

Ocean and Earth Sciences Graduate Student Guide

Most of the information provided herein is available in greater detail within the Old Dominion University [Ocean and Earth Sciences Department Graduate Program Handbook](#).

All completed forms must be submitted to the OES Graduate Program Director (GPD).

Requirements for M.S. & Ph.D. Students

You are expected to attend all seminars, often Thursday 3-4 p.m. during both Fall and Spring Semesters. You may register for the seminar as a 1 credit course each semester (OEAS 791).

Students are required to complete a minimum number of ship/field days during their degree program: 5 days for M.S. students and 10 days for Ph.D. students. Field trips may also count toward this requirement. Completed ship/field days should be documented using the [Shiptime Form](#).

To be considered “full time” and receive a tuition waiver, you must be registered for 9 credits. The waiver will not cover more than 9 credits without the Chair’s permission (for PhD students the 9 credit requirement changes after advancement to Candidacy, see below).

The expectations for your teaching/research assistantship will be equivalent to ~20 hours per week. These expectations will be explained in a G9 form at the start of the semester, and your performance will be evaluated by a supervisor with a G10 form at the end of the assistantship.

M.S. Students

Year 1

Coursework: Students should plan to take the four core courses (plus MATLAB) in their first year. In select instances, a research advisor may recommend that a student take an infrequently offered elective rather than a core course.

Fall:

- OEAS 604 Introduction to Physical Oceanography
- OEAS 640 Advanced Biological Oceanography
- OEAS 506 MATLAB

Spring:

- OEAS 610 Advanced Chemical Oceanography
- OEAS 620 Advanced Geological Sciences

Summer:

- OEAS 698 Research: Research guided by your research advisor. Master's thesis students may apply up to 6 credits towards their degree. Master's non-thesis students may apply up to 3 credits of OES 698 toward their degree.

Master's Thesis Committee (YEAR 1): During YEAR #1, form a committee of 3-4 members, including your primary advisor(s), to provide guidance throughout your research. Committee members should be selected based on their ability to contribute relevant expertise to your research and training. One committee member may be from outside OES or ODU.

If a committee member is from outside ODU, they must be certified for Graduate Instruction before serving on the committee. To initiate this process, the GPD will need to certify them – email the GPD for more details. [Master's Level M1 Form](#) is associated with this. You are strongly encouraged to meet with your committee every semester, but certainly at least once per academic year.

Thesis Prospectus (YEAR 1/2): The expectations for a thesis prospectus will be established by the student's MS thesis committee. Generally, this is meant to be an in-depth research proposal of your proposed thesis research. It should involve intensely reading and citing work from literature to develop a plan of methods and introduction to foundational concepts. The [Master's Level M2 Form](#) for thesis prospectus is associated with this task.

Year 2

Comprehensive Exams (YEAR 2): For non-thesis master's students the comprehensive exam typically occurs during your 3rd semester, after completing all 4 core classes (OEAS 604, 610, 620, 640). The [Master's Level M2 Form](#) for the comprehensive exam (written) is associated with this task. The GPD will coordinate with the core-course instructors to schedule the exam date and distribute preparatory materials to the students taking the exam.

Thesis Defense (YEAR 2/3): This is generally in the form of a roughly 40-minute presentation in front of faculty and peers with questioning to follow. After scheduling a date and acquiring approval from your committee, contact office manager Tia Mori (tmcnamar@odu.edu) for room reservation and consult the College of Sciences (CoS) [website](#) for timing on defense and graduation. An email announcement must be sent out at least 2 weeks before defense. The [Master's Level M2 Form](#) for thesis defense is associated with this task.

Final Step: The final, approved thesis must be submitted to ProQuest in accordance with ODU master's thesis guidelines. Please use the template provided by CoS (not the graduate school) when formatting your thesis.

Deadlines: To graduate in a given semester, all applicable deadlines—including those for the defense, submission to the CoS, and submission to ProQuest—must be met. Students should consult the GPD for specific dates, as these are announced each semester by the

CoS. Students can also check the CoS Thesis and Dissertation page to find the ProQuest due date. Theses must be submitted to CoS 3 weeks prior to ProQuest, and to the department 2 weeks prior to CoS.

ODU Graduate School Forms

- M1 - Appointment or Change of Master's Committee (Form Committee)
- M2 - Results of Master's Examination or Requirement (Thesis Prospectus)
- M2 - Results of Master's Examination or Requirement (Thesis Defense)
- M2 - Results of Master's Examination or Requirement (Comprehensive Exam)
- Ship Time/Field Days (OES website) – 5 days of field work (including class field trips) are required for the MS

Please fill these forms out in Adobe Acrobat (as opposed to filling it out on your browser then downloading it) or through the Kuali system.

