

COASTAL AND MARINE SYSTEM SCIENCE DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-27

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
CORPUS CHRISTI

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

6300 Ocean Dr., Unit 5843 • Corpus Christi, TX 78412
Phone (361) 825-2814 • Website: http://cmss.tamucc.edu/

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This handbook is intended to be read in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog: https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/ and the Graduate Student Handbook, link from https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/doctoral-students.php

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SECTION I. COASTAL AND MARINE SYSTEM SCIENCE PROGRAM

Introduction

This handbook provides guidance to students applying for and enrolled in the Coastal and Marine System Science (CMSS) doctoral degree (Ph.D.) program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC). It contains information about the requirements for successfully completing the degree, the course of study, selecting an advisor and a graduate committee, choosing a dissertation research topic, admission to degree candidacy, the dissertation defense, and the final oral examination. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the Graduate Catalog and the procedures outlined in the Graduate Education Doctoral Student Handbook. The CMSS Handbook lists requirements specific to the CMSS program above and beyond what is already described in those two documents. Graduate Education policies and procedures take precedence over those in this handbook.

The Graduate Education Doctoral Student Handbook also contains detailed instructions for preparing the dissertation manuscript. An updated version of this handbook will be published each academic year. As with the graduate Catalog, the rules of the handbook that are in effect at the time of entry into the program will apply.

The Ph.D. in Coastal & Marine System Science (CMSS)

The CMSS Ph.D. Program at TAMU-CC integrates traditional scientific disciplines to create a holistic understanding of coastal and marine environments. This is an interdisciplinary program housed in the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences (PENS). Graduates are broadly educated in the biological, chemical, geological, and physical sciences as well as coastal/marine policy and economics. The CMSS Ph.D. degree is awarded by the College of Science. However, students and faculty from a variety of scholarly disciplines participate in the program. All CMSS students share a core of five interdisciplinary courses that cover the foundations of mathematical modeling, environmental policy, and case studies in *system science*. Then, each student pursues a program of specialized topical coursework tailored to the student's research interests.

Prospective Student

Prospective students who wish to pursue the CMSS Ph.D. should come from physical or life science backgrounds with strong emphasis on mathematical and analytical skills. Students accepted into the degree program must have a general undergraduate multidisciplinary knowledge of the biological and physical sciences, as well as mathematics and statistics. A strong background would include a major in one science area and a minor in another science area or mathematics. Students with backgrounds in applied computer science or Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are also of great interest to the program. The CMSS faculty welcomes students from diverse academic paths as well as those who have some research experience.

Graduate study provides advanced, specialized training that strengthens academic and professional competence by broadening scientific horizons as well as developing a specific expertise. Graduate students must assume greater responsibility and exercise more individual initiative than was necessary as an undergraduate. The graduate faculty emphasizes productive research, employ seminar methods more frequently, and anticipate class participation. To be successful in the doctoral

program, students must display commitment to independent study, must become familiar with past and current research, and must relate ongoing research to the investigations of other scholars.

Graduate Faculty & Staff

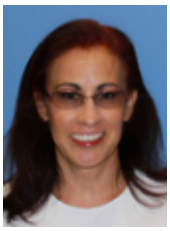


Dr. Ingo Pecher.
Coordinator, Coastal and Marine System Science
NRC 2509, (361) 825-4141
ingo.pecher@tamucc.edu
Please send CMSS communication to cmss@tamucc.edu

- Administer and support the CMSS program
- Collaborate with faculty on all issues related to the program
- Collaborate with graduate students to ensure their success

Academic Advisors
College of Science – contact depends on last name.
Please refer to https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/planning/academic-advising/colleges/cos.php

- Advise on program requirements
- Liaison for student with Graduate Studies regarding required documentation submission throughout educational career
- Coordinate with student admission process
- Currently (Sep. 2026): Stephanie Hock (for students with last name starting with A-K), Deborah Dubuque (last name T-Z).



Alessandra Garcia
Sr. Administrative Assistant, Physical and Environmental Science Department
NRC 3500, (361) 825-2814
alessandra.garcia@tamucc.edu

- Assist CMSS Coordinator and faculty
- Create Independent Studies and Research Courses for the CMSS students
- Assist CMSS students for travel arrangement and supply purchasing



Feiqin Xie, Ph.D.
Interim Chair, Physical and Environmental Science Department
NRC 3507, (361) 825-2814
feiqin.xie@tamucc.edu

- Administer department that hosts the CMSS program
- Coordinate course scheduling and teaching assignments for faculty

Objectives

The **objectives** of the CMSS Ph.D. program are to:

- develop graduates who are fully prepared to face current and future cultural, political, economic, and scientific environmental challenges;
- foster an atmosphere that nurtures research and scholarly activities through interdisciplinary approaches; and,
- foster an atmosphere that promotes education from the regional to international level.

The **objectives** of our graduates are to:

- perform original and hypothesis-driven quantitative analyses that will lead to comprehensive verifiable models of natural systems;
- emphasize mathematical and/or analytical skills to generate new data and critically evaluate models that will aid in our understanding of dynamic natural systems;
- become a resource capable of answering environmental "what if" questions by providing comprehensive interpretation; and
- obtain employment in industry, government, academia, or commercial enterprises.

Get Connected

Most official college and program information for students is distributed on listservs. It is required that you join the CMSS listserv by sending a message with "Subscribe" in the subject to cmss-list@sci.tamucc.edu or go to https://listserv.tamucc.edu/mailman/listinfo.

List address	Description
cmss-list@listserv.tamucc.edu	CMSS students (**REQUIRED**)
msgso@listserv.tamucc.edu	Marine Science Graduate Student Association
escistu-list@listserv.tamucc.edu	Environmental Science students

Interactions With Other Graduate Students

Graduate education is not a solitary endeavor. Students must make opportunities to discuss their projects with other graduate students and offer to assist others in the field or laboratory. Beyond generating camaraderie, this will give students a more comprehensive understanding of the many specific issues and problems in coastal and marine systems, expose them to a broad array of lab/field techniques, provide ideas for research, and provide opportunities to reciprocate in supporting each other.

