

Graduate Manual

College of Fisheries and Ocean
Sciences



2026-2027



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INTRODUCTION

Dear College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS) Student:

This handbook has been prepared to acquaint you with information, procedures, and policies regarding your degree program. Together with the UAF catalog, this handbook will provide you with details about your degree requirements and your responsibilities as a student. Please note that the current UAF catalog is the “ultimate authority.” This handbook does not override the UAF catalog. University policies and procedures related to graduate studies are subject to change. While this manual serves as a general guide, students should always verify current policies with the appropriate contacts. If you have questions or need clarification, please consult with the Academic Program Manager, Department Chair for your program, or the Associate Dean of Academic Programs. Staying informed of any updates ensure compliance with the most current requirements and expectations.

The purpose of the CFOS Academic Programs office is to help make your educational experience at UAF a positive one. You may reach us at our office at 213 O’Neill Building at UAF or by phone or email.

Sincerely,

Christina Sutton, Academic Programs Manager

Phone: 474-5840

Email: clsutton3@alaska.edu or uaf-cfos-academics@alaska.edu

P.S. This handbook will be a continuing work in progress. If you have any suggestions, additions, or clarifications, please alert us! As a student who needs this information, you are the best critic and we appreciate your comments.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the Alaska Native nations upon whose ancestral lands our campuses reside. In Fairbanks, our Troth Yeddha' Campus is located on the ancestral lands of the Dena people of the lower Tanana River. In Juneau, our campus resides on the unceded territory of the Áak'w K̓wáan on Lingít Aaní, also known as Juneau and Douglas, Alaska, which also houses neighboring Xaadas and Ts'msyen peoples. We also recognize and value perspectives from our unique locations in Southcentral Alaska, the ancestral lands of the Dena'ina, Ahtna, Alutiiq/Sugpiaq and Eyak/dAXunhyuu Peoples.

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLEGE

University of Alaska Fairbanks

College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences

Departments of Marine Biology, Oceanography, and Fisheries

The School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (SFOS) was established in 1987 to unite the fisheries and marine sciences programs within the University of Alaska system. In 2017, SFOS became the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS), a college with a broad geographic reach and a comprehensive academic mission. CFOS is committed to excellence in research, education, and public outreach. With approximately 30 faculty members, the college offers students the advantage of a low student-to-faculty ratio.

The College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences offers undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as two undergraduate minors. Undergraduate students can receive a BA in Fisheries (concentrations in Rural and Community Development or Fisheries Business and Social Science), or a BS in Fisheries and Marine Sciences (concentrations in Fisheries, Marine Biology, Oceanography, and no concentration; the no concentration option is available as a fully synchronous, asynchronous, or hybrid concentration). Students from other majors may complete a minor in Fisheries or Marine Sciences.

The UAF College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences offers five Master's degree programs (Fisheries, Marine Biology, Oceanography, Marine Studies, and Marine Policy) and cooperates with the UAF College of Business and Security Management to offer a STEM Blue MBA. All six of these programs have minimum requirements of 30 credits. CFOS also offers PhD programs in Fisheries, Marine Biology, and Oceanography. These nine graduate programs offer substantial flexibility in required and elective courses. Thus students can draw on a rich array of courses to satisfy degree requirements.

The MS in Fisheries, MS in Marine Biology, and MS in Oceanography degrees are traditional Master of Science programs that require specific coursework and original thesis research under the direction of a graduate committee and a thesis defense. Time to completion for full-time students in those programs is typically 2-3 years depending on their research project. The MS in Oceanography program includes concentrations in Biological, Chemical, Fisheries, Geological, and Physical Oceanography.

The Master of Marine Policy (MMP), Master of Marine Studies (MMS), and the STEM Blue MBA are professional Master's degree programs. These course-only degrees do not require a thesis and can be completed in as few as 12 months. The Stem Blue MBA and MMS requires a capstone course and/or a project. The MMP requires an internship and a capstone course.

Most graduates of the STEM Blue MBA are preparing for professional opportunities in business or non-profit organizations. In contrast, MMP graduates are more likely to pursue opportunities in agencies, local or tribal governments, or stakeholder organizations that focus on the development, evaluation, and assessment of policies affecting uses of the marine environment. Like MMP graduates, MMS graduates often pursue opportunities within state, federal, and tribal organizations, but with a focus on science advising instead of policy analysis. While traditional MS graduates also pursue opportunities in government and nongovernmental organizations, most do so in a research capacity. The MS degrees also commonly serve as stepping stones to advanced graduate studies.

The STEM Blue MBA can be completed through asynchronous (online) coursework or with a combination of asynchronous, in-person, and videoconference courses. The MMP, MMS, and MS in Fisheries can be completed with videoconference courses or a combination of distance synchronous, in-person, and asynchronous courses. The MS in Marine Biology, MS in Oceanography, and MMS can be completed with a combination of distance synchronous and in-person courses.

The College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences also offers a PhD in Fisheries, Oceanography, and Marine Biology. All three disciplines are traditional Ph.D. programs that require a minimum of 18 thesis credits and coursework tailored towards the student's research. In addition, original dissertation research under the direction of a graduate committee and a dissertation defense is required. Time to completion for full-time students in those programs is typically 4-6 years depending on their research project. All three Ph.D. programs require a 4-5 day written comprehensive exam and a 1-day oral exam (some fisheries advisors may decide to opt out of the 1-day oral exam for their students. Fisheries Ph.D. students discuss this with their advisor to see if they will require an oral PhD exam).

CFOS has three academic departments:

- 1) The Marine Biology department houses MS and PhD degrees in Marine Biology and the Master of Marine Studies (MMS). The undergraduate minor in Marine Science is shared between Oceanography and Marine Biology. The Marine Biology department is overseen by a Department Chair, who is currently Dr. Katrin Iken (kbiken@alaska.edu).
- 2) The Oceanography department houses the MS and PhD degrees, with options in Biological, Chemical, Fisheries, Geological and Physical Oceanography. The undergraduate minor in Marine Science is shared between Oceanography and Marine Biology. The Oceanography Department is overseen by a Department Chair, who is currently Dr. Russ Hopcroft (rrhopcroft@alaska.edu).
- 3) The Fisheries department houses BA, MS, and PhD degrees in Fisheries, a BS in Fisheries and Marine Sciences (faculty from the Marine Biology and Oceanography departments work closely with the fisheries faculty to administer the Fisheries and Marine Science BS degree), and the MMP. The undergraduate and graduate programs are administered both in Fairbanks and at our CFOS Juneau Center. The fisheries department is overseen by a Department Chair, who is currently Dr. Megan McPhee (mvmcphee@alaska.edu).

The CFOS Academic Programs Office is managed by the Academic Programs Manager, Christina Sutton (clsutton3@alaska.edu), under the direction of the CFOS Dean, Dr. Brad Moran, and the Associate Dean of Academic Programs, Dr. Ana Aguilar-Islas (amaguilarislas@alaska.edu). If you have questions about the different degrees, UAF Graduate School policies, and procedures, or anything in general, please do not hesitate in contacting the CFOS Academic Programs Office staff (uaf-cfos-academics@alaska.edu).

YOUR GRADUATE JOURNEY

Student Responsibilities

As a graduate student, you are fully responsible for knowing and complying with all of the regulations and requirements that apply to graduate students, including the completion of the graduate degree requirements. For this reason, you must become familiar with the policies and regulations outlined in this manual and on the [Graduate School website](#).

Students are responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with the [University of Alaska Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), which outlines both student rights and responsibilities as members of the academic community.

Graduate Degree Requirements

Graduate education should be an intense, coordinated effort, undertaken in a relatively short time and aimed at obtaining professional skills and/or the ability to do original creative research and scholarly work. To receive a degree from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, a graduate student must meet three sets of requirements: general university requirements, specific degree requirements, and program or department requirements.

Degree programs must be composed of courses in the student's discipline or related to and/or supportive of that discipline. All courses applied toward the degree must be approved by the student's advisory committee, Department Chair, and Associate Dean of Academic Programs.

Time Limits for Completion of Degrees

The time limits on degree completion (given below) are intended to correspond to extreme situations of part-time students or those who face unusual difficulties in completing their research or creative work. Under normal circumstances, a master's degree is typically completed within three years, although some students may complete the degree in as little as two years depending on the nature of their funding, research and their progress through the program. A Ph.D. is typically completed within five to six years.

Graduate students may elect to graduate under the degree requirements in effect and published in the UAF catalog in any one of the previous 7 years in which they are enrolled as a master's degree student, or the previous 10 years for a doctoral student. Active enrollment in the master's or doctoral degree program means a student must meet the university's registration requirements such as minimum yearly credit hours for graduate students. If a student is enrolled as a nondegree student, they are not eligible to utilize catalog years for those semesters.

All nonacademic policies and regulations listed in the current catalog apply, regardless of the catalog used for degree requirements. Students must satisfactorily complete all coursework listed on their Advancement to Candidacy form and all other degree requirements within seven years for the master's degree, and ten years for the PhD degree.

In exceptional situations, students may request an extension to the time limits using the Graduate Student Petition Form. ***Extensions require justification and approval at multiple administrative levels and are not automatic.*** Students who need more time may file a petition to extend the time limit, which must be approved by:

- Their advisory committee
- Department Chair

- CFOS Associate Dean of Academic Programs
- UAF Graduate School

Petitions must include a detailed, step-by-step timeline for thesis or dissertation completion, including key milestones such as chapter drafts, thesis submission to committee, the defense date, as well as consequences for missing key deadlines (e.g. change to conditional or unsatisfactory status). Be as specific as possible.

Grade Point Average and Grade Requirements

You must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) for good standing and in courses identified on your advancement to candidacy form to graduate and to maintain your research or teaching assistantship (if applicable). You must earn an A or B grade (no P grades) in 400-level courses; a C grade will be accepted in 600-level courses for satisfying degree requirements provided you maintain an overall B grade average. However, the Marine Biology and Oceanography programs require students to achieve a B- or better in all core courses.

Students who have GPAs slightly below 3.0 and who have reasonable prospects for achieving a 3.0 GPA will be placed on Academic Probation, but are allowed to continue in the program. However, students with a cumulative GPA of less than 2.7 after their first year (or 12-18 credits for full-time students) of graduate study are advised that their chances of completing the graduate program are poor and that withdrawing is likely their best option (A GPA of 2.67 for 18 credits would be the result of 2 C's and 4 B's for 6, 3-credit courses). Students with a GPA less than 3.0 after their second year of graduate study, or after one year of academic probation, whichever is later, will be academically disqualified from the CFOS academic program in which they are enrolled.

Registration Requirement

Students receiving a fellowship, research assistantship (RA), or teaching assistantship (TA) must be registered for at least six credits per semester. International students are required to register for nine credits per semester. Additionally, students receiving federal financial aid (such as Direct Loans, Pell Grants, or other federal aid) through the Financial Aid Office, or students who are deferring repayment of their federal student loans, must also be enrolled in at least nine credits. Please note that some UA scholarship recipients may also need to be registered for nine credits in order to receive their scholarships. When in doubt, check with the CFOS Academic Programs Office and we can determine whether you should follow up with the UAF Financial Aid Office.

Students who are not receiving UA funding (fellowships, RA, TA, scholarships), must be registered for at least six graduate credits per academic year (fall, spring, summer) when actively working toward a degree. Graduate students failing to either register for at least six graduate credits or obtain a leave of absence will be dropped from graduate study and will have to apply for reinstatement before resuming graduate study. Be advised that CFOS is credited for graduate enrollment based on fall semester enrollment. If possible, please register for the fall semester (rather than or in addition to spring or summer). You must be registered for a minimum of three graduate credits within your discipline and maintain enrollment in the semester that you successfully defend your thesis, and you must be registered for a minimum of one graduate credit within your discipline and maintain enrollment during the semester you graduate. The exception applies to master's students in non-thesis/non-project programs. These students are not required to register for the semester in which they plan to graduate.

We encourage you to apply for graduation the semester before the semester you plan to graduate. Applications for graduation filed after the published deadline will be processed for graduation the following semester. You need not have all requirements met before you apply for graduation. The application is an indication that you are planning to finish all degree requirements during the intended graduation semester.

Registration is done on the web using [UAOnline](#). If you are in the field or away from campus, and you cannot register or pay fees, contact either the CFOS Academic Programs office or the UAF Graduate School for assistance at least 10 days in advance of the deadline. If you received a tuition award through a fellowship or your advisor is paying for your tuition (via tuition memo), you must upload your memo or fellowship letter to the [UAF Graduate School tuition portal](#) (Payment memo submission). Research and Teaching Assistant contracts have been submitted on your behalf; however, **it is the student's responsibility that their student account balance is paid by the fee payment deadline**. Any balance can be paid using UAOnline. Please note that a transaction fee will be applied to all credit and debit card transactions, there is no fee for electronic checks. **IMPORTANT NOTE: It is the student's responsibility to make sure that all tuition, insurance, and fees are paid by the fee payment deadline. If student balances are not paid by the deadline, the student will be responsible for late fees. Late fees cannot be waived. If you find that there is an error with your student account and you cannot get in contact with the UAF Graduate School, CFOS Academics Programs, or the UAF Bursar's Office to assist with correcting the balance due, please pay the balance and we can work on correcting the error the following business day.**

Transfer Credits

You may apply post-baccalaureate degree credits earned at UAF as a non-degree seeking student toward a graduate degree only with the approval of your graduate advisory committee, to a maximum of one-half of all credits used to meet your degree requirements. Up to one-half of all graduate degree credits approved for your program may be transferred from UAA and UAS. No more than one-third of approved program credits may be transferred from other accredited institutions outside the UA system. You must earn a minimum of a B grade in all graduate courses presented for transfer. Note: B- grades cannot be transferred.

Course Restrictions

You may not use credit by examination, audited courses, 500-level courses, or courses that are taken under the credit/no credit option to fulfill the basic course requirements of any degree program. No more than 12 credits of special topics courses (693 or 695) or individual study (697) may be used toward a graduate degree. Requests for exceptions to the limit must be approved through your advisory committee, Department Chair, and CFOS Associate Dean of Academic Programs, with final approval from the Director of the Graduate School.

Course Deficiencies

Your advisory committee and/or department may require that you correct certain deficiencies in your degree program. Your committee will determine early in your program how to remedy the deficiencies and the minimum level of performance required of you. Such courses may be taken under the credit/no credit option, audit, or through credit-by-examination.

English Deficiencies

You must be proficient in written and oral English. If deficiencies are apparent, your advisory committee will determine the requirements to remove the deficiencies. The College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences does not require graduate students to fulfill a language/research tool requirement as part of their degree.

