

## **Master of Professional Science Student Handbook** **(2020-2021)**

**Admission** - The MPS program requires a minimum \*[GRE score of 297](#) (verbal + quantitative only), a minimum U.S. Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0, transcripts from all colleges/universities attended, three letters of recommendation, and a statement of purpose (“personal statement”) for graduate program consideration. Applicants must complete the analytical writing portion of the GRE, but only the verbal and quantitative scores will be considered for MPS tuition waivers. \*The GRE is waived for fall 2020 and spring 2021 admission due to COVID-19. However, GRE scores are used as one criterion for [merit-based tuition waivers](#).

If applicable, the [TOEFL, IELTS, or Duolingo English Test](#) may be required for [non-native English speakers](#) or those who received undergraduate degree(s) from a non-US institution.

Dual-degree applicants (JD/MPS), must submit apply to UM’s Law School and Graduate School, and submit an official LSAT report recommendation in addition the documents listed above.

All graduate applicants who have received degrees or are currently enrolled in a degree-seeking program from a college or university outside the United States must request a course-by-course evaluation with degree equivalency and U.S. Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation. Applicants must request that the evaluation report and copy of all the official documents used in the evaluation are sent directly from [one of the three approved evaluation services](#) to the MPS Office [mgs@rsmas.miami.edu](mailto:mgs@rsmas.miami.edu). An updated evaluation report, showing final degree(s), grades, and GPA, must be submitted to the MPS Office once this information posts to your transcripts.

Unofficial academic records are accepted for review purposes only and to expedite this process (excludes transcripts from non-U.S. institutions). If an offer of admission is made, it will be contingent upon receipt of all official records. Applicants who require an [F-1 student visa](#) during their time in the MPS program, must submit the following to commence the [Form I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status](#) application process at UM: passport, [Statement of Financial Responsibility](#) (SFR) and corresponding [bank letter](#), copy of current U.S. visa, Permanent Resident Card, and/or Employment Authorization card, and copy of the [I-94 U.S. travel record](#) (if applicable).

**Track Prerequisites** – The prerequisites for MPS tracks are determined by each RSMAS department as highlighted below.

### **Marine Biology and Ecology (MBE) Tracks**

- Tropical Marine Ecosystem Management (TME)
- Marine Mammal Science (MMS)

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 (AQU)
- Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
- Exploration Science (ESC)
- Fisheries Management and Conservation (FMC)
- \*Juris Doctor/Master of Professional Science (JD/MPS)
- Marine Conservation (MCO)
- \*\*Underwater Archaeology (UARCH or UAR or UWA)

#### 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.)

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

\* Prospective J.D./MPS applicants must apply to each school separately (Law + Graduate

School for RSMAS). Must be accepted to UM's School of Law first. JD/MPS applicants must submit an official LSAT report in addition to GRE scores.

\*\*See Dr. Frederick "Fritz" Hanselmann's Underwater Archaeology [Track Guide](#) for additional requirements.

### **Atmospheric Sciences (ATM) Tracks**

- Broadcast Meteorology (BME)

#### Pre-requisites:

1. Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) or Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)
2. One year of Calculus and a minimum of 12 credits in natural science strongly recommended.

- Climate and Society (CS); formerly Weather, Climate & Society
- Weather Forecasting (WFC)

Pre-requisites (Climate & Society, Weather Forecasting)

1. Undergraduate degree in Meteorology or closely related field (e.g. Math, Physics, Geosciences)

**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.

**MPS Conditional Acceptance:** Two types of conditional acceptances. The first type of condition is applied to student's acceptance due to missing application documents (i.e. 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. Students who received the 2<sup>nd</sup> type of conditional acceptance, are allowed to enrolled in a maximum of 9-class credits for their 1st semester in the MPS program. 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), IP (In Progress) grades; no grade below a C- on Fall 2019 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*
- Completion of both sections of *RSM 700 – Research Ethics*