SECTION II. ADMISSION INFORMATION

Application Requirements

To apply, complete the online Apply Texas Form.

Specific information on University criteria, application procedures, fees, and additional requirements for international applications are found in the page on Graduate Admissions in the Catalog.

Required Documents

Below is a summary of the supporting documents required by the CMSS program:

- Completed university graduate application form.
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores that are not more than 5 years old (temporarily waived).
- A curriculum vitae.
- An essay of about 1000 words describing educational and career goals, interests as they relate to the faculty in the CMSS Program. Persons seeking admission to the PhD Program in CMSS must first contact the program faculty and identify a faculty member willing to serve as the graduate advisor. Applicants will not be admitted to the program without a graduate advisor.
- Three letters of evaluation from people familiar with your scholarly potential.
- Transcripts of all previous undergraduate and/or graduate work (including transcript evaluations of all work done at foreign institutions)*.
- Any relevant supplemental materials such as publications or resumes that include information about relevant experiences.
- International students have additional requirements. See Admissions +"International Students" and Graduate Admissions in the Catalog +"Additional Documents for International Students" for additional information.

*To be considered official, all required postsecondary academic records must be submitted directly from the registrar's office and bear the seal and signature of the registrar of the institution. In some foreign countries, the controller of examinations or principal may certify academic records. Official English translations, not interpretations, are required from most countries.

It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the application is complete by the deadline to assure full consideration. Acceptance into the CMSS Ph.D. program is competitive and based on consideration of all application materials. Students accepted into the program will typically have demonstrated an ability to succeed in an academically rigorous environment through high GPA and GRE scores. Relevant life experiences may also provide a substantial basis for consideration.

A campus visit with personal interviews involving prospective faculty mentors is highly recommended. To schedule a visit, please contact:

Dr. Ingo Pecher CMSS Program Coordinator cmss@tamucc.edu (361) 825-4141	Ms. Alessandra Garcia Sr. Administrative Assistant alessandra.garcia@tamucc.edu (361) 825-2814

or

Application Deadlines

The CMSS program has two types of deadlines: 1) priority deadlines and 2) last decision date deadlines. All students should strive to meet the priority deadline because it is used to make decisions regarding funding of assistantships. All applications after the priority deadline are considered "late" applications. CMSS program deadlines are earlier for international students because of the time required to process visa applications for international students.

Please refer to CMSS program +"Application Deadlines" for up-to-date deadlines.

CMSS APPLICATION DEADLINES			
International Students	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Summer**
Priority deadline to receive complete applications.	January 10	June 1	December 1
Last date to receive complete applications.	June 1	November 1	December 1
Domestic Students	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Summer**
Priority deadline to receive complete applications.	January 10	August 1	December 1
Last date for receipt of complete applications.	July 17	November 5	March 1

Admissions Requirements

Students accepted into the CMSS PhD program must demonstrate proficiency in the natural sciences, mathematical modeling, or geospatial technology. This proficiency can be demonstrated by the successful completion of undergraduate classes in these topics, or by presentation of satisfactory evidence to the CMSS Program Coordinator. Students who are unable to demonstrate proficiency in the natural sciences, mathematics, or geospatial technology may be required to take undergraduate or graduate leveling courses in these areas. These courses will not count toward the coursework required for the PhD degree.

The acceptance process has two steps: 1) vote for acceptance by the CMSS faculty, and 2) final and official acceptance by the Graduate Admissions. The applicant will be notified of his/her acceptance or rejection by Graduate Admissions.

Persons seeking admission to the program should first contact the program faculty and identify a faculty member, or members, willing to serve as the graduate supervisor, and the applicant must include a summary of their discussions with faculty members in their essay. Applicants will not be admitted to the program without a graduate supervisor.

University Admissions Requirements

To be admitted to a program of graduate study, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or an equivalent foreign institution. *(Note: The requirement to hold a bachelor's degree does not apply to students enrolling in the RN-MSN option in nursing.)* Decisions concerning admission to graduate study are based on all admission criteria. To be considered for a graduate program, a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information in the graduate catalog or elsewhere in this handbook. For complete information, see the Catalog, Graduate Admissions section.

Graduate students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran's benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status. Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:

Full-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 9 hours
	Combined summer terms = 6 hours
Three-quarter-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 7 hours
	Combined summer terms = 5 hours
Half-time graduate student:	Fall or spring term = 5 hours
	Combined summer terms = 3 hours

Students seeking admission to a terminal degree program with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must apply through the University's Graduate Education website.

Specific information on University criteria, application procedures, fees, and additional requirements for international applications are found in Admissions – Apply Today.

Time to Degree

Appendix 4: CMSS Ph.D. Program Timeline, provides an overview timelines.

Time Limit

The requirements for Ph.D. degree at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within ten years subsequent to enrollment in the terminal degree program. The ten-year period begins with the first semester in which the student enrolls and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Students have a maximum of five years to advance to candidacy and a maximum of 5 years from candidacy to successfully defend the dissertation. Students who exceed the candidacy deadline may request an extension. Candidacy extensions require strong justification in writing from the student and must include a plan for timely completion of the comprehensive examination, the proposal, and the final dissertation. The extension must be approved by the student's faculty advisor, the department chair, the College Dean, and the Graduate Dean. Credit that is more than ten years old will not count toward a terminal degree. Exceptions will only be considered for courses completed at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and will require strong justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as a revalidation plan. Written approval from the major department chair, the Dean of the college from which the degree is offered, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost are required.