Leave of Absence

You may apply for a leave of absence for up to one year. The application form is available on the [Graduate School website](#). You should note that “need time to write my thesis” is not accepted by the Graduate School as a reason for a leave of absence, because while writing students are presumed to be actively working toward their degree, with help from their major advisor and advisory committee. In that case, students should register for at least three (3) thesis credits per semester. Acceptable reasons for a leave of absence include health problems, financial needs, family commitments, and “personal reasons.” Please keep in mind that advisors and committee members are not expected to provide thesis guidance while a student is on a leave of absence. Additionally, time spent on a leave of absence counts toward the maximum time allowed to complete the degree. Students on a leave of absence are also not eligible to receive research assistantships (RAs), teaching assistantships (TAs), or fellowship funding.

Changing Programs

Graduate students may change their program. To change to a program in a different department, school or college (e.g., from an M.S. in marine biology to an M.S. in biology), the student must submit a new application for admission so faculty in the new degree program can fully review the student’s credentials. To change the area of emphasis, add a degree or change the degree within the same department (e.g., from an M.S. in oceanography to a or add a Ph.D. in oceanography, or from a Ph.D. in biochemistry and molecular biology to a Ph.D. in environmental chemistry), the student may change or add programs by completing the graduate change of major form. The form is available from the Graduate School’s website. Regardless of when the form is submitted, a change of program doesn’t become effective until the beginning of the upcoming fall, spring, or summer semester. For more information, contact the Graduate School at [907-474-7464](tel:907-474-7464).

Graduation

Responsibility

The student is responsible for meeting all requirements for graduation. The Advancement to Candidacy must be received by the Graduate School the semester before they intend to graduate.

Master’s with Thesis or Project

- The student must be registered for a minimum of 3 graduate-level credits within their discipline the semester that they successfully defend their dissertation and plan to graduate.

- If the student has already successfully defended but missed the previous semester's graduation deadline, then they must be registered for a minimum of 1 graduate-level credit within their discipline the semester that they plan to graduate.

Master's with Non-thesis/non-project

- The student is not required to register for the semester within which they plan to graduate.

Application for Graduation

The student must file an application for graduation with the [Office of the Registrar](#). The Graduate School encourages the student to work with their advisor/committee chair before applying for graduation to meet any departmental and Graduate School deadlines. Applications for graduation filed after the published deadline will be processed for graduation the following semester. The student does not need to have all requirements met before they apply for graduation. The application is an indication that they are planning to finish all degree requirements during the intended graduation semester. Students who apply for graduation and who do not complete degree requirements by the end of the semester must reapply for graduation.

Diplomas and Commencement

UAF issues diplomas to graduates three times each year: in September, January and June. All students who complete degree requirements during the academic year are invited to participate in the annual commencement ceremony at the end of the spring semester. Names of students receiving degrees appear in the commencement program and are released to the media unless the student has a confidential hold on file with the Office of the Registrar. Students who do not want their names to be released may place a directory information hold through your UAOnline account. Graduates are responsible for ordering caps and gowns through the UAF bookstore in early spring.

Graduate Forms

All graduate forms are located on the [UAF Graduate School website](#). The UAF Graduate School uses the NextGen/Dynamic Forms platform and collects all signatures digitally. It is important that you review the signature process and who signs each form (e.g., the Dean does NOT sign the majority of the forms, but the Associate Dean of Academic Programs does). Also, it is important that students do NOT use alias emails (e.g., Christina.Sutton@alaska.edu) for UAF faculty and staff. The email will not reach the signatory if alias emails are used. All forms need to be sent to Christina Sutton (clsutton3@alaska.edu) as "department coordinator" to review.

Required Meetings and Required Forms (including deadlines) - Academic Year 2026-2027

Forms and Thesis/Dissertation Submittal		Deadline Dates
Appointment of Advisory Committee http://www.uaf.edu/gradsch/forms/	See Committee guidelines for your program; have all members sign this form. MMP students do not need to fill out this form.	End of the first semester
Graduate Study Plan http://www.uaf.edu/gradsch/forms/	Approved during committee meetings; all members and students must sign. Has to include a 3-5 page research proposal approved by the committee. MMP students will work with their advisor.	By the end of the first semester for MMP students. By the end of the first year of study for all other students.
Annual Academic Progress Report http://www.uaf.edu/gradsch/forms/	This form is due every year. All members and students must sign. The report has to include a self-evaluation report written by the student. MMP and MMS students will only fill out this form if their program of study is projected to continue past 12 months.	March 15 Students entering the spring semester must submit an Annual Academic Progress Report at the end of the first year of study (e.g., entering Spring must submit an Annual Academic Progress Report in December)
Advancement to Candidacy http://www.uaf.edu/gradsch/forms/	Committee members must sign. MMP students will have an advancement form specific to the MMP program. Please contact your advisor or CFOS Academic programs for this form.	This form is due one semester before graduation. Fall Graduation: October 15 Spring Graduation: February 15 Summer Graduation: June 15 For MMP students who intend to complete the degree in two semesters, the Advancement to Candidacy form may be completed after Fall semester grades are posted and before Spring semester begins.
Application for Graduation		Application to Graduate Deadline Dates: https://www.uaf.edu/reg/grad/index.php
Thesis/ Dissertation Submittal to Graduate School (for the MS and PhD Fisheries, Marine Biology, Oceanography programs)	Must be reviewed by the Department Chair and Dean before submitting to graduate school.	Fall Graduation: November 28 Spring Graduation: April 7 Summer Graduation: August 1 Departmental Deadlines: https://www.uaf.edu/cfos/academics/resources/deadlines/index.php

Forms are located on the [UAF Graduate School website](#).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please review the [UAF Graduate School directory](#) to find out who signs which forms. Each form may be slightly different. Christina Sutton is your UAF/CFOS Graduate Coordinator: clsutton3@alaska.edu. **DO NOT USE ALIAS EMAILS FOR UA FACULTY (the forms will not go to them to sign. Alias emails are Christina.Sutton@alaska.edu).**

Committee and Advisors:

- Appointment/Change Committee Form
 - Due by the end of your FIRST year
 - AND anytime your committee members change.
 - NOTE: Resigning members must also sign this form. If the department chair is signing on the resigning member's behalf or is exercising their right to remove a member, a justification for doing so must be noted somewhere on the form.
 - This form is not a requirement for those students in the MMP program.
- Annual Academic Progress Report
 - Due every year by March 15 for people who were admitted in a summer or fall term.
 - Due every year by December 15 for those who were admitted in a spring semester (if necessary, [extensions can be requested](#)).
 - The Report of Advisory Committee form will route to the student twice for signature: 1) to upload the student narrative and disclose publications and presentations; 2) to initial acknowledgment of the committee comments.
 - This is a required form for all MS and PhD students. It is a requirement of a MMS and MMP student whose program extends past the 12-month period.

Petitions, advancements, study plans, registration forms:

- Graduate Study Plan
 - Due by the end of your SECOND semester. The courses on this form should match your degree requirements in your entry catalog. If substitutions are planned, please indicate as much by adding "subbed for core requirement," "subbed for the x-and-such course," etc.
 - For MMP students, this form is due by the end of your first semester. You will work directly with your advisor to develop a study plan.
- Advancement to Candidacy
 - Due at least ONE semester before the semester you intend to graduate.
 - Per the [catalog](#), Ph.D. students cannot advance to candidacy until they have completed a written comprehensive exam.
 - MMP students will have an Advancement to Candidacy form specific to the Marine Policy program. For MMP students who intend to complete the degree in two semesters, the Advancement to Candidacy form must be completed after Fall semester grades are posted and before Spring semester begins.
- [Graduate Student Petition form](#)
 - Required if you deviate from your program requirements or catalog requirements.

Research and Compliance:

- [Human Subjects/Animal Care/Biosafety](#)

Program Status:

- Graduate Reinstatement
 - Required for those who wish to resume their studies, but who have fallen out of status with regard to the registration requirements in the "How to Earn a Graduate Degree" section of the UAF catalog

- **Note:** Reinstatement is possible only if it has been less than two years since your last enrollment in a 400- or 600-level course at UAF. If more than two years have passed, you will need to reapply for admission, and there is no guarantee of acceptance. To avoid falling out of status, it is important that you either register for credits or file a leave of absence.
- **Leave of Absence**
 - Required if you need to temporarily suspend studies while earning a graduate degree. If you do not meet [registration requirements](#) and fail to obtain a leave of absence, you will be dropped from graduate study and will have to be reinstated or apply for readmission before resuming your program (see “Graduate Reinstatement”). Taking a leave of absence from the graduate program does not pause the time to completion requirement.
- **Change/Add Degree, Major, or Certificate Form**
 - NOTE: Changing to a major or degree outside of your department requires a new application for admission.
- [Application for Residency Status](#)
 - Residency status determines tuition rate.

Competency Documents

- **Report of Comprehensive Exam**
 - For MS, MMS, and PhD (and sometimes MMP) students - Filed after the comprehensive exam or proposal/project presentation is passed.
 - Form can be initiated by the advisor or student (if the advisor initiates the form, the form will route twice to the advisor (as initiator and then as chair/advisor).
- **Master's with project (MMS).**
 - The Graduate School does not impose requirements on the format of a project in the non-thesis options. You must obtain specific project format requirements from your department chair (MMS contact the Marine Biology Dept. Chair and for the MMP program contact [Dr. Keith Criddle](#)).
- **Report on Thesis/Dissertation Defense**
 - Required for all students who are completing a project, thesis, or dissertation.
- **Request an Outside Examiner (PhD)**
 - Mandatory for all Ph.D. oral comprehensive exams and Ph.D. dissertations defenses.
 - Requests must be submitted to the Graduate School at least 10 working days prior to the exam (15 days if scheduled during the summer break).

Degree Completion Forms:

- **Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form**
 - Required for all thesis and dissertation students:
 - This form is used to signify approval of the final draft of your project, thesis, or dissertation AFTER you've passed your defense.
 - Dissertations and theses will require the approval of the full committee, department chair, CFOS dean (not Associate Dean), and graduate school.
 - Projects will require the approval of the full committee, department chair, and graduate school.

- This form certifies that the post-defense copy (a.k.a. final copy) of your dissertation/thesis/project is of reasonably publishable quality and is ready for archiving with the library and/or publication.
 - This document is required and is in lieu of (or in addition to) "signature pages".
- Master's with project (MMS).
 - Fill out the thesis/dissertation/project approval form.
- Applying for Graduation
 - Find everything you need to know about graduation on the [UAF Degree Services webpage](#). This page includes information on deadlines, the application process, graduation policies, and commencement. It has the most up-to-date information available.

Graduate Advisory Committees (MS and PhD students)

Each graduate student is guided by a major advisor/professor (also referred to as the advisory committee chair) and a graduate advisory committee. Students are expected to have a major advisor when they are accepted into Graduate School. All students should have an approved advisory committee by the end of their first year. Students should select members based on the guidelines given below and with the advice and approval of their committee chair, as well as the agreement of all proposed members to serve. You should fill out the "[Appointment or Change of Graduate Committee](#)" form). Forms will be routed for signatures using the NextGen platform. If the proposed committee includes any members who do not qualify under the CFOS committee guidelines, please make a note on the NextGen form (in the "Notes for approval" box). Explanation about the departure from guidelines is needed to determine how membership is beneficial to the student.

The role of the committee chair is to provide mentorship, expertise and oversight of the thesis or dissertation. The chair guides the student through each stage of their research, starting by assisting them in developing and refining a research proposal where research questions, theoretical framework and research methodology are defined. The chair is involved in the development of the graduate student plan setting milestones, expectations and deadlines. The chair is responsible for providing feedback on the research progress, and for reviewing and approving drafts of the thesis or dissertation, including assessing the rigor and quality of the work, and providing guidance on organization and writing style. The chair can also help the student navigate institutional requirements and obtain funding. The chair is responsible for ensuring the thesis or dissertation defense proceeds smoothly and that all committee members have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. In addition the chair has administrative responsibilities that include coordination with other committee members, facilitating required meetings, ensuring paperwork is submitted, and managing the overall timeline of the thesis or dissertation process. Effective communication between the chair and the student is essential for a productive working relationship. Expectations vary somewhat between faculty members, so ensure they are clearly articulated and understood as you develop your graduate study plan.

The other committee members support the process by providing additional expertise, feedback, and evaluation. Committee members are resources for the student and provide feedback on the research proposal, the graduate study plan, and on the drafts of the thesis or dissertation. Committee members are active participants in annual meetings to ensure the research is on track, and to help identify and address issues in a timely manner. Committee members are involved in examinations (if required) by providing questions and evaluating responses.

Committee members play a key role during the thesis or dissertation defense by asking questions and evaluating the student's performance to determine if the research and the defense meet the criteria for approval.

The proposed committee is reviewed by the Department Chair (and the department faculty if deemed necessary). Changes may be requested if there is insufficient justification for any deviations. Such changes must occur before the paperwork is forwarded to the CFOS Associate Dean of Academic Programs for approval.

If the proposed committee is not approved, it is returned to the student and major advisor for better justification. Occasionally, the addition or deletion of specific members may be recommended. The student should accommodate recommendations unless there is an overwhelming reason why that is not possible, in which case the reason should be submitted in writing to the Department Chair, with the signature of the major advisor. The Department Chair reserves the right to consult with the faculty for a larger vote.

In cases when the student wants or needs to change the advisory committee composition, approval is required from the existing members and their chair. A change of committee form will be vetted through the appropriate approval process for each department. The "[Appointment or Change of Graduate Committee](#)" form is available from the UAF Graduate School website. Faculty members who leave UAF or retire can continue to serve on advisory committees as members or chairs, unless they do not want to continue in these roles, then they should be replaced. In the rare cases where the committee and/or chair do not approve the committee change, the student should consult with the Department Chair, who will assist with finding a mutually agreeable compromise. If that is not possible, the proposed change is submitted to a vote by the faculty, and if approved, for the signatures of the Department Chair, CFOS Associate Dean of Academic Programs, and Graduate School Director. If a member is deceased, the Committee Chair can sign on behalf of the deceased member.

Committee Composition

Committee composition for all graduate degrees is reviewed by the Associate Dean of Academic Programs and individual departments.

Graduate Advisory Committees in Fisheries

Thesis advisory committees for M.S. Students in Fisheries must include at least three members, one of whom is the chair.

Dissertation advisory committees for Ph.D. students in Fisheries must include at least four members who hold doctoral degrees, one of whom is the chair.

At least two members of MS committee or PhD committee must be "Approved Faculty" (see table below) and at least one must have an academic appointment in the Fisheries Department (i.e., faculty listed in row 1 below).

The following table describes the roles that faculty within and outside the fisheries department can fill on advisory committees. Other committee configurations may be approved on a per-committee basis by a majority vote of the Department of Fisheries faculty.

Unit	Status	Role: Chair	Role: Co-chair	Role: Member	Role: Approved Faculty
Dept. of Fisheries	Tenure-track, Joint, AKCFWRU, Collaborating, Emeritus	X	X	X	X
Dept. of Fisheries	Research Faculty		X	X	X
Dept. of Fisheries	Postdoctoral researchers			X	
Other	Other Approved UA Faculty (see list below)		X	X	X
Other	Professional with MS/PhD*			X	
Other	Individuals w/out MS/PhD [#]			X	

* Includes postdoctoral researchers outside of the Department of Fisheries

[#] Individuals without a MS (PhD) degree can serve as additional members on MS (PhD) committees beyond the three (four) required.

