

REGULATIONS FOR MASTER'S DEGREES

Marine Science and Oceanography

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Master of Science - Thesis/Non-Thesis

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I. GENERAL PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Admission Procedures

Apply online through the Graduate College <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/applyonline/index.php>

B. Application Deadlines

January 15th for Fall; October 15th for Spring

Late and incomplete Applications will not be considered

C. Application/Admission Requirements

Prerequisites: Applicants should have a Bachelor's degree with a STEM background (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math) from an accredited institution. Applicants from other fields are welcome and will be considered individually. Deficiencies in preparatory courses can be corrected by taking courses or passing equivalency exams. The student's Advisor and Graduate Supervisory Committee will be responsible for deciding if there are deficiencies that must be corrected before the students complete the graduate degree.

1. Academic Record

- a. Admission to the program requires either an overall GPA of 3.0 or better on the last 60 hours of undergraduate credits or established graduate level proficiency. Unofficial transcripts are submitted electronically via Graduate College application system; Official transcripts submitted directly to the Graduate College.
2. Two letters of recommendation are required, submitted electronically via Graduate College application process.
3. An optional statement of goals and interests is strongly encouraged. Upload your statement via the Graduate College Application process.
4. Submit a completed Graduate Student MSO Faculty Advisor Verification through the Graduate College application system. See Section II: Faculty Advisor.

D. Transfer Credits

Up to twelve (12) of the credits required for a degree track may be taken at FAU as a non-degree seeking student and applied to the graduate degree requirements. Master's programs may accept a maximum of 6 graduate credits earned from another institution beyond a baccalaureate degree (see University Catalog for Transfer Credit Policy).

E. Conditional Acceptance

Applicants who show promise, but fail to meet the department's minimum standards, can be admitted on "conditional status." Such students must complete a minimum of two (2) graduate courses taken for a letter grade (not S/U) with a minimum of 'B' grade in each class. Satisfactory performance in these courses will enable the student to be reevaluated by the MS Marine Science and Oceanography Program Committee for official entry into the graduate program. Excluding summer terms (when graduate class offerings are limited), conditionally admitted students should complete the two (2) graded courses in their first term.

F. Term Enrollment

Students who are accepted should register for classes for the term in which they were accepted. Students who do not register in their initial term will have their records deactivated and, thus, will need to reapply if they wish to be considered for future enrollment. In exceptional circumstances a deferment of up to one year may be granted. Contact the MSO Program Directors if a deferment is needed.

II. FACULTY ADVISOR (CHAIR OF COMMITTEE)

A. FAU Marine Science and Oceanography Program Advisor

Your Advisor is the Chair of your MS Committee. As such, they help you, the student, achieve your educational and professional goals by working closely with you to finish the degree in a timely fashion. From the first semester through to the last semester they will work with you on courses and research (when applicable) that will give you the skills and connections needed to complete your degree, including Thesis research and Non-thesis Comprehensive Exams. As scientific fields and lab expectations vary, it is important that students communicate with their advisors.

Prior to acceptance into the graduate program, each student must have an FAU MSO Faculty Advisor (MSO Faculty <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-facultylist.php>) who agrees, by completing the Graduate Student Faculty Advisor Verification form, to supervise the student's graduate program <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/MSO%20Faculty%20Advisor%20Form.pdf>.

Affiliate Faculty (formerly called Courtesy Appointments) are non-FAU employees who can be appointed as Graduate Faculty Associate Graduate Faculty, or Graduate Lecturers. Faculty in these categories may not act as a student's graduate faculty Advisor, however such faculty can co-chair Master's Committees. The Graduate College maintains an updated list of approved Graduate Faculty and associated Graduate Faculty for the University.

III. PROGRAM POLICIES

A. Program Grade Requirements

- Only graduate students enrolled for 9 semester hours are considered "full-time". Students must maintain a minimum grade 3.0 [B] each semester in all coursework attempted.
- Passing grades: The grades of "A" through "C," and "S," are passing grades.
- The grades of "B-," "C+" and "C," while considered passing for undergraduate students, are indicative of unsatisfactory work for graduate students. Only one (1) "B-," "C+" or "C" grade will be accepted for any coursework attempted within the MSO program; additional courses receiving these grades will be considered failed.
- Failing grades: The grades of "C-," "D+," "D," "D-," "F" and "U" are failing grades. No credits are earned in courses in which grades of "AU," "CR," "F," "I," "U," "W," "WM" or "ZR" are received.
- The student's Graduate Supervisory Committee may, at its discretion, require reading proficiency in a foreign language.
 - a. If it does, the student must be certified by the Department of Language and Linguistics.
 - b. Certification is generally given if the student has intermediate language skills, as evidenced by any of the following: two (2) semesters of college level foreign language; eight (8) CLEP credits in a foreign language; fluency in a foreign language; or passing an exam.

B. Mandatory Program Meetings

Annually (or biannually) the MS MSO Graduate Program will have a meeting required of all students in the program. Program requirements, updates, introductions, orientation, and question/answers will be among the topics. Such meetings will likely be the only time all students in the program will meet simultaneously, thus they are mandatory. Students must petition the MSO Program Directors at least 1 month in advance of such scheduled meetings for approval to be excused from attending. Those who miss such meetings without prior approval are considered out of good standing, and risk penalties up to removal from the program.

C. Plan of Study

This is the set of courses that, in consultation with your advisor, you will take to complete the coursework and credit hour aspects of your degree requirements. Please see Section VII for the degree you are seeking.

Preparing your Plan of Study:

1. Review your course degree requirements for the degree you are seeking (Undergraduate courses do not count towards your degree).

2. Meet with your academic advisor to discuss your courses.
3. Use checklist for your degree (at end of this document) to plan your courses with your advisor.
4. Initiate Plan of Study and let the MS MSO Graduate Program know when it is ready for review so that potential corrections can be made before official submission and approval.

