

REGULATIONS FOR MASTER'S DEGREES

Marine Science and Oceanography

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Master of Science - Thesis/Non-Thesis

Established August 2017

(Use hyperlinks in blue to access websites & documents directly)

I. GENERAL PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

A) Admission Procedures

- Apply online through the Graduate College link: <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/applyonline/index.php>
- All application requirements below must be completed by the respective deadlines for application to be reviewed.
- Admission to Masters Programs will be based upon the application/admission requirements below

B) Deadline to Apply: **January 15 for the following Fall**

Late and incomplete Applications will not be considered

C) Application/Admission Requirements:

- 1) **Academic Record** (upload copy of unofficial transcript via Graduate College application process <https://owlapp.fau.edu/post/application/login/index.xhtml>)
Thesis, Non-Thesis Option Requirement: 3.0 or better average on the last 60 hours of undergraduate credits or established graduate level proficiency
- 2) **Letters of recommendation** (two are required; submitted electronically via Graduate College application process)
- 3) **Statement of goals and interests (optional; strongly encouraged;** upload statement via Graduate College Application process)
- 4) **Graduate Record Examination** (minimum GRE scores of **Verbal = 151** and **Quantitative = 151**)
 - i. GRE scores older than 5 years will not be accepted.
 - ii. Upload copy of GRE scores electronically via Graduate College application.
- 5) **Graduate Student MSO Faculty Advisor Verification Form Completed** (submitted electronically via Graduate College application process). See section H - Advisor & Graduate Supervisory Committee for Faculty Advisor Requirements

D) Prerequisite Requirements:

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 by 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.

E) 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).

F) 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.

G) Term Enrollment:

Students who are accepted must register for classes for the term in which they were accepted – there are no deferments. 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.

II. Advisor & Graduate Supervisory Committee

A. FAU Marine Science and Oceanography Program Advisor

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, though such faculty can co-chair Master's Committees. The Graduate College will maintain the updated list of approved Graduate Faculty and associate Graduate Faculty for the University.

B. Formal definitions, policies and procedures for Appointments in MSO within the purview of the Graduate College policy:

- **Graduate College Policy:** All thesis/dissertation committee members **must** obtain **Graduate Faculty status**

otherwise the Graduate College will not recognize their signatures on a thesis/dissertation.

- **FAU Faculty** must be added to the Graduate Program Faculty list for the Program in which they wish to participate and then 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 must be voted on by the MSO Program Committee, who will submit an application 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.
1. **Affiliate Status** (external/non-FAU Faculty)

Per the Graduate College and COS: Non-FAU faculty must obtain Affiliate status before they can obtain Graduate Faculty status. 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.)
 2. **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
 3. **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. A Graduate Faculty application is then submitted to Grad College through COS (faculty list maintained by Graduate College—available on GC webpage)

C. M.S. Supervisory Committee Membership Form, Policy and requirements

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. The Graduate College maintains the updated list of approved Graduate Faculty Committee Members:

<http://www.fau.edu/graduate/faculty-and-staff/graduate-faculty.php>

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 M.S.O. Supervisory Committee Membership form at <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmsso-forms.php>
3. A minimum of three (3) **MSO Graduate Faculty** members is required (including the advisor)
4. An optional fourth (or more) member can be accepted. (see link above for full requirements for 4th member)
5. Official verification of the Graduate Supervisory Committee is verified by the completed Members for Supervisor of Research Committee Form with signatures from each professor agreeing to serve on the committee.
6. Members for Supervisor Committee Form must be submitted to the MS MSO office (HB 201) by the end of second semester for the student to be considered to be making adequate progress.

III. General Academic Requirements

- Only graduate students enrolled for 9 semester hours are considered "full-time." Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of **3.0 [B]** each semester **in all coursework**.
- Passing grades: The grades of "A" through "C," and "S," are passing grades.
 - i. Note: The grades of "B-," "C+," and "C," while considered passing for undergraduate students, are indicative of unsatisfactory work for graduate students and may not be accepted for some courses.
- 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. If it does, the student must be certified by the Department of Language and Linguistics. 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.

IV. 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 Graduate 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.

V. DEPARTMENTAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

A) *Teaching Assistantships*

"Full-time" graduate students (i.e., enrolled in a minimum of 9 credits) may be eligible for a Teaching Assistantship (T.A.; 20 hrs/wk), which will provide a salary and partial coverage of tuition (including waiving out-of-state tuition rates for non-Florida residents). All credit hours covered by the Tuition benefit (see section D below) must be required for the degree, courses not required you will have to pay out of pocket. For the official Graduate College policies, please see section D, below, *Tuition Benefits Policy for Graduate Students*.

- 1) T.A. assignments are competitive and are distributed based on the following **Priority System**:
 - First and second year MS Thesis students making adequate progress have highest priority over non-thesis students (and support is normally given for a two year period only)
 - Students admitted under normal status have priority over those admitted conditionally (until those latter students are officially accepted; see Admission Procedures section on p. 1)

- Subject knowledge and teaching ability/past performance

2) TA Request:

Each semester in which TAships are available you will receive an email regarding TA support. You must respond to the email by the deadline in order to be considered for a TA position.

3) Performance Evaluation:

Performance as a TA is evaluated and monitored continuously during the teaching assignment by either the Laboratory Supervisor and/or Professor. TA academic progress and success is evaluated annually by the Graduate Program Committee (see **Annual Evaluation** section IV-B below). Students are expected to demonstrate dedication to their T.A. duties. This includes 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; **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) T.A. Contract Termination:

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

6) Mandatory T.A. Meetings:

TA's are all required to attend mandatory orientation meetings prior to each term – so do not schedule commitments that would conflict with these meetings. Those who do not attend these required meetings may have their contracts cancelled. Students must petition the MSO Directors at least **1** month in advance of such scheduled meetings for approval, to be excused from attending.

Annual or biannual mandatory MS Program meetings must also be attended by **ALL** graduate students in the program (see Mandatory Program Meeting section IV)

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 assure 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 English pronunciation and intonation, practicing 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*

Research assistantships (RA) might be available. Please check with your advisor about availability.

VI: Tuition Benefits Policy for Graduate Students (*ratified by the Graduate College – March 2013*)

See link for Graduate College Graduate Assistantship and Tuition Benefits additional information:
<http://www.fau.edu/graduate/tuition-benefits/index.php>

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 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 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.

A. 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.

In order 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/dissertation credit hour. 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.

Important Note: 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 sources. This adjustment may result in repayment of previously disbursed financial aid.

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.

B. Full-Time Enrollment and Petitions

For **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 5 credits are considered half-time. For the **summer** semester: Graduate students registered for 6 credits are considered full-time, registrations for 5 credits are considered 3/4-time and registrations for 3 credits are considered half-time.

Form 14 - Graduate Equivalent Full Time Status Waiver <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php>

Graduate students may petition to take fewer credits and maintain full-time graduate student status. Students must meet the eligibility guidelines below to submit the petition and must satisfy at least one of the following three conditions:

1. Master's degree students who have completed all required coursework as listed on their approved Plan of study and are only enrolled in thesis credits may petition to be classified as full-time graduate students with an enrollment of at least 3 credits.
2. All graduate students who have completed all coursework and thesis/dissertation credits as listed on their approved Plan of Study and are only enrolled to satisfy continuous enrollment requirements to complete their thesis or dissertation may petition to be classified as full-time graduate students with an enrollment of at least 1 credit.
3. All graduate students in their last semester of study, as verified by their approved Plan of Study, may petition to be classified as full-time graduate students with an enrollment of the remaining credits needed to complete their degree.

C. Eligibility Guidelines for Form14: Graduate Equivalent Full Time Status Waiver

The following eligibility guidelines must first be satisfied prior to submitting the petition to seek full-time graduate student status. A separate petition must be submitted for each term in which this status is being sought. The student must have:

1. An approved Plan of Study on file in the Graduate College;
2. Maintained continuous enrollment during the previous 12-month period;
3. Enrolled in the minimum number of credits as stipulated by one of the four applicable conditions above.

Important Notes for Form#14.

The form #14 must be completed each term for which full-time equivalency is requested.