**Managing UM Email** – MPS students are responsible for regularly managing their UM email inbox(es). Upon confirmation of attendance to UM, all MPS students are added to various UM and RSMAS mailing lists (including the *MPS Student Mailing List*). If a student believes he/she is not on a RSMAS mailing list, he/she must notify the MPS Office immediately (in person or via email); the MPS Office will contact [RSMAS Computing Facility](#) (RCF) on the student’s behalf. Email is the primary method of communication between the MPS Office and its students during their time in the MPS program and even post-graduation. MPS students must review messages sent by the MPS Office and/or its staff. Reviewing messages from other RSMAS mailing lists, such as *Info RSMAS* [info@lists.rsmas.miami.edu](mailto:info@lists.rsmas.miami.edu), is not required but strongly encouraged. Please be advised, the Dean of RSMAS, Dr. Roni Avissar, also receives messages distributed via select mailing lists, such as *Info RSMAS*; therefore, students should be mindful of the information he/she sends via these mailing lists.

**Course Registration, Credit Requirements, & Holds** - The MPS Office performs all course registration processes for MPS students (i.e. adding/dropping/adjusting course/credits). MPS students are not allowed to self-register and/or drop a course(s) on their own, unless approved ahead of time in writing by the MPS Office. Written approval from a student’s Advisor is required for adding/dropping required (core/compulsory) classes. Advisor approval is not required for registration or adjustment of internship credits; however, a student’s committee must be aware (in writing) of your intent to enroll in/extend/complete internship credits during your time in the MPS program.

A minimum of 30 graduate-level credits are required for master’s degree (graduation). Of those, a minimum of 24 credits must be lecture-based credits and a minimum 2 credits must be internship credits. The remaining 4 credits may be used for lecture-based and/or internship credits. All students are required to take the course and \*internship credits outlined below:

### **24-28 graduate lecture-based credits**

All students are required to complete 24 – 28 lecture-based credits. Within each track, there are compulsory classes and electives. Coursework is multi-disciplinary and thus will be accepted from multiple RSMAS departments. Graduate courses outside of RSMAS must be approved ahead of time by the student’s advisor and MPS Senior Director.

### **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 for at least 1 internship credit per semester in which he or she is involved with the internship project; this includes any time dedicated to: research,

field/lab work, collection/analysis of data, writing reports/revisions, oral presentation (defense), and submission of final internship forms.

Students are responsible for regularly checking their CaneLink accounts to confirm they are enrolled in the appropriate course(s) and credits each semester. Students must review their course(s)/credits in CaneLink after each change in schedule (courses and/or credits). If a student believes there is an error, he/she must notify the MPS Office immediately via email. Students are responsible for negligence.

***Petition for Transfer of Credit*** - A graduate student wishing to transfer in graduate credits taken at another institution must complete the Petition for Transfer of Credit form:

### **COMPLETE THE PETITION FOR TRANSFER OF CREDIT**

The MPS office requires receipt of official transcript(s) from the outside institution as well as a course syllabus for review by the student's academic advisor and the MPS Sr. Director. If approved, the student may submit a formal petition via the link above to the Graduate School. If approved by the Graduate School, the credits will transfer and apply to the student's master's degree.

*Graduate School Student Handbook* (pg. 5) Upon recommendation of the major program and the approval of the Graduate School, a maximum of 6 credit hours of graduate credit hour, with grades of B or above, may be transferred from another accredited graduate institution, in partial satisfaction of a master's degree requiring less than 36 credit hours. 9 credit hours of graduate credit hour may be approved for transfer to a degree program requiring 36 credit hours or more. Work taken more than six years prior to transfer will not be accepted. All work transferred is subject to examination by the program. Any student wishing to transfer credit hour must first be admitted to a graduate program at the University of Miami. The satisfaction of the requirements of another university does not relieve the student from the University of Miami's requirements. An official transcript of work to be transferred must be on file in the Graduate Office. Credit hours that pertain to or have been counted toward another degree cannot be transferred. Students enrolled in the Master of Business Administration program are not eligible for credit hour transfers. Exceptions must be approved by the dean of the Graduate School. No transferred credit hours are calculated into the University of Miami GPA.