Revalidation of Courses Beyond Degree Time Limit

Revalidation requests should be made through the student's academic advisor. Requests will require documentation and approval at the department, college, and administration level and will be facilitated by academic advising.

Financial Support

Students seeking full consideration for fellowships or assistantships should have a completed application file submitted by the Priority Deadline of February 1 (Fall admission only). However, applicants must apply separately for scholarships, assistantships, and fellowships at the College website on Graduate Funding Opportunities.

After the priority deadline, any awards will be made on a first come, first served basis. Students who have received offers for fellowships or assistantships must notify the CMSS Program Coordinator (Ingo Pecher) and the College of Science Dean's office of their acceptance within one week of receiving the offer letter. Otherwise, the University will assume that the offer has been rejected and will make offers to other deserving students.

Admission to the program is decided independently of financial awards. Students must first be accepted into the program before financial awards can be considered. For details regarding graduate assistantships, refer to Graduate Excellence's Graduate Assistantship Handbook.

CMSS Assistantships

Assistantships are available for half-time (20 hour/week) 9-month appointments, with the possibility of funding through the summer term.

The CMSS program coordinator will announce the availability of these assistantships via the CMSS listserv by March 1, together with instructions on how to apply for these assistantships.

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching assistantships are available each year through the College of Science; see Graduate Funding Opportunities.

All students in the CMSS PhD program are encouraged to work as a teaching assistant for at least one semester. Students who will seek career opportunities in higher education are encouraged to take advantage of additional teaching opportunities, including teaching a credit-bearing course as Instructor of Record. The State of Texas requires international graduate students whose native language is not English to obtain English proficiency certification before serving as graduate teaching assistants. See Graduate Education's Graduate Assistantship Handbook for details.

Research Assistantships

A limited number of research assistantships are available through research institutes or centers, and individual faculty members; consult with the institute or center directors and individual faculty members to identify these funding sources. Some graduate research assistantships are administered through the College of Science; see Graduate Funding Opportunities.

Harte Research Fellowships

Fellowships are available through the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies (HRI). These fellowships are for students working with the HRI Endowed Chairs in the Institute. Application is made directly with an HRI Endowed Chair.

Eligibility

All students who hold assistantships must be enrolled as full-time students (at least 9 graduate hours during the fall and spring semesters, and 3 hours during the combined summer session) in the CMSS program. Appointments are for two full semesters (fall and spring). Reappointment requires reapplication each year, and students should not assume that the appointment will continue automatically. Summer assistantships may be available but must be applied for separately. Check Research & Innovation's Graduate Funding website for additional funding opportunities.

Amounts

Salary amount for each assistantship is based on the type of degree program, level of academic progression (e.g., pre- vs. post-candidacy for doctoral students), and/or other factors as determined by the hiring department and approved by the Graduate Dean.

Out-of-State Tuition Waiver

Graduate assistants are eligible for a tuition waiver that reduces tuition to Texas Resident rates. However, this must be applied for each semester and a student must work in a half-time (20 hrs/week) position and be enrolled in 9 credit hours during fall and spring semesters and 3 credit hours during the summer to be eligible for the waiver. To apply for the waiver, visit the Office of Graduate Excellence's Assistantships website.

Cost of Education

Graduate education can be expensive, and many students may want to estimate their financial commitment. For estimates of the cost of attendance, visit Costs & Aid's Cost of Attendance website.

Doctoral Orientation

Please view the "New Student Checklist" for graduate students. The web-site on "Am I required to complete orientation?" provides further information on orientation for graduate students.

A special orientation session may be available for doctoral students upon request by the department/program. Topics covered during the Doctoral session include:

- The Big Picture of Doctoral Degrees

- Getting to the Doctoral Degree
- University and Program requirements.

SECTION III. ACADEMIC PROGRESSION

Enrollment Status

All CMSS students are expected to be enrolled full-time, which is 9 hours during the fall and spring semesters and 3 hours during the combined summer session.

In addition, all CMSS students must follow University rules governing graduate studies including, but not limited to: residency, continuous enrollment, recency of credit, leave of absence, transfer credit, degree plans, grade point average, scholastic probation, enforced withdrawal, out-of-state tuition waivers, and the Texas 99-hour rule. All of these rules are described in the Graduate Student Handbook (Link from: https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/doctoral-students.php).

Fulfilling CMSS Ph.D. Program Degree Requirements

Completing a Ph.D. is often described as a degree of perseverance. Progression follows two distinct periods: pre-qualification and post-qualification. Progression to a degree consists of the following steps or milestones:

A. Pre-Qualification
1. form a committee
2. create a degree plan
3. develop a prospectus
4. develop a proposal
5. pass comprehensive/qualifying exams

B. Post-Qualification
1. conduct research
2. write dissertation
3. defend dissertation

Doctoral Program Forms

Each step of the progression in the doctoral program is accompanied by a requisite form, which is created and maintained by the Office of Graduate Education. Please use the checklist below for a timely submission of required forms. Always download the most recent version of the doctoral forms. These can be found at the Graduate Education Forms and Templates webpage.

In addition, the forms webpage also include templates for the dissertation title page, copyright page, and committee member page.

All forms are submitted electronically on the Graduate Education Forms and Templates webpage. Form links initiate the required signature process via Docusign and questions about the process can be directed to the Office of Graduate Education

If you have questions or require additional information, contact the Office of Graduate Education.

Directions: Please use the forms list below to ensure timely submission of required forms. These forms can be found at Graduate Education Forms and Templates webpage (https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/forms/index.php).

