at the 500 level may be used towards completing degree requirements.

**THESIS RESEARCH (6 credit hours of CMWS 700) or INTERNSHIP (6 credit hours of CMWS 701)**

**2.3 Guided and Independent Research and Professional Experiences; Research Thesis or Professional Experience Internship**

The Master’s Degree Program is designed to provide two options for the guided and independent research and/or professional experience to be completed by all Master students.

These are:

- a) a traditional thesis track focused on original research or
- b) a professional internship track focused on experience working on real world-applications.

*Students should decide within the first semester which option, thesis or non-thesis, they will pursue.*

**2.3.1 Thesis Track Requirements**

Although course work is important, research and the resulting thesis are the unique experiences of graduate study. The design of a realistic and well-defined research project should be considered the highest priority. A detailed proposal outline helps achieve this goal by explaining the steps in developing a review of the pertinent literature and a written narrative of the direction the thesis will take. The proposal is used by both student and Graduate Advisory Committee for evaluating and overseeing research progress. Research provides an opportunity to make a contribution to science. Thesis writing is an important step to that contribution. The thesis should present research findings evaluated within the context of previously published works. It is usually a common goal of student and advisor

to publish results of the thesis research. There are several possible arrangements between the student and advisor concerning authorship of a manuscript to be submitted for publication. This should be discussed as the research progresses.

Students choosing the thesis option based on original research must assemble a Graduate Advisory Committee of at least three members by the second semester of enrollment. The committee will consist of at least three full-time CCU faculty members including the major professor who will chair the committee. A member from an outside institution may be included as approved by the Graduate Programs Coordinator and Graduate Programs Committee. The entire Graduate Advisory Committee will meet with the student periodically to assess progress and to give advice. Before graduation, students will submit the completed thesis to the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator who will schedule the public defense.

### **2.3.2 Professional Experience Track Requirements**

Students interested in future employment as professionals in the environmental field with federal, state, local agencies, not-for-profit organizations or private businesses, particularly with an educational, policy or management focus, may wish to choose a non-thesis option. Students who select a non-thesis option will complete an internship (CMWS 701, total of 6 credits) with a sponsoring public, non-profit or private laboratory, agency or business. The internship will be at least 450 hours. *Students should decide within the first semester which option, thesis or non-thesis, they will pursue.*

Although the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and CMSS Graduate Student Services Coordinator will provide guidance to students, it is the responsibility of each student to seek and secure an internship.

Students must assemble a Graduate Advisory Committee, similar to thesis track students. The committee should include the supervisor from the organization the student will be interning with and at least three SCMS faculty. A SCMS faculty should be designated as the major professor and chair of the committee.

The internship proposal must be approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and SCMS Graduate Programs Coordinator and should be related to the student's educational and career goals. The details of the work should be described in a proposal and filed with the SCMS Graduate Programs Coordinator and a formal internship agreement in place as necessary per University Internship Policy before beginning the internship.

An Internship Proposal must be completed and approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator before the internship is started. This should be completed before the end of the second semester. During the semester of the internship, students must register for 6 credits of CMWS 701 Internship. When the internship is complete, students must work with the CMSS Graduate Student Services Coordinator in scheduling a presentation and submitting a final report for approval by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The report should analyze and detail how the student's internship activities integrate with the interdisciplinary field of CMSS and the current state of knowledge, and identify the directions of growth in the future student's career. The report must be submitted and approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator before graduation. The on-campus presentation, summarizing the material in the report, will be followed by a meeting of the candidate with their Graduate Advisory Committee to discuss the report and its connections to core CMWS courses taken by the candidate.

## **2.4 Admission to Candidacy**

Admission to the graduate program in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies does not signify Admission to Candidacy. To be eligible for Admission to Candidacy for the Master of Science in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies, a student must choose either the thesis or professional experience option and then satisfy the corresponding requirements.