**Required Online Courses - Research Ethics (RSM 700)**: Must be completed during a student's first semester in the MPS program. This online, 0-credit course is offered via the [CITI Program](#) website (not Blackboard). At the start of each term (except summer), the MPS Office will register all new/incoming MPS students, provide instructions for log-in and a deadline for completion. Students must successfully pass two sections: 1 disciplinary background within the *Responsible Conduct of Research* course series (i.e. Physical Sciences) and 2. the Plagiarism option. 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 \(GRD 600\)](#)**: Must be completed during a student's first semester in the MPS program. This online, 0-credit course is offered via the 3<sup>rd</sup> party platform, [EverFi](#). This course is administered by the [Graduate School](#), not the MPS Office; therefore, the Graduate School registers all students, provides log-in instructions, and deadlines for completion. No grade is given for this course, but successful completion is a requirement for graduation.

**Failure to complete the above courses (*RSM 700 + GRD 600*) will block the MPS Office from registering the student for the following semester and ultimately graduation.**

The [Graduate School Student Handbook](#) provides guidelines and policies for, but not limited to:

- Time to Completion (pg.3)
- Full-time Study (pg.4)
- Recency/Validation for Over-Aged Credits (pg. 4)
- Graduate Grades & Quality Points (pg. 6)
- Graduate Repeat Rule (pg. 8)
- Continuous Enrollment (pg. 11)
  - Students who fail to maintain continuous enrollment during the Fall and Spring semesters, must submit an [Application for Readmission to the Graduate School](#).
  - Students returning from a [Leave of Absence](#) must request readmission. The student must contact the MPS Office well in advance of registration for the intended return term. 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. Deadlines for readmission are listed on the [Academic Calendar](#).
  
- Ethics, Student Rights & Responsibilities (pg. 13)
- Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students (pg. 14)
- Requirements for Commencement [“graduation?”] (pg. 14)

Review the [Graduate School Student Handbook](#) for a complete list of rules.

**Holds in CaneLink**- Students are responsible for regularly checking their CaneLink account for any holds. *Academic Advising* holds are administered by the MPS Office and remain on a student's account until graduation. This type of hold blocks enrollment activity only (adding, dropping courses/credits), and is intended to prevent unauthorized changes to a student's schedule; changes that could affect a student's tuition bill and/or

full-time/part-time student status. Only *Academic Advising* holds should remain on your account during your time in the MPS program. All other holds are applied by offices outside of MPS and may affect other student services (i.e. blocks student access to transcripts, blocks the release of diploma, etc.). Students must contact the corresponding office listed in CaneLink to remove the hold(s). Failure to remove holds administered from offices outside of MPS could block the MPS Office from any enrollment activity on your behalf (adding, dropping courses/credits), including readmission to the graduate school, and graduation. Visit the [CaneLink Student FAQs website](#) to see if you have a hold and review details related to that hold.

**Monthly Student Meetings** – Students are required to attend monthly MPS student meetings (“pizza meetings”) via Zoom during their 1<sup>st</sup> two semesters in the MPS program (Fall & Spring only). Meetings are held during toward the end of the month (unless noted otherwise by the MPS Office). Meetings are held after most RSMAS graduate classes have ended for the day; exact dates/times/location will be provided by the MPS Office. Zoom meetings may be recorded. The MPS Office will send email reminders to all students about monthly student meetings. The week after the meeting, the MPS Office will distribute meeting notes to all students (new/current/about to graduate) via email (MPS student mailing list).