Ph.D. Students

Year 1

Ph.D. Advisory Committee (YEAR 1): Form a committee of 3-4 members to help you up to the candidacy stage. One committee member may be from outside OES or ODU and will need to be certified for Graduate Instruction prior to serving on the committee – email the GPD to initiate this process. The [Doctoral Level D1 Form](#) is associated with this task. You are strongly encouraged to meet with your committee every semester, but certainly at least once per academic year.

Fall:

- OEAS 604 Introduction to Physical Oceanography
- OEAS 640 Advanced Biological Oceanography
- OEAS 506 MATLAB

Spring:

- OEAS 610 Advanced Chemical Oceanography
- OEAS 620 Advanced Geological Sciences

Summer:

- OEAS 898 Research guided by your research advisor, see above (Can use 6 of these credits towards your degree)

*Students entering the program with an MS in Oceanography from another institution may be exempted from some or all of these courses, following a conversation between the GPD, pertinent instructor, and evaluation of the curricula.

Year 2 & Beyond

Comprehensive Exams (YEAR 2): Most Ph.D. students take the comprehensive exam during their 3rd semester, after taking all 4 core classes (OEAS 604, 610, 620, 640) to get their Master's degree in passing. You are currently not required to get your Master's in passing. The [Doctoral Level D3 Form](#) for the "Diagnostic Examination" is filled out after passing the Comprehensive Exam.

Ph.D. Candidacy Exams (YEAR 3): This includes a written and oral exam, administered by your advisory committee. You must pass written portion to attempt the oral exam. The [Doctoral Level D3 Form](#) for "Candidacy Examination" is filled out again after passing your Candidacy Exams.

Ph.D. Dissertation Committee (YEAR 3): After passing your candidacy exam and submission of your D1, D3, D4, and D9 forms, your candidacy committee dissolves and you are required to form a new committee who will guide you through the remainder of your time in the program. One member of this committee is required to be external to the department (meaning they can be from other departments within ODU or faculty/researchers from outside of ODU). To change your Candidacy Committee to a Dissertation Committee you must submit a [Doctoral Level D2 Form](#), which changes your committee.

All But Dissertation (YEAR 3): Following your candidacy examination, submit the [Doctoral Level D4](#) Form and [Doctoral Level D9 Form](#) that formally advances you to candidacy.

You will need to fill out the Doctoral Level D4 Form every semester hereafter until graduation.

Dissertation Prospectus (Year 3): The expectations for a dissertation prospectus will be established by the student's PhD dissertation committee. Generally, this is meant to be an in-depth research proposal of your proposed dissertation research. It should involve intensely reading and citing work from literature to develop a plan of methods and introduction to foundational concepts. Following the approval of your dissertation your prospectus, submit [Doctoral Level D3 Form](#) for "Dissertation Prospectus".

Dissertation Defense: This is generally in the form of a roughly 40-minute presentation in front of faculty and peers with questioning to follow. Contact office manager Tia Mori (tmcnamar@odu.edu) for scheduling and consult the CoS [website](#) for timing on defense and graduation. The [Doctoral Level D3 Form](#) and [Doctoral Level D5 Form](#) for dissertation defense is associated with this task.

Final Step: The final, approved dissertation must be submitted to ProQuest in accordance with ODU dissertation guidelines.

Deadlines: To graduate in a given semester, all applicable deadlines—including those for the defense, submission to the CoS, and submission to ProQuest—must be met. Students should consult the GPD for specific dates, as these are announced each semester by the CoS.

ODU Graduate School Forms

- D1 - Appointment or Change of Doctoral Committee (Form Candidacy Committee)
- D3 - Result of Doctoral Examination or Requirement (Comprehensive Exam)
- D3 - Result of Doctoral Examination or Requirement (Candidacy Exam)
- D2 - Appointment or Change of Doctoral Dissertation Committee (Form Dissertation Committee)
- D4 - Doctoral Candidates 1-Hour Full-Time Notification (1-Hour Full-Time)
- D9 - Advancement to Candidacy (Prospectus Submission)
- D3 - Result of Doctoral Examination or Requirement (Dissertation Prospectus)
- D3 - Result of Doctoral Examination or Requirement (Dissertation Defense)
- D5 - Doctoral Dissertation Acceptance & Processing (Acceptance of Dissertation)

Please fill these forms out in Adobe Acrobat (as opposed to filling it out on your browser then downloading it) or through the Quali system.