Your Plan of study must be fully approved by the end of your first semester.

Plan of Study Online Submission Instructions:

1. Log in to your MyFAU account at <https://myfau.fau.edu/>
2. Click on the MyPOS icon.
3. Follow the prompts.
4. If the POS changes, students are responsible for updating it every semester.
5. Students may need to fill out the 'Marine Science and Oceanography Program Petition' form if they wish to include courses not approved in the MSO curriculum on their POS.
<https://www.fau.edu/hboi/documents/mso-program-petition-form.pdf>
6. Students are urged to follow the MSO curriculum. Auditing classes and taking classes outside the curriculum may not be considered as counting 'toward' the degree or supported by the tuition waiver, and students may be charged for these courses.

For assistance with the online Plan of Study System contact <mailto:graduatesupport@fau.edu> or call 561-297-2203.

<http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/plan-of-study.php>

D. M.S. Supervisory Committee Formation: Nomination Requirements, Instructions, and Forms

The M.S. Supervisory Committee consists of three MSO Graduate Faculty Members that will guide and facilitate the student's progress toward completion of their Master's degree. The committee members must hold a doctoral degree and be a member of the Graduate Faculty or Associate Graduate Faculty.

1. During the end of your first semester or beginning of your second semester meet with your Advisor to start forming your committee.
2. Download the MSO Masters Committee Checklist form at <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>
3. The Committee must include a minimum of three (3) MSO Graduate Faculty members (including the advisor).
4. An optional fourth (or more) member can be accepted. These may be either Graduate Faculty or *ad hoc* members.
5. Once the Committee members have been identified, download, and complete the MS MSO Supervisory Committee Formation form, and obtain signatures from each of the members.

6. Submit the MS MSO Supervisory Committee form to the MS MSO office (HB 201) by the end of second semester. The form must be received by this deadline for the student to be making adequate progress.

Faculty Appointments in the MSO Program

- All MSO policies for appointments are under the purview of the Graduate College.
- All thesis/dissertation committee members must hold Graduate Faculty status. The Graduate College will not recognize signatures on a thesis/dissertation of faculty without Graduate College status.
- FAU Faculty must be added to the Graduate Program Faculty list for the Program in which they wish to participate and then be added to the Graduate College's Graduate Faculty list by that Program.
- For FAU faculty whose home department does not have a graduate program of its own, Graduate Faculty Status will be voted on by the MSO Program Committee, who will apply to the Graduate College on their behalf.
- Non-FAU Faculty (faculty employed by another university or institution) must first become Affiliates, be added to the Graduate Program Faculty by the Program Committee, and then added to the Graduate Faculty.

Procedures:

1. Graduate Program Faculty Status (Internal and external faculty)
 - a. Program Faculty Status must be voted on by the Graduate Program in which the individual wishes to participate.
 - b. The Program Faculty list is maintained internally by the program/concentration.
2. Graduate Faculty Status (FAU and Non-FAU Faculty)
 - a. For MSO Program Faculty Candidates are simultaneously voted into MSO Program Faculty and Grad Faculty status by the MSO Program Committee.
 - b. A Graduate Faculty application is then submitted to the Graduate College through the College of Science (the faculty list is maintained by the Graduate College and is available on the GC webpage).
3. Affiliate Status (external/non-FAU Faculty)
 - a. Per the Graduate College and College of Science (COS), non-FAU faculty must obtain Affiliate status before they can obtain Graduate Faculty status.
 - b. Faculty are voted in as Affiliates by MSO program Committee and added to the banner system by COS (obtain Z#, FAU login, library access, etc.).
4. *Ad hoc* Committee Members (Non-FAU Faculty)
 - a. Rather than applying for Graduate Program and Graduate Faculty status, non-FAU faculty may participate on student's committees on an *ad hoc* basis, such members participate on the committee but are not signatories. The Committee must still include three members who have Graduate Program and Graduate Faculty status.

F. Time to Degree Completion

1. All Master's Students working full-time towards the degree are expected to complete all requirements for degree within two (2) years of entering the program.
2. No student may take more than seven (7) years to complete a Master's degree.
3. Students who do not enroll for classes during one term (Fall or Spring) can enroll in the subsequent term without issue. However, students who do not enroll for 2 or more consecutive terms must reapply to the graduate program.

G. Scheduling and Adequate Progress Requirements

1. Submit Plan of study of by end of the first semester.

The MSO Masters requires that all students complete the Plan of Study prior to the beginning of their 2nd semester. This applies to both full- and part-time students. For instructions, please see Section III.C and the following link: <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/plan-of-study.php>

2. Form a Graduate Supervisory Committee during the second semester of graduate study (See Section III.D above).
3. Thesis option:

A crucial component for adequate progress is the selection of an appropriate thesis topic that can be completed within a reasonable period (1-1.5 yr), yet which maximizes originality and importance. It is the responsibility of the Graduate Supervisory Committee and the student to see that this objective is met. The schedule outlined here will be used by the MSO Graduate Program Committee to judge whether students are making "satisfactory progress in the program."

Students attending Graduate School on a part-time basis must satisfy both their advisor and their Graduate Supervisory Committee that they are progressing with their degree requirements as rapidly as possible.

- a. Thesis Proposal Seminar must be presented no later than the third semester of graduate study; (see Section VIII.A).
- b. Thesis Defense Seminar should be presented no later than the fourth semester of graduate study; (see Section VIII.C).

The Thesis Proposal and Thesis Defense cannot occur in the same semester and must occur at least one month apart.

4. Non-thesis Option:

- a. Comprehensive Exams should be completed no later than the fourth semester. (See Section IX).