At times, select courses and/or events may interfere with a student’s ability to attend a monthly student meeting. If a student cannot attend a meeting, he/she must notify the MPS Office ahead of time (via email) and provide a reason for the absence. Students are still responsible for reviewing/completing any materials discussed during these meetings, even if the student did not attend that month’s meetings.

**Fall 2020 dates:** Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>, and Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> (no meeting in December)  
**Spring 2021 dates:** To Be Announced (no meeting in May)

**Writing Seminar** - Mandatory attendance is required at 1 of 2 writing seminars hosted by the MPS office. Writing seminars are hosted each fall and spring term (none available for summer). MPS leadership will provide guidance on how to write your internship’s proposal and final report. Staff will also discuss: internship forms, MPS Checklists, oral presentations, credit distribution (lecture vs internship credits), and answer FAQs. Date/times for writing seminar will be announced later in the semester via the MPS student email list. Fall 2020’s writing seminar will be virtual (i.e. Zoom); method of delivery for spring 2021 to be determined.

**MPS Checklists** – The MPS *Checklist* is an itemized document for students to track requirements during their time in the MPS program. Each semester (Fall, Spring & Summer) has its own Checklist, each containing the same information, with the exception of Summer term: there are no Monthly Student Meetings, Presentation Symposium, or commencement ceremonies for the summer term. Checklists contain different due dates for select items such as the deadline for a student’s 1<sup>st</sup> draft of Report, final draft of Report, deadline to submit *Certificate of Approval* and *Clearance Form*, deadline to apply for graduation, etc. All Checklists, including Summer, contain the same deadlines

for a student's Comprehensive Exam, *Internship Commitment Form*, *Appointment to Student's Committee* form, and proposal. Checklists are a helpful reminder for students to complete the following:

- *RSM 700 Research Ethics*
- *GRD 600 Preventing Sexual Harassment*
- Comprehensive Exams
- *Internship Commitment Form*
- *Appointment to Student's Committee Form*
- Internship's Proposal
- 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of internship Report
- Final draft of Internship Report
- Oral Presentation
- *Certificate of Approval*
- *Clearance Form*
- Apply for Graduation/Graduation Clearance
- Checking your Transcript (credits/grades)
- Clearing Holds

Checklists are available on the [MPS website](#), and on the external hard drive given to students during his/her first semester in MPS.

**Comprehensive Examination** – Students must respond to and successfully pass 4 comprehensive exams during his or her time in residence. Typically, students complete all comprehensive exams during his or her first two semesters in the MPS program (i.e. fall, spring). Course instructors have final approval if a student elects to take a comprehensive exam during a semester other than the semester in which the student was enrolled in that course. Students decide how he/she wants to distribute these exams during their time in MPS (i.e. take 3 exams in Fall, 1 in the Spring - OR- take 2 in the Fall, 2 in the Spring, etc.). Comprehensive exams are offered after a course's final exam. Students select the course(s) for which he/she would like to take the comprehensive exam, but not all courses qualify (i.e. *RSM 700 Research Ethics* does not qualify). If you are unsure if your course qualifies, please contact the MPS Sr. Director. If your course instructor is unfamiliar with MPS comprehensive exam process, please notify the MPS Sr. Director; the Director will reach out to your course instructor, providing guidelines and rules.

Once a student requests to take the comprehensive exam for a course, the student is committed to this request and must take that exam; the student cannot rescind this request. The comprehensive exam will be \*written and will be based on core course content. Your overall evaluation for all 4 comprehensive exams is cumulative. The MPS Senior 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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. If you are missing any comprehensive exams, you will not receive a final report indicating your overall

cumulative result. Contact the MPS Director via email if you have completed and passed 4 comprehensive exams but have not received your final report. Your email must indicate the course name (i.e. *Advanced Weather Forecasting*), semester completed (i.e. *Spring 2018*), and course instructor name (i.e. Dr. John Smith).

\*Students who require testing accommodations, must notify the MPS Office and the [Office of Disability Services](#) ahead of time and in writing of their needs.

