# Masters Programs Student Benchmarks Chart

## Year 1
- Take Core Courses
- Begin research
- **By 2nd Term:** Confirm Major Professor
- **By 2nd Term:** Form Advisory Committee

## Year 2
- Hold your Thesis Proposal Assessment Meeting
- Take electives
- Continue Research & Writing Thesis

## Prepare for Final Semester
- Apply to Graduate on OASIS
- Review ETD Website and Checklist & Attend Workshop
- Register for Commencement (optional)

## Final Semester

<table>
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<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<td>Submit Dissertation Committee*</td>
<td>Target: Two weeks before Sufficiency Meeting</td>
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<td>Sufficiency Meeting &amp; Request for Defense*</td>
<td>Target: At least two weeks prior to defense Forms: Request for Defense; Defense Announcement</td>
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<td>Defense*</td>
<td>Target: Four weeks before the end of the term Forms: Successful Defense; Defense Announcement; Written SACS Evaluations</td>
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<td>Submit Certificate of Approval Packet to OAA</td>
<td>Target: One week after Defense Forms: Certificate of Approval packet</td>
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<td>Final Submission to ETD</td>
<td>Deadline determined by ETD Office and is posted each semester</td>
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*can be completed prior to graduating semester

## Every Semester
- Discuss your funding with your MP & submit funding info to OAA
- Register for courses in advance—avoid $100 late registration fee
- Email committee with an update on your research and drafts
- Check your GPA: Must maintain 3.00 for Good Standing

## Every Year
- Discuss & submit a progress report every October after your first year
- Consider new funding sources and apply (e.g. fellowships, grants, TA)
- Meet with committee
CREDIT REQUIREMENTS (Biological, Chemical, Geological, Physical Concentrations)

- 32 semester credit hours total
  - 12 core class credits - 4 core classes, 3 credit hours per class (Physical, Chemical, Biological and Geological Oceanography). A grade of "B-" or better in each of the core classes is required.
  - 8 elective formal class credits
  - 6 elective research credits
  - 6 thesis credits (OCE 6971)

CREDIT REQUIREMENTS (Marine Resource Assessment Concentration)

- 32 semester credit hours total
  - 12 core class credits - 4 core classes, 3 credit hours per class (Physical, Chemical, Biological and Geological Oceanography). A grade of "B-" or better in each of the core classes is required.
  - 9 MRA concentration credits - 3 of the 4 MRA courses (Population Dynamics, Fish Biology, Dynamics of Marine Ecosystems, Applied Multivariate Statistics)
  - 5 elective research credits
  - 6 thesis credits (OCE 6971)

REQUIRED FORMS

Links to all forms required for the master’s degree program can be found on the CMS Graduate Programs - Forms website. Unless noted otherwise, all completed forms should be returned to the Academic Affairs Office or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

http://www.marine.usf.edu/education/current-students/forms/

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND TIMELINES

1. Permanent Major Advisor Assigned
   Target: Year 1

2. Form Your Thesis Advisory Committee
   Target: Year 2
   - Advisory Committee Appointment Form
   - For non-USF members: Email CV to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to obtain approval.
Committee consists of three (3) people: the major professor and two other members from CMS or an area related to that in which degree is sought. At least one of the additional two members must be from the CMS.

3. Submit Thesis Proposal to Committee Members
   Target: Year 2
   Thesis Proposal – SACS Evaluation Form
   Once your thesis proposal is approved – distribute this form to each of your committee members. Once completed, instruct your major advisor to return the forms to the Academic Affairs Office or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

4. Complete Core Courses
   Target: within 2 years
   - Core courses must be passed with a B- or better grade. Students who earn below a B- must retake the core course. Please note: a B- is 2.66 GPA points. Too many B-grades can bring a GPA below a 3.00 and place a student on probation.

