

Master of Professional Science Degree Handbook (2018-2019)

1. **Program Prerequisites** – The prerequisites for the M.P.S. degree programs are determined by each RSMAS department as highlighted below.

Marine Biology and Ecology (MBE) Tracks

- Tropical Marine Ecosystem Management
- Marine Mammal Science

Pre-requisites:

1. Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) or Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.)
2. One year of General Biology & General Biology Labs
3. One year of General Chemistry & General Chemistry Labs
4. At least one semester of Calculus (for Science/Math majors)
5. 9 additional credits in natural science (research in these fields may substitute for coursework hours at the discretion of track leaders or MPS director)

Note to students: Deficiencies in the required courses may be considered on a case-by-case basis for otherwise highly qualified students.

Marine Ecosystems and Society (MES) Tracks

- Aquaculture
- Coastal Sustainability
- Coastal Zone Management
- Exploration Science
- J.D./MPS *
- Marine Conservation
- Underwater Archaeology **
- Fisheries Management and Conservation

Pre-requisites:

1. Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) or Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.)
2. One year of General Biology & General Biology Labs
3. One year of General Chemistry & General Chemistry Labs
4. At least one semester of Calculus (for Science/Math majors)
5. 9 additional credits in natural science (Research in these fields may, in some cases, substitute for coursework hours.)

*Must be accepted to UM's School of Law first. Prospective J.D./MPS applicants must apply to each school separately. MPS application portal available on the [MPS website](#).

**See Dr. Fritz Hanselmann's separate Underwater Archaeology [Track Guide](#).

Atmospheric Sciences (ATM) Tracks

- Broadcast Meteorology
- Computational Meteorology and Oceanography
- Weather, Climate, and Society

- Weather Forecasting

Pre-requisites:

1. Undergraduate degree in Meteorology or closely related field

Note to students: Deficiencies in the required courses may be considered on a case-by-case basis for otherwise highly qualified students.

Ocean Sciences (OCE) Tracks

- Applied Remote Sensing

Pre-requisites:

1. Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) in Mathematics, Physics, Geosciences, Engineering, or an equivalent degree
2. Successful completion of the following (or equivalent) undergraduate courses: Calculus, Statistics, Physics, Computer Programming (Matlab, IDL, C, or Fortran)

- Natural Hazards and Catastrophes

Pre-requisites:

1. Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) or Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.)
2. At least one of the following: one semester of Calculus or Statistics or 6 credits in Geoscience

Note to students: Deficiencies in the required courses may be considered on a case-by-case basis for otherwise highly qualified students.

2. **Course Requirements:** 30 graduate-level credits required for graduation. Of those, a minimum of 24 credits must be “class” credits and a minimum 2 credits must be “internship” credits. The remaining 4 credits may be used for class or internship credits. All students are required to take the course and *internship credits outlined below:

24-28 graduate course credits	All students are required to complete 24 – 28 course credits. Within each track, there are compulsory classes and electives. Coursework is multi-disciplinary and thus will be accepted from multiple departments.
2-6 internship credits	Students are expected to complete an internship for 2 - 6 academic credits with an approved agency, institution, or business, culminating in a formal report.

*Students must register or at least 1 internship credit per semester in which he or she is engaged with the internship project.

All RSMAS students are required to take:

Research Ethics (RSM 700): Completed during 1st semester in MPS program. Course is online (0-credit) and offered via the [CITI Program](#) website (not Blackboard). MPS Office registers all MPS students and submits instructions on how to log-in. Students must successfully pass two sections within the *Responsible Conduct of Research* course series;

one of those sections must include the section on Plagiarism. Grade is S (Satisfactory) or I (Incomplete) and will post to a student's transcript. Students must submit Completion Reports for each section to the MPS Office. Successful completion of this course is a requirement for graduation.