### **2.4.1 Thesis Track Candidacy**

1. Achieve regular admission status;
2. Have a degree plan and thesis proposal approved by the major professor, Graduate Advisory Committee, SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator, and the Director of the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science;
3. Complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of graduate work at Coastal Carolina University;
4. Have earned a B or better average on all graduate work pursued and a B or better in the three core courses (CMWS 601, CMWS 602, CMWS 603); and
5. Approval by SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

### **2.4.2 Professional Experience Track Candidacy**

1. Achieve regular admission status;
2. Have a degree plan and internship proposal approved by the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator, the student's major professor, Graduate Advisory Committee, and the Director of the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science;
3. Complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of graduate work at Coastal Carolina University; and
4. Have earned a B or better average on all graduate work pursued and a B or better in the three core courses (CMWS 601, CMWS 602, CMWS 603).
5. Approval by SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The final decision for admission to Candidacy is made by Director of the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science and CCU Director of Graduate Programs. All students, including transfer students, must clear the English Proficiency Requirement, if applicable, before being admitted to Candidacy. Candidacy Applications are available in the Graduate Programs Coordinator's office.

## **Section 3: Master's Degree Program Timeline: Thesis or Professional Experience Track**

The typical sequence of milestones and timeline for progressing through the Master's Program in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies is outlined below and attached in Appendix A. Students should refer to this timeline to maintain progress towards graduation on time. The timeline and milestone tracking will be maintained by the student's major professor and filed with the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator. The Milestone charts provide for input on potential causes of delays from maintaining the targeted progress through the program. Excessive delay in progress may jeopardize program resources, such as graduate RA's provided by School funds.

### **3.1 Choose Master's Program Thesis or Professional Experience Track**

This choice should be made during the first semester.

### **3.2 Establish Major Professor for CMWS Program**

The major professor will help in the selection of at least two additional faculty members to serve on the Graduate Advisory Committee. Any School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Faculty and Affiliated Faculty is eligible to serve as major professor if he/she has expertise in an appropriate field of research. Faculty from other universities or agencies may not serve as major professor but may serve on the Graduate Advisory Committee.

It is highly beneficial to have communicated with and identified a major professor who will commit to mentor your graduate work during the admissions process. Highly qualified students may be accepted to the program without a defined major professor. It is expected that students will identify their major professor by the end of the first semester and or early in the second semester at the latest. A request to establish major professor is submitted to the Graduate Programs Coordinator for approval (see forms page: [www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs](http://www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs)).

#### **3.2.1 Establish Major Professor for CMWS Thesis Track**

A key role of the major professor is to assist in the selection and refinement of a thesis topic and to give advice in the design of the research program. The major professor will also give advice on and edit the thesis. This advisor, therefore, must have expertise in the appropriate area of research.

#### **3.2.2 Establish Major Professor for Professional Experience Track**

A key role of the major professor is to assist in the selection and establishment of an appropriate internship to accomplish the student's academic and professional goals. The major professor will give advice on and edit the professional experience proposal and final report. The major professor, therefore, must have expertise in the appropriate area of research. The School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Graduate Student Services Coordinator may also be a very helpful resource in identifying and establishing professional internship opportunities.

### **3.3 Establish CMWS Graduate Advisory Committee**

The Graduate Advisory Committee will assist in putting together the degree program and must approve program courses. It is important to carefully select the Graduate Advisory Committee Members. Close contact with each member should be maintained throughout the degree program. In order to assure the committee is up-to-date, it should be convened at least once each semester. There should be a close working relationship between the student, the major professor and the Graduate Advisory Committee with more frequent communication individually or as a group and as needed. The Graduate Advisory Committee membership is submitted to the Graduate Programs Coordinator for approval (see forms page: [www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs](http://www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs)).

#### **3.3.1 CMWS Graduate Advisory Committee in Thesis Track**

The Graduate Advisory Committee should be composed of faculty members who can provide access to additional expertise to aid in the design and execution of thesis research. They will also assist with the development of the research proposal and must approve the thesis proposal. The committee may offer advice and counseling on any aspect of the degree program. The committee will evaluate performance, and determine whether the student passes or fails the thesis proposal and thesis defense requirements. Each committee member will read, edit, and evaluate the thesis and must approve the final draft.

It is especially important to keep them informed of progress on research and the thesis preparation and enlist their guidance to ensure efficient progress through the program to graduation.

Any School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Faculty or Affiliated Faculty is eligible to serve on the student's Graduate Advisory Committee if he/she has expertise in an appropriate field of research. Faculty from other universities or agencies are not required to serve on the Graduate Advisory Committee but the School recommends considering an outside expert in the field on the Committee.

#### **3.3.2 Graduate Advisory Committee in Professional Experience Track**

The Graduate Advisory Committee will also assist with identification and approval of an appropriate professional internship experience to support the student's academic and professional goals. The committee may offer advice and counseling on any aspect of the degree program. The committee will evaluate performance, and determine whether the student passes or fails the internship proposal, final report and final presentation requirements.