Form	Timeline
Form A: Preliminary/Final Degree Plan Forms	9 hrs
Form B: Comprehensive Examination and Advancement to Candidacy Report	36 hrs
Form C: Doctoral Dissertation Advisory Committee Appointment Form	9 hrs
Form D: Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Hearing Request Form	36 hrs
Form E: Preliminary Agreement to Schedule the Dissertation Defense/Final Examination	8 weeks prior to graduation
Form F: Dissertation Defense and Written Dissertation Report	5 days following defense
Form G: Graduate Faculty Representative Report	5 days following defense
Form H: Doctoral-Dissertation Committee Member Change Request Form	As needed
Form I: Graduate Degree Plan Exceptions Form	As needed
Form K: Doctoral Request for a Leave of Absence	As needed
Form L: Catalog Change Request Form	As needed

Graduation Deadlines

You must submit a completed application for graduation to your academic advisor by the posted deadline. The application must be obtained and processed through your advisor.

In order to graduate, a series of deadlines must be met. These deadlines are posted by the Registrar: https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/registrar/academic-calendar/doctoral-dates.php

Commencement

For dates, times and location of the commencement ceremonies please visit http://commencement.tamucc.edu.

Degree Plan

The graduate advisory committee will evaluate your past coursework and experience as well your research interests to formulate a tentative degree plan. *The degree plan must be approved by the end of the **second long semester** by both the graduate advisory committee and Graduate Education.* Furthermore, degree plans should be developed by the time students have completed *half the course work in the program*. To obtain a degree plan, please contact the program coordinator.

Students who are unable to demonstrate proficiency in the natural sciences, mathematics, or geospatial technology will be required to take undergraduate or graduate leveling courses and possibly complete a master's degree prior to entry into the CMSS doctoral program. In most cases, leveling courses will not apply towards the total minimum credit hours required for the Ph.D. degree.

The *emphasis area* is a phrase that best expresses the student's intended focus within the broad field of coastal and marine systems. The student defines an emphasis area, with assistance from the graduate advisory committee, and then states it on the degree plan. There is no established list of emphasis areas from which to choose. Rather, each student uniquely formulates an emphasis area based upon academic interests. Electives and the research project will normally relate to the emphasis area.

After the graduate advisory committee approves the degree plan, it must be filed with the College of Science CMSS Academic Advisor, CMSS Program Administrative Assistant, and Graduate Education. After a tentative degree plan is finalized, degree plan development will be documented in the student's online degree planner by the academic advisor. Exceptions and changes to degree plans require consultation with your academic advisor. The graduate advisory committee and Graduate Education must approve any changes or elective coursework if the courses are to be applied to the total semester hours required for the degree. Prior to graduation, a final degree plan that includes any approved changes from the tentative degree plan will be circulated to the chair of the graduate advisory committee, program coordinator, and Department chair for final approval.

The Graduate Advisory Committee

After being enrolled into the CMSS program, the most important first step is forming the graduate advisory committee. In collaboration with their faculty advisor, students should select a graduate advisory committee, to guide them through their degree program by the end of their **first semester** in the CMSS program.

Together, the graduate advisory committee and the student prepare a degree plan detailing the coursework necessary for the student's program of study, select a dissertation topic and formulate a research plan. The graduate advisory committee also approves the dissertation proposal and final manuscript and administers your qualifying examination and final dissertation defense/oral examination. Signed copies of the degree plan must be sent to the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor) and the Office of Graduate Education by end of **the second long semester**.

Composition and size of the graduate advisory committee should reflect the scope of the intended graduate program and should be developed with substantial input from the student's primary

advisor(s). After the committee is formed, your primary advisor will normally become your committee chair. Individual faculty members are under no obligation to serve on your committee or to be your committee chair. The decision not to serve should be based on some definable criteria such as work overload or incompatible research interests.

The graduate advisory committee consists of at least four members, and three members must be of the CMSS Ph.D. faculty, including the committee chair. Additional members from outside the CMSS Ph.D. faculty may be approved by Graduate Education. In exceptional cases, individuals holding graduate faculty rank at TAMU-CC or another accredited institution may serve as co-chair with the unanimous approval of the committee. In all cases involving the appointment of a non-CMSS Ph.D. faculty member, an associate graduate faculty status request accompanied by a curriculum vitae and a rationale for the appointment must be filed with Graduate Education and provided to the CMSS Program Coordinator. Once the committee is formed, Doctoral Form C (https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/forms/index.php) must be submitted to Graduate Education.

Upon submission of Form C (Doctoral Dissertation Advisory Committee Appointment Form), Graduate Education will appoint a Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) to the committee. The role of this appointee is to serve as an impartial member of the committee to ensure the integrity of University standards as they apply to the Ph.D. process. This member attends and participates in the oral portions of the proposal hearing and the final defense/oral examination.

The advisory committee chair supervises the student's dissertation research, including preparation of the dissertation manuscript. The committee as a whole approves the degree plan, research proposal, and dissertation manuscript and administers the qualifying examination and final dissertation defense/oral examination. Beyond these functions, the chair and advisory committee members should serve as valuable mentors.

If possible, students should meet with their committee *by the end of the **first long semester** but* **no later than the end of the second long semester**. The goal of the first committee meeting is to allow students to introduce themselves and their academic and research interests to the committee and to finalize a degree plan. Students should remain in close contact with their graduate advisory committee during all phases of graduate study and dissertation research to keep them informed of progress and setbacks. At least annually, students must meet with their advisory committee to update the committee regardless of progress.

Students are responsible for calling required annual meetings of the committee and any other meetings deemed necessary by either the student or a committee member. The student is responsible for maintaining a written record of advisory committee meetings including conclusions reached. The student also submits all necessary paperwork and reports from the graduate advisory committee to the CMSS Administrative Assistant. Copies of meeting notes will be placed in your program file by the CMSS Administrative Assistant.

On occasions it may be necessary to replace a committee member or a committee chair. If such a situation arises, the student should consult his/her committee chair or the CMSS Program Coordinator immediately. The Program Coordinator and the other members of the committee will

determine if a change is necessary. The removal or replacement of a committee member requires filing Form H, and agreement of the Committee Chair, Department Chair, and the Program Coordinator.

