



SCHOOL OF COASTAL AND
MARINE SYSTEMS SCIENCE

COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science

Graduate Student Handbook

M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies

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

2014 - 2015

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Glossary

School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science (SCMSS):

Major Professor: Graduate student's primary faculty mentor. The Major Professor also fulfills the responsibility of Major Advisor, Dissertation advisor, and Thesis Advisor.

Graduate Advisory Committee: The student's committee helps to guide the student in pursuit of the graduate degree. The committee also fulfills the responsibility of Dissertation Committee or Thesis Committee.

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

SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator:

SCMSS Graduate Student Services Coordinator:

Director of SCMSS:

SCMSS Qualifying Examination:

SCMSS Comprehensive Examination:

SCMSS Comprehensive Examination Committee:

Affiliated Faculty:

School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science (SCMSS)
General Degree Requirements

Both the M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies (CMWS) and the Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science programs 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 understanding of the complex and interdisciplinary nature of coastal systems, processes and resources. Each student will complete 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 M.S. program or 2) dissertation or peer reviewed publications for the Ph.D. program.

Section 1: General Institutional Admissions Requirements

Students apply to the Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science and/or the M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies through Coastal Carolina University's Office of Graduate Studies: www.coastal.edu/graduate/.

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 SCMSS 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee and Director of SCMSS.

Students proposing to enter the program on an alternate schedule or with need for any other special consideration affecting matriculation should contact the SCMSS 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 Major Professor to be admitted to the program and include a recommendation by this individual 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 Systems Science (M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Science and Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science) must meet the requirements for graduate admission to both Coastal Carolina University and the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science. This includes:

1. Successful completion of a bachelor's degree (for the M.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 Coastal 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, official 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. program 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 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 (internet-based test) on the TOEFL 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 Systems Science M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies if they do not fully 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. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science

Students applying for admittance to the Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science are expected to 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 SCMSS 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 M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies (CMWS)

Students applying to the doctoral program from the school's CMWS program, or already enrolled in the University's CMWS program with interests in the Ph.D. program should discuss their interests in the Ph.D. program with potential research mentors. Such students are expected to first complete their M.S. 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee to by-pass the master's degree and progress directly into the doctoral program. To do so students should:

1. Formally apply, in writing, to the SCMSS 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 SCMSS faculty research mentor outlining the student's work completed to date and potential for transition to doctoral work.
4. Provide a Curriculum Vitae (CV) highlighting professional accomplishments, documented achievements relevant to the proposed doctoral work, and outline of the student's proposed dissertation research.
5. Provide recommendations by the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator and SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee supporting the transition.

Upon recommendation of the SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee and approval of the SCMSS Director, the student may transition from the M.S. to the Ph.D. program track. The student and the student's Graduate Advisory Committee will then update the student's program plan and follow the Ph.D. program track including arranging for Ph.D. SCMSS Comprehensive Examination 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 Ph.D. program through the general admission procedure outlined above. As part of the admission process, the student will have identified a SCMSS faculty research mentor. Students should include with their application a written recommendation by a SCMSS 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 from an Accredited Institution in Disciplinary Areas Related to Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science

The SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee will review the student's application and determine if there are any deficiencies in prior coursework or other preparatory work for doctoral study. If deficiencies are identified, the Graduates Programs Committee may recommend the student be provisionally accepted to the program and assign specific courses or work (typically in consultation with the student's dissertation advisor) to be successfully completed in preparation for the program. Upon successful completion of any specified preparatory work and successfully passing the SCMSS 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 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee that would impede progress for doctoral study, the SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee may recommend the applicant be admitted to the M.S. program and be assigned specific courses or work (typically in consultation with the student's Major Professor) 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 Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies program (See Section 1.3.1.). Any graduate coursework completed applicable to the program course requirements while in provisional status will be applied to program requirements.

Section 2: M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies (CMWS) Requirements

The M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies consists of two distinct program tracks:

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

General Program Requirements

Students must complete the M.S. 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 credit hours.
2. A minimum grade point average (GPA) 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 a maximum of six years.

Note: Transfer credit(s) cannot be used to raise the GPA at Coastal Carolina University.

