

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 Ecology3
CMWS 603: Coastal and Wetland Policy and Management3

GRADUATE SEMINAR COURSES (3 credit hours)

CMWS 697: Graduate Seminar I.....1
CMWS 698: Graduate Seminar II.....1
CMWS 699: Graduate Seminar III1

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.