5. Complete Other Formal Courses (as advised by committee)
   Target: Within 2-3 years

6. Review the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Resource Center website
   Target: 1-2 semesters prior to graduation
   http://www.grad.usf.edu/etd-res-main.php

7. Attend the ETD Workshop
   Deadline: 1 semester prior to graduation
   The ETD Workshop is offered on the Tampa Campus and is helpful to attend, but not required. If you cannot attend, students are expected to understand the process by reviewing the ETD website. Visit the ETD Resource Center for dates and details.
   http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD_Req_01_WorkshopsAndSessions.php

8. Electronic Thesis Registration (online)
   Deadline: to be completed prior to the end of the 4th week of classes in the semester of graduation.
   http://www.grad.usf.edu/etd-res-main.php

9. Apply to Graduate
   Deadline: by 4th week of final semester, see Graduation Deadlines for exact date
   Students who plan to graduate must complete and submit their Graduation Application online. Please give yourself an earlier deadline to address any potential obstacles. When you are ready to begin the survey and apply, login into OASIS using your Net ID and self-assigned password, then click on the Student menu and select Apply for Graduation.
   Enroll in minimum of 2 thesis credits during the term of graduation.
10. Submit Thesis to Committee  
Deadline: by the 4th week of the semester you plan to graduate  
☐ Students should send by mail or email a copy of their thesis to their major advisor and committee members giving at least a two-week review period before the Sufficiency Meeting.

11. Sufficiency Meeting  
Target: Usually the semester you plan to graduate, the meeting must occur at least two weeks before you defend.  
Verify with your committee that you are ready to defend at the sufficiency meeting. Work with your committee members to determine a time and date for your defense. Once your date is established, find and schedule a facility where the defense will be held. Please work with Academic Affairs Administrator to schedule rooms in KRC and MSL, and the Karen A. Steidinger Auditorium. The defense date must be set at least two weeks after the Sufficiency Meeting.

Request for Master's Thesis Defense Form  
Due: at least two weeks BEFORE your defense  
Obtain the necessary signatures from major professor, committee members and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Note: The signatures of your committee members indicate that they have read the dissertation and the student is ready to defend.

Create a Defense Announcement  
Due: two weeks BEFORE to your defense.  
- Templates are available on the CMS Forms website. Provide a copy of your defense announcement to the Academic Affairs office. The Academic Affairs office will post your defense announcement on the bulletin board outside of MSL 210C, send a copy to the Office of Graduate Studies in Tampa, and will also send an email notice to users@marine.usf.edu announcing your defense. You are responsible for posting your defense announcement around our buildings at least 1 week prior to the defense in at least 6 public locations (for example 3 in KRC and 3 in MSL). Additionally you can email the announcement to any interested parties.
12. Thesis Defense

- All Committee members should be present in person or remotely. Note, the major advisor is required to be physically present the final defense.
- Generally 30-45 minutes of presentation (discuss length with your advisor), followed by questions from the general audience, a short break, then questions from the committee, and then a final deliberation and vote by only the committee.
- Majority vote is needed for passing

**Successful Defense Form**
**Deadline:** day of your defense
- Print and bring to your defense. Obtain signatures of all committee members and submit completed form to the Academic Affairs office.

**Thesis Defense & Thesis Written – SACS Evaluation Forms**
**Deadline:** day of your defense
- Print and bring a copy for each committee member. To be completed by each committee directly after defense and submitted to the Academic Affairs office. One is for the written thesis and the other is for the oral defense.

13. Electronic Thesis Submission

**Target:** no later than the final submission deadline posted on the Office of Graduate Studies web site

Our College has a special arrangement with the Office of Graduate Studies so you do NOT have to drive to Tampa to submit your forms, instead you will deliver all signed documents directly to Academic Affairs Office on or before the posted deadline by 3 pm. The final submission process involves uploading your final written thesis to the ProQuest website, completing surveys, and hand delivering paper forms in person to the Academic Affairs Office.

Please refer to the ETD Resource Center for detailed instructions, required forms and deadlines. [http://www.grad.usf.edu/etd-res-main.php](http://www.grad.usf.edu/etd-res-main.php)

**The Certificate of Approval Form** (two pages)

**Plagiarism Check Summary Page – completed by Major Professors**

**SACS Evaluation Forms** (CMS website)

**Deadline:** after committee approves the final manuscript

To be completed by each committee and submitted to the Academic Affairs office.

14. Commencement

Students must register if they wish to participate in the graduation ceremony. College of Marine Science students participate in the Tampa Ceremony (not St. Pete), below is a link to Tampa campus registration and ceremony information.

[http://usfweb2.usf.edu/commencement/check-list.asp](http://usfweb2.usf.edu/commencement/check-list.asp)