2.1 Enrollment Requirement

Students in the M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies degree must be continuously enrolled during all phases of graduate work. This includes fall, spring and at least one 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 to satisfy the continuous enrollment requirement. Registering in CMWS 702 maintains email and library privileges and allows access to university facilities and faculty advisers. CMWS 702, however, does not count toward the completion of 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 M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies requires the successful completion of an approved program of study with a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours.

Included in the program are three core courses, three seminar courses, electives, and a required thesis or internship as follows:

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
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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

The M.S. program provides two options for the guided and independent research and/or professional experience to be completed by all degree candidates. These are:

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

**Students should decide within the first semester of the program which option, thesis or experience, they will pursue.*

2.3.1 Thesis Track Requirements

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

this 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 the results of thesis research. There are several possible arrangements between the student and advisor concerning authorship of a manuscript to be submitted for publication, and 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 SCMSS core and affiliated Coastal faculty members including the student's Major Professor who will chair the committee. A member from an outside institution may be included as approved by the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator and SCMSS 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 SCMSS 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, non-profit organizations or private businesses, particularly with an educational, policy or management focus, may wish to choose the experience option. Students who select the experience 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 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 SCMSS faculty. A SCMSS faculty member 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 SCMSS 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator and a formal internship agreement in place as necessary per University Internship Procedures before beginning the internship.

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

An internship proposal must be completed and approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and the SCMSS 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 SCMSS Graduate Student Services Coordinator in scheduling a presentation and submitting a final report for approval by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

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

2.4 Admission to Candidacy

Admission to the M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies does not signify admission to candidacy. To be eligible for candidacy for the M.S. 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 SCMSS;
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. Be approved by the 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 Major Professor, Graduate Advisory Committee, SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator, and the Director of SCMSS;
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. Be approved by the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The final decision for admission to candidacy is made by the Director of SCMSS and Coastal Carolina University 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 SCMSS 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 M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies is outlined below and attached in Appendix A. Students should refer to this timeline to maintain progress toward graduation on time. The timeline and milestone tracking will be maintained by the student's Major Professor and filed with the SCMSS 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 Research Assistants.

3.1 Choose Thesis or Professional Experience Track

This choice should be made during the first semester.

3.2 Establish Major Professor for Program

The Major Professor will help in the selection of at least two additional faculty members to serve on the Graduate Advisory Committee. Any SCMSS 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 during the admissions process who will commit to mentor the student's graduate work. Highly qualified students may be accepted to the program without an identified 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 a Major Professor is submitted to the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator for approval (see the SCMSS Graduate Program Forms page: www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs/msforms.html.)

3.2.1 Establish Major Professor for 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 Major Professor, 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 SCMSS Graduate Student Services Coordinator may also be a very helpful resource in identifying and establishing professional internship opportunities.

3.3 Establish 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. 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 as needed. The Graduate Advisory Committee membership is submitted to the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator for approval (see the SCMSS Graduate Program Forms page: www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs/msforms.html.)

3.3.1 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 committee members informed of progress on research and the thesis preparation and enlist their guidance to ensure efficient progress through the program to graduation.

Any SCMSS 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 to serve 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 committee members 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 SCMSS 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 internship will serve as a member of the Graduate Advisory Committee.

3.4 Proposal

3.4.1 Thesis Track Proposal

Research and the resulting thesis are 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 the student achieve this goal by explaining the steps in developing a review of 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 and 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 and this should be discussed with the 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The proposal is a research 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The SCMSS is committed to leverage its resources to help ensure student success. Students may work with their Major Professors and Graduate Advisory Committee to submit an itemized budget for potential basic support (e.g. 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 research. The budget is endorsed by the Graduate Advisory Committee and submitted simultaneously with the thesis proposal. The SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator will review the budget requests and available funds in consultation with the SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee and notify the student and the Major Professor of what, if any, of the school resources may be committed to from the request. The Major Professor is responsible for administering 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 coursework is important, professional application of the discipline is a critical component of the professional experience. The design of a realistic and well-defined internship project should be considered the highest priority. A detailed proposal outline will help the student achieve this goal by explaining the steps in developing a review of 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, non-governmental organizations 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 SCMSS 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The proposal is an internship 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