Should a dispute arise between a student and any committee member, the student should consult his/her committee chair, CMSS Program Coordinator, assigned Graduate Faculty Representative or Department Chair.

Degree Requirements

The CMSS Ph.D. degree program consists of five components:

- **Coursework**
- **Qualifying examination (admission to candidacy)**
- **Research proposal**
- **Dissertation**
- **Dissertation defense** (research seminar and final defense/oral examination)

Throughout this process, there are three major decision points for the faculty. The first is admission to the program. An affirmative vote of the admissions committee indicates that the faculty believes you have the potential for advanced study. The second decision point occurs after a student has completed most of the required coursework (and any additional leveling coursework), and the graduate advisory committee administers a qualifying examination. The purpose of this step is to determine if the student has followed through by demonstrating potential for advanced study. After successful completion of this examination, a CMSS student becomes a Ph.D. Candidate. The third and final decision point comes when the student completes his/her dissertation. Successful defense of this work leads to the awarding of the Ph.D. degree in Coastal and Marine System Science.

Curriculum

Each student accepted to the CMSS Ph.D. degree program must complete a minimum of 90 hours beyond the bachelor's degree or 60 hours beyond the master's degree, including the 15-hour CMSS Core Curriculum (Appendix 1). If any of the core courses have been previously taken by the student, this course can be replaced with elective courses or research courses at the discretion of the graduate advisory committee. The majority of credit hours will be in formal research, but the program requires a minimum of 18 credit hours (for students with an M.S. degree) or 30 credit hours (for students without an M.S. degree) of regular graded coursework on a Ph.D. degree plan.

To clarify the expectations of admitted students, those entering the CMSS doctoral program from the BS level will come from programs in the natural science, math or engineering that include at least one year each of biology, chemistry, geology, and physics, as well as Calculus II, and statistics. Those students entering with other degrees will likely need the courses noted above, equivalents, or demonstrated competencies in coastal and marine biological, chemical, geological and physical science. Any student who is unable to demonstrate these interdisciplinary competencies in coastal and marine systems will be required to do leveling work.

Coursework Requirements

The degree plan in the catalog for your year of entry is applicable. Students can switch to later degree plans. There may be some inconsistencies between doctoral handbooks and past degree plans. Please check https://catalog.tamucc.edu/archived-catalogs/.

A. Admission from a Bachelor's Degree Option (90 semester credit hours)

Course	Title	Hours
CMSS 6312	Communicating Science Seminar	3
	Core coursework*	12
	Elective coursework	15
	Research coursework**	51-57
CMSS 6999	Dissertation defense	3-9
	Total	**90**

B. Admission from a Master's Degree Option (not CMSS Master's) (60 semester credit hours)

Course	Title	Hours
CMSS 6312	Communicating Science Seminar	3
	Core coursework*	12
	Elective coursework	6
	Research coursework**	30-36
CMSS 6999	Dissertation defense	3-9
	Total	**60**

Core course group 1: Mandatory (3 hours)
*CMSS 6312 COMMUNICATING SCIENCE SEMINAR

***Core course group 2: Multidisciplinary core courses (2 courses, or 6 hours) from:**

CMSS 6307 COASTAL AND MARINE SYSTEMS
GSEN 6330 SPATIAL SYSTEMS SCIENCE
CMSS 6359 MARINE ECOSYSTEM DYNAMICS
CMSS 6370 COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND OCEAN LAW

***Core course group 3: Math and statistics core courses (2 courses, or 6 hours) from:**
MATH 6315 STATISTICAL METHODS IN RESEARCH I
MATH 6316 STATISTICAL METHODS IN RESEARCH II
CMSS 6323 EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN
CMSS 6360 COMPUTER PROGRAMMING IN EARTH SYSTEM SCIENCES
CMSS 6352 ENVIRONMENTAL FORECASTING

**CMSS research courses: CMSS 6996 Research (prior to candidacy), CMSS 6998 Dissertation Research (after passing the candidacy exam).

C. Admission from a CMSS Master's Degree Option (60 semester credit hours)

Course	Title	Hours
Core: Multidisciplinary Course Choices		
If CMSS 6307 was not taken for credit before, it must be taken. If it has been taken, one of the below courses that has not already been taken for credit must be taken.		3
CMSS 6307	Coastal and Marine Systems (see note above)	
GSEN 6330	Spatial Systems Science	
CMSS 6359	Marine Ecosystem Dynamics	
CMSS 6370	Coastal and Marine Policy and Law	
CMSS 6315	Environmental and Geological Applications of GIS	
CMSS 6321	Big Data Blitz	
Elective		
Elective coursework is from approved biology, chemistry, coastal and marine system science, computer science, environmental science, geographic information science, geology, marine biology, or other course offerings from other TAMUCC colleges in consultation with the student's advisory committee. These may also be DIS courses.		6
Research coursework: CMSS 6996: Research (PhD student), CMSS 6998: Dissertation research (PhD candidate)		42-48
CMSS 6999	Dissertation defense	9
Total		**60-66**

CMSS Core Curriculum Course Descriptions

These courses are to be taken by all CMSS Ph.D. Program students. See "Degree Requirements" above for details on the core curriculum. ***Elective courses are described in the Graduate Catalog.*** Information on leveling courses may be found there or in the Undergraduate Catalog.

All students in residence admitted after June 1, 2019 are required to complete CMSS 6312 (Communicating Science Seminar). For students who have finished 1- or 2-hour of the legacy course CMSS 6102 (Seminar in Coastal and Marine System Science), either use those hours as electives or take Directed Independent Study to fulfill the remaining hours to meet the 3-hr seminar requirement.