H. Individual Development Plans (IDP)

The Student's IDP is due twice a year. The IDP can be found on the MSO webpage under the 'policies and forms.' The student and their advisor are required to submit the completed form (available online) to the MSO Graduate Program Committee indicating:

- (1) The semester/year in which the student entered the graduate program.
- (2) Progress made by the student since entering the program or since the previous report.
- (3) Plans for the upcoming year.

For students who entered the program in a Fall semester, the IDP is due November 1st, along with the Plan of Study, and the revised submission is due on April 15th. For students who entered the program in a Spring semester, the IDP is due on April 15th along with the Plan of Study, and the revised submission is due on November 15th. All students will submit the IDP twice a year for every year they are in the program.

The IDP must be signed by both the student and advisor. Failure to submit the IDP by the deadline can result in the loss of good standing until the report is received and reviewed by the MS Graduate Programs in Biology Committee. The IDP will serve, in part, as the basis for rank-ordering students that apply for continued GTA support.

I. Satisfactory Progress and Good Standing

Students are expected to maintain good academic standing and make adequate progress toward completing their degree. Students are responsible for being aware of, and in compliance with, all Departmental and University requirements.

Students in Good Standing are those that meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and receive grades of B or higher in all graduate work.
2. Meet all required deadlines such as including submission of Plans of Study, IDP, Committee formation, Thesis Proposal (for thesis students), etc.
3. Attend all mandatory meetings (e.g., MS Meetings, GTA meetings) and complete required training (e.g. Lab Safety, IACUC for those working with vertebrates).
4. Show adequate and ethical performance as both a student in classes and as a GTA (for those with such assistantships).
5. Satisfactorily complete all duties and responsibilities in research (i.e. an "S" grade in DIR or

Thesis credits).

J. Not in Good Standing and Dismissal

Students who do not comply with the minimum requirements above will be placed in Not in Good Standing status. In such case, students will be required to schedule a meeting between themselves, their Advisor, and the MSO Program Directors to discuss their situation, including a plan to get back into Good Standing as soon as possible. While in Not in Good Standing status, students are ineligible for Teaching Assistantships and may be otherwise penalized. Additionally, students who remain in Not in Good Standing status for 2 consecutive semesters risk removal from the program.

K. Communication Between Graduate Students and MS MSO Program

The MS MSO Program is geographically located among multiple FAU campuses. Thus, email is the official communication form for the program. As such, we require that all MSO Graduate students use their FAU-assigned email address. We suggest that students create a folder in their email client software specifically for our email communications. We understand that newly admitted students may not yet have an FAU email address; we will temporarily use private or non-FAU email addresses until such students have their official FAU email addresses. To ensure that MSO directors and staff receive forms from students and faculty, such communications should be send to the MSO-Admin@fau.edu address.

IV. DEPARTMENTAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A. Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)

"Full-time" graduate students (i.e., enrolled in a minimum of 9 credits, except in the summer semester when fewer credits are accepted for full-time status, see Section V.B) may be eligible for a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA; 20 hrs./wk.), which provides a salary and partial coverage of tuition (including a waiver of out-of-state tuition rates for non-Florida residents). All credit hours covered by the Tuition benefit (see section V) must be required for the degree; the student is responsible for tuition associated with courses which are not required. For the official Graduate College policies, please see section V, Tuition Benefits Policy for Graduate Students.

1. TA assignments are competitive and are distributed based on the following Priority System
 1. First and second year MS Thesis students making adequate progress have highest priority over non- thesis students. Support is normally given for a two-year period only.
 2. Students admitted under normal status have priority over those admitted conditionally, until those latter students are officially accepted; see Admission Procedures.
 3. Students in good standing within the Program have priority over students not in good standing.
 4. Subject knowledge and teaching ability/past performance.

2. Requesting a GTA

Each semester in which GTAs are available students will receive an email regarding GTA support. You must respond to the email by the deadline to be considered for a GTA position. Requesting a TA does not guarantee a position.

3. Performance Evaluation

Performance as a GTA is evaluated and monitored continuously during the teaching assignment by either the Laboratory Supervisor and/or assigned Professor. GTA academic progress and success is evaluated annually by the Graduate Program Committee (see Annual Evaluation section III.H below). Students are expected to demonstrate dedication to their GTA duties including teaching and administering the required materials presented by the Laboratory Supervisor and/or assigned Professor.

4. Grade Requirement

Students must maintain excellence in their own course work; a minimum grade point average of 3.0 [B] must be maintained each semester in all course work attempted. For those in research tracks, competency and progress in research must be demonstrated and maintained.

5. GTA Contract Termination

GTA contracts can be terminated at any time (including those underway), with loss of consideration for future GTA support, when there is a serious dereliction of duties. Additionally, graduate students considered to be not in good standing will not normally be considered for GTA positions.

6. Mandatory GTA Meetings

GTA's are required to attend mandatory orientation meetings prior to each term. Those who do not attend these required meetings may have their contracts cancelled. Students must petition the MSO Directors and the GTA coordinator at least 1 month in advance of such scheduled meetings for approval to be excused from attending. These mandatory meetings may include Environmental Health and Safety training and orientations offered by the laboratory supervisors.

B. Teaching Assistantships for International Students

As part of our commitment to excellence in teaching, Florida Atlantic University has established a minimum level of English language and teaching proficiency by which all international graduate students may work as graduate teaching assistants. To ensure that these standards are upheld, the Graduate College, in conjunction with the Department of Teaching and Learning, has established the Seminar for International Teaching Assistants (SITA).

SITA is a multi-purpose program designed to prepare international graduate students to teach undergraduate students at FAU. Such preparation includes developing an understanding of the teaching role in American university classrooms, providing training in classroom communication skills and instructional strategies, and assisting students during the first semester of teaching at FAU.