The SCMSS is committed to leverage its resources to help ensure student success. Students may work with their Major Professor and Graduate Advisory Committee to submit an itemized budget for potential basic support (e.g. 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 SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator will review the budget requests and available funds in consultation with the SCMSS Graduate Programs Committee and notify the student and the Major Professor of what, if any, of the school's resources may be committed to from the request. The Major Professor is responsible for administering 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 Degree

See section 2.4 and Appendix A

3.6 Completion of CMWS Course Requirements

See section 2.2 and Appendix A. Core courses should be completed during first two semesters of study. All coursework and research credits should be completed by the end of the fourth semester.

3.6.1 Thesis Track

Completion of coursework for the Thesis Option requires a total of 6 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 Experience Track

Completion of coursework for the Professional Experience requires 6 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 Thesis or Professional Experience Final Report

3.7.1 Thesis Track

The results of the student's research are submitted electronically as a formal thesis at: www.etsadmin.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 the data and newly gathered information. In general, the thesis should be in the format of a manuscript ready for submission to an appropriate science journal.

The student should contact the SCMS 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 Graduate Studies has signed it. The thesis title and date of approval must be filed in the Office of Graduate Studies before the degree requirement is officially met.

3.7.2 Professional Experience Report

The results of the student's internship work are submitted as a formal report. CMWS internship guidelines are available from the SCMS Graduate Student Services Coordinator. If applicable, the report should be in the format of a manuscript ready for submission to an appropriate science journal or technical report for the organization that supported the experience.

The student should contact the SCMSS Graduate Programs 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 will read and edit the draft and return it for revisions. After revisions are made, it is submitted to other members of the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator. Each committee member should study and edit the thesis before the defense. The SCMSS 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 Graduate Advisory Committee. Normally, the defense of thesis immediately follows the public presentation. At the conclusion of the defense, copies of the thesis containing each committee 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 will be notified of whether he/she passed or failed. If passed, the student must prepare a final copy of the thesis based on the written and oral comments provided by the committee. If failed, the committee will schedule a second defense allowing for further study and/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 will read and edit the draft and return it for revisions. After revisions are made, it is submitted to other members of the student's Graduate Advisory Committee and the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator. Each committee member should study and edit the report before the defense. The final draft report is submitted to The 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 Graduate Advisory 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 will be notified of whether he/she passed or failed. If passed, the student must prepare a final copy of the report based on the written and oral comments provided by the committee. If failed, the committee will schedule a second defense allowing for further study and/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. All forms are available at the SCMSS Graduate Program Forms page: www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs/msforms.html. 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. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science facilitates student 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 Ph.D. 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; (4.1, 4.2)
2. Successful Passing the SCMSS Comprehensive Examination (4.3)
3. Successful Passing the SCMSS Qualifying Examination (4.4)
4. Admission to candidacy; (4.5)
5. A minimum GPA of B on all course work;
6. Completion, presentation, and successful defense of a dissertation (4.6, 4.7)
7. All work applied toward the degree must be earned in a maximum.

*** Note:** Transfer credit(s) cannot be used to raise the GPA at Coastal Carolina University.

4.1 Enrollment Requirement

Students in the Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science 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 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, however, count toward degree requirements and does not substitute for the 6 credit hour requirement in CMSS 700 Thesis Research.

4.2 Required Graduate Coursework (60 Graduate Credit Hours)

The Ph.D. in Marine Science: 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 provides 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 the SCMSS Comprehensive Examination. 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 Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems 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 AND DIRECTED STUDY (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 (Minimum of 12 credit hours)

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

4.3 Program SCMSS Comprehensive Examination

Students are required to pass the SCMSS Comprehensive Examination 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 consists of written and oral components. In the written exam, students will respond to questions established by the SCMSS Comprehensive Examination 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 committee will schedule a follow-up oral examination with each student based on the responses given in 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 SCMSS Comprehensive Examination to continue in the doctoral program.