CMSS 6307 3 sem. hrs. (3:0) COASTAL AND MARINE SYSTEMS
Description of coastal and oceanic ecosystems to provide an overview of the fundamental concepts of the abiotic and biotic components, physical-chemical processes, and interactions with environmental and human systems.

CMSS 6312 3 sem. hr. (3:0) COMMUNICATING SCIENCE SEMINAR
Covers communication topics ranging from proposal writing to professional presentations with a minor emphasis on additional non-traditional communication formats. Must be taken to fulfill degree plan requirements by all Coastal and Marine System Science graduate students and is recommended in the first spring of the degree.

CMSS 6323 3 sem. hrs. (3:0) EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN
Fundamental concepts of mathematical ecology and the design and analysis of environmental experiments. Students Learn SAS programming and procedures to compute ecological metrics, data management techniques, exploratory analysis, power, sample size, checking assumptions, and analysis of variance models to compute a priori and post hoc hypothesis tests. Prerequisite: Math 5315 Statistical Methods in Research I, undergraduate equivalent, or consent of instructor.

CMSS 6352 3 sem. hrs. (3:0) ENVIRONMENTAL FORECASTING
Statistical techniques (classic and Bayesian) and new artificial intelligence-based techniques, such as neural networks, for the analysis of environmental systems with large datasets. Prerequisite: CMSS 6305.

CMSS 6359 3 s. sem. hrs. (3:0) MARINE ECOSYSTEM DYNAMICS
Investigation of the interactions between organisms and physical processes that regulate marine ecosystem functions.

CMSS 6360 3 sem. hrs. (3:0) COMPUTER PROGRAMMING IN EARTH SYSTEM SCIENCE
This course is to enhance the programming skills of graduate students under various scientific programming environments. The focus is on the data analysis and problem-solving using Python, R, MATLAB and IDL. The contents of the course include the basic concepts of the operating systems and high-level programming languages, basics of programming in Python, general data analysis methods and tools, common scientific data formats, publication quality scientific graphics, the critical steps of building a large programming project.

CMSS 6370 3 sem. hrs. (3:0) COASTAL MANAGEMENT AND OCEAN LAW
Intensive study of the 1972 National Coastal Zone Management Act and subsequent coastal management programs. The Texas program, which is administered by the General Land Office, will be dealt with in depth as the central focus of the course. Statutory law relating to citizen, state, and federal rights and duties as they impact coastal and maritime law will be studied including applicable Texas real property law. Students will use case law studies relating to those rights and duties and

Public Trust Doctrine cases to gain an integral part of understanding the responsibilities of governments and rights of citizens.

GSEN 6330 3 sem. hrs. (3:0) SPATIAL SYSTEMS SCIENCE
Introduction and advanced usages of mapping datums, coordinate systems, and accuracy requirements for geographic information systems (GIS). Use of GIS tools to investigate statistical patterns and relationships among maps and geo-databases. Derivation of new maps and analysis based on spatial context, patterns, surface configuration, proximity, connectivity and flows. Prerequisites: MATH 6316 or permission of instructor.

MATH 6315 3 sem. hrs. (2:2) STATISTICAL METHODS IN RESEARCH I
This course is for graduate students in other disciplines and is designed to prepare them to use statistical methods in their research. This is a non-calculus exposition of the concepts, methods and usage of statistical data collection and analysis. Topics include descriptive statistics, the t-test, the one and two-way analysis of variance, multiple comparison tests, and multiple regression. Students also learn how to conduct these analyses using computer software and how to properly report their findings. Prerequisite: MATH 1442 or 3342.

MATH 6316 3 sem. hrs. (2:2) STATISTICAL METHODS IN RESEARCH II
This course is a continuation of MATH 6315 . Topics include: statistical experimental design, randomized blocks and factorial analysis, multiple regression, chi-squared tests, analysis of covariance, non-parametric methods and sample surveys. Emphasis will be placed on the computer analysis of research data and how to properly report statistical findings. Prerequisite: MATH 6315.

CMSS 6590 1-5 sem. hrs. ADVANCED TOPICS
An advanced study of an environmental systems topic. May be repeated with full credit in another area of environmental systems.

CMSS 6596 1-5 sem. hrs. DIRECTED INDEPENDENT STUDY
Study in areas of current interest. A total of six semester hours of Directed Independent Study may be counted towards the Ph.D. degree.

CMSS 6996 1-9 sem. hrs. RESEARCH
Independent research conducted under supervision of an advisor. Open to Coastal and Marine System Science students who have not yet passed the qualifying exam and with consent of their graduate advisor. The course is graded with an S or U, and may be repeated.

CMSS 6998 1-9 sem. hrs. DISSERTATION RESEARCH
Research related to Ph.D. dissertation project. Open only to degree candidates having passed the qualifying exam in Coastal and Marine System Science with consent of their graduate advisor. The course is graded with an S or U, and may be repeated.

CMSS 6999 3-9 sem. hrs. DISSERTATION DEFENSE
Open only to degree candidates in Coastal and Marine System Science with consent of their graduate advisor. Students should enroll in this course during the last semester of the CMSS PhD program. To successfully complete this course the student must pass the dissertation defense as well as have a final copy of the dissertation signed by the full graduate committee and approved for binding and

distribution. A course section will be created for the student to enroll. A grade of Credit/No Credit will be assigned for the class with the possibility to assign the grade of IP or In Progress. If a grade of IP is assigned, the course must be repeated the following semester(s) until the course is passed.

Maximum Course Load

A graduate student may register for up to 12 hours of coursework in a regular semester, or up to 6 hours in a single summer session. Registration for a higher course load requires approval of the Dean of the College of Science.