Preventing Sexual Harassment & Sexual Violence (GRD 600): Also known as "Campus Clarity," students must successfully complete this online (0-credit) course during his or her 1st semester in the MPS program. Course is administered by the [Graduate School](#), not the MPS Office; the Graduate School registers all students and provides log-in instructions. Students must submit the Certificate of Completion to the MPS Office. No grade is given for this course, but successful completion is a requirement for graduation.

Failure to complete the above courses will block students from registering for courses/credits for the following semester and ultimately the student will not be cleared for graduation.

3. **Academic Advisor and Committee Chair** - Students will be assigned an Academic Advisor during their first semester in residence. The advisor must hold an appointment in the department representing each student's track. This individual will offer guidance regarding University expectations, coursework, registration, program details, and graduation requirements. At the beginning of the first semester, the student and the Academic Advisor will establish the curriculum to be followed, based on the student's personal and professional goals and M.P.S. track requirements. During a student's second semester in residence (Fall or Spring), each student will begin forming their internship committee, starting with the committee chair. This person can be different from the student's academic advisor. The Committee Chair acts as a resource to the student regarding career guidance and the selection of an appropriate internship, as well as providing guidance during the internship and report/presentation creation. Any RSMAS graduate faculty member may act as a committee chair, but it should be someone with relevant experience in the student's chosen career/internship path. Students should identify their chair no later than the end of the second semester.
4. **Committee** – All MPS students must have a graduate committee of at least 3 members. This committee will include a committee chair from the RSMAS faculty (described above), an additional faculty member from UM, and one outside committee member, who is usually the direct supervisor at the student's internship. Each member should be an expert in the student's chosen track, and more specifically, the topic of their final report. Though deviations from these guidelines are possible, they must be approved by the MPS Associate Dean and Program Director. The "Appointment to Student Committee" form solidifies the committee and is due 1 week after starting an internship.
5. **Comprehensive Examination** – Students must respond to and successfully pass 4 comprehensive exams during his or her time in residence. The exams will be written and will be based on core course content. Your overall evaluation for all 4 comprehensive exams is cumulative. The Program Director will collect the exams from your course instructors and submit your comprehensive exam's final report (indicating your overall result) to you via email upon completion of your 4th comprehensive exam. In the event of a failure, a student may be re-examined once, or choose a different course's exam. Successful completion of 4 comprehensive exams is a requirement for graduation.

6. **Pre-Internship** - Before commencing an internship, a student must:
- A) Submit the “Internship Agreement Form” including a 1-page summary of the proposed project, highlighting the timeline, goals, expectations, and objectives of your internship.
 - B) Complete at least 12 graduate-level credits with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
 - C) Removal all I (Incomplete) and NG (No Grades) grades and deficiencies such as: failure to submit items listed on student’s Certificate of Admission; failure to complete online courses (*RSM 700: Research Ethics* and *GRD 600: Preventing Sexual Harassment*); failure to successfully pass 4 comprehensive exams.

7. **Internship** - Each student will be required to complete an internship with an organization engaged in some activity associated with marine and/or atmospheric science and identify an Internship Supervisor. Such organizations can be national or international agencies, private corporations, or foreign governments with clearly defined marine and/or atmospheric-oriented programs or activities. Internships can be either paid or unpaid by the organization, or interns can complete the internship by formal participation in a University-sponsored program in some area of marine or atmospheric science. The “Internship Commitment Form” is due no later than 2 weeks after the start of an internship, but should ideally be completed before the internship begins. Additionally, a detailed synopsis of a proposed contribution to the hosting organization is required as a formal proposal no later than 1 month after the start date. The internship proposal will include: an introduction to the topic (i.e. a literature review), a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, methods and materials (i.e. the proposed activities and analyses), a timeline, and plans for disseminating the information. The internship proposal template and guidelines are available on the M.P.S. website <http://mps.rsmas.miami.edu/form/>.

Institutions may release an intern before the end of the proposed time commitment, and an intern may also terminate the position with an institution at any time, provided there are significant reasons not to proceed. In either case, due process will include a conference with the intern, the supervisor, and the student’s academic committee members. The resolution of any problems should occur during this meeting. However, should the problems continue, or are deemed to be irreparable/irrevocable, the internship may be terminated, and the plans for the involved student will be reevaluated by the student’s committee.