For an updated list of Department of Fisheries and other approved faculty members, click [here](#).

Graduate Advisory Committee Master of Marine Policy (M.M.P.)

The graduate advisory committee in Marine Policy consists of the chair or two co-chairs. The MMP program coordinator, Keith Criddle (UAF) or MMP faculty (Hannah Myers, UAF, Hekia Bodwitch (UAS)), may serve as the advisory committee chair or co-chairs. Other UAF and UAS faculty members can serve as co-chairs with the MMP program faculty on approval of the Master of Marine Policy Steering Committee (Keith Criddle, Hannah Myers, Hekia Bodwitch).

Graduate Advisory Committee Master of Marine Studies (M.M.S.)

The advisory committee must have at least three members, one of whom is the chair.

- 1 person must be a member of Marine Biology faculty (can be the advisor/mentor)
- 1 person must be a member of CFOS faculty (can be the advisor/mentor)
- 1 person can be anyone (any affiliation, university, agency, tribal, NGO, elder, etc.) with approval of the other 2 committee members
- The committee may have additional members beyond the three required. These members may be affiliated with any organization or be community members with relevant expertise.

Graduate Advisory Committees in Marine Biology

The composition of graduate advisory committees in Marine Biology must be approved by a majority vote of the Marine Biology tenure-track and research faculty unless the MS or PhD committees have at least two members who are tenure-track or research faculty in the Marine Biology department (see details below).

M.S. Committee Marine Biology:

- The advisory committee must have at least three members, one of whom is the chair. All three required members must have a minimum of an MS degree.
- The chair must be a Marine Biology tenure-track or research faculty. Faculty from other departments or emeritus faculty can co-chair with a tenure-track or research faculty member from Marine Biology.
- At least two committee members must be tenure-track or research faculty in Marine Biology. If the chair (or co-chair) is research faculty, at least one other committee member must be tenure-track faculty in Marine Biology.
- The third member may be faculty in any UAF department, non-UAF faculty, or other professional researchers (e.g., agency personnel).
- The committee may have additional members beyond the three required. These members may be any UAF or non-UAF professional researchers with relevant expertise. Additional members with extensive, appropriate experience may serve without an MS degree.

PhD Committee Marine Biology:

- The advisory committee must have at least five members, one of whom is the chair. Four of the five required members must have a minimum of a PhD degree. The fifth member and any additional members with extensive, appropriate experience may serve without a PhD
- The chair must be a Marine Biology tenure-track or research faculty. Faculty from other departments or emeritus faculty can co-chair with a tenure-track or research faculty member from Marine Biology.
- At least two committee members must be tenure-track or research faculty in Marine Biology. If the chair (or co-chair) is research faculty, at least one other committee member must be tenure-track faculty in Marine Biology.
- The third member must be research or tenure-track faculty from any CFOS department.
- The fourth member may be any faculty member from CFOS, other UAF departments, non-UAF faculty, or other professional researchers (e.g., agency personnel).
- The fifth member MUST be from outside of CFOS, including any other UAF or non-UAF teaching or research faculty, or other professional researchers (e.g., agency personnel).
- The committee may have additional members beyond the five required.

In selecting their PhD committee, PhD students and their major advisors should recognize that one important function of the committee is to write and evaluate the comprehensive examination. Hence, the committee needs to be able to administer an examination that is appropriate for the field of Marine Biology, in addition to providing expertise on the topic of the student's dissertation. This means that the committee should represent some of the breadth within the field of Marine Biology, as well as the depth in the specific research area.

Graduate Advisory Committees in Oceanography

MS Committee Oceanography:

- The advisory committee must have at least three members, one of which is the chair.
- The chair must be an Oceanography tenure-track faculty member
- Oceanography research, affiliate, and associated faculty cannot normally serve as a sole chair but can co-chair.
- Two members of the committee must be Oceanography research or tenure-track faculty.
- The third member may be any faculty member at UAF.
- All three required members must have a minimum of an MS degree.
- The committee may have additional members beyond the three required from UAF, that may encompass other universities, or non-faculty (e.g., agency scientists).
- Additional members with extensive, or appropriate experience may serve without an MS degree (justification must be provided).
- Emeritus faculty are considered the same as associated faculty as long as they remain active in their research.
- All committees are subject to approval by the Oceanography Department Chair.
- Exceptions to the above requirements may be granted by the Oceanography Department Chair in consultation with the faculty in their department.

PhD Committee Oceanography:

- The advisory committee must have at least five members, one of which is the chair.
- The chair must be an Oceanography tenure-track faculty member
- Oceanography research, affiliate, and associated faculty cannot normally serve as chair but can co-chair.
- Two members of the committee must be Oceanography tenure-track faculty.
- The third member must be from Oceanography and may be tenure-track, research, affiliate, or associated faculty.
- The fourth member may be CFOS or UAF faculty.
- The fifth member must be outside of CFOS, either from another UAF unit, or from an outside institution/university.
- Four of the five required members must have a PhD degree. The fifth member and any additional members with extensive, appropriate experience may serve without a PhD (justification must be provided).
- The committee may have additional members beyond the five required (justification must be provided).
- Emeritus faculty are considered the same as associated faculty as long as they remain active in research.
- All committees are subject to approval by the Oceanography Department Chair.
- Exceptions to the above requirements may be granted by the Oceanography Department Chair in consultation with the faculty in their department.

In selecting their PhD committee, PhD students and their major advisors should recognize that one important function of the committee is to write and evaluate the comprehensive examination. Hence, the committee needs to be able to administer an examination that is appropriate for the field of Oceanography, in addition to providing expertise on the topic of the student's dissertation. This means that the committee should represent some of the breadth typical of Oceanography, as well as the depth in the specific research area.

Additional Graduate Form Details

Annual Academic Progress Report Form

You are **REQUIRED** to meet formally with your committee at least once per year and submit an “Annual Academic Progress Report” after each meeting. More frequent meetings (e.g., twice a year) are recommended. An Annual Academic Progress Report form has to be submitted from each committee meeting, which is an official record of your committee meeting. The Annual Academic Progress Report consists of two documents: 1) The Annual Academic Progress Report form which includes comments from the committee and 2) an annual progress report written by the student. The purpose of the Annual Academic Progress Report is to provide you with a written evaluation of your progress over the last year in your degree program in regards to courses and research by your committee. In case of a conditional evaluation, the Annual Academic Progress Report should also include recommendations of the committee outlining necessary steps regarding degree completion. **The report form has to contain substantial, detailed evaluations of your coursework and research progress from the major advisor.** The annual meeting would be a good time to review your Graduate Study Plan (GSP) to make sure you are on track. Not submitting the Annual Academic Progress Report will place you in poor academic standing with CFOS and UAF Graduate School. In addition, you may no longer qualify to receive scholarships, fellowships, or research/teaching assistantships. The Annual Academic Progress Report form is due to the UAF Graduate School by March 15th for students admitted in Summer or Fall semesters. A student starting their program in the spring must submit an Annual Academic Progress Report by December 15.

Graduate Study Plan Form

The Graduate Study Plan (GSP) outlines the curriculum of study and timetable to be followed by the graduate student in meeting graduate degree requirements. It serves as a road map for graduate study and should be drafted early in your program (MMS, MMP, MS and PhD students, preferably by the end of the second semester of study jointly with your committee. For MMP students, this form is due by the end of your first semester). The GSP is a working agreement of mutual expectations between you and your committee.

The GSP not only contains the specific degree requirements but also indicates the mechanism for fulfilling these requirements (e.g., via coursework, examinations) and a projected timetable for completing various requirements. Depending on the length of your degree program, the first draft of the GSP may be your final one, although it is not unusual to find it necessary to revise your GSP. A possible reason for revising a GSP could be that initial results or funding changes dictate a change in research direction, etc. A revised GSP will undergo the same signature process as the original GSP. You should recognize that the GSP is an important document and outlines a realistic approach to completing your degree program.

For programs that require a thesis or dissertation, a (preliminary) research proposal must be submitted/attached to the GSP. The (preliminary) proposal is written by the student and shared, discussed, and approved by the advisory committee. As with the GSP, the (preliminary) research proposal can be modified and expanded during later committee meetings as a research project develops. A full, formal research proposal that builds on the preliminary research proposal must be approved by the advisory committee prior to Advancement to Candidacy.

Please use the following guidelines when submitting the research proposal with your GSP:

- A research proposal should typically be less than 10 pages.
- Students are expected to include the following elements into the proposal:

- Introduction
 - The introduction should give some background information on your research topic and your system (region and habitat) and the current state of knowledge
 - The introduction should address
 - Why are you doing this?
 - Why should we care about this?
 - What is known about this topic?
 - What are you contributing to the existing knowledge?
 - The introduction should demonstrate that you have researched this topic area
 - You need appropriate references in your introduction to demonstrate that you have researched your topic.
- Research question
 - Clearly state your hypotheses or questions and research objectives. It is okay to have just one hypothesis or question.
 - Good resources to refer to include:
 - ESA guide: [Scientific Writing Made Easy: A Step-by-Step Guide to Undergraduate Writing in the Biological Sciences.](#)
 - Purdue guide: [Writing is a Conversation - Purdue OWL](#)
- Methods
 - A methods section that shows you have thought about how you are going to address your question/hypothesis from sampling/experimental design to statistical analysis tools.
- Timeline
 - Add a preliminary timeline on what is happening where and when (could be a table or Gantt diagram).
- References
 - A reference section. Please ensure that the references are cited correctly. Please choose the style of an appropriate journal for your topic. We strongly recommend using a reference manager, such as [Mendeley](#) or [Zotero](#), to make this task easier and less prone to errors.

Fisheries students must develop a full, formal MS or PhD proposal that builds on and expands the preliminary proposal attached to the GSP. The format and content typically includes the same elements as the preliminary proposal, but the full proposal may be considerably longer (typically 6-10 single-spaced pages of text for MS proposal, 10-15 pages for Ph.D. proposals). MS students must complete their full proposal as described in the Comprehensive Exam section below, Ph.D. students must have a full, committee-approved proposal prior to taking their Comprehensive Exam.

Advancement to Candidacy Form

Advancement to candidacy formally establishes your specific degree requirements with the Graduate School and the UAF Graduation Office. It is in the best interest of both you and your advisory committee that you apply for candidacy as soon as you qualify. **At the latest, the Application for Advancement to Candidacy form must be submitted at least one semester before applying for graduation.** For MMP students who intend to complete the degree in two semesters, the Advancement to Candidacy form may be completed after Fall semester grades are posted and before Spring semester begins.

The Graduate Study Plan should be the basis for completing the Application for Advancement to Candidacy, but it is not necessary to submit another Graduate Study Plan to the UAF Graduate School with the Application for Advancement to Candidacy.

A petition form is used to request any changes to the Advancement to Candidacy once it has been filed. The petition must be signed by the committee, Department Chair, and Associate Dean of Academic Programs. The petition form can be found on the Graduate School website.

MS Degree:

You may apply for advancement to candidacy if you are in good standing and:

- 1) Satisfactorily completed program core courses;
- 2) For **Oceanography** students: complete core courses with a B- or better (P for integrative oceanography seminar), approval of graduate student plan, and successfully defend a thesis proposal.

For **Fisheries** students: pass required core courses with a B- or better and successfully defend a thesis proposal (oral proposal defense & committee-approved written proposal).

For **Marine Biology** students: pass your required classes (Marine Biology, Biological Oceanography, Physiology of Marine Organisms) with a B- or better, successfully defend the thesis proposal in a public seminar setting, and pass your oral comprehensive exam.

For **Marine Policy** students: successfully complete at least 9 credit hours of required and elective coursework with grades of B- or better.

For **Marine Studies** students: successfully complete all required core courses (with the exception of the professional development core) with grades of B- or better.

- 3) Have a 3.0 GPA

PhD Degree:

You may apply for advancement to candidacy for the PhD degree if you are in good standing and have accomplished the following:

- 1) Completed the full-time equivalent of two academic years of graduate study,
- 2) Received approval of the Graduate Study Plan;
- 4) Obtain committee approval of dissertation proposal prior to the written Comprehensive Exam;
- 5) Passed a written and/or oral comprehensive examination (See next section for specific requirements).
- 6) **Marine Biology and Oceanography** students must present their proposal in a public seminar.
- 7) **Marine Biology and Oceanography** students must have completed, or be able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge of, the core course material required for their respective degree programs. If similar courses were taken at another institution, students may petition to have those courses counted toward the core requirements.

Examinations

The primary purpose of the comprehensive examination is to determine whether you have integrated knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts underlying your major and related fields.

Fisheries - Comprehensive examination (MS and PhD)

MS students in Fisheries comprehensive exam: For the Comprehensive Examination, MS Fisheries students are required to present and defend a proposal of their graduate research before the advisory committee and file a "Report on Comprehensive Exam" form. The format of the proposal should adhere to standard proposal guidelines, such as those established for the most recent NPRB Research Plan (under their [Core Program](#)) or the NSF Project Description ([Chapter II - Proposal Preparation Instructions](#)). A 6-page minimum length is recommended. In an oral examination following the student's presentation, the committee will evaluate: (a) the scientific quality of the proposal, (b) the student's ability to explain and justify the research plan, (c) the student's understanding of the broader context and significance of the planned research in fishery science and management, and d) any additional topics identified on the student's graduate study plan (GSP) as specified by the committee. Additional topics should reflect areas of expertise that are essential to the student's thesis and should be based on completed coursework or mutually agreed-upon background materials. Questions about the broader context (c) and specific topics (d) should be appropriate to an M.S.-level student early in their graduate studies.

The proposal defense should be completed during or before the 3rd semester of enrollment. In some circumstances, e.g., when a class that is essential to the student's progress is only offered on a biennial schedule, the proposal defense may be completed during the 4th semester, with the approval of the student's graduate committee. Students who complete the proposal defense, as well as a committee-approved written proposal, are eligible for advancement to candidacy.

Grading of the MS Fisheries comprehensive exam: A student's performance is graded as Pass, Fail, or Conditional Pass. In the latter case, the Advisory Committee judges that the student's proposal is incomplete or the student lacks the knowledge or skills necessary for their thesis research. To address these deficiencies, the committee may request a revised or expanded proposal or may specify additional work in the subject areas of deficiency (for instance, readings or coursework).

Retaking the MS Fisheries comprehensive exam: The Committee may require a subsequent examination or other evidence of the student's success in overcoming the deficiency. When that requirement has been met, the Committee will change the student's grade to Pass by submitting a new Report of Examination form. If the advisory committee finds that the proposal or the student's performance demonstrates insufficient knowledge, the exam will be graded "Fail." Students failing the proposal defense are entitled to a second examination within a timeframe determined by the Advisory Committee, but no later than the subsequent semester. After two failures, a student will be dismissed from the Fisheries program. If the student disagrees with the outcome of the exams and/or the committee's decision, the student can appeal the committee's decision through the established [UAF process for academic appeals](#).