- **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 requirements of individual lending institutions, insurance providers, and fellowship stipulations.**
- **International students must also meet all International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) requirements**

VII. Registration Form (for Thesis, DIS and Internships)

Students registering for Master's thesis, Proposal/Defense, DIS or Internship must complete a registration form, signed by both you and your advisor, then send the form to crossmel@fau.edu or bring it to the office at HB201 in order to be registered.

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

A. Options

The MSO Program offers two Master of Science degree programs:

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

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.

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 students in the MS-MSO program are required to take Physical & Geological Oceanography (OCE 6097) and Biological and Chemical Oceanography (OCE 6057) (3 credits each) as well as the MSO Colloquium (1 credit). Students are expected to take these in their first fall semester. For students following the thesis track, a minimum of 24 credits are then taken from the core subject areas as described on the MS-MSO webpage <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-curriculumandcore.php> with at least one course from each of four different core subject areas. Up to 6 credits designated as "Special Topics" courses (courses not listed there) may be taken with the approval of the Thesis Advisor. Students can take up to 3 credits of Directed Independent Study and 3-6 credits of Thesis research. To enroll in Master's Thesis or DIS credits see registration form section.

The thesis track also requires a **written thesis proposal and proposal seminar and defense, and a written thesis and thesis seminar and defense**. Students can defend their theses either immediately after the thesis results seminar or at another time (summer semesters included). 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 theses 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 Study. Thereafter, no more research credits can be taken until the research topic has been approved by the student's thesis committee. No more than 3 credits in DIS 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 Biological Sciences (Non-Thesis Option)

This M.S. degree requires a minimum of 37 credits. Students taking the non-thesis track take 30 credits from the core subject areas and electives, with at least one course from each of four different core subject areas as described on the MS-MSO webpage <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-curriculumandcore.php> . Up to 6 credits designated as “Special Topics” courses (courses not listed there) may be taken with the approval of the Thesis Advisor. Students can take no more than 3 credits of Directed Independent Study. 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). To enroll in DIS credits see registration form section.

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 Biology Department 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. 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. Switching from the Non-thesis degree to the Thesis option will require a new application and application fee.

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/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php> . Additionally, a new Plan of Study will be required.

D. 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.

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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 the 3 "specialty areas" covered in the exams from the core areas of the MSO program.

Written 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, the following are acceptable exam formats and expectations:

1. Each written exam will be administered on the date 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 very important.

5. Exams should be of sufficient rigor and coverage thereby typically requiring significant study efforts 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. Previous or current course work (and associated exams) cannot substitute for the Comprehensive Exams.
8. 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).

Procedures for Scheduling/Completing Comprehensive Exams - M.S. - Non-Thesis

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. 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

The outcome (satisfactory/unsatisfactory) of the comprehensive exams, along with copies of the completed exams, must be turned into 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.

3. 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 (crossmel@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 _____;

Exam dates cannot be changed without written consent from the professor administering the exam

4. The MSO Graduate Program will then review the information for approval. Once approved, students and committee members will be notified. Students cannot take any comprehensive exam without such prior approval.
5. 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.

6. Complete Comprehensive Examination Form (available at HB 201 or on MSO Website (<http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>))
7. Committee members must forward scanned copies of both the exam questions and the student's answers to the MSO Graduate Program (crossmel@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.

IX. Thesis Proposal and Defense Requirements:

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 particular discipline. 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. Please see the link below:

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

Thesis Proposal Procedures:

1. Send completed proposal to Chair of Committee for edits and final approval (see link below for formulating your proposal),<http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php> (**Give Chair of your Committee a minimum of one month for reviewing your proposal**)
2. Send approved copy of your proposal to the remaining members of your committee. (Allow the **committee members a minimum of 3-4 weeks to review your proposal** before any scheduled seminar date.)
3. When you send your proposal to your committee members request available dates and times to consider for presenting your proposed research project.
4. Three weeks prior to the approved proposal date by all of your committee members contact the MSO staff to schedule the seminar: (Such advanced notice is required to ensure a room can be reserved). Until date is approved by all committee members, the office cannot submit the request to reserve a conference room.
5. Post Flyer around building and Send flyer to office to be emailed out a minimum of 7 days before scheduled date (Students will have to reschedule such seminars if the timelines are not followed (i.e., posting flyers/emailing office flyer for a seminar with less than a week's notice is not permitted).
6. After seminar has been presented, all non-committee members will exit the room, The Committee

will proceed with the oral proposal defense (unless scheduled for another time) and then decide if the thesis proposal is approved/disapproved or if additional editing is required.