It is especially important to keep them informed of progress on the internship and the final report preparation and enlist their guidance to ensure efficient progress through the program to graduation.

Any School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Faculty or Affiliated Faculty is eligible to serve on the student's Graduate Advisory Committee if he/she has expertise in an

appropriate field of research. If the internship is with an outside agency or university it is generally expected that the external professional supervising the professional internship will serve as a member of the Graduate Advisory Committee.

### **3.4 CMWS Proposal**

#### **3.4.1 Thesis Track Proposal**

Research and the resulting thesis are the unique experiences of graduate study. The design of a realistic and well-defined research project should be considered the highest priority. A detailed proposal outline helps you achieve this goal by explaining the steps in developing a review of the pertinent literature and a written narrative of the direction the thesis will take. The proposal is used by both student and Graduate Advisory Committee for evaluating and overseeing progress of the research. Research provides an opportunity to make a contribution to science. Thesis writing is an important step to that contribution. The thesis should present research findings evaluated within the context of previously published works. It is usually a common goal of student and advisor to publish results of the thesis research. There are several possible arrangements between the student and advisor concerning authorship of a manuscript to be submitted for publication. This should be discussed with your major professor and Graduate Advisory Committee as the research progresses.

A thesis proposal prepared early in the academic program is essential to promote a firm and mutual understanding of expectations for educational and research activities. The proposal should be completed by the beginning of the second semester and the end of the first academic year at the latest. It will be retained as a part of the student's CMWS graduate file. The proposal will consist of the cover sheet, literature review and research proposal. There must be a clearly identified section in the proposal that describes the relationship between the proposed research and the material covered in the core classes (CMWS 601, 602 and 603). Students are required to present their proposals in the seminar class. Once approved by the Graduate Advisory Committee the cover page will be signed by the Committee and filed with the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The proposal is a research proposal or plan, and as such may be modified as the research progresses. Significant changes in the proposed research plan should be approved by the Graduate Advisory Committee and filed with the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science is committed to leverage its resources to help ensure student success. Students may work with their major professors and Graduate Advisory Committees to submit an itemized budget for potential basic support (supplies, conference travel etc.) The budget should include prioritized, real projected expenses (including the use of boats) not covered by research grants and other support for the student's thesis research. The budget is endorsed by the Graduate Advisory Committee and submitted simultaneously with the thesis proposal. The Graduate Programs Coordinator will review the budget requests and available funds in consultation with the Graduate Programs Committee and identify the student and their major professor of what if any of the School resources may be committed to from the budgets request. The major



professor is responsible for the administering of the budget and ensuring all expenditures and enabling paperwork are properly submitted to the School and University financial processes.

### **3.4.2 Professional Experience Track Proposal**

Although course work is important, professional application of the discipline is a critical component of the professional. The design of a realistic and well-defined internship project should be considered the highest priority. A detailed proposal outline helps you achieve this goal by explaining the steps in developing a review of the pertinent literature and a written narrative of the direction the internship will take. The proposal is used by both student and Graduate Advisory Committee for evaluating and overseeing progress of the internship. Professional internships provide an opportunity to practice the discipline within state or federal agencies, universities, NGO's or private sector in line with the students' professional ambitions and goals.

An internship proposal prepared early in the academic program is essential to promote a firm and mutual understanding of expectations for educational and professional activities. The proposal should be completed by the beginning of the second semester and the end of the first academic year at the latest. An Internship Proposal must be completed and approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator before the internship is started. It will be retained as a part of the student's CMWS graduate file. The proposal will consist of the cover sheet, literature review and internship proposal. There must be a clearly identified section in the proposal that describes the relationship between the proposed internship and the material covered in the core classes (CMWS 601, 602 and 603). Students are required to present their proposals in the seminar class. Once approved by the Graduate Advisory Committee the cover page will be signed by the Committee and filed with the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The proposal is an internship proposal or plan, and as such may be modified as the project progresses. Significant changes in the proposed internship plan should be approved by the Graduate Advisory Committee and filed with the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science is committed to leverage its resources to help ensure student success. Students may work with their major professors and Graduate Advisory Committees to submit an itemized budget for potential basic support (supplies, conference travel etc.) The budget should include prioritized, real projected expenses (including the use of boats) not covered by research grants, internship programs and other support for the student's internship work. The budget is endorsed by the Graduate Advisory Committee and submitted simultaneously with the proposal. The Graduate Programs Coordinator will review the budget requests and available funds in consultation with the Graduate Programs Committee and identify the student and their major professor of what if any of the School resources may be committed to from the budgets request. The major professor is responsible for the administering of the budget and ensuring all expenditures and enabling paperwork are properly submitted to the School and University financial processes.