The comprehensive exam for Fisheries PhD students: Students must pass both a written and oral comprehensive examination. The examination is typically scheduled after two full academic years but no later than three academic years of study. For students transitioning from

a MS into the PhD program, the comprehensive exam must be scheduled no later than two years after the effective date of the transition. It is recommended to schedule the Comprehensive Exam on completion of courses on the student's Graduate Study Plan. The subjects on which each student is examined are determined by their Advisory Committee and are identified in Section II of the student's Graduate Study Plan.

Alternative formats for the written comprehensive examination may be chosen by an Advisory Committee with prior approval of the Department Chair in Fisheries, but ordinarily, examinations consist of a set of questions, one or more submitted by each member of the student's Advisory Committee. Students may expect to spend as long as one day answering the question or questions from each Committee member at the discretion of the member (up to two days if substantial data analysis or quantitative exercises are to be performed). At the discretion of the Committee member, the student may or may not use reference materials in preparing their answer. The entire written examination, consisting of answers to all questions from all Committee members, is typically completed within two weeks as determined in consultation with the committee; questions from different members may be addressed on sequential days.

In preparation for the examination, each student should consult with their Advisor at least three (3) months before taking the examination (a tentative date having been set in the student's Graduate Study Plan) and set dates for the comprehensive examination. The student also should consult with each Advisory Committee member about any special preparation for the examination, for instance, to get recommendations for readings, etc.

The major advisor will coordinate the exam by:

- Soliciting questions from each member of the Advisory Committee;
- Providing the questions to the student at the appropriate time;
- Proctoring the examination;
- Receiving the answers from the student;
- Transmitting the answers to the appropriate committee members;
- Receiving each member's evaluation of each answer;
- Collating the answers and their evaluations for distribution to the entire Advisory Committee;
- Polling the Committee on the question of whether the student has passed the examination and if any revisions are needed;
- Filing the [Report of Examination form](#) via NextGen.

Grading of the PhD Fisheries comprehensive exam: A student's performance is graded as Pass, Fail, or Conditional Pass. In the latter case, the Advisory Committee judges that the student lacks the knowledge or skills necessary for their dissertation research and specifies remedial work in the subject areas of deficiency (for instance, readings or coursework).

Retaking the PhD Fisheries comprehensive exam: The Committee may require a subsequent examination or other evidence of the student's success in overcoming the deficiency. When that requirement has been met, the Committee will change the student's grade to Pass by submitting a new Report of Comprehensive Exam form. If the grade is not changed to Pass within the semester after the student's first attempt at the comprehensive examination, or as soon as any required coursework can be completed, the grade becomes Fail.

If the Advisory Committee finds the student's performance demonstrates insufficient knowledge, the exam will be graded "Fail." Students failing the comprehensive examination are entitled to a second examination. After two failures, a student can petition the Fisheries Department Chair to

sit in the examination a third time if the Advisory Committee approves the petition. If a third attempt is unsuccessful, and the Committee has found the student's performance unsatisfactory, the student will be disqualified. If the student disagrees with the outcome of the exams and/or the committee's decision, the student can appeal the committee's decision through the established [UAF process for academic appeals](#)).

MMP students - Capstone Course

MMP students complete the capstone course (FISH F691 Marine Policy Capstone) after completing at least 9 credits of coursework.

Marine Studies (MMS) - Comprehensive examination

MMS students should take their comprehensive exams after completing their core course requirements, excluding the professional development core. Students will submit their project proposal to the committee at least 2 weeks before the exam date. Students will defend their proposal to the committee. The committee will review and provide feedback on the project proposal. Students are also expected to answer questions related to their core courses (excluding the professional development core) and their project. The length of the exam should be scheduled for 90-120 minutes. If an MMS student wishes to appeal a comprehensive exam decision, they must follow the same process required for MS Marine Biology students. Please refer to the *Marine Biology MS* section of the manual for details on grading and retaking comprehensive exams.

Marine Biology - Comprehensive examinations (MS and PhD)

M.S. students in Marine Biology comprehensive exam: The exam consists of a public defense of the student's proposed thesis plan, followed by a closed-door oral examination administered by the student's advising committee plus one additional examiner from the Marine Biology department. This examiner can include any research or tenure-track faculty member in Marine Biology and will be randomly assigned (the student should coordinate with the Marine Biology department chair). The exam is administered after the student has completed the three required core courses (Marine Biology, Biological Oceanography, and Physiology of Marine Organisms), and has produced, at minimum, a solid working draft of their thesis proposal (see proposal guidelines elsewhere in this handbook). When the advising committee agrees that the proposal is sufficiently developed, and the student is ready to take the comprehensive exam, the student should notify the CFOS Academic Programs Office to schedule a public presentation and closed-door oral examination of the proposal. This notification should be given at least one month before the planned exam date and should be accompanied by a copy of the proposal to be transmitted to the additional Marine Biology faculty examiner, as well as an abstract that will be shared in the announcement. The student should be prepared to answer concepts discussed in the core classes during their oral comprehensive exam, but other topics related to their thesis work may also be covered. Students are encouraged to reach out to their committee and the marine biology outside examiner to determine additional topics they should plan to review for their comprehensive exam. The public presentation (and defense) of the thesis proposal consists of an approximately 30- to 40-minute presentation of the planned research, including objectives/hypotheses, motivation for the research, and approach/methods, and may include preliminary results if applicable. Following the presentation, the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions about the student's area of research.

Grading of MS Marine Biology Comprehensive Exam: All members of the Marine Biology tenure-track (i.e., teaching) faculty are expected to be present at public proposal defenses,

barring any unavoidable schedule conflicts. It is the committee chair's responsibility to formally add the scheduled proposal presentation to the calendar of the Marine Biology faculty. Following the public presentation, the advising committee and the additional Marine Biology faculty examiner will administer a closed-door oral examination. The committee members and the marine biology outside examiner will deliberate both after the proposal presentation as well as the oral exam if the student passes their exam. The student is encouraged to discuss exam topics with all members of the advising committee and the additional Marine Biology faculty examiner. However, a detailed understanding of concepts and topics covered in the Marine Biology core courses (i.e., Biological Oceanography, Marine Biology, and Physiology of Marine Organisms) is the basis for the comprehensive exam. . The typical format for the closed-door session consists of two or more rounds of questioning during which each committee member and the outside examiner will ask questions that may address aspects of the planned research, or broader topics in marine biology, the core classes, or other relevant fields. The student will be evaluated based on: a) ability to explain and justify the research plan, b) understanding of the broader context and/or significance of the planned research, and c) command of key concepts in the broad field of marine biology (as covered by the core courses). Questions will be appropriate for an M.S. student in the second year of their graduate career. A student's performance is graded as Pass, Fail, or Conditional Pass. Performance need not be perfect to warrant a pass, but the student should demonstrate mastery of the core knowledge of their discipline and an ability to apply that knowledge. As a guideline, exams will usually be graded "Pass" if the answers, overall, are ~80% correct. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that a "Report of Examination" form is completed. The form must be submitted before the "Advancement to Candidacy" form is filed. When filling out the Report of Examination form, the student must list the "outside" examiner as a committee member as there is no designated area on the form to list MS outside examiners.

Retaking the MS Marine Biology Comprehensive Exam: If the committee decides that the student lacks knowledge in some of the areas covered during the exam, they may award a "Conditional Pass". The committee will then dictate what conditions must be met. These conditions can include but are not limited to, remedial coursework, additional assigned readings, and/or satisfactory answers to written questions after an additional period of study. In some cases, the committee may require an additional examination or other evidence that the deficiency has been overcome. The conditions must be met before the exam will be graded "Pass". Except under unusual circumstances, which should be explained in writing to the Department Chair, the conditions must be met within one semester of the exam date. If, after one semester, the student is not making substantial progress toward completing the conditions, and does not have an acceptable reason for the delay, the Department Chair can change the exam grade to "Fail". If the student's answers are, overall, less than about 70% correct, the exam will be graded "Fail". A failed exam can be repeated once in the same format as the first exam. The CFOS Academic Programs Office should again be notified one month before the planned exam date, and a new faculty examiner from the Marine Biology department will be assigned. Students should work with their committee to address deficiencies before a second attempt. If the exam is failed a second time, the student can petition, within 30 days of the exam, to retake the exam for the third time. The petition (in letter form) should be signed by the student's advisory committee members and chair stating they approve the re-take, and be submitted to the Department Chair for approval. The letter should include a thorough and convincing explanation of the reasons why the first two attempts were unsuccessful, and the detailed steps (including a timeline for completing these steps) the student will take to succeed. If a third attempt is unsuccessful, no other attempts will be allowed and the student will not be able to complete the M.S. degree requirements for Marine Biology. If the student disagrees with

the outcome of the exam, the student can appeal the decision of the committee through the established [UAF process for academic appeals](#).

The comprehensive examination for PhD Marine Biology students: requires a comprehensive examination (written and oral) for PhD students, normally taken near the end of the second year. The purpose of the examination is to demonstrate that the student is qualified to undertake the proposed dissertation research. Therefore, the exam must be successfully completed before the majority of the research is conducted. Students cannot advance to candidacy until the exam is successfully completed. Each student takes an exam specifically written for him or her by the members of the graduate advisory committee. The general topic areas to be covered in the examination should be discussed with the committee, and these areas should be noted in the Graduate Study Plan. Often, the student and committee will select graduate courses to help prepare for the examination. The student should consult committee members 3-6 months before the examination is planned and agree on the topic areas to be covered. Students typically schedule individual meetings with committee members to discuss strategies for preparing for the exam and/or obtain relevant reading materials. The exam consists of a written portion and an oral portion. Each committee member will prepare a question or series of questions that generally require one day (8 hours) to complete (i.e., allow a minimum of five days to complete the written exam for a committee with five members). Sections of the written exam do not have to be completed on consecutive days but should ideally occur within a 2-week time frame. After the committee members have evaluated the written exam (normally within one to three weeks), a closed-door oral exam is scheduled. All oral exams MUST include an outside examiner appointed by the Graduate School. **An application (<https://uaf.edu/gradschool/current-students/forms.php>) for the outside examiner for a PhD oral examination MUST be made, by the PhD student, to the Graduate School at least 14 days before the scheduled oral exam.** Ideally, all committee members will be present for the oral exam either in person or via Zoom. It is the student's responsibility to schedule a room and/or a Zoom meeting. CFOS Academic Programs can provide the student with instructions on how to set up a Zoom account and can assist with scheduling rooms. Contact the CFOS Academic Programs Office at least two weeks before the start of the exam period. In unusual cases, when a committee member cannot participate in the oral exam, the student should ask the Department Chair for assistance. The usual remedy is to appoint another faculty member to represent the absent member.

Grading of the PhD Marine Biology comprehensive exam: The advising committee evaluates the student's performance on both the written and oral portions of the exam. In addition, the outside examiner must certify that the oral examination was both rigorous and fair. The committee will award a "Pass" if they determine that the student knows the necessary to successfully complete their dissertation research and place their research findings in a broader context.

Retaking the PhD Marine Biology comprehensive exam: A "Conditional Pass" may be awarded if the student demonstrates mastery in most subject areas covered but has one or more areas of deficiency. The committee will specify conditions designed to remedy the deficiencies, which can include (but are not limited to) satisfactory answers to written and/or oral follow-up questions to be attempted after an additional period of study, or additional coursework. The conditions must be met before the exam will be graded "Pass". Except under unusual circumstances, which should be explained in writing to the Department Chair and the advising committee chair, the conditions must be met within one semester of the exam date. If, after one semester, the student has not made substantial progress toward completing the conditions and does not have an acceptable reason for the delay, the committee can change the exam grade to

“Fail”. If the committee finds that the student has not demonstrated sufficient mastery of the topics covered, the exam will be graded “Fail”. Students are entitled to retake the exam one time but are strongly encouraged to talk with committee members to get a detailed evaluation of the exam and suggestions for improvement. If the exam is failed a second time, the student can petition, within 30 days of being notified of their grade of Fail, to take the exam for the third time. The petition should be signed by the student’s advisory committee members and chair and submitted to the Department Chair. It should include a thorough and convincing explanation of the reasons why the first two attempts were unsuccessful, and the detailed steps (including a timeline for completing these steps) the student will take to improve success. If a third attempt is unsuccessful, no other attempts will be allowed and the student will not be able to complete the PhD degree requirement for Marine Biology. If the student disagrees with the outcome of the exam, the student can appeal the decision of the committee through the established [UAF process for academic appeals](#).

Oceanography - Comprehensive examinations (MS & PhD)

MS Oceanography students - In place of a Comprehensive Examination, MS students in Oceanography are required to publicly present and defend their research proposal, ideally during their second semester, but no later than their second year. In addition, Oceanography MS students are expected to take the 1-credit course in Integrative Oceanography (OCN633) during their second year after completion of Oceanography’s four core courses to foster cross-disciplinary thinking.

The **public presentation** of the MS (and PhD) thesis proposal consists of an approximately 30-minute outline of the planned research, including objectives/hypotheses, motivation for the research, and approach/methods, and may include preliminary results if applicable. Following the presentation, the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions about the student’s area of research (~ 10 minutes). Faculty members present will complete a written evaluation form with any concerns and whether the student’s research is on track. There is no formal grading, but the advisory committee will convey any areas of weakness in a constructive manner. All members of the Oceanography tenure-track (i.e., teaching) faculty are expected to be present at public proposal defenses, barring unavoidable schedule conflicts.

Report on Examination Form: MS Oceanography students – After the completion of any proposal defense and OCN633, the student must submit a “Report on Examination” signed by your committee chair, committee members, the Department Chair, and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. The student and/or advisor is responsible for filing this form. The “Report on Examination” form can be found on the UAF Graduate School website under “forms”. Students cannot advance to candidacy until the thesis proposal presentation is successfully completed and examination form is submitted.

Ph.D. Oceanography Students – The Oceanography Department requires a research proposal presentation (see the format in the M.S. Oceanography students “public presentation” section of this handbook) given by the Ph.D. student during their second year, and a comprehensive examination (written and oral), normally taken during their third year. The purpose of the presentation and examination is to demonstrate that the student is ready and qualified to undertake the research for their dissertation. Therefore, **it is important that both are successfully completed before major portions of the research are completed**. Students advance to candidacy once the research proposal presentation and exam are successfully completed. Written examination questions are dissertation-specific and are prepared by each member of the advisory committee. General topic areas and graduate courses required for the examination should be identified and discussed with the committee and

noted in the Graduate Study Plan. The student and committee members should revisit the topic areas to be covered three to six months before the comprehensive examination is planned and revise as needed. Tentative exam dates should be set at this time. The oral examination takes place after the written examination is completed. All committee members should strive to be present, in person or via video conference, for the oral exam.