**Academic Advisor and Committee Chair** - Students will be assigned an Academic Advisor during their first semester in residence (reference *Acceptance Packet*). 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 MPS 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 from the student's corresponding [RSMAS department](#) (ATM, MBE, MES, OCE). 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 from the corresponding RSMAS department 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.

**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 ahead of time by the MPS Associate Dean and/or Program Director. The *Appointment to Student's Committee* form solidifies the committee and is due 1 week after starting an internship. Copies of this form are available on the [MPS website](#) and the external hard drive given to students during his/her first semester in MPS.

**Before Commencing an Internship** - Students must successfully complete the requirements listed below before starting an internship:

- Complete at least \*12 graduate-level lecture-based credits with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0.
- Removal all I (*Incomplete*) and NG (*No Grades*) grades.

- All grades below a C- must be addressed; a mandatory meeting with the course instructor and the MPS Sr. Director is required.
- Successful completion of *RSM 700 Research Ethics* and *GRD 600 Preventing Sexual Harassment*
- Successful completion all requirements listed on student's *Certificate of Admission*
- Approval from Academic Advisor and/or Committee Chair, and the MPS Sr. Director

\*Exceptions to this must be approved ahead time by the student's Academic Advisor and/or Committee Chair as well as the MPS Sr. Director.

**Internship** - At the start of the internship, or before, students must meet with their Chair and internship supervisor to draft a basic outline of the student's duties within the internship and the proposed project. This 1-page outline summarizes the student's proposed project/duties, highlighting the timeline, goals, expectations, and objectives of the internship. Students must attach the summary to the *Internship Commitment Form* (also known as the *Internship Agreement Form*); form and summary are due to the MPS Office no later than 1 week after the start of the internship. Copies of the *Internship Commitment Form* are available on the [MPS website](#) and the external hard drive given to students during his/her first semester in MPS.

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 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 1 week 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 [MPS website](#) and the external hard drive given to students during his/her first semester in MPS.

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.

**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 is accepted) submitted via e-mail to the M.P.S. Office

The internship report template and guidelines are available on the [MPS website](#) and the external hard drive given to students on RSMAS New Student Orientation day. Students must follow the *MPS Checklist* for important deadlines, how to submit related internship documents, and more. Follow the *Checklist* corresponding to the semester in which you plan to graduate (i.e. Graduating Fall 2020? Follow the directions and deadlines listed on the *Fall 2020 Checklist*).

**Oral Presentation** – A strict requirement for the completion of the MPS degree is an oral presentation. Oral presentations are 30 minutes maximum (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. [Zoom](#), [Skype](#), [GoToMeeting](#), etc.). All students must present their project at the MPS Presentation Symposium (at the RSMAS campus) during the semester in which they intend to graduate. The dates of this event are set at the beginning of each term (Fall and Spring only), and will be posted on the *MPS Checklists*. The Checklist also contains details on what information each student must submit to the MPS Office prior to the symposium (i.e. title of project, names/times of committee members, name of host organization, etc.). Exceptions to participation in the symposium must be approved in advance by the MPS Sr. Director and Chair of the student's committee. Students must give 1-month advance notice (in writing) if he/she cannot participate in the symposium. Students who are excused from participation in the MPS Presentation Symposium are still required to host an oral presentation for all members of his/her committee. Students who cannot participate in symposium, must follow the directions and deadlines listed on the Checklist. Hosting an oral presentation and submitting its visual content (e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi, PDF) to the MPS Office is a requirement for graduation for all students (no exceptions). No MPS Presentation Symposium is offered during the summer term.