### **3.5 Admission to Candidacy for CMWS Degree**

See section 2.4

### **3.6 Completion of CMWS Course Requirements (see 2.2)**

#### **3.6.1 Thesis Track**

Completion of coursework for the Thesis Option requires a total of six credits of CMWS 700 (Thesis Research). This course may be taken as variable credit (1-6 credits per semester) as best fits the student's degree plan. Close consultation with the student's major professor is encouraged in planning enrollment in these credits.

#### **3.6.2 Professional Studies Track**

Completion of coursework for the Professional Experience requires six credits of CMWS 701 (Internship). This course must be completed during the semester in which the internship is undertaken. This is not a variable credit course.

Prior to beginning the internship students must complete and file an internship learning contract (see Appendix A).

### **3.7 Submittal of Master's Thesis or Professional Experience Final Report**

#### **3.7.1 Thesis Track**

The results of the student's research are submitted as a formal thesis (<http://www.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteId=464>). Detailed presentations of methods and data should be in appendices and should be sufficient to allow future students to duplicate the work or to make comparisons between your data and newly gathered information. In general, the thesis should be in the format of an article ready for submission to an appropriate science journal.

The student should contact the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator early in the thesis writing process to find out if there are any changes in thesis guidelines, and any relevant deadlines. The thesis does not fulfill the degree requirement until the Director of the Graduate School has signed it. The thesis title and date of approval must be filed in the Graduate School before the degree requirement is officially met.

#### **3.7.2 Professional Experience Internship Report**

The results of the student's internship work are submitted as a formal report. CMWS Master's Internship Guidelines are available from the CMSS Graduate Student Services Coordinator. If applicable, your report should be in the format of an article ready for submission to an appropriate science journal or technical report for the organization you worked with.

The student should contact the CMSS Graduate Coordinator early in the report writing process to find out if there are any changes in internship report guidelines, and any relevant deadlines. The report does not fulfill the degree requirement until the Director of the Graduate School has signed it. The report title and date of approval must be filed in the Graduate School before the degree requirement is officially met.

### **3.8 Thesis Defense or Professional Experience Presentation**

#### **3.8.1 Thesis Defense**

Approximately two months before the desired date for the thesis seminar and defense, the student should submit a thesis draft (including figures and tables) to his/her major professor. The major professor shall read and edit the draft and return it for revisions. After these revisions are made to the draft, it is submitted to other members of the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator. Each committee member should study and edit the thesis before the defense. The CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator reviews the thesis for formatting, and upon approval, the student may schedule the presentation and defense. The defense of the thesis shall be conducted at a date and time mutually agreed upon by the student and examining committee. Normally, the defense of thesis immediately follows the public presentation. At the conclusion of the defense, copies of the thesis containing each member's suggestions for changes are returned to the student. After committee deliberation on the quality of responses to questions, oral performance, and condition of thesis, the student shall be notified of whether he/she passed or failed. If the defense is passed, the student must prepare a final copy of the thesis based on the written and oral comments provided by the committee. Should he/she fail the defense, the committee will schedule a second defense allowing for further study or revision. Typically a period of three months is provided for the revision.

#### **3.8.2 Professional Experience Presentation**

Approximately two months before the desired date for the professional experience seminar and defense, the student should submit a report draft to his/her major professor. The major professor shall read and edit the draft and return it for revisions. After these revisions are made to the draft, it is submitted to other members of the committee and the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator. Each committee member should study and edit the report before the defense. The final draft report is submitted to The CMSS Graduate Coordinator who reviews the report for formatting, and upon approval, the student may schedule the presentation and defense. The defense of the internship shall be conducted at a date and time mutually agreed upon by the student and examining committee. Normally, the defense of internship immediately follows the public presentation. At the conclusion of the defense, copies of the report containing each member's suggestions for changes are returned to the student. After committee deliberation on the quality of responses to questions, oral performance, and condition of report, the student shall be notified of whether he/she passed or failed. If the defense is passed, the student must prepare a final copy of the report based on the written and oral comments provided by the committee. Should he/she fail the defense, the committee will schedule a second defense allowing for further study or revision. Typically a period of three months is provided for the revision.