Timing and preparation: Two weeks before the written exams, the student should contact the CFOS Academic Programs Office to reserve a room for the period over which they will take place. Each committee members' written questions are designed to be completed within one day (six to eight hours). Examination days do not have to be consecutive but should not be spread over more than about two weeks. After the committee members evaluate the written examination (normally within one to three weeks), a closed-door oral examination takes place. The student should also contact CFOS Academic Programs Office to reserve a room for the oral examination two weeks prior to the scheduled day.

An application for the outside examiner for the oral examination **MUST** be made, **by the PhD student**, to the Graduate School at least 14 days before the scheduled oral exam.

(<https://uaf.edu/gradschool/current-students/forms.php>)

Grading: The examination committee evaluates the student's performance on both the written and oral examinations. The outside examiner certifies that the oral examination was both rigorous and fair. The standard for a "Pass" is that the committee determines the student has the knowledge necessary to successfully complete their dissertation research. The standard for a "Conditional Pass" is that the committee determines the student has most of the knowledge necessary to successfully complete their dissertation research, but that there are one or more areas of deficiency. The committee will specify conditions to remedy the deficiencies. Actions can include satisfactory answers to written and/or oral follow up questions, to be attempted after an additional period of study, or suggest courses to address knowledge gaps. These conditions must be met before the examination is considered "Pass", typically within one semester post examination. Under exceptional circumstances, documented to the Department Chair and the Committee Chair, additional time may be granted. If the student does not make substantial progress toward completing these conditions and does not have an acceptable reason for the delay, the exam committee can change the exam grade to "Fail". If the advisory committee does not determine the student's performance demonstrates the knowledge necessary to successfully complete the dissertation research, the exam will be graded "Fail".

Report on Examination Form for Ph.D. students

After the completion of any examination (e.g., comprehensive exam, thesis defenses), the student must submit a "Report on Examination" signed by the committee chair, committee members, the outside examiner, the Department Chair, and the Dean for Academic Programs. The student and/or advisor is responsible for filing this form. The form can be found on the UAF Graduate School website under "forms".

Re-taking the Exam: Students failing the comprehensive examination are entitled to one retake. Students in this situation should discuss with committee members the deficiencies of their first examination and receive suggestions for improvement prior to repeating the examination. In the case of a second failure, the student may petition for a third attempt within 30 days after being notified of the second failing. The petition should be signed by the student's advisory committee members and chair and submitted to the Department Chair. It should include a thorough and convincing explanation of the reasons why the first two attempts were unsuccessful, and the detailed steps (possibly including a timeline for completing these steps) the student will take to improve their chances for passing on the third try. If a third attempt is unsuccessful, the student will not be able to complete the Ph.D. degree requirement in

Oceanography but may consider options within the MS programs.

Should the student disagree with the outcome of the examination, the student can appeal the decision of the committee through the established [UAF process for academic appeals](#).

Outside Examiner (PhD students only)

An “outside examiner” (OE) representing and appointed by the Director of the Graduate School is required for all PhD oral examinations and dissertation defenses. The examiner must be from a department outside CFOS. The function of the outside examiner is to determine that a stringent, unbiased examination is given and that it is fairly administered and evaluated.

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE ORAL EXAM OR DEFENSE:

- **It is the student’s responsibility to file a [request for an outside examiner](#).**
- It is also the student’s responsibility to contact the CFOS Academic Programs Office to reserve a room and to facilitate distance participation.

For the dissertation defense, you must supply the outside examiner with a credible version of your dissertation at least one week prior to the defense.

Report on Examination Form

After the completion of any examination (i.e., proposal presentation/comprehensive exam, thesis or dissertation defense), the student must submit a “Report on Examination form” signed by your committee chair, committee members, the Department Chair, and the Associate Dean for Academic Programs (and if required, the outside examiner). Typically, the committee chair will initiate the Report of Examination form; however, the student should confirm who will initiate this process. The form is located on the [UAF Graduate School forms website](#).

MS General Requirements

Since master's degree requirements may change, the most reliable source for UAF degree and program requirements is the current catalog. We have provided links to the most recent catalog. However, if a student is following an earlier catalog for their degree requirements, these links may not direct to that specific version. In such cases, please refer to archived catalogs to find the requirements listed on the student's Graduate Study Plan or Advancement to Candidacy.

[MS Fisheries](#)

[MS Marine Biology](#)

[Masters in Marine Policy \(MMP\) General Requirements](#)

[Masters in Marine Studies \(MMS\) General Requirements](#)

[MS Oceanography](#)

PhD General Requirements

Since PhD degree requirements may change, the most reliable source for UAF degree and program requirements is the current catalog. We have provided links to the most recent catalog. However, if a student is following an earlier catalog for their degree requirements, these links may not direct to that specific version. In such cases, please refer to archived catalogs to find the requirements listed on the student's Graduate Study Plan or Advancement to Candidacy.

[PhD Fisheries](#)

[PhD Marine Biology](#)

[PhD Oceanography](#)

Graduate student expectations

Expectation Documents

Expectations for graduate students and advisors are provided to incoming students by their major advisor, typically in advance of acceptance. Expectations are specific for each advisor and/or department but share fundamental aspects. The expectations document is a source of information and should be the basis of early discussions between students and their advisors. The student and advisor should ensure they have the same interpretation of these expectations, and it is recommended to review them during annual committee meetings. If you have not been provided with one, please contact your advisor to discuss expectations.

Research and Teaching Assistantships (RA/TA)

Students are awarded assistantships to support them while they pursue their academic goals and earn their degree. While the assistantship is a job, the academic pursuit is a personal and professional development and enrichment. Research and Teaching Assistantships provide a bi-weekly salary. Vacation time while on a RA/TA must be

approved with their faculty advisor and/or instructor on record for the course they are assigned to. For TAs, absences due to field work requirements should be communicated to the instructor of record in advance of the beginning of the semester. Research and Teaching assistantships are at-will positions. The funding agency/advisor has the right to terminate funding for justifiable cause at any time.

Fellowships

A graduate fellowship is a non-service, non-working award, meaning that fellows are not considered employees and are not required to work as teaching or research assistants during the fellowship period unless they receive a supplemental Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) position. While fellowships are not linked to a specific job, programs may establish academic expectations for fellows, such as maintaining good academic standing, progressing in coursework, completing preliminary examinations, or conducting independent thesis research, as long as these expectations align with the program's degree requirements. Graduate fellows are mentored by graduate faculty members as part of their advanced degree objectives.

Fellowship stipend payments made to U.S. citizens and permanent residents are not subject to tax withholding by universities **but** are considered taxable income and will be reported on a 1099 and/or 1098-T form. Recipients are responsible for paying any applicable income taxes. Although fellowships do not constitute employment, fellows may still be expected to engage in research or other scholarly activities as part of their academic progress.

Fellowship payments for international students in the U.S. have specific tax implications, which depend on factors like visa status, tax treaties, and the type of fellowship. International students should consult their university's International Student Office for guidance on visa and work-related matters, and the Financial Aid or Fellowship Office for details on fellowship terms. They should also seek advice from tax professionals specializing in international student taxation to understand the tax implications and potential treaty benefits. IRS resources and publications can offer further tax guidance, and the embassy or consulate may provide additional assistance. Local tax assistance programs can help with filing requirements.

Please note, CFOS as a department cannot offer tax advice to students.

Thesis credits

Graduate students enrolled in thesis credits (FISH/MB/FOS/OCN 699) are expected to dedicate time and effort equivalent to a traditional course, with 6 thesis credits requiring approximately a minimum of 270 hours per semester (about 18 hours per week) and 9 thesis credits requiring around a minimum of 405 hours per semester (about 27 hours per week), in alignment with standard academic workload expectations. Resources to read:

<https://www.bestcollegesonline.org/faq/how-much-time-per-week-should-i-expect-to-spend-on-earning-a-masters-degree-while-working-full-time/>

<https://thesislaunch.com/guide/time-management-final-year-thesis-coursework/>

International Students - Thesis/Course credit expectation

The Department of Homeland Security views international students as a guest in our country and requires students to complete their program expediently. International students are required to enroll full-time at 9 credits a semester. This ensures that they are engaged with their studies, and can make timely progress to their degrees. For more information about remaining in status please review the [F-1 Status](#) on [International Student and Scholar Services webpage](#).

Guidelines for Preparation of the Thesis/Dissertation (MS/PhD Fisheries, Marine Biology, and Oceanography students)

(NOTE: THERE ARE SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR FISHERIES STUDENTS AT THE END OF THIS SECTION)

Be sure to attend the thesis preparation workshop offered by the UAF Graduate School every semester.

Writing

Students are urged to carefully read the [Thesis/Dissertation Format Workbook](#), available at the Graduate School website.

BEFORE beginning to write. Many aspects of the required format are easy to incorporate, as the document is written, but difficult and time-consuming to do after the thesis is already nearly done. Departments generally expect that thesis or dissertation chapters are prepared in a format for submission to a peer-reviewed journal (or in some cases, already submitted or published), especially for PhD dissertations. The Graduate School provides templates for thesis, dissertations, and projects in Word or in Latex (contact the UAF Graduate School for the most current template). Talk to your committee to determine whether the “monograph” or the “manuscript” style is most appropriate. Students will often benefit from carefully reading several published papers or a thesis or dissertation in their field before beginning to write. Students will have already read many papers, but in this case, students should read them to look closely at the structure, writing style, and other elements they might not have attended to when reading for content. Major advisors can often suggest papers or theses that they consider well-written.

Some suggested courses that may be beneficial to your preparation for writing your thesis/dissertation:

MBI F602: Proposal Writing - 1 credit

Familiarizes students with the proposal writing process. Writing proposals is a common requirement during graduate school and will be continuing during the career as a scientist and researcher. This class aims to cover some common rules about good proposal writing. Students will be required to write a proposal and to give feedback to 1-2 proposals of classmates. Course may be repeated for credit.

FISH/OCN F677 Scientific Writing Techniques - 3 credits

This class takes a comprehensive approach to learning to write for scientific audiences with skill and clarity. Writing a manuscript or grant proposal is approached in sections, which are revised throughout the semester in response to reviews from classmates. Topics include writing approaches, storytelling, style, grammar, punctuation and editorial review.

BIOL F604: Scientific Writing, Editing and Revising in Biological Sciences - 3 credits

For students who are ready to produce a manuscript or thesis chapter. Topics include the publication process, selecting a journal, authorship, the components of the scientific paper, revising and editing manuscripts, and responding to reviews. Students will produce a complete manuscript. **Prerequisites:** Graduate standing in Biology, Wildlife, or related discipline; permission of instructor.

WLF/BIOL F602: Research Design - 3 credits

An introduction to the philosophy, performance, and evaluation of hypothetical/deductive research in the biological sciences, with emphasis on hypothesis formulation and testing. Each student will develop a research proposal.

Students should note that strong skills in written and spoken English are essential for a successful academic or research career in the United States (or other English-speaking countries) and are valuable even if an international student plans to return to their home country. Any necessary improvement of these skills should be given high priority early in a graduate program.

Major advisors and committee members expect to spend a reasonable amount of time editing student writing and also accept that students whose first language is not English will require more editorial assistance. However, students should not submit thesis or dissertation drafts requiring several dozens of editorial corrections on every page. If such a draft is submitted, committee members may return it unread. Students who find that their writing skills are not up to producing an acceptable initial draft should consider hiring an editorial assistant. Sometimes, fellow graduate students who are reasonably familiar with your field can provide the best help and are willing to work for modest compensation (suggested minimum of \$20/hour). However, not all students are able or willing to provide such assistance, and they are under no obligation to do so. Note that such editorial assistants can correct errors of grammar or syntax but should not be expected to extensively rewrite the material. It is primarily the student's responsibility to write the thesis or dissertation in acceptable English. If a student's writing skills are so poor as to make that impossible, the student must improve those skills before they can graduate.

Writing support is available for UAF graduate students at all stages of the writing process. From defining your questions or crafting a proposal to working through dissertation structure and edits, tutoring and other resources are available to get you over the mountains and through the woods of your writing process. Contact the UAF Graduate School or the UAF Writing Center for more information.

With so many writing books available, selecting the right one can be overwhelming. To simplify this, the UAF Rasmuson Library compiled a list of recommended books. Please visit the [Rasmuson Library Graduate Writer's Reading List](#) for a comprehensive list.

Additional writing courses that may be of interest. Please note that these courses cannot be applied to your graduate degree and are considered deficiency courses.

OCN F303: Data Analysis and Writing for Aquatic Sciences - 3 credits

In this course, students will develop skills in basic data analysis, and scientific writing, and interpretation of published research. This course will utilize public data sets and peer-reviewed scientific writing samples drawn from the fields of fisheries, marine sciences, and limnology that address an important question in aquatic science.

ENGL F314: Technical Writing - 3 credits

Writing business letters (Letters of inquiry, complaint, evaluation, and job application with resume), preparing tables, graphs, process descriptions, technical instructions, abstracts, grant proposals, and technical reports (progress, laboratory, survey, incident, feasibility and research).

Review and revision

Normally, the student will submit each chapter of the thesis or dissertation, as it is completed, to their advisory committee chair. Some committee chairs, however, prefer to receive a complete thesis draft before beginning review. Students should ask their committee chair for directions as they begin to write, and this is also a good time to find out about the chair's travel schedule and other obligations that could affect how long it takes for them to complete their review. Advisory committee members may or may not read the first draft chapters. This is left to the preference of the committee chair, committee member, and student. However, it is recommended that committee members read early drafts of chapters when they have specialized, related expertise not shared by the committee chair. The committee chair (and any committee members) will read the chapters and return them to the student with suggestions for revision. A thorough review is time-consuming, and students should allow (even in ideal circumstances) at least **two weeks** for the review of the first draft of each chapter. The review can take longer if the faculty member is on travel, unusually busy, or if the chapter requires an unusual amount of revision and correction. The student should discuss availability for review with each of their committee members well in advance.

If the first draft is well done and requires only a moderate amount of revision, and with the agreement of the major advisor, the student should submit the second draft of the complete thesis to the entire committee for review. Unless all committee members agree to a shorter time, a complete copy of the defense draft of the thesis or dissertation must be given to all committee members at least **30 days before the defense**. Note that this requirement means that the thesis or dissertation must reach the committee member by this date.

Scheduling defense

Graduate thesis defense examinations are public events and open to the university and wider community. The student should submit their name and project, thesis, or dissertation title and the date, time, Zoom link, and location of their defense examination to the CFOS Academic Programs Office and the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to their defense examination date. The Graduate School, along with the home program, department, college, or school, will advertise the examination. The defending student or committee chair will be responsible for dispersing the Zoom password (this will alleviate any potential Zoom bombing opportunities). You may submit your Public Defense Announcement to the Graduate School using the submission form found on the [Forms webpage](#).

