

Master of Science-Oceanography MS

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose

Institutional Mission Reference

The Oceanography M.S. program offers graduate students a high quality degree program in oceanography that meets national standards of excellence. Program faculty are committed to quality teaching and the discovery of new knowledge. The Oceanography M.S. Program supports the University's mission of providing advanced professional education for the Hampton Roads area and the Commonwealth.

Institutional Goal(s) Supported

The Department of Ocean, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences supports the University mission through its efforts to seek new knowledge and to use all knowledge toward the solution of societal problems as well as to disseminate this knowledge, through the venues of teaching and service, to the public in the effort to further their understanding and appreciation of the physical world in which they live and the complexity of local to global problems which confront humanity.

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes, Methods for Assessment, Criteria for Success, Assessment Results, and Use of Results

Intended Outcome 1

Students will acquire basic knowledge in the four sub-disciplines of oceanography (physical, chemical, biological and geological oceanography).

Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success: All students must achieve a "B" (3.0) average or better in the four core courses (OCEN 604, 610, 620 and 640). 75% (or more) of students will achieve this GPA without having to repeat any of the core courses.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 1: Most of the students have completed the core courses with a 3.0 average. Only a few (2) will have to repeat a course.

Intended Outcome 2

Students will effectively communicate scientific information through writing.

Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: A student taking the thesis option must successfully complete a written master's thesis that is approved by their thesis committee.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 2: Students continue to successfully write and defend their thesis.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: A student taking the non-thesis option must pass a written comprehensive examination (administered by the GPD and four other department faculty) testing breadth of knowledge in oceanography.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 2: Non-thesis students generally pass the written comprehensive examination on their first attempt.

Intended Outcome 3

Students will effectively synthesize and communicate scientific information orally.

Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: A student taking the non-thesis option must successfully complete OCEN 691 (seminar).

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 3: Non-thesis students continue to successfully give presentations in OCEN 691.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: A student taking the thesis option must successfully present their masters thesis research in a public thesis defense.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 3: Students continue to take OCEN 691 to fulfill their requirements.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: Oceanography has not had a thesis presentation since the initial report. Most students move to the Ph.D. program before completion of the thesis. With tuition issues this seems to be the trend until the rules change.

Intended Outcome 4

Students must develop breadth of knowledge in oceanography.

Method for Assessing Outcome 4 and Criterion for Success: A student taking the non-thesis option must pass a written comprehensive examination (administered by the GPD and four other department faculty). 90% (or more) of students will pass this examination on their first attempt (only two attempts are allowed).

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 4: Non-thesis students generally pass the written comprehensive examination on their first attempt.