All international teaching assistants are required to successfully pass a panel review prior to beginning their teaching assignments. The SITA program takes place the week before fall semester classes commence. There are nine additional sessions offered throughout the fall semester, for a subset of teaching assistants requiring additional language and teaching development. Contact the Graduate College or see the following link for additional information

<http://www.fau.edu/international/internationalassistants.php>

C. Research Assistantships and other Assistantships

Graduate Research assistantships (GRAs) and other Assistantships may be available. Please check with your advisor about availability.

V. TUITION BENEFITS POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

(Ratified by the Graduate College, March 2013 and amended Feb 2023. See link for Graduate College Graduate Assistantship and Tuition Benefits additional information:

<https://www.fau.edu/graduate/documents/tuition-benefits-policy-for-graduate-students.pdf>)

A. Introductory Information

Throughout this section, the term graduate assistant(s) is used generically to represent a graduate student who is receiving tuition benefits related to employment as a graduate research assistant, graduate teaching assistant, graduate research associate, graduate teaching associate, or graduate student worker. Graduate assistants are eligible to receive tuition benefits for up to 27 credit hours in a given academic year, provided all requirements listed below are met:

1. The appointment period must be continuous within the official beginning and ending dates of the academic semester or summer session.
2. The level of tuition benefit available to students is driven by the full-time enrollment (FTE) of the appointment.
 - a. To receive 100% tuition benefits in the fall and spring semesters, students must have a 0.5 FTE appointment (20 hours per week) and be classified as full-time graduate students. (Refer to the Full-Time Graduate Student Classification Status Section C below)
 - b. Students who have met the conditions in (a) above during the previous fall or spring semester may receive 100% tuition benefits during the summer term with no minimum enrollment requirement provided they have at least a 0.25 FTE appointment.
 - c. Students with FTE employment conditions between 0.25 and 0.5 receive a tuition benefit percentage equal to two times the FTE appointment provided they are enrolled full time.
 - d. Except as provided by (b) above, students with an enrollment status less than full time (as defined by the Full-Time Graduate Student Classification Status below) are eligible to receive 50% tuition benefits provided their appointment is at least 0.25 FTE.
3. All credit hours paid by this tuition benefit must be necessary to complete the graduate degree.
4. The number of credit hours for which graduate students can receive tuition benefits is set at 10% above the published credit hour total for the degree program. Courses taken to remove deficiencies as indicated on the Plan of Study are allowable and do not count toward the 10% limit.
5. An approved Plan of Study is required to receive tuition benefits beyond the second semester of the assistantship. Students receiving tuition benefits as part of an assistantship are required to file a Plan of Study and obtain final approval from the Graduate College by the end of the second semester of the assistantship
6. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 based on the degree requirements as stipulated on the approved Plan of Study.

The MSO program follows the College of Science recommendations for the allocation of tuition waivers (Executive committee, January 16th, 2019). No more than 9 credits will be supported by a tuition waiver for the Fall or Spring semesters. An additional credit will be paid if a student is enrolled in a 4 credit course (e.g. PCB 6456 Experimental Design and Biometry) or if a student is taking a required 1 credit seminar course that is only offered in that semester. Tuition waivers more than 1 credit of research (DIR or thesis) for the Summer semester will be determined on an individual basis. Thesis students might take less than 9 credits a semester once they have completed their coursework, are taking thesis credits, and are in their graduating semester.

B. Benefits Information

Graduate assistants who resign or terminate their assistantship prior to completing the continuous employment period will forfeit all their tuition benefits and must repay the university the full amount of tuition paid by this benefit for the term in which they were enrolled.

The last day to receive tuition benefits in any given semester is the “last day to drop/add courses without consequences” as indicated in the FAU academic calendar. After this date students will not be eligible to receive tuition benefits in that semester. To use tuition benefits for graduate research assistants, prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College is required. If allowed by the funding source, the Principal Investigator(s) shall budget for research assistants at the in-state tuition rate. Should a non-Florida resident be employed, the non-resident fee will be funded by the university’s tuition waiver budget. To use tuition benefits to support graduate assistants employed in non-academic offices, prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College is required.

To use tuition benefits to support graduate teaching assistants and graduate assistants employed in the academic colleges, the College Deans will be provided tuition benefit budgets each year by the Provost based on past use and projected needs prior to budget construction.

To award an assistantship, both the stipend and accompanying tuition benefit must be available. The amount of the tuition benefit cannot be manipulated, reduced, or eliminated to fulfill this requirement.

Graduate assistants may not work more than a total of 20 hours per week for all appointments combined during the fall and spring semesters. However, graduate assistants may work additional hours with prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College using Form 10 – Request to Waive a University Requirement.

Graduate assistants in their last semester of study are to enroll only in the number of credit hours necessary to fulfill their degree requirements. Graduate assistants who have completed all degree requirements as listed on their Plan of Study but must remain enrolled in order to complete their thesis or dissertation are to enroll only in one thesis credit hour, which would be the Thesis defense credit for thesis students. Graduate assistants who take reduced credit hours under these conditions can petition to be classified full-time graduate students using the procedure as outlined in the section below entitled Full-Time Graduate Student Classification Status. International students

affected by this policy must consult with the ISSS Office regarding the Reduced Course Load requirements to assure compliance with U.S. Immigration laws.

A reduced enrollment status can impact disbursement of financial aid and qualification for health insurance, depending upon the rules of the lending institution and insurance provider. It is the responsibility of the student to know the enrollment status requirements of individual lending institutions and insurance providers.

It is the student's responsibility to pay all "student fees".

Exceptions to these requirements may only be made with prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College.

C. Full-Time Enrollment and Petitions

Fall and spring semesters: Graduate students registered for 9 or more credits are considered full-time, registrations for 7 credits are considered 3/4 - time and registrations for 4.5 credits are considered half-time.