8. **Internship Report** - The final assessment will be based on a written report and an oral presentation. The internship report is not a summary of involvement but rather a contributory assessment of the experience, including developmental insight and a summary of any research performed. Copies of the final, approved report should be distributed as follows:

- One electronic copy to each member of student’s committee
- One copy for the representative agency, institution, or business (electronic and/or hard copy, at their request)
- One electronic copy (as a Word document file), plus the fully-signed title page (PDF or hard copy is accepted) submitted via e-mail to the M.P.S. Office

9. **Oral Presentation** – A strict requirement for the completion of the M.P.S. degree is an oral presentation. Oral presentations should be no longer than 30 minutes in length (includes time for Q&A from the committee and other attendees), should include a visual

- component (e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.), and may not be scheduled until all committee members have edited at least one draft of the internship report. Additionally, the PowerPoint (or equivalent) must be reviewed and edited by your Committee Chair, and all committee members must be invited to the presentation, to attend either in person or virtually (e.g. Skype, GoToMeeting, etc.). If presenting at RSMAS, please coordinate with your committee to identify a mutually agreeable time and date, and then follow the instructions and deadlines on the *MPS Graduation Checklist* (checklists are available on the MPS website). If presenting off-campus or at a different UM campus (e.g. Coral Gables, Medical, etc.), follow the instructions above as well as those listed on the MPS Graduation Checklist. Hosting an oral presentation and submitting its visual content (e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi, PDF) to the MPS Office is a requirement for graduation.
10. **Conference** – Though not mandatory, M.P.S. students are strongly encouraged to attend a scientific conference during their academic residency at RSMAS.
 11. **Residency** – For full-time students, residency will be limited to 24-months within a continuous 30-month period. A student who has not completed all of the requirements for graduation within this time period will be required to petition the MPS Office and the relevant RSMAS faculty mentor and/or Committee Chair for continuation. Time to completion starts when a student enters the MPS program. All work (course work and internship) must be completed within 6 years of the time of admission and matriculation to the MPS Program; see [Graduate School Student Handbook](#)'s *Time to Completion* section for 6-year policy. If a student does not graduate within 6 years of starting the M.P.S. program, he or she must meet with the MPS Director, relevant Faculty members and/or committee members for reevaluation of enrollment and continuation. Exception to this time to completion policy may be granted by the Dean of the Graduate School at the request of the Graduate Program Director; see [Graduate School Student Handbook](#)'s *Time to Completion* section.
 12. **Transfer of Credits**: A total of 6 graduate-level credits may be petitioned for transfer into the M.P.S. degree program from an outside institution, provided that those credits did not result in the conferral of another degree. However, all courses must be evaluated by the Academic Advisor or MPS Director and approved by the instructor of the equivalent RSMAS class prior to transfer/acceptance. Official transcripts from each academic institution in which credits are requested for transfer must accompany the official petition to the Graduate School. Transcripts from non-U.S. academic institutions must be submitted to an [external credentialing service for U.S. grade and Grade Point Average \(GPA\) conversion](#). The final report from the credentialing agency must be submitted to the MPS Office. UM faculty and/or the MPS Director may request a syllabus from each course being considered for transfer. Unofficial transcripts from U.S. institutions may be submitted to UM faculty and/or the MPS Director for review purposes only. Official records are required for submission to the Graduate School. The Graduate School has the final approval of any/all transfer credits for a graduate degree. Classes for which there is no equivalent course at RSMAS are not eligible for transfer.
 13. **University of Miami Credits Taken as an Undergraduate**: If pursuing an M.P.S. degree in any track, current UM undergraduate students may complete up to 12 credits of required graduate coursework while in residence as an undergraduate at the University of Miami. University of Miami undergraduate students within 30 credits of meeting the requirements for the baccalaureate degree may take and receive credit for graduate courses, while completing the requirements for the baccalaureate degree. No