### **3.9 Submittal of Documentation**

In addition to a final version of the thesis or final report, students or their advisors must submit a defense report form and a program assessment form. As with all necessary forms, these are available at ([www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs](http://www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs)). Students should double check the Degree Program Timeline and Completion Checklist.

## **Section 4: Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science Requirements**

The Ph.D. program in Coastal and Marine Systems Science facilitates students to work with faculty on original research expanding and applying knowledge of coastal systems. Emphasis is on developing predictive capabilities of coastal environmental systems and infusing an appreciation of associated environmental policy development.

### **General Program Requirements**

*Students must complete the Doctoral Degree Program Timeline and Degree Completion Checklist (Appendix B)! Review this list with the Major Professor often and complete milestones/tasks in a timely manner.*

1. Successful completion of an approved program of study with a minimum of 60 graduate hours; (3.1.1, 3.1.2)
2. Successful Passing the Comprehensive Examination (3.2)
3. Successful Passing the Qualifying Examination (3.3)
4. Admission to Candidacy; (3.4)
5. A minimum grade point average of B on all course work;
6. Completion, presentation, and successful defense of a dissertation (3.5)
7. All work applied toward the degree must be earned in the seven years immediately preceding the completion of the graduate program.

**Note:** Transfer credit(s) cannot be used to raise the GPA at CCU

### **4.1 Enrollment Requirement**

Students in the Coastal and Marine Systems Science Ph.D. degree program must be continuously enrolled during all phases of graduate work. This includes fall, spring and summer terms. Registering for a minimum of one graduate credit in each term typically satisfies this requirement. However, the situation may arise where students have completed all course requirements except for the dissertation. In this case, students must enroll in CMSS 702 Project Completion in order to satisfy the continuous enrollment requirement. Registering in CMSS 702 maintains email and library privileges and also allows access to university facilities and faculty advisers. CMSS 702 does not count toward degree requirements and does not substitute for the 6 credit hour requirement in CMSS 700 Thesis Research.

### **4.2 Required Graduate Courses (60 Graduate Credit Hours)**

The Ph.D. degree program in Coastal and Marine Systems Science requires the successful completion of an approved program of study with a minimum of 60 graduate credit hours.

The approved program of study includes a series of: core and seminar courses required for all students, specialized content supporting a student's individual research or academic needs and a required thesis.

The core of the curriculum is intended to provide a comprehensive foundation across the sub-disciplinary areas of the marine sciences (Atmospheric, Physical, Chemical, Geological, Biological, and Policy) to facilitate a systems approach to the coastal marine environment and preparation for Comprehensive Exams. Specialized coursework, directed study, and research courses identified by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee are required to support student research and professional objectives. Students may receive credits for an earned master's degree in an area related to the doctoral program.

The curriculum for the Ph.D. in Coastal and Marine System Science (60 credit hours)

**CORE COURSES (21 credit hours)**

- CMSS 605 Coastal and Marine Hydrodynamics (3)
- CMSS 606 Coastal and Marine Geological Processes (3)
- CMSS 607 Coastal and Marine Bio-Geochemistry (3)
- CMSS 608 Coastal / Marine System Science, Issues and Applications (2)
- CMSS 609 Coastal / Marine System Science Seminar (4)
- CMSS 610 Temporal and Spatial Analysis (3) or CMSS 611 Modeling Coastal and Marine Systems (3)
- CMWS 603 Coastal and Wetland Policy and Management (3)

**SPECIALIZED COURSES (18-27 credit hours) \*\*\***

Graduate coursework approved from an earned master's degree and/or required by a student's Graduate Advisory Committee.

**DISSERTATION RESEARCH AND DIRECTED (Minimum of 12 credit hours)**

\*\*\* With the approval of the School's Graduate Programs Coordinator a student's Graduate Advisory Committee may specify other course work to satisfy the core or specialized course requirements to suit a student's particular needs and the objectives of the curriculum.