Summer semester: Graduate students registered for 6 credits are considered full-time, registrations for 4.5 credits are considered 3/4-time and registrations for 3 credits are considered half-time.

D. Graduate Assistants on Tuition Waivers

The Graduate College will verify enrollment status for graduate tuition benefits through Banner and direct communication with academic departments, as necessary. Graduate students with tuition waivers remain eligible for 100% tuition benefits if at least one of the enrollment criteria listed below is met:

- Enrollment of a minimum of 9 credit hours in fall/spring (no minimum enrollment requirement in summer) .
- Enrollment in a minimum of 1 credit of eligible coursework (thesis credits, directed independent study, internship, practicum, etc.).
- Final semester of study.
- Approved Form 10 petition (Graduate College will review registration for students on tuition waivers).

Form #10 is used for any courses not listed above <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php>

International Students

International students who wish to register for reduced credit hours are still required to complete the Reduced Course Load Form and should work directly with the Center for Global Engagement. <http://www.fau.edu/international/forms/RCLform%20323.pdf>

E. Tuition Waivers and Financial Aid Requirements

All students must notify the Office of Student Financial Aid immediately if they receive or anticipate receiving a tuition waiver or exemption, as financial aid may be affected. Tuition waivers are considered “resources” and must be considered a part of a student’s financial aid package. To report outside awards, complete the “Student Statement of Outside Resources” and submit to the Office of Student Financial Aid. Should it later be found that you are receiving outside resources which you neglected to report, your financial aid package will be adjusted retroactively to include these resources. This adjustment may result in repayment of previously disbursed financial aid.

Financial Aid Office:

Contact Suzanne Paton patons@fau.edu or 561.297.4618 or by visiting the Financial Aid office in Building SU-80, Room 233.

VI. REGISTRATION FOR THESIS, DIR AND INTERNSHIP CREDITS

Students registering for Master's thesis, DIR or Internship credits must complete a registration form (<http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>), signed by both you and your advisor, then send the form to crossmell@fau.edu or bring it to the office at HB201 in order to be registered.

OCE 6908 Directed Independent Research: these credits are used before a thesis student proposes.

OCE 6972 Thesis Research: these credits are used after a thesis student has successfully completed their proposal.

VII. MASTER'S DEGREE OPTIONS, REQUIREMENTS, AND EXAMINATIONS

A. Options

The MSO Program offers two Master of Science degree programs:

Thesis Option (M.S., 37 credits),

Non-Thesis Option (M.S., 37 credits),

The Thesis Option requires completion of a research project and thesis. This option is tailored for students interested in doing research or contemplating graduate work for a Ph.D. degree.

The Non-Thesis Option is designed for students who wish to improve their knowledge in the marine sciences through a rigorous series of courses and exams, or for Integrative Biology PhD students choosing a Master's Along the Way (MALW) degree in Marine Science and Oceanography.

B. Specific requirements for each Master's option

Master of Science in Marine Science and Oceanography (Thesis Option)

This M.S. degree requires a minimum of 37 total credits. **All thesis students in the MS-MSO program are required to take 12 credits*:**

- Physical & Geological Oceanography (OCE 6097; 3 credits)
- Biological Oceanography (OCB 6066; 3 credits)
- Chemical Oceanography (OCC 6050; 3 credits)
- MSO Colloquium (OCE 6922; 1 credit) OR the Marine Science Seminar (BSC 6938; 1 credit)
- Marine Science and Oceanography Thesis Proposal (OCE 6974; 1 credit)
- Marine Science and Oceanography Defense (OCE 6975; 1 credit).

*Catalog revision implemented in Spring 2024.

For students following the thesis track, a minimum of 15-21 elective credits are then taken from the approved course list as described on the MS-MSO webpage

<http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-curriculumandcore.php>.

- Up to 6 credits designated as "Special Topics; BSC 6936" courses may be taken with the approval of the Thesis Advisor.
- Students can take up to 3 credits of Directed Independent Research (OCE 6908) before completing the thesis proposal credit

After passing the thesis proposal, students can take 6-12 credits of Thesis research (OCE 6972). To enroll in Master's Thesis or DIR credits see the registration instructions, Section VI.

The thesis track also requires a written thesis proposal and proposal seminar and oral defense of the work, and a written thesis and thesis seminar and defense of the work.

- Students can defend their theses either immediately after the thesis results seminar or at another time (summer semesters included).
- Students should sign up for Marine Science and Oceanography Defense (OCE 6975), during the term they will defend their thesis.
- The thesis proposal and thesis seminars are public forums, but only members of the student's committee can attend the proposal and thesis defense and sign off on the thesis. All seminars and thesis defenses must be announced via poster and email at least one week in advance and must be broadcast to at least one other campus besides the originating campus. Effort should be made to schedule seminars to maximize attendance; all students and faculty are encouraged to attend.

Before a thesis topic is approved by the thesis committee, a student may explore the feasibility of a thesis project. Students doing such exploratory research can receive up to 3 credits in Directed Independent Research. Thereafter, no more research credits can be taken until the research topic has been approved by the student's thesis committee and the student has completed the Marine Science and Oceanography Thesis Proposal credit (OCE 6974). No more than 3 credits in DIR may be counted toward this degree. To be considered on schedule, the research topic should be approved by the thesis committee before the end of the student's second semester of graduate study.

Master of Science with Major in Marine Science and Oceanography (Non-Thesis Option)

This M.S. degree requires a minimum of 37 credits. All students in the MS-MSO program are required to take 11 credits:

- Physical & Geological Oceanography (OCE 6097, 3 credits)
- Biological Oceanography (OCB 6066, 3 credits)
- Chemical Oceanography (OCC 6050, 3 credits)
- MSO Colloquium (OCE 6922; 1 credit) OR the Marine Science Seminar (BSC 6938; 1 credit).
- Marine Science and Oceanography Comprehensive Exam (OCE 6965; 1 credit)

Students taking the non-thesis track take 26 credits from the approved subject list and electives as described on the MS-MSO webpage <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmsocurriculumandcore.php>.

