COLLEGE OF NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES

Master of Science in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies

The Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies graduate program encompasses a broad range of scientific disciplines relevant to the coastal zone. It is a multidisciplinary degree including biology, chemistry, geology, marine science, and physics. The applications of current knowledge related to marine and wetland environments, understanding natural processes, policy and ethical management, and the ability to conduct and report original research are emphasized. The program is designed for students interested in marine and wetland systems, organisms living in these systems, and the management of these systems. A thesis is required.

The program is administered by the College of Natural and Applied Sciences.

Admission to Study

Applications for graduate study are to be directed to the Office of Admissions at the University.

Admission Requirements

Regular admission to the Master in Science in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies is met by satisfactorily meeting the following six criteria:

1. Completion of an application form.
2. Submission of an official transcript from each post secondary school or college previously attended (all prior undergraduate academic study must be represented as well as other graduate study). Transcripts should show a minimum overall graduating GPA of 3.0 and a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the basic courses prerequisite to the area of proposed graduate study and in any graduate work already completed.
3. Evidence of having received a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution in this country or its equivalent at a foreign institution based on a four-year degree program.
4. Completion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The University expects successful applicants to have a score of no less than 400 on both the verbal and quantitative portions. International students whose native language is not English must also submit scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Scores on the GRE (and TOEFL) must be less than five years old.
5. Submission of at least two letters of recommendation.
6. Submission of a written statement of educational and career goals, how this degree will fulfill those goals and the subject area of research interest while completing this degree.

Provisional Admission

Applicants may receive provisional admission in the Master of Science in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies degree program if they do not meet the stated admission requirements and are entering the University for the first time or are returning to the University after an extended absence. Students on provisional admission are limited to 12 hours of course work.
Removal of Provisional Status

To remove provisional status the student must:

a) earn a B or better in each course of the first 9-12 hours of course work, which includes at least two core courses;

b) meet all the requirements for regular admission, except for undergraduate GPA;

c) earn a B or better in all undergraduate prerequisites required as specified in the provisional acceptance letter; and

d) have the commitment from a faculty member to be the major professor.

Admission to Degree Candidacy

Admission to the graduate program in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies does not signify Admission to Candidacy. After completing nine to twelve semester hours, students must apply for Admission to Candidacy. To be eligible for Admission to Candidacy for the Master of Science in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies, a student must:

1. achieve regular admission status;
2. have a degree plan and thesis proposal approved by the student, the major professor, thesis committee, and the Dean;
3. complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of graduate work at Coastal Carolina University;
4. have earned a B or better average on all graduate work pursued and a B or better in the three core classes (CMWS 601, CMWS 602, CMWS 603); and
5. show successful completion of the qualifying examination.

*Transfer credit(s) cannot be used to raise the GPA at CCU.

The final decision for admission to Candidacy is made by the Dean in the College of Natural and Applied Sciences based upon the recommendation of the student’s committee and the CMWS Graduate Committee.

All students, including transfer students, must clear the English Proficiency Requirement, if applicable, before being admitted to Candidacy. Candidacy Applications are available in the Dean’s office.

Thesis Committee

A thesis committee of at least three members will be established by the second semester of enrollment. It will consist of at least three full-time CCU faculty members including the major professor who will chair the committee. An approved member from an outside institution is also recommended. The entire thesis committee will meet with the student semi-annually to assess progress and give advice.

Qualifying Examination

In addition to the regularly scheduled course examinations, a candidate for the master’s degree must satisfactorily pass a written qualifying examination arranged by the CMWS Graduate Committee. The examination is designed to incorporate general information from the core courses. Exam questions will require students to integrate and apply their knowledge.

A student who is not successful in passing the qualifying examination may, at the discretion of the CMWS Graduate Committee, be allowed another examination not later than one semester after the unsuccessful attempt.
Degree Requirements
A Master in Science in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies requires:
1. Successful completion of an approved program of study with a minimum of 30 graduate hours;
2. Successful completion of the qualifying examination;
3. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 (B) on all course work;
4. Completion, presentation, and successful defense of the graduate thesis; and
5. All work applied toward the degree must be earned in the six years immediately preceding the completion of the graduate program.

Required Courses (30 Credits)
The Masters of Science degree program in Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies at Coastal Carolina University requires 30 graduate credit hours for completion. This includes the successful defense of a thesis based on the student’s original research. Three core classes prepare students to deal with complex multidisciplinary scientific interrelationships that apply to coastal areas. All students also are required to participate in the seminar series.

Core Courses (9 Credits)
- CMWS 601 Coastal Marine and Wetland Processes (3)
- CMWS 602 Coastal Marine and Wetland Ecology (3)
- CMWS 603 Coastal and Wetland Policy and Management (3)

Thesis Research (6 Credits)
- CMWS 700 Thesis Research (6)

The student must assemble a thesis committee of three faculty members, one of which is the major professor.

Graduate Seminar (3 Credits)
- CMWS 697 Graduate Seminar I (1)
- CMWS 698 Graduate Seminar II (1)
- CMWS 699 Graduate Seminar III (1)

Electives (12 Credits)
Coastal Marine and Wetland Studies courses 500-level or above. A maximum of 6 credits at the 500-level may be used towards completing the degree requirements.