**JD/MPS Students** – The graduation requirements for students enrolled in the joint

JD/MPS program differ from students enrolled in the MPS program alone. Students in the joint degree program are only required to complete 24 “graduate” credits (typically comprised of 24 lecture-based credits and 0 internship credits). JD/MPS students must [Petition for Transfer of Credit](#) through the Graduate School and indicate the Law courses to be transferred from the student’s Law record to his/her Graduate record. A maximum of 6 law credits are allowed for transfer. JD/MPS students should select courses relevant to his/her RSMAS area of concentration. If/when the Law courses have been approved by the Graduate School, then the Law courses will post to student’s graduate record. The combination of Graduate courses plus Law courses should equal 30 total credits. 30 credits are required for a master’s degree at UM.

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, JD/MPS students are expected to form a committee and submit the *Appointment to Student’s Committee* form, take and pass Comprehensive Exams, 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. JD/MPS students must include a signed title sheet (following the report template) with his/her final report; follow the directions and deadlines on the MPS Checklist. JD/MPS students are exempt from submitting the *Internship Commitment Form*, an internship Proposal, and the oral presentation is optional but may be requested by your committee

**Professional Meetings** – Though not mandatory, MPS students are strongly encouraged to attend a scientific conference during their academic residency at RSMAS; attendance must be approved by Academic Advisor and/or Chair of Committee.

**Academic Probation** - Non-successful completion of any of the items listed above by the deadlines listed in this handbook and/or the MPS Checklist will result in a mandatory meeting with the MPS Director and placement on academic probation. An assessment of the student’s progress in MPS program, areas of concern, and a potential plan for completion (if approved) will be addressed.

**MPS vs. MS 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 “class” 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.

**Transfer from MPS to Self-funded MS** – Students interested in transferring from the MPS program to the M.S. program must be accepted by a member of the graduate faculty, obtain pre-approval from the Associate Dean of all graduate studies at RSMAS ([Dr. Brian Soden](#)), and all requests for transfer must be made PRIOR to the start of the second semester in residence at RSMAS. Transfers from MPS to self-funded MS will not be considered after students have completed more than 15 credits of graduate coursework.

Prior to approval, 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 MS 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 MS Program Director must review the plan, and transfer to the MS program will be subject to their approval of the proposed research. When/if approved, the Faculty Advisor, Program Director (MPS & MS), and Associate Dean must sign the *Program Transfer Form for MPS to Self-Funded MS (MS-1)* for submission to the Graduate Studies and MPS offices. Copies of this form are available via the MPS Office.

**Application for Undergraduate to Take a Graduate Course** - [Click here](#) to download the form. 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 email the completed form and a completed [drop/add form](#) to the Graduate School, at [gradforms@miami.edu](mailto:gradforms@miami.edu), for final approval. Once the form is signed by the Graduate School representative, the student will receive it signed via email. The student then must send that form and the associated drop/add form to Canes Central, at [canescentral@miami.edu](mailto:canescentral@miami.edu), for processing.

\*For forms on fellowships and grants, please visit the [Financial Aid and Funding Opportunities](#) section under the *Costs & Funding* tab.

**Graduation** – Students must be registered for at least 1 graduate-level credit for the semester in which they plan to graduate. Students must [apply to graduate \(via CaneLink\)](#) during the semester in which they plan to graduate; apply by the dates listed on the [Academic Calendar](#) (i.e. *Application for Graduations Opens - Last Day to Apply for Graduation*). Summer graduates must apply for graduation during the Spring semester. You must apply to graduate again even if you previously applied to graduate for a past semester and decided to defer graduation. Email the MPS Office if you're unable to apply to graduate via CaneLink.

(**JD/MPS**) students must notify the MPS office via email of his/her intent to graduate; CaneLink will only allow you to apply for graduation for law school, not graduate school. Email [mps@rsmas.miami.edu](mailto:mps@rsmas.miami.edu) by the deadlines listed on the [Academic Calendar](#) (i.e. *Application for Graduations Opens - Last Day to Apply for Graduation*).