The defense examination includes a public presentation of the thesis moderated by the chair of the graduate advisory committee, followed by a private executive examination by the committee.

PhD students, DO NOT FORGET to schedule your outside examiner at least two weeks prior to your defense. You must be prepared to provide a copy of the defense draft of the dissertation to the Outside Examiner at least two weeks before the defense. Sometimes the approaching deadlines will force a student to schedule a defense before final approval of the committee is obtained. While this is permitted, you should note that this could result in the cancellation of the defense after it has already been advertised.

Generally, multiple drafts and editorial exchanges with your advisor are necessary (either chapter by chapter, or as a complete thesis or dissertation). Once you have completed several rounds of corrections, and your advisor/committee chair has signaled their approval, the document will be ready for submission and review by the committee. Depending on committee feedback further drafts may be required.

Rarely, a student will think that their thesis or dissertation is ready for defense when the committee chair and/or committee members think that it is not. You should recognize that the committee members' requirements for additional revisions before the defense are in your best interest. Keep in mind that the committee is trying to provide you with the best possible chance of a successful defense. Occasionally, a majority of committee members agree that a thesis or dissertation is ready for defense, but a single committee member disagrees. In that case, the student and their major advisor should ask the Department Chair for their department for advice.

If you did not receive a link from CFOS Academic Programs to fill one out, please contact them at uaf-cfos-academics@alaska.edu.

NOTE: The thesis/dissertation version submitted to the Department Chair has to be approved by the advisory committee and has to be without grammatical, spelling, or formatting errors. **If a thesis contains a substantial amount of errors, the Department Chair can refuse to complete the review of the thesis and request additional editing by the student and advisory chair before the thesis is resubmitted to them.** If this results in delays in submission to the UAF Graduate School, graduation may be postponed to the following semester.

The Appeal of a Failure of the Defense

Failure of the thesis or dissertation defense is uncommon but not unheard of. Because oral examinations are virtually impossible to evaluate in retrospect, appeals of decisions in defenses are unlikely to be successful. However, the student can appeal the decision of the committee through the established [UAF process for academic appeals](#).

Thesis Format for Fisheries Students

The UAF Graduate School specifies a format (i.e., pages, order of pages, margins, etc.) and directs that the style conforms to an accepted style, such as one specified by an appropriate journal. The Fisheries Department asks the following of students and their committees: As a default please prepare your thesis chapters according to the graduate school's instructions and in the style prescribed by an appropriate journal approved by the committee, in which case please provide the Fisheries Department Chair with a copy of that journal's guide for authors. In the absence of a specific journal intended for publication of the chapter, please refer to the American Fisheries Society Style Guide instructions for manuscript formatting (<https://fisheries.org/books-journals/writing-tools/style-guide/>).

The Fisheries Department acknowledges and supports the fact that individual thesis and dissertation chapters may be diverse, and the products produced may include a variety of forms and media. In cases where the main product of a thesis or dissertation chapter is not a written scientific product for publication in a scholarly journal, the Fisheries Department expects that a written summary description of the scholarly effort will still be produced that addresses three key components of the scholarly process. First, the chapter should document in writing the motivation for the product being produced or the effort undertaken, where possible relying on existing scholarship and theory, and the specific intent or purpose of the product in addressing that need. Second, the chapter should provide a comprehensive written description of the product or effort, with particular focus on the intentionality of design and potentially the positionality of the author as appropriate. Third, the concluding portion of the chapter should consider the overall success of the product in meeting the need identified, and to the extent practicable place the product or effort in the context of similar endeavors. In the case of chapters not intended for publication in scholarly journals, the Fisheries Department highlights the need for students to consult with their Graduate Committee members and the Department

Chair, to ensure the proposed chapter and associated product(s) are appropriate as a component of a graduate degree in Fisheries.

Thesis Format for Marine Biology and Oceanography Students

There are no special format requirements for Marine Biology and Oceanography students beyond those required by the graduate school.

Thesis/Dissertation Deadlines

When planning for graduation, students must be mindful of [deadlines](#). CFOS thesis/dissertation deadlines, including the deadline for submitting to the Department Chair, are available on our student resource page.

MS students typically spend two full semesters writing and revising their thesis, while PhD students usually spend at least four semesters on their dissertation. This timeline can be shortened if individual chapters are written for publication early and preliminary sections (e.g., introduction, literature review, methods) are completed well in advance.

Students should coordinate with their committee chair and members to determine draft submission timelines. The Department Chair will not review a thesis or dissertation until the committee chair has given final approval. Final approval is indicated when the chair signs the Thesis/Dissertation Submittal Form or notifies the Department Chair that the document is ready for review.

After the Department Chair reviews the thesis/dissertation and provides feedback, the student must make the necessary revisions and submit a final copy to CFOS Academic Programs (they will provide the copy to the Dean). Once the Department Chair signs the Thesis Submittal Form, the Dean typically signs it as well. After the Dean's signature, the student can submit their thesis/dissertation to the UAF Graduate School through the designated portal (see "General Thesis/Dissertation Submission Procedure" for more details).

Application for Graduation

You must be registered for at least three graduate credits within your discipline and maintain enrollment during the semester in which you successfully defend your thesis. Additionally, you must be registered for at least one graduate credit within your discipline and remain enrolled in the semester you graduate (if you already defended). The only exception applies to master's students in non-thesis/non-project programs, who are not required to register for the semester they plan to graduate.

We strongly recommend applying for graduation in the semester before your intended graduation. Applications submitted after the published deadline will be processed for the following semester. You do not need to have completed all degree requirements before applying—your application simply indicates your intent to finish all requirements during the planned graduation semester. If you do not complete your degree requirements by the end of the semester, you must reapply for graduation.

For more information, please visit the Office of the Registrar's [graduation](#) page.

General Thesis/Dissertation Submission Procedure

After you have successfully defended your thesis/dissertation, made any recommended corrections, and your thesis/dissertation approval form has been signed by your committee, Department Chair, and Dean, you can begin the Online Thesis Submission Process. It is a courtesy to provide/purchase a copy of your thesis for your advisor, and possibly your

committee members. They provided the guidance and in most cases funding to get you to this point. Please do not forget them when considering how many copies to purchase.

To find all the necessary information to ensure thesis/dissertation submission and graduation go smoothly, please visit the UAF Graduate School “[Roadmap](#)” webpage. This page includes graduation semester timeline, graduate school dates and deadlines, upcoming defenses, thesis/dissertation formatting standards. and how to publish your thesis/dissertation to ProQuest.

PhD candidates will have some additional paperwork to fill out (Survey of Earned Doctorates, Publishing Your Dissertation, and a 50-word abstract for the commencement brochure). These forms will be given to you when you turn in your thesis/dissertation for the format check at the UAF Graduate School. Once the final copies and any accompanying paperwork are turned in to the UAF Graduate School, the UAF Graduate School will then issue a final clearance to the Graduation Office that changes deferred thesis grades to pass.

Graduation Checkout Requirements

Upon graduation, students must check with their advisor to ensure all necessary steps are taken regarding the labeling and storage of samples. A copy of all data, analysis, figures and documents generated during their degrees must be provided to the major advisor. Graduates have two weeks to clean out their lab spaces, desks, and return any UAF-owned equipment, computers, and keys. Failure to return equipment, digital records, or keys may result in a hold being placed on their diploma and/or additional fees being assessed. It is essential to complete these tasks promptly to avoid any delays in the graduation process.

Sample MS/PhD Degree Timeline/Checklist

All CFOS students are required to meet the UAF and CFOS mandated safety training within the first month of their study. Special training requirements apply to NSF-funded undergraduate and graduate students which they need to discuss with their major advisor. Students also need to discuss additional safety training requirements based on their study needs with their major advisor. If your study involves observation, collection, or experimentation with vertebrate animals, you may need approval from the [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#) and may require training. Similarly, if you are planning on working with human subjects, including surveys and interviews, you main need approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and associated training (<https://www.uaf.edu/irb/training/>). Be sure that you check with the [Office of Research Integrity](#) if you have any questions about making sure that you are conducting responsible and ethical research.

Full-time master's students intending to complete their degree within two and a half years.

1. Before the beginning of your first semester:

- Confer with your major advisor or interim advisor to select the courses to be taken during your first and second semesters
- If you have a major advisor and a specific research area or topic, find out what you will need to accomplish during the first year, and set up a rough schedule. This of course is subject to revision.
- Ask your major advisor for reading suggestions relative to your project, complete the reading, and discuss it with your advisor.
- **ALL UAF and CFOS safety training must be completed before entering any labs.**

2. During your first year:

- Meet frequently (a short meeting at least biweekly is recommended) with your major advisor to discuss your progress in research and courses (especially if you are having difficulties). You should refine and revise your research goals and timeline as needed.
- If in the rare case, you have an interim advisor, these meetings should focus on your progress in locating a project and major advisor, as well as progress in or difficulties with courses.
- Apply for funding if you do not have funding to support your research. You can refer to the [CFOS student funding](#) page pertaining to internal funding. Your advisor or interim advisor may know of additional, outside sources, and can assist with proposal preparation. All students should submit an application for [UAF Privately Funded Scholarship](#) every year. One application covers all the UA scholarships you may be eligible to be awarded.
- At the end of the first semester or the beginning of the second semester, discuss any changes in your class schedule needed due to course cancellations, performance during the first semester, changes in your interests, etc.
- By the beginning of the second semester, discuss potential committee members with your major advisor or interim advisor. If you have not met or spoken with prospective candidates, arrange a meeting to talk about your planned research.

- All students working with vertebrates, human subjects, or biosafety must comply with UAF policies and acquire the appropriate permits to do research. For more information, contact the [Office of Research Integrity](#)

3. By the end of your first year:

- Meet with your major advisor to ensure that your thesis project is fairly well outlined. What is the problem you are addressing? The hypotheses being tested? The approaches and methods you are using? Any significant results so far?
- Choose your committee members, plus one or two alternates in case a first choice cannot serve.
- Contact your choices and ask them if they are willing and able to serve on your advisory committee.
- Complete and submit the [Appointment of Graduate Advisory Committee form](#).
- Schedule a meeting with your committee. Prepare a draft GSP and proposal in consultation with your major advisor before the meeting.
- At the meeting, discuss the [GSP](#) and your research plans. Complete an [Annual Progress Report](#) form.
- Revise GSP as needed based on committee input. Submit using the forms on the UAF School website.

The following forms should be submitted no later than March 15th (if it looks as if you will be submitting the forms late, you will need to request an extension - [Extension to submit late forms Link](#)):

- GSP and proposal
- Appointment of Committee
- Annual Academic Progress Report

Forms not submitted in time could result in student status changing from “in good standing” to “out of status”. If you start in the spring semester, you have until the end of the fall semester to submit forms.

4. During your second or third semester:

- Complete required courses.
- Schedule your comprehensive examination/proposal defense.
- Continue to meet frequently with your major advisor, assess your progress, and set future goals for your research.
- Meet with committee members as needed for additional advice.
- Conduct field or laboratory research or data analysis and modeling relevant to your project.

5. By the end of your second year:

- Pass your comprehensive examination/proposal defense (even if a retake is required).
- File [Report of Comprehensive Exam form](#).
- File an [Advancement to Candidacy form](#).
- Conduct field or laboratory research or data analysis and modeling relevant to your project.
- Continue to meet frequently with your major advisor. Begin writing your thesis, even if some aspects of your research are still in progress.

- Schedule a meeting with your advisory committee.

The following forms should be submitted no later than March 15th (if it looks as if you will be submitting the forms late, you will need to request an extension - [Extension to submit late forms Link](#)):

- Annual Academic Progress Report
- Report of Examination Form (if completed comprehensive exam/proposal defense).
- Advancement to Candidacy (if Report of Examination Form has been submitted).

6. Fifth semester:

- Tie up any loose ends in your research and data analysis.
- Finish writing your thesis, conferring often with your major advisor and committee.
- Schedule your Defense
- Defend.
 - File your [Report of Defense form](#).
 - File your [Thesis Approval form](#) when your advisor gives you clearance that the thesis is ready for Department Chair review.
 - Complete department exit survey.

Full-time PhD students intending to complete their degree within five years:

1. Before the beginning of your first semester:

- Confer with your major advisor or interim advisor to select the courses to be taken during your first and second semesters.
- If you have a major advisor and a specific research area or topic, find out what you need to accomplish during the first year, and set up a rough schedule. This of course is subject to revision.
- Ask your major advisor for reading suggestions relative to your project, complete the reading, and discuss it with your advisor.
- If you have an interim advisor, ask their advice (and that of the Department Chair) on faculty members to contact relative to potential projects. However, you are free to talk to any faculty member whose research interests you.
- **Complete UAF and CFOS safety training MUST be completed before entering any labs!**
- **Complete any required training (check with your advisor).**

2. During your first year:

- Meet frequently (a short meeting at least biweekly is recommended) with your major advisor to discuss your progress in research and courses (especially if you are having difficulties). You should refine and revise your research goals and timeline as needed.
- If you have an interim advisor, these meetings should focus on your progress in locating a project and major advisor, as well as progress in or difficulties with courses.
- Apply for funding if you do not have funding to support your research. You can refer to the [CFOS student funding](#) page pertaining to internal funding. Your advisor or interim advisor may know of additional, outside sources, and can assist with proposal preparation. All students should submit an application for [UAF Privately Funded](#)

[Scholarship](#) every year. One application covers all the UA scholarships you may be eligible to be awarded.

- At the end of the first semester or the beginning of the second semester, discuss any changes in your class schedule needed due to course cancellations, performance during the first semester, changes in your interests, etc.
- By the beginning of the second semester, discuss potential committee members with your major advisor or interim advisor. If you have not met or spoken with prospective candidates, arrange a meeting to talk about your planned research.
- Choose your committee members, plus one or two alternates, in case a first choice cannot serve.
- Contact your choices and ask them if they are willing and able to serve on your advisory committee.
- Complete and submit the [Appointment of Graduate Advisory Committee](#) form.
- Schedule a meeting with your committee. Prepare a draft [GSP](#) and proposal in consultation with your major advisor before the meeting.
- Also before the meeting, meet with your major advisor to ensure that your thesis project is fairly well outlined. What is the problem you are addressing? The hypotheses being tested? The approaches and methods you are using? Any significant results so far?
- At the meeting, discuss the GSP, proposal, and research plans. Complete an [Annual Progress Report form](#).

The following forms should be submitted no later than March 15th (if it looks as if you will be submitting the forms late, you will need to request an extension - [Extension to submit late forms Link](#)):

- GSP and proposal
- Appointment of Committee
- Annual Academic Progress Report

Forms not submitted in time could result in student status changing from “in good standing” to “out of status”. If you start in the spring semester, you have until the end of the fall semester to submit forms.