- Up to 6 credits designated as "Special Topics, BSC 6936" courses may be taken with the approval of the student's Advisor.
- Students can take up to 3 credits of Directed Independent Research. To enroll in DIR credits, see registration instructions Section VI.
- Non-thesis candidates will complete an exit exam specific to their area(s) of study in the spring of their second year, administered by the student's degree committee (see Comprehensive Examination section for requirements).

Master's Along the Way

Integrative Biology Ph.D. students choosing Marine Science and Oceanography for a Master's Along the Way degree will be verified for completion of degree requirements by the MSO Program during the Graduation Audit Check. Consult with the IB Ph.D. advisor early in matriculation to ensure the curriculum followed would satisfy the requirements for the M.S./Non-Thesis Option. In the case of a MALW, the thesis proposal and defense serve as the comprehensive exam.

C. Comprehensive Examinations

Completion of the Master's degree requires that students pass a Comprehensive Examination, to be administered by the student's Graduate Supervisory Committee.

- For students in the M.S. Thesis Option, the Comprehensive Examination consists of a thesis defense, which focuses on the completed research project and the student's relevant knowledge base (Section VIII).
- For students in the M.S. Non-Thesis Option, the Comprehensive Examination consists of a traditional, written test to ensure students have a broad knowledge base in Marine Science and Oceanography. This is administered by the members of the student's Graduate Supervisory Committee. The student and his/her Graduate Supervisory Committee will select 3 "specialty areas" to be covered in the exams (Section IX). Students will sign up for one credit of Marine Science and Oceanography Comprehensive Exam (OCE 6965) during the semester they take the comprehensive exams.

VIII. THESIS PROPOSAL AND DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Proposal

The MSO Graduate Program does not have a strict, required written thesis proposal format. Students should check with their Advisor and Graduate Supervisory Committee for the format best suited to the discipline and Graduate College requirements. Any format chosen should begin with a title page with the following: project title, student's name, and committee member names and signature lines for approval. Additional sections should include an abstract, introduction /background, objectives/research questions, proposed research and procedures, expected results, and literature cited.

Although the Graduate College only reviews completed, approved theses, they do have some specific formatting requirements for the layout. Thus, it is advisable to review their requirements:

<http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php>

B. Thesis Proposal Procedures

1. Send completed proposal to the Chair of your Committee for edits and final approval, allowing one month for review.
2. Request available dates and times from your Committee to consider for presenting your proposed research project.
3. Send approved copy of your proposal to the remaining members of your committee, allowing the committee members a minimum of 3-4 weeks to review your proposal before the scheduled seminar date.
4. Three weeks prior to the approved proposal date contact the MS MSO staff to schedule the seminar. Until date is approved by all committee members, the office cannot submit the request to reserve a conference room/videoconferencing.
5. Create a flyer for your seminar and send it to the MSO office (cc: Program Director) to be distributed a minimum of 7 days before the scheduled date.
6. After the seminar has been presented, all non-committee members exit the room. The Committee will then proceed with the oral proposal defense unless this has been scheduled for another time. The Committee will then decide if the thesis proposal is approved or if additional editing is required.
7. Approved proposals must be verified by the following which must be submitted to the MS MSO Office (HB201):
 - a. Completed Thesis Proposal form
 - b. Rubric form from each committee member
 - c. Student will earn an "S" for one credit in Marine Science and Oceanography Proposal (OCE 6974)

Thesis Defense

The final, approved thesis document will be published by the University. Although the University does allow disciplines to organize theses, to some degree, based on accepted discipline-specific guidelines, there are still specific formatting requirements. The final written thesis must be submitted and approved by the University. Thus, students at the defense-writing stage need to review the current University thesis requirements and must attend a Thesis and dissertation workshop. It is the student's responsibility to make sure all requirements for the Defense and submission of the Thesis have been followed.

C. Thesis Defense Procedures

1. The semester before you plan to graduate check Graduate College Deadlines for submitting your thesis so that you can prepare for your final semester. <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php>
2. Attend Thesis and Dissertation Formatting workshop <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/formatting.php>. This workshop is particularly important; the Graduate College will disapprove your Thesis if you do not follow the guidelines, including using the correct paper, pen, and formatting of the pages.
3. Send completed thesis to Chair of Committee for edits and final approval, allowing a minimum of three months for reviewing your thesis.
4. Contact your committee members and request available dates and times to consider for presenting your defense research project.
5. Once the Chair of Committee has approved your thesis send a copy to the remaining members of your committee, allowing the committee members a minimum of 4-6 weeks to review your thesis before any scheduled seminar date.
6. Schedule your Thesis Defense a minimum of 3 weeks before Graduate College Deadline. <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php>
7. Three weeks prior to the approved defense date, contact the MSO Office staff to schedule the seminar. Such advanced notice is required to ensure a room can be reserved. Until the defense date is approved by all committee members, the office cannot submit the request to reserve a conference room,
8. Create a flyer for your seminar and send it to the MSO office (cc: Program Director) to be distributed a minimum of 7 days before the scheduled date,
9. After the defense seminar has been presented all non-committee members will exit the room. The Committee will then proceed with the oral thesis defense (unless scheduled for a later date) and decide if the thesis is approved/disapproved or if additional editing is required.
10. Signature page (This is your responsibility, make sure formatting is correct and that you get all required signatures. Do not wait until the Graduate College deadline to start looking for your committee members/chair and dean to get their signatures. Each member has a different schedule. Contact them ahead of time to check for their availability.
11. Final Paperwork for MSO Requirements.