**4.3 Ph.D. Program Comprehensive Examination**

Students are required to pass the Comprehensive Exam to be taken within a year of completion of the core curriculum courses. This is typically after the third semester of the program. The format of the exam will consist of written and oral components. In the written exam, students will respond to questions established by the Comprehensive Exam Committee to assess the broad range of sub-disciplinary knowledge required to address complex coastal systems and the ability to identify and explain the linkages between sub-disciplinary concepts and processes. The Comprehensive Exam Committee will schedule a follow-up oral examination with each student based on the responses of the written exam and allow for further examination of sub- and interdisciplinary knowledge and applications not emphasized in the written exam. Following the oral examination, the Committee will identify one of the three following outcomes: pass, fail, or retake the exam within three

months. Students must pass the Comprehensive Exam to continue in the doctoral program.

#### **4.4 Ph.D. Program Qualifying Examination**

Students are required to present and defend their dissertation research plan. This examination of the student's dissertation research plan and specific technical background required to complete the proposed research must be completed before the sixth full semester in residence to advance to candidacy in the doctoral program. The dissertation proposal will be constructed as a formal research proposal addressing the objective and need for the proposed research, command of the existing literature and foundation of the proposed research, specific testable hypotheses or research questions, an experimental design and work plan to address the questions, as well as description of proposed analyses and the broader implications of the research results. The proposal is reviewed by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee, which will schedule a formal presentation and defense of the proposal by the student. The presentation will be open to all SCMSS faculty and students. Following the public presentation, the Committee will meet with the student for an oral examination of the proposal and presentation. The oral exam will assess the student's research plan and preparation for the proposed research. The Committee will also identify any deficiencies in the proposal and assign one of three outcomes: pass and approval of the final proposal/work plan; provisional pass and require a resubmission of an improved proposal and work plan and re-exam within three months; or failure. Upon passing the Qualifying Exam, the student may proceed with the dissertation research.

The Graduate Programs Coordinator or designee from the School's faculty will serve as chair of the examination in an ex officio capacity. The role of the chair is ensure the exam follows School requirements, ensure key questions related to overall program objectives (integrating concepts) are explored in addition to the more specific technical content being examined by the Graduate Advisory Committee and major professor. The Chair of the Committee also ensures the Committee's vote on acceptableness of the work is documented along with any other information, perspectives or guidance for the student going forward.

Students failing the Qualifying Exam may petition the program to convert their program of study to the CMWS Master's Degree Program with the positive recommendation of the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator and approval of the Director of the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science. The Graduate Advisory Committee and Graduate Programs Coordinator will determine the applicable conversion of course and degree program requirements satisfied by work to date and provide an updated course of study to enable the student to complete the master's program.

#### **4.5 Admission to Candidacy**

Admission to the graduate program does not signify Admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science. To be eligible for Admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science, a student must satisfy the corresponding requirements.

1. Achieve regular admission status;
2. Complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate work at Coastal Carolina University, including core curriculum courses;
3. Have earned a B or better average on all graduate work pursued and a B or better in the SCMSS core courses;
4. Successfully passed the Comprehensive Exam;
5. Approval of dissertation proposal by Graduate Advisory Committee and Graduate Programs Coordinator;
6. Successfully passed the Qualifying Exam; and
7. Recommendation by Graduate Advisory Committee, Graduate Programs Coordinator, SCMSS Director and Dean.

#### **4.6 Dissertation**

Students will submit the results of his/her doctoral research as a formal dissertation and/or series of publications in compliance with Coastal Carolina University Graduate Studies and School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science policy and procedures.

#### **4.7 Dissertation Defense**

The Graduate Programs Coordinator will schedule a formal public presentation of the work by the student to be followed by an Oral Examination (Defense) of the work by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee.

The Graduate Programs Coordinator or designee from the School's faculty will serve as Chair the examination in an ex officio capacity. The role of the Chair is ensure the exam follows School requirements, ensure key questions related to overall program objectives (integrating concepts) are explored in addition to the more specific technical content being examined by the Graduate Advisory Committee and major professor. The Chair of the committee also ensures the committee's vote on acceptableness of the work is documented along with any other information, perspectives or guidance for the student going forward.

Upon passing the defense, the student will submit the completed dissertation as specified by the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Program and University guidelines.



## **Section 5: Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science Degree Program Timeline**

The typical sequence of milestones and timeline for progressing through the Ph.D. Program in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science and is outlined below and in Appendix B. Students should refer to this timeline to maintain progress towards graduation on time. The timeline and milestone tracking will be maintained by the student's major professor and filed with the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator. The milestone charts provide for input on potential causes of delays from maintaining the targeted progress through the program. Excessive delay in progress may jeopardize program resources, such as graduate assistantships provided by School funds.