- **All students working with vertebrates, human subjects, or biosafety must comply with UAF policies and acquire the appropriate permits to do research. For more information, contact the [Office of Research Integrity](#)**

4. During your third and fourth semester:

- Complete courses listed on your GSP.
- Continue to meet frequently with your major advisor to assess your progress and set future goals for your research.
- Meet with committee members as needed for additional advice.
- Conduct field or laboratory research or data analysis and modeling relevant to your project.

5. By the end of your second year:

- Continue to meet frequently with your major advisor to assess your progress and set future goals for your research.
- Schedule a meeting with your advisory committee. Report on research progress, and ask for input on steps needed for completion of your research. Submit your [Annual Progress Report](#) and Statement on Research Progress.

- Oceanography and Marine Biology students are expected to present their research plan (=proposal presentations) to the faculty, students, and staff within their second year through a public seminar (e.g., CFOS seminar).

The following forms should be submitted no later than March 15th (if it looks as if you will be submitting the forms late, you will need to request an extension - [Extension to submit late forms Link](#)):

- [Annual Academic Progress Report](#)

6. Third year:

- Schedule and pass your comprehensive examination. If an oral examination is required, do not forget to request an outside examiner.
- File [Report of Comprehensive Exam form](#).
- File the [Advancement to Candidacy form](#).
If you are on a RA or TA be sure to contact CFOS Academic Programs to remind them to file an increase of pay rate - it is the student's responsibility to notify CFOS Academic Programs.
- Continue to meet frequently with your major advisor to assess your progress and set future goals for your research.
- Conduct field or laboratory research or data analysis and modeling relevant to your project.
- Meet with committee members as needed for additional advice.
- Schedule a meeting with your advisory committee. Report on research progress, and ask for input on steps needed for completion of your research.

The following forms should be submitted no later than March 15th (if it looks as if you will be submitting the forms late, you will need to request an extension - [Extension to submit late forms Link](#)):

- [Annual Academic Progress Report](#)

7. Fourth year:

- Continue to meet frequently with your major advisor to assess your progress and set future goals for your research.
- Meet with committee members as needed for additional advice.
- Conduct field or laboratory research or data analysis and modeling relevant to your project.
- Begin writing if possible. Prepare a manuscript for publication if your research has progressed to that point. Write up methods, introduction, or background. Attend a national or international meeting to present some of your results.
- Apply for a thesis completion fellowship, if needed.
- Schedule a meeting with your advisory committee. Report on research progress and ask for input on steps needed for completion of your research.

The following forms should be submitted no later than March 15th (if it looks as if you will be submitting the forms late, you will need to request an extension - [Extension to submit late forms Link](#)):

- [Annual Academic Progress Report](#)

8. Fifth year:

- Tie up any loose ends in your research and data analysis.
- Finish writing your dissertation, conferring often with your major advisor and committee. Submit manuscripts for publication as they are completed.
- Attend a national or international meeting (or several) to present your results.
- Apply for postdocs or other jobs appropriate for your skills and career goals.
- Apply for graduation
- Schedule Defense (do not forget to request outside examiner)
- Defend your dissertation.
 - File a [Report of Defense form](#).
 - File an [Approval of Dissertation form](#) (when your advisor gives you the clearance your dissertation is ready to submit to the Department Chair)..
 - Fill out the department exit survey.
- Graduate!

MS SCHEDULE

Semester 1

- Committee Formation
 - Student selects members in consultation with advisor
- Milestones:
 - **Appointment of Graduate Student Advisory Committee Form**

Semester 2

- 1st Committee Meeting
- Milestones (March 15 or December 15 deadline):
 - Graduate Study Plan
 - Preliminary Proposal (submitted with GSP)
 - 3-5 page document
- **Report of the Advisory Committee Form**

Semester 3

- Formal Thesis Proposal
 - Submitted to the committee ~1 month before the meeting
- **Comprehensive Exam (Proposal Presentation)**
 - Student requests a reading list from the committee ~2-3 months before the exam
- Milestones:
 - **Report of Examination Form**
 - **Advancement to Candidacy Form** (completed no later than the semester before defense)

Semester 4-5

- Students must maintain good standing (see guidelines for good standing)
- Milestones:
 - Annual committee meeting
 - **Report of the Advisory Committee Form** (March 15 deadline)

Semester 4-6

- Ensure all graduate requirements are met
- Ensure registration for a minimum of 3 credits in the defense semester (including summer)
- Check the "Path to Graduation" timeline
- Application for Graduation
- The committee approved the final version of the thesis
- Defense announcement
- **Public defense & closed-door exam** with committee
- Milestones:
 - **Report on Thesis Defense Form**
 - Submit the final committee approved thesis to department chair
 - Submit a **Thesis Approval Form**

PhD SCHEDULE

Semester 1

- Committee Formation
 - Student selects members in consultation with advisor
- Milestones:
 - **Appointment of Graduate Student Advisory Committee Form**

Semester 2

- 1st Committee Meeting
- Milestones (March 15 or December 15 deadline):
 - **Graduate Study Plan**
 - Preliminary Proposal (submitted with GSP)
 - 3-5 page document
- **Report of the Advisory Committee Form**

Semester 3-5

- **Formal Thesis Proposal**
 - Should be approved before the comprehensive exam
 - Study for the Comprehensive Exam
 - Student requests a reading list from the committee ~3-4 months before the exam

- **Written Comprehensive Exam**
- Should occur after completion of the courses listed in the Graduate Study Plan
- **Oral Comprehensive Exam** (within 1 month of written exam)
- **Request an external examiner** for the Oral Comprehensive Exam at least two full weeks in advance (longer lead time is advisable)
- Milestones:
 - **Report of Examination Form**
 - **Advancement to Candidacy Form** (completed no later than the semester before defense)

Semester 6-10

- Annual committee meeting
- Milestones:
 - **Report of Advisory Committee** (March 15 or December 15 deadline)
- Students must maintain good standing (see guidelines for good standing)

Defense Semester

- Ensure all graduate requirements are met
- Ensure registration for a minimum of 3 credits in the defense semester (including summer)
- Check the "Path to Graduation" timeline
- Application for Graduation
- The committee approved the final version of the thesis
- Defense announcement and request an outside examiner (at least two weeks before the defense)
- **Public defense & closed-door exam** with the committee
- Milestones:
 - **Report on Thesis Defense Form**
 - Submit the final committee-approved thesis to department chair
 - Submit a **Thesis Approval Form**

Graduation Checklist - MS and PhD students

- File [Advancement to Candidacy](#) form.
- Apply for [graduation](#).
- Schedule a defense date and room (contact CFOS Academic Programs).
- PhD students will need to request an [outside examiner](#)
- Email the CFOS Academic Programs Office and UAF Graduate School:
 - Thesis/Dissertation title;
 - Abstract;
 - Zoom link and password;
 - Photograph for social media post;
 - Any additional information that you would like to include in the announcement
- Defend thesis/dissertation Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____
- Make the needed faculty corrections to thesis/dissertation.
- Fill out [Thesis/Dissertation Approval form](#).
- Turn in thesis/dissertation to Department Chair Due Date: _____
- Make needed Department Chairs corrections.
- Turn in the thesis/dissertation to the Dean (this must go through CFOS Academic Programs). Due Date: _____
- Submit your thesis electronically to the Graduate School (follow thesis submittal instructions under your program [roadmap](#)).
- Make needed Graduate School corrections.
- Marine Biology, Oceanography, and Fisheries: Fill out Exit Interview Survey:

Marine Biology: <https://goo.gl/forms/LmhG5Sy9YHI1zNVp2>

Oceanography: <https://goo.gl/forms/sdiMVX8StByeczpV2>

Fisheries: <https://goo.gl/forms/RTRDyuIBk6i1cV0F3>
- PhD Candidates also need to submit:
 1. SLED Survey (available Graduate School Website)
 2. UMI Microfilm and copyright form
 3. 50-word abstract (for commencement booklet)

GRADUATION (now you are at the finish line)!!
Congratulations!!!



Assistantships and Financial Aid

Graduate Assistantships¹

Research and teaching assistantships are awarded to qualified graduate students by each program based on availability. CFOS students are awarded research or teaching assistantship usually at the time they are admitted into their graduate program.

Graduate assistants are paid a maximum of 20 hours per week while classes are in session (exceptions may apply). Students with assistantships must be registered for at least six credits during the fall and spring semesters (audited credits cannot be counted toward workload).

NOTE: International students MUST be enrolled in nine credits every semester. Students receiving federal funds may need to be registered for nine credits per semester. Please check with your funding source or advisor if you have any questions pertaining to required credits.

Teaching assistantships include a tuition payment by the University for no more than nine credits during each semester if the workload is 15 to 20 hours per week.

Research assistantships can include a tuition payment by grants/contracts to cover six-nine credits per semester. No tuition will be included if the workload is less than 10 hours per week.

Tuition supplements may be used for tuition only. Per the AGWA contract agreement, consolidation and infrastructure fees are typically covered by both TAs and RAs. Special fees (e.g., for a field course, lab fees) are often the responsibility of the student unless the department or grant makes other arrangements.

A graduate student with a GPA of less than 3.0 for one semester will be allowed to petition to continue as a graduate assistant for the next semester. A maximum one-semester exception will be allowed per student. The student's advisory committee chair, the department chair, and Dean must approve the petition by the student.

Rate of Pay for CFOS Graduate Research and Teaching Assistantships **2026-2027 Academic Year**

¹ This manual was published before we received the full 2026-2027 AGWA CBA rates - some of these rates or policies may change after publishing. Please contact CFOS Academic Programs with any questions or updates.

<u>2026-2027 Rates</u>	MS	PhD
Hourly Rate	\$26.06	\$30.40
Bi-weekly 20 hours	\$1042.00	\$1216.00
Bi-weekly 40 hours	\$2084.80	\$2432.00

Funding Sources Available for CFOS Graduate Students

<https://www.uaf.edu/cfos/academics/graduate/scholarships-funding/index.php>

A variety of funding sources are available to assist graduate students in accomplishing their educational and research goals while at UAF. There are sources within the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (CFOS), at the Graduate School, and external to the University. Depending on the source, the funds may be used for living expenses (stipend or salary), tuition, equipment, supplies, or travel. Keep in mind that some fellowships and scholarships require students to be registered for 9 credits in order to receive them. If you have any questions, please contact the funding source.

Grants, Scholarships and Fellowships

Grants are usually based on your financial need, while scholarship awards are based on academic achievement and promise as well as financial need. These types of aid do not have to be repaid. Most grants and scholarships are designed for undergraduate students, although there are some available for graduate students.

UAF Privately Funded Scholarships

The deadline for applying for UAF privately funded scholarships is February 15. Early applications are strongly encouraged. The Financial Aid Office coordinates scholarship applications with the various departments, which evaluate the applications for appropriate scholarships. Please refer to the [Financial Aid Office](#) website for more information.

University of Alaska Foundation Scholarships

Scholarships are available for students attending any campus in the UA system. The deadline is February 15. Students can apply by logging into [UAOnline](#).

Misc. Information

Graduate Student Union

ALASKA GRADUATE WORKERS ASSOCIATION (AGWA/UAW)

The Bargaining Unit definition includes: Graduate Assistants (including Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, Service Assistants, and Engagement Assistants) Student Assistants, and Fellows enrolled in graduate programs.

Regular, full-time University employees, regardless of whether they are enrolled in a graduate program, are not part of AGWA/UAW.

For more information, please visit their website: <https://www.alaska.edu/hr/labor/labor-relations/gseu/index.php>

Timesheets

All GN/GT positions will have timesheets. Similar to other salaried positions, **timesheets will only be required if time off is being taken or if funding needs to be updated for the pay period.** SN/ST positions will continue to use timesheets to submit all hours worked and time off taken.

Time Off (Graduate students on RA/TA/SN/ST)²

AGWA bargaining unit members will receive 16 hours of scheduled time off per semester (including summer semester). The time off is to be used in the semester in which it was received. It does not accrue or rollover. More detailed information will be provided once we receive the AGWA contract. The student's contract must cover the entire semester to be eligible for the paid time off.

Fee Payment

If your tuition, insurance, and/or fees are being covered by a Research Assistantship, Teaching Assistantship, Fellowship, or memo issued by the CFOS Academic Programs Office, it is the student's responsibility to verify that the contract letters/memos have been submitted, processed, and accounts are paid in full by the fee payment deadline. If there is a balance on your student account, and you cannot get in contact with anyone from the CFOS Academic Programs Office to assist by the fee payment deadline, pay the balance and contact us the next business day. We can work with the UAF Bursar's Office, Graduate School, and/or the Financial Aid office about issuing you a refund. If balances are not paid in full by the deadline, the late fee will be the student's responsibility.

Residency

The University of Alaska Fairbanks offers a discounted tuition rate for Alaska residents. Some students qualify automatically, while others must provide additional documentation to verify their residency.

Students generally qualify for residency tuition by living in Alaska for at least one year and demonstrating intent to remain in the state. Other qualifying categories include active-duty military members and their families, certain dependents of Alaska residents, and recent Alaska high school graduates. Programs such as the UA Scholars Program and Come Home to Alaska may also provide residency eligibility for non-residents.

Graduate advisors often encourage students to apply for residency as soon as they are eligible, as it reduces tuition costs charged to their grants and allows funding to stretch further.

To apply for resident tuition, complete the [Application for Resident Tuition Assessment](#) form and submit it, along with the required documentation, to the Office of Admissions before the published deadline for the semester in which residency is sought.

Office/Desk Space

CFOS will make every effort to provide you with space that will include a desk and, if possible, a file cabinet. However, space is not guaranteed. Depending on the number of students and availability of space, you may have exclusive or shared use of shelves, file cabinets, etc. In Fairbanks, "bullpen" desk spaces are reserved for students whose advisors do not have designated desk space available for them. Those students who have access to desk space in an advisor's lab/designated space may request to be placed in a bullpen; however, priority is

² AGWA and the University Administration periodically negotiate the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which may result in policy changes. For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the AGWA website.

given to those students who do not have advisor-designated space. Students who have other desk space options available to them may be asked to relocate to their advisor's designated student space for those students who do not have that option. Juneau students, please check with the Lena Point Facilities coordinator about office/desk space availability.

You can expect to retain your office space as long as you are a full-time CFOS student actively pursuing your degree and are using it to conduct your work. We expect you to vacate your space, remove all of your items, and clean the area when you graduate or when you are no longer an active full-time CFOS student. If you wish to continue to use your office space beyond your date of graduation to prepare chapters for publication submission, you must ask and receive permission from the CFOS Academic Programs Office to continue the use of that space for a specified period. **Please note that we have very limited graduate space, and CFOS may need your office space for an incoming student by the time you are finishing your degree.**

NOTE: Office space is not to be used for the storage of personal belongings (besides books, papers and school-related materials), lab supplies, and/or samples that contain chemicals. In addition, offices are not to be used as short or long-term housing. Animals are not permitted in UAF buildings without prior approval or permission except for service animals (UAF policy 05.09.001). Students who abuse office space will be asked to vacate that space. If you are asked to vacate your space, you have up to two weeks to do so. If office space is not vacated within that timeframe, CFOS Academic Programs will contact the UAF Police Department or Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities, who will inventory, pack, and store belongings at their facility.