- i. Completed Thesis defense form
- ii. Rubric form from each committee member

Defense and rubric forms must be submitted electronically to MSO-Admin@fau.edu. Rubric forms are submitted directly by the Committee members or by the Student's Advisor on the Committee members' behalf; they are not submitted by the student.

12. Once the student has passed the defense and turned in all the required MSO paperwork, they will earn an "S" grade for the Marine Science and Oceanography Defense credit.
13. Final Paperwork for Graduate College: Check Graduate College website for final paperwork requirements <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php>

IX. NON-THESIS COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

A. Comprehensive Examination Format

To ensure that all M.S. Non-Thesis students are examined in a thorough and equitable manner within the 3 specialty areas, students and faculty should read the Comprehensive Exam Instructions: <https://www.fau.edu/hboi/documents/mso-non-thesis-comprehensive-exam-instructions-rev-10-3-23.pdf>

The following are acceptable exam formats and expectations:

1. Each written exam will be administered on the date or timeline agreed to by the student and their committee members.
2. Each exam must cover one of the 3 chosen specialty areas (i.e., two committee members cannot cover the same specialty area).
3. Exams will consist of questions unknown to the student prior to administering the exam.
4. Question types should require written responses, primarily of essay format. In addition to expecting a broad knowledge base covered within the 3 specialty areas, assessing written communication skills of these students is also particularly important.
5. Exams should be of sufficient rigor and coverage thereby requiring significant study effort by Students (which is why students are required to contact committee members the term prior to the actual exams). Committee members should provide students with reading and supplemental study suggestions upon request.
6. The assumption will be that closed-book format will be used for the exam. If open-book format is used, such exams should be of sufficient rigor to be comparable to a closed-book exam. In either case, a specific time frame must be established when the student and committee member initially meet (i.e., term before) to schedule the exam (e.g., 3 hours for a closed-book exam; due in 24 hours for an open-book exam).
7. Faculty will use the MSO Comprehensive Exam rubrics to evaluate the student's work. <https://www.fau.edu/hboi/documents/mso-non-thesis-comprehensive-exam-rubric-rev-10-3-23.pdf>
8. Previous or current course work and associated exams cannot substitute for the Comprehensive Exams.
9. Research/summary/review papers cannot substitute for the Comprehensive Exams. Such papers, however, may supplement the written exam, if this is required by a committee member who must articulate this to the MSO Graduate Program office when the student schedules the exam.

B. Scheduling and Completing Comprehensive Exams

1. During the term prior (or earlier) to the term in which the exams will be administered, students should contact committee members individually to ask for guidance (e.g., references, books) regarding how best to study for the designated subject area to be covered.

2. The student should also schedule a date(s) individually with each committee member. It is advised to schedule exams for different weeks, given the comprehensive nature of each exam. Following are the deadlines for completing all exams for each term:
 - Fall term = November 15
 - Spring term = April 15
 - Summer term = July 15
3. The outcome (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) of the comprehensive exams, along with copies of the completed exams and rubrics, must be sent to the MSO Graduate Programs office by the administering faculty member by the dates listed above, or the exam will be considered invalid for that semester.
4. Once all of the exams are scheduled, and at least 30 days before the exams will be given, students are required to send an email to the MSO Graduate Programs office (MSO-Admin@fau.edu) with the following information (please copy and paste the form information below into the email message):
 - Exam 1: Content Area 1 _____; Committee member name _____
 - Exam 2: Content Area 2 _____; Committee member name _____
 - Exam 3: Content Area 3 _____; Committee member name _____
5. The MSO Graduate Program will review the information for approval. Once approved, students and committee members will be notified. Students cannot take any comprehensive exam without such prior approval.
6. Exam dates can only be changed with written consent from the professor administering the exam.
7. Failure to pass any of the 3 examinations (i.e., each committee member's exam) will require that the student be re-examined for the failed exam. A failure to pass the second examination will result in immediate dismissal from the graduate program.
8. Complete Comprehensive Examination Form and rubrics (available at HB 201 or on MSO Website (<http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>))
9. Committee members must forward scanned copies of both the exam questions, the student's answers, and rubrics to the MSO Graduate Program (MSO-Admin@fau.edu) for Graduate College and/or Program verification by the semester deadline listed above. As with other grades, documentation must be retained for a minimum of 5 years.
10. Once the student has passed the comprehensive exams and all documentation has been provided to the MSO program, the student will earn an "S" grade for the Marine Science and Oceanography Comprehensive Exam credit (OCE 6965).

X. SWITCHING DEGREE OPTIONS

Students are admitted to the MS MSO graduate program for one of the degree options listed above.

If circumstances should change and a student wishes to switch from the Thesis option to the Non-thesis degree option, after consultation with, and agreement by, their Graduate Supervisory Committee, they should notify the MSO Graduate Programs Committee in writing of the change.

For any switches, an updated Graduate Student Faculty Advisor Verification form must be completed and signed by your new advisor and a New Committee Formation form must be completed <http://www.fau.edu/hboj/education/msmso-forms.php>. Additionally, a new Plan of Study will be required.

XI. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Graduate students who find it necessary to temporarily suspend their studies may apply for leave of absence from graduate study. Leave of absence is intended for students who are unable to pursue their studies at all, rather than for students who are actively working on a thesis or dissertation after completing coursework. Leave of absence is approved by the Graduate College based on the recommendation of the student's faculty advisor, department chair and college dean. To apply for a leave of absence, students use a Form 10: Request to Waiver a University Requirement.