The minimum number of hours required to define your enrollment status may depend on the requirements of any financial aid you receive. In general:

- CMSS Fellowships: 9 hrs each during Fall and Spring, 3 hrs during either 5-week summer session, or 3 hrs over 10-week summer session.
- Scholarships or Loans: varies, check with lending agency or entity granting the scholarship.
- Other Teaching Assistantships or Research Assistantships: 9 hrs each during Fall and Spring, 3 hrs during either 5-week summer session or over 10-week summer session.

Repetition of a Course

There are specific policies about repeating courses for higher grades, including the provision that graduate students may retake a maximum of two courses during graduate study at the University. Each course may be repeated only once. Some courses may be repeated for multiple credit if those courses are so designated in the course description and approved by the faculty or program advisor as designated by their college. Complete catalog information may be found in the Graduate Academic and Degree Requirements section of the catalog

Seminars

All students must also present a Final Dissertation Research Seminar prior to the final dissertation defense/oral examination.

Research Prospectus/Proposal

The CMSS program strives to give doctoral students comprehensive knowledge in their professional fields as well as training in the methods of research. Students must conduct original research related to CMSS program goals. Many classes will require you to write research proposals and/or peer-reviewed publications as part of the graded class assignments. Original research and the publication of results are an obligatory part of any Ph.D. program.

The required dissertation involves an independent, detailed research project of importance to the international scientific community. The student's graduate advisory committee will guide the conception, design, construction, and execution of a systems-based inquiry and will review and approve the dissertation manuscript. Normally, an edited version of the dissertation will be published. Your graduate advisory committee may require such publication as part of the defense process.

The doctoral student, along with their graduate advisory committee, designs and plans the dissertation research project. This plan should be formalized in a "Prospectus," a brief two page document summarizing the motivation, goals and methods of the student's intended research project, as well as the expected benefits or outcomes. The Prospectus is a prologue to the formal Research Proposal and should be presented to the graduate advisory committee at an early meeting.

The Introduction to the Prospectus should briefly explain the area of interest and scholarly motivation for the research. One or a few clearly stated objectives should be listed. The Prospectus should conclude with an approach on how, where, and when the research will be accomplished. The Prospectus will be submitted, along with the degree plan, to the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor), no later than the end of the **second long semester** (fall/spring).

Structure of Research Proposal

The proposal should be concise and provide a compelling rationale for the proposed research. The proposal must include a brief but complete synthesis of previous research on the problem, the significance or novelty of the research, and a detailed plan (experimental protocol) for carrying out the research and eventual analysis of the results. The proposal must also include a timeline with distinct milestones to guide the student and the advisory committee in assessing progress, as well as the budget. The proposal should be approved by the advisory committee prior to substantial research, and normally should be completed by the end of the second year of studies.

A dissertation proposal must include the following sections, in this order:

1. Title page. See example of a correctly spaced and formatted title page below.
2. Project Summary. Like an abstract, the Summary should be a synopsis of the proposed activity suitable for publication and not more than one page in length. It should describe the activities of the project. The Summary must clearly address, in separate statements, the two merit review criteria that are used by national science programs: 1) the intellectual merit of the proposed activity; and 2) the broader impacts resulting from the proposed activity.
3. Background & Relevance. This section summarizes the available scientific literature related to the problem or topic and explains why the proposed research is necessary.
4. Purpose, Objectives and Hypotheses. This section explicitly states the purpose of the research project (e.g., to determine what effect sea-level rise has on oyster reef extent and morphology). The purpose should reflect the question(s) that the research hopes to answer, not the method used to conduct the research. The objectives provide the steps in the research (not explicit methods) that will be used to answer the question (e.g. to gather data on oyster reef extent and morphology in areas of rising sea level). Hypotheses provide the explicit questions and predictions that will be tested in order to answer the larger research question (e.g., what are the factors affecting the extent and morphology of oyster reefs as sea level changes?).
5. Study site. If field research is planned, then a description of the study area including a map must be included. The study site should be briefly characterized in terms of physical and/or biological attributes.
6. Methods. This section describes in detail the methods of data collection and analysis you will use to meet each research objective or hypothesis. This is arguably the most important part of the proposal. Be sure and include how and when you will obtain any necessary permits.
7. Timeline. The timeline should be a table that includes distinct milestones showing the schedule for both research and academic work. Milestones should include completion of coursework, preliminary examinations, data-gathering for each objective or hypothesis, and analysis of each objective or hypothesis, writing of dissertation, submission to committee, and graduation.

8. Budget. The budget should reflect an accurate assessment of the expenses that will be incurred during the research project and by whom they will be paid. Include financial or other support obtained from all sources. Include each relevant item in the budget in the "Method" section of the proposal. Divide the budget into 4 subsections and present it in tabular form.
    a. Equipment. Include cost figures for each piece of non-expendable equipment that you must purchase to support your research. Do not include purchase costs for equipment already available for use at TAMU-CC, but make sure that such equipment is operational and available for your use. Obtain permission before using University equipment and expendables.
    b. Expendables. Estimate costs for all supplies, chemicals or other items to be exhausted during your research project. All items currently in stock must be replaced, so include replacement costs. Expendables include items such as traps, microscope slides, test tubes, glassware, aerial photography, and electronic data.
    c. Operational Expenses. Include cost estimates for data collection including travel, boat rental and other expenses. The use of University vehicles and boats requires approval by the Field Trip Coordinator and the Department Chairperson, or the research institute or center director with oversight over that vehicle.
    d. Document Preparation. Include cost estimates for all aspects of preparing the proposal and thesis, including the cost of having the final document bound. These costs are born by the student alone.
9. Budget Justification. This is a brief statement explaining why each element of the budget is necessary to accomplish the research.
10. Literature Cited. This section includes the complete citation for each article referenced in the proposal in the format of the format journal you have selected.
11. Biographical Sketch. The vitae must be 2 pages or less in length and should include five sections: 1) name, present address, contact information, and date; 2) Professional preparation including degrees listing most recent first; 3) Appointments to employment positions, listing most recent first; 4) Publications listing most recent first; and 5) Synergistic Activities, e.g. professional associations, presentations, professional activities, or any other relevant service.