(**All Students**) Once you apply to graduate, contact the MPS Office to schedule an appointment to review your student file. After reviewing the student's file, the MPS Office will email each student with a list of missing items, past due items, incomplete items, review your credits/grades, and identify any negative holds (i.e. *Past Due Bill, Exit Interview*, etc.). The MPS Checklist contains a complete list of items to review/complete for graduation clearance. Students who apply for graduation but fail to complete the requirements by the deadlines listed on the MPS Checklist will not be cleared to graduate. Clearance delays will delay the release of a student's degree/diploma.

**Checking Your Transcript & Graduation Clearance:** Students should check his/her

transcript regularly. Those who plan to graduate require the following:

- Minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA by final semester.
- Minimum 30 credits will be “Earned” by completion of final semester of graduate program. All credits are listed as “Attempted” until a grade is posted. Credits are not applied to a semester until a grade posts to CaneLink.
  - **JD/MPS** students are required to complete a minimum of 24 “graduate” credits and must submit a [\*Petition for Transfer of Credit\*](#) form to the Graduate School in order to transfer law credits to his or her graduate record at RSMAS. A maximum of 6 Law School credits are allowed for transfer to MPS. JD/MPS students must earn and show 30 credits total on his/her *graduate* school transcript (24 grad + 6 law).
- Successful completion of *GRD 600 Preventing Sexual Harassment* and *RSM 700 Research Ethics*; the latter with a grade of “S” (Satisfactory).
- All courses listed as 600-level or above (i.e. *MES 660*, *MBE 805*, etc.); no credit will be given for undergraduate or online courses (i.e. *MES 560*)
- All *MPS Internship* credits appear as “S” (Satisfactory); grades for the current semester will appear as “IP” (In Progress) until the course instructor releases a grade for you in for CaneLink.
- All passing grades. The following grades are not accepted for graduation:
  - Incompletes (I)
  - No-Grades (NG)
  - In Progress (IP)
  - Any grade below a C-
- Completion of all items listed on the MPS Checklist

Students must first receive clearance from the MPS Office. Once student is cleared by the MPS Office, the MPS Office will notify the Graduate School to review your records (i.e. admissions documents, grades, GPA, credits, online courses, etc.). If and when the Graduate School approves a student’s file, their office will notify the Office of the University Registrar to post the student’s degree and release the diploma. On average, the Graduate School requires 3 months (from the date you were cleared by the MPS Office) to review/release your master’s degree.

Participation in the commencement ceremony is not an indication of successful completion of the MPS program, nor does it indicate your degree will be awarded by the Graduate School. The commencement ceremony at the Coral Gables and RSMAS campus are celebratory events and do not confirm conferral of your graduate degree.

**Deferring Graduation to a Future Term:** If you suspect that you cannot meet the requirements and deadlines listed on the Checklist by the *Last Day to Apply for Graduation*, email the MPS Office immediately to review your options. Students should be mindful of time commitments and workload (i.e. time needed to analyze data, time needed to complete a draft/final report, etc.). If you believe you cannot meet these deadlines, you should consider delaying graduation to the following semester. When applications for graduation open in CaneLink, students should examine their workload/remaining requirements to assess the best semester for graduation. Consult with

the MPS Office immediately to review your options.

21. **MPS Office Mailing Address**

University of Miami  
RSMAS Campus, Room: SLAB 132, MPS Office  
4600 Rickenbacker Causeway  
Miami, Florida 33149-1031

Email: [mps@rsmas.miami.edu](mailto:mps@rsmas.miami.edu)

Website: <http://mps.rsmas.miami.edu/>

- [Dr. Brian Soden](#), Associate Dean
- [Dr. Evan D'Alessandro](#), Senior Director
- [Kandra Velez](#), Associate Director
- [Jessica Melendez](#), Administrative Assistant
- Athena Van Overschelde, Student-Employee  
[athena.vanoverschelde@rsmas.miami.edu](mailto:athena.vanoverschelde@rsmas.miami.edu)

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