

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

The M.S. in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies (CMWS) 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 coursework.
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 program 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 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 selected from BIOL, CHEM, CMSS, CMWS, MATH, MSCI, PHYS, or STAT.

A maximum of 6 credit hours at the 500 level may be used toward 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. The proposal must be presented to the Graduate Advisory Committee and may be open to the public at the

discretion of the Committee and Graduate Programs Coordinator. 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 and clarified 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 full-time SCMSS core and affiliated faculty members. A SCMSS faculty member should be designated as the Major Professor and chair of the Committee.

The internship proposal must be presented to the Graduate Advisory Committee and may be open to the public at the discretion of the Committee and Graduate Programs Coordinator. The 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 the proposal and filed with the SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator and a formal internship agreement should be 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, 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.

Candidacy must be achieved by the end of the second academic semester to remain in the program. In certain cases, students (with approval of their Major Professor) may petition the Graduate Programs Coordinator for a one-time extension of the time limit to achieve candidacy.

2.4.1 Thesis Track Candidacy

1. Achieve regular admission status;
2. Have a degree plan, and thesis proposal presented and approved by the Major Professor, Graduate Advisory Committee, SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator, and the SCMSS Director by the end of the second academic semester
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 presented and approved by the Major Professor, Graduate Advisory Committee, SCMSS Graduate Programs Coordinator, and the SCMSS Director,;
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 jointly by the SCMSS Director and Coastal Carolina University Director of Graduate Studies. 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.