more than six (6) graduate credits may be taken in one semester, and no more than a total of twelve (12) graduate credits may be taken as an undergraduate. The student should be enrolled in at least 12 undergraduate credits each semester to avoid eligibility issues for some aid programs. Students may take no more than 15 credit hours of combined undergraduate and graduate credits. Admission to take graduate courses does not automatically admit the student to a graduate degree program at the University of Miami. The graduate credits earned may NOT be used to meet undergraduate graduation requirements or be used to meet the 120 credit hour requirements at the University of Miami. Undergraduate students who request to take graduate coursework must complete the *Application for Undergraduates to Take a Graduate Course* and then bring the completed form and a completed drop/add form to the Graduate School Office, Ashe 235, for final approval. Once the form is signed by the Graduate School representative, the student will be notified to pick up the form in Ashe 235. The student then must take that form and the associated drop/add form to the Office of the Registrar for processing. Refer to the [Graduate School's Policies & Forms](#) website for full instructions. Students transferring the following credits are eligible for the following MPS merit-based partial tuition waivers if he or she meets the GPA and GRE requirements. The combination of transferred graduate credits and tuition waivers cannot exceed 12 credits.

14. **M.P.S. vs. M.S. Distinction** - RSMAS currently offers two different self-funded degrees, the MPS degree and the self-paid MS degree. These degrees differ from traditional MS and Ph.D. degrees in that tuition is the student's responsibility and no monthly stipend is provided. These degrees are attractive to many students because acceptance into the programs is not contingent on a faculty member's financial commitment to tuition and stipend as it would be with a Ph.D. or standard MS.

The difference between self-funded MS and MPS

Both the self-funded MS and MPS programs consist of 30 credits, 24 of which must be course credits, and costs are paid by the student. However, there are several important distinctions between the two degrees. The MS degree, self-funded or not, is a traditional graduate degree meant to move a student towards a career in academia and research. Its culmination is a full hypothesis driven thesis which will be later published in a peer reviewed journal. As such, it requires an *a priori* match with a member of the regular graduate faculty for mentorship, office/lab space, and research costs. This student-faculty match, together with a coordinated research plan and timeline, is a necessary prerequisite for acceptance into the self-funded MS program and to the degree itself. The major difference between the traditional MS and self-funded MS is that tuition and living costs are the student's responsibility in the self-funded MS. This difference allows faculty to accept exceptional students more freely and creates more opportunities to obtain an MS degree.

In contrast, the MPS degree is an accelerated program that can be finished in as little as a year, culminating in an internship and internship report. This degree is meant to quickly equip a student with the skills they need to start careers in research, industry, or government, or to move on to a more traditional graduate career. While the internship and internship report are somewhat analogous to primary research and thesis, they do not need to be hypothesis driven nor published in a peer reviewed journal, thus the progress toward a degree is faster for MPS compared to MS students. A student may switch from the MPS degree to a self-paid or traditional MS, subject to suitable academic qualifications and a coordinated research plan and timeline for the MS thesis study.

15. **Transfer from M.P.S. to M.S.** – Students interested in transferring from the M.P.S. program to the M.S. program must be accepted by a member of the graduate faculty, obtain pre-approval from the Associate Deans of Graduate and Professional Studies, and all requests for transfer must be made PRIOR to the start of the second semester in residence. Transfers from the M.P.S. to the M.S. will not be considered after students have completed more than 15 credits of graduate coursework.

If approved, the student must identify and communicate with a faculty member with shared research interests and obtain a commitment from that faculty member to act as their M.S. Faculty Advisor. Then, the student must compose a 1-page research plan, describing a publishable quality, original research project. The Faculty Advisor and the department Program Director must review the plan, and transfer to the M.S. program will be subject to their approval of the proposed research. When/if approved, the Faculty Advisor, Program Director, and Associate Deans must sign the “Transfer from M.P.S. to M.S. Program” form for submission to the Graduate Studies and M.P.S. offices.