Campus Mail

The UAF Campus Mail Center is responsible for all incoming/outgoing mail service, and intra-campus mail pickup/delivery for UAF departments. Mail service is limited to official university business only. Mail is sorted and delivered to primary departmental offices, not to individual faculty/staff offices. Each department has been given a unique 4-digit mailbox number to assist with the sorting and delivery process.

Incoming – Do NOT use University of Alaska as your personal mailing address. All non-university business mail (including utility bills, bank statements, insurance policies, catalogs and magazines, Stitch Fix, Ulta, and any other personal mail) must be directed to your home address or personal mailbox. UAF campus mailboxes for personal use are available for rent at the Campus Mail Center.

Outgoing – Personal mail will be picked up with all other classes of mail if it has postage and is sealed.

Research Permits

All students working with vertebrates, human subjects, or biosafety must comply with UAF policies and acquire the appropriate permits to do research. For more information, contact the [Office of Research Integrity](#).

Additional state or federal research, collection, or possession permits may be required, as well as Land Use Permits. Check with your advisor before starting any research and/or shipping and receiving any samples.

Safety, FERPA, Minor, and Title IX Training

All students employed or volunteering in a lab MUST have UAF and CFOS safety training BEFORE entering a lab. In addition, all students must complete Minor and Title IX training. Teaching Assistants must complete FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) certification. Assistantships may be revoked if students do not have current training certification. Contact your supervisor for a list of the safety training modules you must complete. Please contact uaf-cfos-academics@alaska.edu for the current FERPA training link and the [CFOS Facilities Manager](#) for a list of the current safety training.

The university has a strict policy regarding the use of alcohol and intoxicants (including marijuana) while at university-own or managed facilities, in the field, or at university-sponsored events. Restrictions on the use of these substances are meant to promote safety and responsible behavior. Students are expected to know and adhere to these policies.

UAF Vehicle Policy

Driving University Vehicles or on University Business

All requirements referenced herein are in accordance with the University of Alaska (UA) Transportation Safety Guidelines and applicable University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), UA, and Board of Regents (BoR) policies and regulations.

Note: Policies and guidelines related to vehicle operation and driver authorization are currently under review by the UA System Office of Risk Services and Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management (EHSRM) stakeholders and may be subject to change. Individuals should always refer to the [UAF Risk Management Driving](#) website for the most current regulations, policies, and requirements, including information on who must complete the UAF driver authorization process.

Transportation Services vehicles are to be used for official University business only. Personal use is not allowed.

Authorized Renters:

- All UAF Departments
- Student groups approved by the Student Leadership and Involvement Office

Authorized Drivers must have:

- Annually [Category 2 \(PDF\)](#) form on file with their department which requires:
 - A valid, unrestricted Driver's License
 - An official Motor Vehicle Record (checked by supervisor)
 - If traveling more than 50 Miles one way, driving with other people, driving for 14 consecutive days, or is driving is part of their job description
 - at least 3 years driving experience
 - Current UA Employment
 - Obtained a Drivers Safety Card, or Confirmation of completion for the UA drivers [safety training](#). EHS&RM oversees training (474-5413).
 - No more than 2 moving violation or more than 5 points against their license in the last 3 years
- Dean or Advisor approval (via [signed rental agreement \(PDF\)](#))

Any questions concerning the authorized users list may be addressed by contacting the Transportation Services Office. Volunteers/ non-employees may receive approval but must do so through EHS&RM (474-5413) prior to check-out. The approval process follows the requirements of the Category 1 drivers form and takes 2-3 business days to complete.

Travel

UAF regulations and procedures must be adhered to when traveling on university business.

Car rental policy on insurance: The university provides liability and physical damage coverage for rental vehicles only when the vehicle is being used by an authorized employee while acting in the course and scope of the employee's official duties. Any other use will be considered personal. Motor vehicle rental agencies are not allowed to be named as an insured party or additional insured party under the university's insurance and self-insurance plan. University employees and agents are not authorized to enter into an agreement that would make a rental agency, related entities, or others named or additional insured under the university's insurance or self-insurance programs. International Travel Car Rentals Only: Vehicle insurance should always be purchased for rentals by university employees in foreign countries (except for Canada), US territories and possessions.

If you are traveling for university purposes, even if a student does not plan on being reimbursed, you must obtain prior authorization for travel. Please check with the [UAF Travel Department](#) to make sure you are filing the correct authorization paperwork and following the correct procedures for reserving accommodations and purchasing airline tickets (if needed).

It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the travel policies found at <https://www.uaf.edu/cfos/internal-resources/business-operations/travel/index.php>. If you have any questions, please contact [UAF Travel Customer Service Office](#) at uaf-travel@alaska.edu

If you do not follow these instructions, there is a strong possibility that you will not be able to complete your travel plans or you will be reimbursed for any expenses you incurred.

Purchasing (i.e., Procurement)

Please work with your advisor on any purchasing needs. In Fairbanks, please refer to the [CFOS procurement website](#) pertaining to important purchasing information or email: uaf-cfos-purch@alaska.edu. **The university does not have a mechanism for reimbursing purchases paid in cash or made on a personal credit card.**

Employment Payroll and Auto Deposit

Students receiving research or teaching assistantship should contact Christina Sutton-who will assist students with the necessary documents. All students on research or teaching assistantship will be required to fill out hiring paperwork and show proof of employment eligibility. UAF payroll operates on a bi-weekly cycle. Due to this schedule, the first paycheck may not be received until a month after the official start date. For specific payroll and payment dates, please refer to the [Chart of Pay Periods](#).

Auto deposit (direct deposit) of your pay is a benefit offered to all University of Alaska employees and ensures that your biweekly net pay is automatically deposited to an Automatic Clearing House (ACH) participant bank, credit union, and/or savings and loan of your choice anywhere in the U.S. You have the option of depositing your pay to one bank account or splitting your pay between two accounts at the same or separate financial institutions. It is highly

recommended that all students set up a direct deposit for payroll and reimbursements from the UA system. This is setup in uaonline.alaska.edu under the employee tab.

Changing workstations and remote work

If a student on a RA or TA changes workstations (e.g., moving from Alaska to California or out of the country), you must notify [Labor and Employee Relations](#) as soon as possible. This is important because there could be significant tax implications. Additionally, if a student is working outside of Alaska, a [Remote Work Agreement](#) must be filed. You must have your advisor's approval before changing workstations.

UAF Disability Services

UAF Disability Services provides accommodations to students on the Fairbanks campus as well as on the Bristol Bay, Chukchi, Interior Alaska, Kuskokwim, Northwest, Community and Technical College (CTC), UAF eCampus, and College of Rural and Community Development (CRCD) campuses. Their goal is to provide UAF students with access to academic classes and course materials through an interactive accommodation process. UAF will provide academic and access accommodations **only to the known limitations** of an otherwise qualified student who has a disability. To be considered for UAF Disability Services accommodations individuals should be enrolled for at least one credit as a UAF student. Applications for services can be hand-delivered, emailed, faxed or mailed to Disability Services. Following receipt of an application and documentation an interactive interview will be scheduled by the DS program. If you need assistance with completion of any form, contact UAF Disability Services by email at uaf-disability-services@alaska.edu, by phone at 907-474-5655, or by TTY at 907-474-1827. For more information, please visit their website at: <https://uaf.edu/disabilityservices/about.php>

Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability (ORCA)

Graduate students can easily feel everyday stress and anxiety as they juggle the pressures of school, work, and family life. Life can become overwhelming in a hurry. [The UAF Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability \(ORCA\)](#) was created to support student-centered programs and services designed to assist students in achieving their personal, academic, and career goals, regardless of location. The Office's mission is to focus on student care, conflict resolution, suicide prevention, crisis management, educational outreach, and much more.

ORCA is committed to the safety and success of all UAF community members. Through early intervention, ORCA empowers each member of the university to succeed in their goals. ORCA collaborates with campus partners to encourage prevention education, well-being, and student success.

The Office focuses on:

- Student Conduct
- Title IX
- The Resilience Project
- Student CARE Team
- Educational outreach
- Student Conflict Resolution
- Policy Development, Implementation, and Evaluation
- Facilitation of Students' Ethical Development
- Restorative Justice for Students

- Suicide Prevention
- Student Crisis Management
- Student Death Management
- Sexual Assault Education and Prevention
- Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention
- Consultation to and with other student service areas such as Residence Life, Athletics, Disability Services, Veterans and Military Services, Student Health and Counseling Center, Resource and Advocacy Center, and the Title IX office
- Development of partnerships with related academic departments and disciplines
- Parent and Family Relations

For more information about the ORCA, please visit their website at: <https://www.uaf.edu/orca/>. You can also email them at uaf-orca@alaska.edu or call them at 907-474-7300.

Student Health and Counseling Center

The UAF Student Health and Counseling Center [mission](#) is to help our UAF students stay healthy, grow and develop personally, and do as well as they can in their university studies. They offer a variety of [services](#) at the center, including [medical care](#), [counseling](#) and assistance with the graduate and international student [insurance plans](#). The Student Health and Counseling Center has qualified, professional [staff](#) to provide medical and confidential counseling services to eligible UAF students. Their medical staff includes a physician, one telemedicine medical provider, and two medical assistants. They currently have three professional counselors available to assist students with their counseling needs. They also have a staff member who handles insurance billing and acts as a liaison for students with insurance-related issues ([Margaret Kellogg](#)). Their center provides a wide variety of services to students only from general medical care, with a lab and on site to counseling services range from individual counseling to crisis intervention, alcohol referrals and help with general adjustments to college life. [Confidentiality and personal privacy](#) are important to everyone. They maintain the highest level of confidentiality possible for our UAF students. They follow the rules set forth by federal and state laws along with the ethical guidelines of our professional organizations. For more information about the Student Health and Counseling Center visit their website: <https://uaf.edu/chc/> or call them at 907-474-7043.

Graduate student insurance³

Graduate student insurance is provided as a benefit to graduate students who are on a stipend as a teaching or research assistant. It is provided by UnitedHealthcare Student Resources. Please visit its [UAF student policy website](#) to establish an account, print ID cards and check claims.

The graduate student insurance at the Student Health and Counseling Center covers 100 percent of the center's charges. There is no deductible or copayment required. If you have to use your graduate insurance at community facilities, you are responsible for deductibles and copays. Please read your policy very carefully.

³ AGWA and the University Administration periodically negotiate the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which may result in policy changes. For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the AGWA website.

The Student Health and Counseling Center fee is optional for graduate students taking fewer than six credits of face-to-face courses as long as a student is taking six credits total, including online courses. If you would like access to services provided at the center, please contact the [UAF Bursar's Office](#) to have the fee added to your account. Graduate students can add their spouses, as well as dental and vision coverage, to their plan for an additional cost paid by the student.

International Students - F-1 Status

International students are personally responsible for maintaining their legal immigration status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) while in the U.S. UAF International Student and Scholar Services has a two-fold responsibility:

1. Ensuring UAF compliance with the regulations
2. Advise and assist you in maintaining your legal status.

For students, they are here to:

- to help you adapt to the environment of UAF and the U.S.;
- to help you gain the needed skills and knowledge to function independently in American society;
- to assist you if you encounter situations or procedures you do not understand, or if you feel you have somehow been wronged;
- to listen to your ideas and concerns and to enhance your visit by offering educational, recreational, and social activities that are designed for you;
- to clarify your obligations under your visa status and obtain the full benefits to which you are entitled, as well as to help you understand UAF and U.S. immigration policies.

The International Advisors are located in International Student and Scholar Services, 215 Eielson Building, Phone 907-474-7677 or 907-474-7583
Email uaf-iss@alaska.edu.

At the request of the UAF Chancellor, they are authorized by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service and the Department of State, to provide international students and scholars with immigration advising. Please take advantage of their expertise in immigration regulations. **Contact them as soon as possible regarding any change in your research or teaching activities, change of address, or employment authorizations.** If you have questions or concerns, ask sooner rather than later. The advisors are your advocates – they want to assist international students, scholars and professors in maintaining legal status. International students and scholars are held to a higher standard than U.S. domestic students by U.S. immigration regulations. Issues that may not seem important could have a life-changing impact for international students and scholars. For current U.S. regulations and more information about UAF International Student and Scholar Services please visit their website at: <https://www.uaf.edu/iss/handbook/index.php>

Health Insurance Requirement for International Students

UAF has a mandatory health insurance plan through [LewerMark Insurance](#). Your UAF student account will be billed for the health insurance cost each semester. [The plan summary \(PDF\)](#) and brochure are available for the upcoming academic year in early August.

If you do not wish to have LewerMark Insurance, you will need to request [a waiver \(PDF\)](#) and provide documentation of comparable coverage from a company located outside the U.S. U.S.-based company plans are not eligible for waivers. If you decide to request a waiver, please be

sure to forward a copy of your insurance documentation, including name of company, plan summary of benefits, name, coverage dates to ISSS.

Graduate students receiving health insurance coverage as part of their UAF funding will have this health insurance charge removed from their student accounts when tuition payments are posted. There is no need to submit an insurance waiver request.

For more information about International Health Care and Insurance, please visit the International Student and Scholar Services website about [health care and insurance](#).

International Students - Thesis/Course credit expectation

The Department of Homeland Security views international students as a guest in our country and requires students to complete their program expediently. International students are required to enroll full-time at 9 credits a semester. This ensures that they are engaged with their studies, and can make timely progress to their degrees. For more information about remaining in status please review the [F-1 Status](#) on International Student and Scholar Services webpage.

Support and Resources

The CFOS Academic Programs Office is here to support you throughout your academic journey. If you ever have questions, concerns, or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.

If you feel uncomfortable raising a concern within CFOS or would prefer to speak with someone outside the college, you may contact the Office of Rights, Compliance, and Accountability (ORCA). ORCA works to foster a respectful, inclusive, and welcoming university environment and serves as a central resource for matters involving Title IX, discrimination, student behavioral intervention, crisis management, and the Student CARE Team.

Please note that CFOS Academic Programs staff (Christina Sutton and Brian Crandall), as well as Ana Aguilar-Islas, Associate Dean of Academic Programs, are mandatory reporters. This means we are required to report certain concerns involving discrimination, harassment, abuse, exploitation, inappropriate relationships, and related matters. However, if you would like to speak with someone confidentially, we can help connect you with appropriate confidential resources.

Most importantly, we want you to know that support is available. Our goal is to ensure you have the resources, guidance, and assistance needed to succeed at CFOS and UAF. You are an important part of our community, and we are here to help.

Final Thoughts

We hope you have found this manual helpful. If you need assistance at any time, please contact the CFOS Academic Programs Office. We also welcome suggestions for information or resources that could be added to future editions of this manual.

CFOS Academic Programs Email: uaf-cfos-academics@alaska.edu



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