### **5.1 Establish Major Professor**

A key role of the major professor is to assist in the selection and refinement of a dissertation topic and to give advice in the design of the research program. The major professor will also give advice on and edit the dissertation. This advisor, therefore, must have expertise in the appropriate area of research.

The major professor will help in the selection of at least four additional faculty members to serve on your Graduate Advisory Committee. The Graduate Advisory Committee should be composed of faculty members who can provide you access to additional expertise to aid in the design and execution of thesis research. Any School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Faculty and Affiliated Faculty is eligible to serve as Major Professor if he/she has expertise in an appropriate field of research. Faculty from other universities or agencies may not serve as major professor but may serve on the Graduate Advisory Committee.

It is highly beneficial to have communicated with and identified a major professor who will commit to mentor your graduate work during the admissions process. Students are normally not admitted to the Ph.D. program in Marine Science without a defined major professor who should provide a letter of support for the student's application and commitment to mentor the student's dissertation work. A student may change their major professor with the commitment of a new major professor and the CMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

A request to establish your major professor is submitted to the Graduate Programs Coordinator for approval.

### **5.2 Establish Graduate Advisory Committee**

The Graduate Advisory Committee will assist in putting together the degree program and must approve program courses. They will also assist with the development of the research direction and must approve the dissertation proposal. The committee may offer advice and counseling on any aspect of the degree program. The committee will evaluate performance, and determine whether the student passes or fails the dissertation proposal and dissertation defense requirements. Each committee member will read, edit, and evaluate the dissertation

and must approve the final draft.

It is important to carefully select the Graduate Advisory Committee members. Close contact with each member should be maintained throughout the degree program. It is especially important to keep them informed of progress on research and the dissertation preparation and enlist their guidance to ensure efficient progress through the program to graduation. In order to assure the Committee is up-to-date, it should be convened at least once each semester. There should be a close working relationship between the student, the major advisor and the Graduate Advisory Committee with more frequent communication individually or as a group and as needed.

A Ph.D. student's Graduate Advisory Committee consists of at least five eligible professionals. Any School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science Faculty or Affiliated Faculty is eligible to serve on the student's Graduate Advisory Committee if he/she has expertise in an appropriate field of research. At least three Committee members must be from the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science. The School requires one of the five Graduate Advisory Committee members to be based at a different university or agency to provide an external perspective of the work from the field. The Graduate Advisory Committee membership is submitted to the Graduate Programs Coordinator for approval.

### **5.3 Comprehensive Exams**

See section 4.3

### **5.4 Dissertation Proposal - Qualifying Exam**

See section 4.4

### **5.5 Admission to Candidacy for Degree**

See section 4.5

### **5.6 Completion of Course Requirements**

Upon completion of the course requirements the Degree Candidate should submit the CMSS Course Requirement Tracking Sheet or Equivalent Documentation from Coastal's Webadvisor to their major professor. The Major professor reviews the documentation and verifies the course requirements have been met and forward the documentation to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

### **5.7 Completion of Dissertation Research and Directed Study**

### **5.8 Submittal of Dissertation (See Section 3.5)**

Students will submit the results of his/her doctoral research as a formal dissertation and/or series of publications in compliance with Coastal Carolina University Graduate Studies and School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science policy and procedures

(<http://www.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteId=464>).

## **5.9 Defense of Dissertation**

See section 4.7

## **5.10 Submittal of Documentation**

In addition to a final version of the dissertation, students or their advisors must submit a defense report form and a program assessment form. As with all necessary forms, these are available at ([www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs](http://www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs)). Students should double check the Degree Program Timeline and Completion Checklist.

**Appendix A: CMWS Master's Degree Program Timeline and Degree Completion Checklist**

<b>Milestone/Task</b>	<b>Timeline/ Target Date</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Did Student Meet Target Date and/or Task? If no, provide explanation.</b>	<b>Required Signature or Form Filed</b>
1. Student accepted into graduate program	Spring or fall			
2. Student formally begins program	Fall or spring semester			
3. Establish major professor	Before end of first semester of enrollment			
4. Choose thesis or professional experience track	Before end of first semester of enrollment			
5. Establish Graduate Advisory Committee: a. If thesis track, choose at least 3, counting major professor, SCMSS affiliated faculty to serve as Graduate Advisory Committee; or b. If professional experience (internship) track, choose at least 3, counting major professor, SCMSS affiliated faculty and the supervisor of internship to serve as Graduate Advisory Committee	Beginning of second semester of enrollment			
6. Approve proposal: a. If thesis track, proposal must be approved by Graduate Advisory Committee and Graduate Programs Coordinator; or b. If professional experience track, proposal must be approved by Graduate Advisory Committee and SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator 1. Details of the work should be described and filed with the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator and a formal internship agreement (MOU and Internship Learning Contract) in place as necessary per University Internship Policy before beginning the internship	Before end of second semester of enrollment			