16. **J.D./M.P.S. Students** – The graduation requirements for students enrolled in the joint J.D./M.P.S. program differ from students enrolled in the M.P.S. program alone. Students in the joint degree program are only required to complete 24 credits, and these credits are typically comprised of 24 course credits and 0 internship credits. The student’s total work in the joint program, whether related to courses, seminars, or an individual research project at the School of Law or RSMAS, must result in a substantial, written analysis (publishable quality) of marine law, policy, or related scientific issues. Students may use their required upper-class research paper, or law review, at the School of Law to fulfill this requirement. Thus, joint J.D./M.P.S. students are expected to form a committee and submit the “Appointment to Student’s Committee” form, take and pass the Comprehensive Exam, and submit a report from a legal internship (must be marine related) or a paper published in their law journal that is vetted and approved by all committee members. Joint J.D./M.P.S. students are exempt from submitting the Internship Commitment Form, the Internship Proposal, and the oral presentation is optional but may be requested by your committee. J.D./M.P.S. students must submit a [Petition for Transfer of Credit](#) form and indicate the law courses to be transferred from the student’s Law record to his or her Graduate Record. A maximum of 6 law credits are allowed for transfer. J.D./M.P.S. students should select courses relevant to his or her RSMAS area of concentration.

17. **Graduation** – Students must be registered for at least 1 graduate-level credit during the semester in which they plan to graduate. Also, all students must have at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA to graduate from the MPS program. All M.P.S. students, including joint J.D./M.P.S. students, must *Apply to Graduate* via CaneLink during the semester in which they plan to graduate; summer graduates must apply for graduation during the Spring semester. Application deadlines for graduation are available on the [Academic Calendar](#). If you applied to graduate, and then elected to defer graduation to a future term, you must apply for graduation again, this time during the term in which you plan to graduate. Students who applied for Spring graduation but chose to defer to Summer graduation must notify the MPS Office via email. J.D./M.P.S. students can only apply to graduate from Law School via CaneLink. J.D./M.P.S. students must email the MPS office of his or her intent to graduate and indicate the semester for graduation. All MPS students, regardless of Track, must follow the deadlines and instructions listed on the *MPS Graduation Checklist* for successful clearance by the MPS Office. Students who fail to complete the requirements listed on the MPS Graduation Checklist will not be cleared for graduation. Clearance delays will delay the release of a student’s degree/diploma.

Graduation clearance process: Students must first receive clearance from the MPS Office. Upon confirmation of clearance, the MPS Office notifies the Graduate School to review your records (e.g. admissions documents, grades, GPA, completion of online courses, etc.). If and when the Graduate School approves a student for clearance, their office will notify the Office of the University Registrar to post a student's degree and release the diploma.

18. **Merit-Based Tuition Waivers** - We currently offer a 3-credit or 6-credit merit-based tuition waiver. The minimum eligibility requirements for a 3-credit waiver is 297 on the GRE (a combined total score on the Verbal and Quantitative sections only), and a cumulative U.S. Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) of 3.0. The minimum eligibility requirement for a 6-credit waiver is 308 on the GRE (a combined total score on the Verbal and Quantitative sections only) and a cumulative U.S. Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) of 3.3. Applicants are still required to complete the Analytical Writing section of the GRE, however only the Verbal and Quantitative scores will be considered and calculated for tuition waiver purposes.