7. Approved proposals must be verified by the following:
 - i. Completed Thesis Proposal form (see link below)
 - ii. Rubric form from each committee member (<http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>)
 - iii. Proposal form and rubric forms must be submitted to the MS MSO Office (HB201)

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 defense must be submitted and approved by the University. Thus, students at the defense I-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.

Thesis Defense Procedures:

1. Check Graduate College Deadlines for turning in your thesis the semester before you plan to graduate 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 see link below for dates/times to register. <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/formatting.php> **This workshop is very important for the Graduate College will disprove your Thesis if you do not follow the guidelines, this includes, correct paper, pen and formatting the pages**
3. Send completed thesis to Chair of Committee for edits and final approval. (Give Chair of your Committee a minimum of three months for reviewing your thesis) (Example: If you are planning to graduate in Fall you should send your completed thesis to the Chair of your Committee by August 15th and for Spring by January 15th)
4. Once Chair of Committee has approved send copy of your thesis to the remaining members of your committee. (Allow the committee members a minimum of 4-6 weeks to review your thesis before any scheduled seminar date)
5. When you send your thesis to your committee members request available dates and times to consider for presenting your defense research project.
6. Schedule 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 by all of your committee members contact the MSO Office staff to schedule the seminar. Such advanced notice is required to ensure a room can be reserved. Until date is approved by all committee members the office cannot submit the request to reserve a conference room
8. Post Flyer around building and Send flyer to office to be emailed out a **minimum of 7 days before** any scheduled date (Students will have to reschedule such seminars if the timelines are not followed (i.e., posting flyers for a seminar with less than a week's notice is not permitted).
9. After defense seminar has been presented; all non-committee members will exit the room, The

Committee will 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 signature. Don't wait until the Graduate College deadline to start looking for your committee members/chair and dean to get your signatures. Each member has different schedules. Contact them ahead of time to check for their availability.
11. Final Paperwork for MSO Requirements
 - i. Completed Thesis defense form (see link below)
 - ii. Rubric form from each committee member (<http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>)
 - iii. Defense form and rubric forms must be submitted to MSO Office. 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. Final Paperwork for Graduate College: See link Below to Check Graduate College website for final paperwork requirements

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

X. PROGRESS TOWARD DEGREE COMPLETION

A. All Masters Students working full-time towards degree are expected to complete all requirements for degree within two (2) years after entering the program.

B. Scheduling and Adequate Progress Requirements:

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

The MSO Masters requires that all (full and part-time) students complete the Plan of Study prior to the beginning of their 2nd semester. For instructions, please see 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 procedures for Committee Formation.
3. Thesis option: a Thesis Proposal Seminar must be presented no later than the third semester of graduate study; (see Proposal requirements)
4. Thesis Option: in a subsequent term a Thesis Results Seminar should be presented no later than the fourth semester of graduate study; (see Defense requirements). The Thesis Proposal and Thesis Defense cannot occur in the same semester and **must occur at least one month apart.**
5. Non-thesis Option: Comprehensive Exams should be completed no later than the fourth semester. (See requirements for Comprehensive exams)

Thesis Students: A crucial component for adequate progress is the selection of an appropriate thesis topic; i.e., one that can be completed within a reasonable (1-1.5 yr) period, 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 above (Section XII) 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.

No student may take more than seven (7) years to complete a Master's degree.

Students who do not enroll for classes one term (Fall or Spring) can enroll the subsequent term without issue. However, students who do not enroll for 2 or more consecutive terms must reapply to the graduate program.