4.4 SCMSS 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 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, and 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 SCMSS 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 to ensure the exam follows school requirements and that 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 SCMSS Qualifying Examination may petition to convert their program of study to the CMWS master's degree with the positive recommendation of the student's Graduate Advisory Committee, SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator, and approval of the Director of the School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science. The Graduate Advisory Committee and SCMSS 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 candidacy, 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. Earn a B or better average on all graduate work pursued and a B or better in the SCMSS core courses;
4. Successfully pass the SCMSS Comprehensive Examination;
5. Receive approval of dissertation proposal by Graduate Advisory Committee and SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator;
6. Successfully pass the SCMSS Qualifying Examination; and
7. Be recommended by the Graduate Advisory Committee, SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator, SCMSS Director and Dean of the College of Science.

4.6 Dissertation

Students will submit the results of their 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 SCMSS 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 SCMSS 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 and that 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 School of Coastal and Marine Systems Science 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. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science is outlined below and in Appendix B. Students should refer to this timeline to maintain progress toward graduation on time. The timeline and milestone tracking will be maintained by the student's Major Professor and filed with the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator. The milestone chart provides 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.

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 give advice in the design of the research program. The major professor will also give advice on and edit the dissertation. The Major Professor, 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 the Graduate Advisory Committee. 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. Any SCMSS 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 the graduate work during the admissions process. Students are normally not admitted to the Ph.D. program 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 the Major Professor with the commitment of a new Major Professor and the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

A request to establish the Major Professor is submitted to the SCMSS 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. The committee 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 the members informed of progress on research and the dissertation preparation and enlist their guidance to ensure efficient progress through the program to graduation. To ensure 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 as needed.

A Ph.D. student's Graduate Advisory Committee consists of at least five eligible professionals. Any SCMSS 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 SCMSS. The school requires one of the members to be based at a different university or agency to provide an external perspective of the work from the field. The committee membership is submitted to the graduate programs coordinator for approval.

5.3 SCMSS Comprehensive Examination

See section 4.3 and Appendix B

5.4 Dissertation Proposal - Qualifying Exam

See section 4.4 and Appendix B

5.5 Admission to Candidacy for Degree

See section 4.5 and Appendix B

5.6 Completion of Course Requirements

Upon completion of the course requirements the degree candidate should submit the SCMSS Course Requirement Tracking Sheet or equivalent documentation from Coastal's WebAdvisor to the Major Professor. The Major Professor reviews the documentation and verifies the course requirements have been met and forwards the documentation to the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator.

5.7 Completion of Dissertation Research and Directed Study

See sections 4.6, 4.7, and Appendix B

5.8 Submittal of Dissertation

Each student 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. The results of the student's research are submitted electronically at:
www.etsadmin.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. All forms are available at the SCMSS Graduate Program Forms page: www.coastal.edu/scmss/programs/msforms.html. Students should double check the Degree Program Timeline and Completion Checklist.

**Appendix A: M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies (CMWS)
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
1. Student accepted into 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 the committee; or b. If professional experience track, choose at least 3, counting Major Professor, SCMSS affiliated faculty and the supervisor of internship to serve as the committee	Beginning of second semester of enrollment			
6. Approve proposal: a. If thesis track, proposal must be approved by Graduate Advisory Committee and SCMSS 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			

Milestone/Task	Timeline/ Target Date	Date Completed	Did Student Meet Target Date and/or Task? If no, provide explanation.	Required Signature or Form Filed
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 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: Ph.D. in Marine Science: Coastal and Marine Systems Science
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
1. Student accepted into 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 the graduate programs coordinator	Before end of second semester of enrollment			
6. Complete SCMSS Comprehensive Examination	Upon recommendation of Graduate Advisory Committee; generally expected by end of third semester			
7. SCMSS Qualifying Examination: a. Proposal approved by Graduate Advisory Committee; b. Oral qualifiers with Graduate Advisory Committee	Before end of fifth semester of enrollment			

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"> a. Completion of program core curriculum courses and a grade of B or better; b. Successful completion of SCMSS Comprehensive Examination; c. Successful passing of SCMSS Qualifying Examination; d. Approval of dissertation proposal by Graduate Advisory Committee and SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator e. Recommendation by Graduate Advisory Committee, SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator, SCMSS Director and Dean of College of Science; f. Complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate work at Coastal Carolina University; g. Have earned a B or better average on all graduate work pursued and a B or better in SCMSS core courses 	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			