Fall applicants and newly-accepted students for fall (not current students) may retake the GRE and submit an updated/higher score by July 1st for U.S. citizens/permanent residents, and June 1st for international applicants. The deadline for spring applications and newly-accepted students is November 15th for U.S. citizens/permanent residents, and October 31st for international spring applicants. We recommend submitting updated scores to the MPS Office after you've achieved your personal best. The MPS Office will consider the highest score listed on the GRE test report. GRE scores are valid up to 5 years from test date. Prospective applicants who submit an application before completion of the GRE are still eligible for waiver consideration, upon receipt of GRE scores by the MPS Office. Applicants and newly-accepted students (not current students) may submit "unofficial" GRE scores by downloading test scores from the ETS website while "official" records arrive in the mail. Send unofficial scores to mps@rsmas.miami.edu if you are unable to submit scores with your application. GRE scores are considered "official" if they are mailed directly to MPS from ETS. If a merit-based tuition waiver is awarded, an applicant will be notified upon acceptance. Those eligible to receive merit-based tuition waivers are not required to apply, accept or reject the waiver; waivers are applied upon course registration. 3-credit waivers are applied to a student's first semester in the MPS program. 6-credit waivers are divided equally and distributed equally across a student's first two semesters in the MPS program (Fall & Spring semesters). Recipients of the 6-credit waiver will receive 3 credits applicable to his or her 1st semester in MPS; the remaining 3 credits will be applied to student's 2nd semester in the MPS program.

19. **MPS Conditional Acceptance:** Two types of conditional acceptances. The first type of condition is applied to student's acceptance due to missing application documents (e.g. missing official transcript, official test scores, letter of recommendation, etc.) and does not have a credit-maximum limit. The second type of conditional-acceptance is applied to student's acceptance due to low GPA, GRE, or lack of relevant undergraduate coursework. A maximum of 9-class credits is allowed during a student's 1st semester of enrollment. Upon successful completion of the first semester and review of the student's file, the student may be eligible to register for more than 9 credits for the following semester. Non-successful completion of the first enrolled semester will result in a mandatory meeting with the MPS Director and possible termination from the MPS Program. Successful completion of the first enrolled semester includes:

- Minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA
 - No I (Incomplete), NG (No Grade), C- grade, and any grades below a C- on Fall 2018 transcript.
 - Completion of all items listed on your *Certificate of Admission* and confirmation of receipt by the MPS Office.
 - Completion of *GRD 600 - Preventing Sexual Harassment* also known as “Campus Clarity”
 - Completion of both sections of *RSM 700 – Research Ethics*
20. **Low G.P.A. for Current MPS Students** - Non-successful completion of any enrolled semester will result in a mandatory meeting with the MPS Director and placement on academic probation. Successful completion of an enrolled semester includes:
- Minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA
 - No I (Incomplete), NG (No Grade), C- grade, and any grades below a C- on Fall 2018 transcript.
 - Completion of all items listed on your *Certificate of Admission* and confirmation of receipt by the MPS Office.
 - Completion of *GRD 600 - Preventing Sexual Harassment* also known as “Campus Clarity”
 - Completion of both sections of *RSM 700 – Research Ethics*
21. **Leave of Absence** – A student may stop the clock on their degree if there is good reason. A formal request must be submitted via the Graduate School’s [*Petition for Leave of Absence*](#) form. A Leave of Absence officially stops the time to completion of the degree. A graduate student wishing to take a leave of absence from a graduate program, and return at a later date, must complete the *Petition for Leave of Absence* form. Prior to submission of the leave of absence form, the student must meet with and notify each course instructor as well as the MPS Directors of his or her intent to pause from graduate studies. The MPS Office will confirm with each faculty that a meeting was performed. The MPS Office will inform the student on the steps necessary to commence graduate studies for the MPS program and the deadlines for any required processes (e.g. Application for Readmission to Graduate School, Last Day to Register for Classes, deadline to change Incomplete grades, etc.).
22. **Application for Readmission to the Graduate School** - Graduate students who have not been continuously enrolled must request readmission. Students returning from a Leave of Absence must request readmission. The student must contact the appropriate program office well in advance of registration. Please note that if additional college work has been completed elsewhere since the last enrollment at the University of Miami, an official transcript of this coursework will be required. Recency of credit hour rules will apply. A graduate student wishing to be readmitted to a graduate program must complete the [*Application for Readmission to the Graduate School*](#) form. Deadlines for readmission are listed on the [*Academic Calendar*](#).

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