C. Annual Evaluation

Every year on April 15 the Annual report will be due. The student and his/her advisor are required to submit to the MSO Graduate Program Committee a form (which will be available online) 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 year's report if the student is in his/her second year of study), and (3) plans for the upcoming year. The report must be signed by both the student and advisor, and distributed to each member of the student's Graduate Supervisory Committee. Failure to submit such a report 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 reports will serve, in part, as the basis for rank-ordering students that apply for continued T.A. support.

D. Good Standing

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 Plans of Study, Thesis Proposal (for thesis students), Committee formation (when required), etc.
3. Attend all mandatory meetings (e.g., MS Meetings, TA meetings, IACUC for those working with vertebrates, Lab Safety)
4. Adequate and ethical performance as both a student in classes and as a TA (for those with such assistantships)
5. Satisfactory completion of all duties and responsibilities in research (e.g. an "S" grade in DIS or Thesis credits)

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 Graduate 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.

E. 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. 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; so we will temporarily use private or non-FAU email addresses until such students have their official FAU email addresses.

F. 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 on the basis of 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 Waive 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. Students who were enrolled without being fully admitted into a graduate degree program will not be eligible to return.
7. Returning students will be admitted under the catalog guidelines in place at the time of re-admission.

XI. 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.

XII. SCHEDULES, CHECKLIST AND DEADLINES FOR THE MASTERS DEGREE OPTIONS

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

Master of Science/Thesis Guidelines (37 credits)

Semester I

- Begin preliminary research studies (up to 3 hrs. before proposal of DIS (no more than 3 credits of DIS can count toward the degree) or Thesis Research (BSC 6971). 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 (see Specific requirements f or MS Thesis option)
- Decide on your thesis topic and consult advisor to choose committee members
- Complete Plan of Study (must submit by end of 1st semester). Visit Graduate College website for online form and instructions: <http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php>

Semester II

- Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements for MS Thesis option)
- Choose committee members in consultation with advisor; (see Advisor & Graduate Supervisory), 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 hrs. before proposal of DIS (BSC 6905 no more than 3 credits of DIS can count toward the degree) or Thesis Research (BSC 6971). Use Registration form at this link: <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>
- Complete Thesis Proposal writing – see Thesis Proposal guidelines and oral Thesis Defense

Semester III

- 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 –See Proposal guidelines
- Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements f or MS Thesis option)
- Submit "Revised " Plan of Study, if necessary (Please visit 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 defense and send to Committee Chair-See Thesis Defense Guidelines

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>
- Schedule a thesis defense date with your committee (see Registration form link) <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>
- Present your thesis results see Thesis Defense Guidelines
- 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 (see Specific requirements for Non-Thesis option)
- **Choose committee members** in consultation with advisor (see Advisor & Graduate Supervisory),
- **Review Comprehensive Examinations** requirements; select 3 areas within one specialty group; committee members chosen should be based on the specialty areas selected for the Comprehensive Examinations (see section III-D)
- 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 (see Specific requirements for Non-Thesis option)
- Complete **MS Supervisory Committee Membership Form**:
<http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>

Semester III

- Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements for Non-Thesis and MST options)
- 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** (see section D. Comprehensive Examinations: Written Comprehensive Examination Format for format requirements and to schedule dates for exams). <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>
- **Take Comprehensive Examinations and complete Comprehensive Examination Form** (on MSO Website: <http://www.fau.edu/hboi/education/msmso-forms.php>)
- Complete course work

Master's Thesis Checklist
37 credits Total Required

Required Courses (7 credits)

Name of Course	Semester Taken	Credits
OCE 6097 Physical & Geological Oceanography		
OCE 6057 Biological and Chemical Oceanography		
Geosciences Colloquium Series		

Electives and DIS

Name of Course	Core Subject Area	Semester Taken	Credits

Thesis Credits

Name	Semester Taken	Credits

Master's Non-Thesis Checklist
37 credits Total Required

Required Courses (7 credits)

Name of Course	Semester Taken	Credits
OCE 6097 Physical & Geological Oceanography		
OCE 6057 Biological and Chemical Oceanography		
Geosciences Colloquium Series		

Electives and DIS

Name of Course	Core Subject Area	Semester Taken	Credits

Comprehensive Exams (4th Semester)

Name	Subject Area	Date Taken
Exam 1		
Exam 2		
Exam 3		