**CMWS Master's Degree Program Timeline and Degree Completion Checklist**

<b>Milestone/Task</b>	<b>Timeline/ Target Date</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Did Student Meet Target Date and/or Task? If no, provide explanation.</b>	<b>Required Signature or Form Filed</b>
7. Achieve eligibility for Admission to Candidacy (in addition to the above requirements): a. Complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of graduate work; b. Earned a B or better average on all graduate work; c. Earned a B or better in all 3 core courses; d. Clear the English proficiency requirement, if applicable; e. Approved by SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator	Before end of second semester of enrollment			
8. Complete minimum of 30 graduate credit hours achieving a minimum 3.0 grade point average	Before end of fourth semester of enrollment			
9. Research thesis or professional experience: a. Conduct research project for thesis; or b. Complete internship (at least 450 hours)	Before end of fourth semester of enrollment			
10. Approve thesis or final report: a. Thesis completed and approved by Graduate Advisory Committee, and then submitted to SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator; or b. Final written report (summarizing the professional experience) completed and approved by Graduate Advisory Committee, and then submitted to SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator	Before end of fourth semester of enrollment			
11. Present and defend: a. Present and successfully defend thesis; or b. Oral presentation summarizing the professional experience and defense	Before end of fourth semester of enrollment			
12. Submit documents, including Graduation Application, demonstrating all degree requirements have been met	Before end of fourth semester of enrollment			

**Appendix B: SCMSS Doctoral Degree Program Timeline and Degree Completion Checklist**

<b>Milestone/Task</b>	<b>Timeline/ Target Date</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Did Student Meet Target Date and/or Task? If no, provide explanation.</b>	<b>Required Signature or Form Filed</b>
1. Student accepted into graduate program	Spring or fall			
2. Student formally begins program	Fall or spring semester			
3. Establish major professor	During admission process			
4. Establish Graduate Advisory Committee (at least 5 members with at least 3 from SCMSS faculty and 1 external member)	Before end of second semester of enrollment			
5. Approval of Graduate Advisory Committee by Graduate Programs Coordinator	Before end of second semester of enrollment			
6. Complete SCMSS Comprehensive Exam	Upon recommendation of Advisory Committee; generally expected by end of third semester			
7. SCMSS Qualifying Exam: a. Proposal approved by Graduate Advisory Committee; b. Presentation open to all SCMSS faculty and students; c. Oral qualifiers with Graduate Advisory Committee	Before end of fifth semester of enrollment			

### SCMSS Doctoral Degree Program Timeline and Degree Completion Checklist

Milestone/Task	Timeline/ Target Date	Date Completed	Did Student Meet Target Date and/or Task? If no, provide explanation.	Required Signature or Form Filed
8. Advancement to Candidacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Completion of Program Core Curriculum courses and a grade of B or better;</li> <li>b. Successful completion of SCMSS Comprehensive Exam;</li> <li>c. Successful passing of SCMSS Qualifying Exam;</li> <li>d. Approval of dissertation proposal by Advisory Committee and Graduate Programs Coordinator</li> <li>e. Recommendation by Advisory Committee, Graduate Programs Coordinator, SCMSS Director and Dean of College of Science;</li> <li>f. Complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate work at Coastal Carolina University;</li> <li>g. Have earned a B or better average on all graduate work pursued and a B or better in SCMSS core courses</li> </ul>	Before end of fifth semester of enrollment			
9. Complete 21 hours of Dissertation Research and Directed Study (up to 6 hours) and required SCMSS coursework	Before end of eighth semester			
10. Submit results of doctoral research as a formal dissertation and/or series of publications	Before end of eighth semester			
11. Present a seminar to SCMSS on dissertation	Before end of eighth semester			
12. Defend dissertation in oral exam given by Graduate Advisory Committee	Before end of eighth semester			
13. Submit documents, including Graduation Application, that all degree requirements have been met	Before end of eighth semester			