Degree-seeking students returning after an absence of more than one year will be subject to the following:

1. File a new graduate admissions application with appropriate documentation.
2. Re-establish Florida residency for tuition purposes.
3. Be in good academic standing (eligible to return) at FAU and at any institution attended since the last period of enrollment at FAU.
4. Provide official transcripts to the Graduate College from any institution attended since the last period of enrollment at FAU.
5. Submit proof of conformity to the Measles Immunization Policy of the State University System for graduate students under the age of 40 who have not previously submitted this information.
6. Returning students will be admitted under the catalog guidelines in place at the time of re-admission.

Students who were enrolled without being fully admitted into a graduate degree program will not be eligible to return.

XII. GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

The MSO Program recognizes that these guidelines cannot anticipate all circumstances that may affect a student's progress in the Program. Therefore, exceptions to these regulations may be sought by the student through a petition submitted to the MSO Graduate Program Committee. If this committee does not resolve the matter to the student's satisfaction, he/she may bring the matter before the Program Directors who, in consultation with the faculty, will make a final decision.

XIII. SCHEDULES, CHECKLIST AND DEADLINES FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE OPTIONS

The following are guidelines to assure that you are making adequate progress toward the completion of your degree. The Graduate Program Committee will base its evaluation of your annual report on these schedules.

Master of Science/Thesis (37 credits)

Semester I

- Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (Section VII.B)
- Begin preliminary research studies. Up to 3 credits of Directed Independent Research, OCE 6908 can count towards your degree. Use Registration form at this link: <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>
- Consult advisor and take courses that fulfill your degree requirements (Section VII.B)
- Decide on your thesis topic and consult advisor to choose committee members
- Complete Individual Developmental Plan and Plan of Study by November 15th (for students who started in Fall) and April 15th (for students who started in Spring). The Graduate College website has the online form and instructions: <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php>

Semester II

- Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (Section VII.B).
- Choose committee members in consultation with advisor (Section III.D), complete MS Supervisory Committee Membership Form: <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php> (due by end of 2nd semester).
- Take research credits, up to 3 credits of DIR (OCE 6908) before Thesis proposal, Marine Science and Oceanography Proposal (OCE 6974), or Thesis Research (OCE 6972) for subsequent research. Use Registration form at this link: <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>
- Complete Thesis Proposal writing (Section VIII.B).
- Revise and submit IDP.
- Students will sign up for one credit of research over the summer term.

Semester III

- Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (Section VII.B).
- If not already completed, the student will schedule a Thesis Proposal date with your committee. Use Registration form at this link: <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>
- Present your Thesis Proposal (Section VIII.B).
- Revise and submit IDP.
- Submit "Revised" Plan of Study, if necessary. See the Graduate College website for instructions:

<http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php>

- Sign up for Thesis Formatting Workshop: <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/formatting.php>
- Finish writing your Thesis and send to Committee Chair (Section VIII.C).

Semester IV

- Apply for graduation early in term (see specific deadline date published in Schedule of Courses)
<http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php>
- Sign up for Marine Science and Oceanography Defense (OCE 6975).
- Schedule a thesis defense date with your committee (see Registration form link)
<http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmsso-forms.php>
- Present your Thesis results (Section VIII.C).
- Submit your thesis to the Graduate College (see deadline date; Don't miss it!).
<http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php>

Master of Science/Non-Thesis (37 Credits)

Semester I

- Consult advisor and take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (Section VII.B).
- Choose committee members in consultation with advisor (Section III.D).
- Review Comprehensive Examinations requirements; select one specialty from within three different core areas; committee members chosen should be based on the specialty areas selected for the Comprehensive Examinations (see section III-D).
- Complete and submit the IDP
- Complete Plan of Study (must submit by end of 1st semester). Visit Graduate College website for instructions: <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php>

Semester II

- Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (Section VII.B).
- Revise and submit IDP.
- Complete MS Supervisory Committee Membership Form: <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>

Semester III

- Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (Section VII.B).
- Revise and submit IDP.
- Submit "Revised " Plan of Study, if necessary (Please visit Graduate College website for instructions: <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php>
- Contact committee members to schedule Comprehensive Examinations (see deadlines for each term) which should be taken in the 4th semester (Section IX.B). <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>
- Send (via email) Comprehensive Exam schedule to MSO Office for review and approval.

Semester IV

- Apply for graduation early in term (see specific deadline date published in Schedule of Courses) <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php>
- Sign up for Marine Science and Oceanography Comprehensive Exam (OCE 6965).
- Take Comprehensive Examinations and complete Comprehensive Examination Form (MSO website: <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>)
- Complete course work.

Master's Thesis Checklist

37 credits Total Required

Required Courses (12 credits)

Course	Semester Taken	Credits
OCE 6097 Physical & Geological Oceanography		3
OCB 6066 Biological Oceanography		3
OCC 6050 Chemical Oceanography		3
OCE 6922 MSO Colloquium OR BSC 6938 Marine Science Seminar		1
OCE 6974 MSO Proposal		1
OCE 6975 MSO Defense		1

Electives and DIR

At least 15 credits in this category. No more than 3 credits of DIR (OCE 6908) are allowed before the thesis proposal. Students can take 1 credit of DIR in summer. No more than 6 credits of Special Topics (BSC 6936) are allowed.

Course	Semester Taken	Credits

Thesis Credits (OCE 6972)

At least 6 credits in this category. Students can take 1 credit of thesis research during summer.

Name	Semester Taken	Credits

Master's Non-Thesis Checklist

37 credits Total Required

Required Courses (11 credits)

Course	Semester Taken	Credits
OCE 6097 Physical & Geological Oceanography		3
OCB 6066 Biological Oceanography		3
OCC 6050 Chemical Oceanography		3
OCE 6922 MSO Colloquium OR BSC 6938 Marine Science Seminar		1
OCE 6965 MSO Comprehensive Exam		1

Electives and DIR

Course	Semester Taken	Credits

Comprehensive Exams

	Subject Area	Date Taken
Exam 1		
Exam 2		
Exam 3		