After the proposal is completed, i.e., it is written well and formatted correctly, a draft copy must be submitted to the chair of the graduate advisory committee. After preliminary approval by the committee, the student should arrange to formally present the proposal in a public seminar. This presentation will clarify objectives, justification, methods, logic, or the proposed research and provide project orientation. The student and the graduate advisory committee must plan the timing, location, and format of the Dissertation Proposal presentation and the student must make a public announcement (Appendix 3) so that any interested persons may attend. All members of the committee should be present. The dissertation defense/final oral examination will not be permitted until this requirement is met.

Writing a successful proposal may require many drafts prior to approval by the entire advisory committee. Starting this process early is strongly advised. After the proposal meets the committee chair's approval, each of the remaining committee members should be provided a copy for review. After all requested changes have been made and the committee is satisfied that all aspects of the proposal are in order, the final Dissertation Research Proposal must be delivered to the committee chairperson for his/her signature and then to the rest of the committee and Program Coordinator for signatures.

Once all signatures are obtained, make copies to distribute to all members of the graduate advisory committee, and to the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor). Students must take this process into account when planning their research schedule.

Dissertation Proposal Seminar

Once the advisory committee has approved the research proposal and a date for the Dissertation Proposal Seminar has been set, the student must submit Form D: Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Hearing Request Form (available at https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/forms/index.php). This form has to be submitted with original signatures to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than **two weeks** prior to the hearing (seminar) and, at minimum, two semesters prior to the student's anticipated graduation. A Research Proposal Seminar Announcement (see example below) should be sent to the appropriate listservs no later than **one week** before the seminar date.

Qualifying Examination & Admission to Degree Candidacy

To be admitted to candidacy for the CMSS Ph.D. degree you must:

- Have a cumulative GPA and a degree plan GPA of at least 3.0
- Satisfy the residency requirement (completion of 9 credit hours each in two consecutive long semesters)
- Pass the qualifying examination
- Complete all formal course work on the degree plan (excluding dissertation project research hours, and CMSS 6999)
- Have an approved dissertation proposal on file with the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor).

*You must be admitted to degree candidacy no later than **5 years** after the first semester you enrolled in the program and at least 1 year before the date of the final dissertation defense/oral examination.* Graduate Education will not authorize a final dissertation defense/oral examination for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy.

After the completion of any required leveling courses and the CMSS Core Curriculum, all students must pass a Qualifying Examination to be admitted to degree candidacy. This examination may be scheduled when the student is within 6 semester credit hours of completing coursework (excluding dissertation project research hours and CMSS 6999) but should be completed after 12 and before 24 months of entering the program. Students entering with a BS should complete the exam before 36 months. If leveling work is not needed, students should complete the Qualifying Examination by the end of their second full year.

The Qualifying Examination involves written exams from each graduate advisory committee member, followed by an oral exam administered by the committee as a whole. In order to establish the emphasis area, the oral exam starts with a 15-minute oral presentation by the student describing the planned dissertation work. Questions at the oral exam can cover any aspect of the emphasis area, any aspect of the written exam, and any other topics committee members deem relevant.

The Qualifying Examination must be scheduled with proactive communication between the student and the committee. The written exams must be taken on no more than five consecutive days. Each participating committee member will prepare a written exam specifying time (at least 4 hours, but no more than 8 hours), conditions, and questions for the exam. Each of the four days is set aside for a different committee member. The written exam is returned to the committee member who prepared it, graded as Pass or Fail, signed, dated, and returned to the graduate committee chair. The chair determines if the written exam is passed and puts the exams in the student's file. The written exam must be passed prior to taking the oral exam. The oral exam should be scheduled no sooner than one week after, but no later than **one month** after the written exams are completed. Students are advised to consult with each committee member well in advance to determine how to prepare to take the exams and to schedule the exam.

Exam schedules must be arranged so that all members of your advisory committee can be present. One committee member (but not the chair) may participate from remote sites via telephone or other media. Any member of the graduate advisory committee who must be absent should arrange with a member of the CMSS Ph.D. faculty from his or her department to sit at the examination as a substitute and should notify Graduate Education, in writing, of the proposed substitution at least one

week prior to the examination. In an emergency, the absent faculty member may clear the substitution with Graduate Education by telephone, and follow-up with a written confirmation. Only one substitution is allowed. No substitutions for the chair of the committee will be approved. If a chair cannot attend a scheduled examination, or if two (or more) members of an advisory committee must be absent, the examination must be rescheduled.

The graduate advisory committee chairman will report the results of the examination in Form B (https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/forms/index.php) to the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor) and GRADUATE EDUCATION signed by all committee members. This form must be submitted electronically to the GRADUATE EDUCATION within 10 working days of the scheduled qualifying oral examination date and at least 14 weeks prior to the date of the final dissertation defense/oral examination. The committee may make recommendations for additional or remedial work as a condition for passing the exam. *If you successfully pass the Qualifying Examination, you will be advanced to candidacy at the beginning of the next semester. At that point you must complete all remaining requirements for the degree within 5 years.*

Individuals unable to pass the Qualifying Examination(s) will be dropped from the program. If you fail the Qualifying Examination, there is no obligation for a re-examination. At their discretion, the Graduate Advisory Committee may allow one re-examination when adequate time has passed to allow students to address inadequacies emerging from the first examination (not less than four months, but no more than six months). The advisory committee may request that the student retakes the entire exam or only those portions that were not passed, or the committee may recommend that the student complete a master's degree and be administratively withdrawn from the doctoral program.

Graduation

TAMU-CC confers graduate degrees at the close of each regular semester and 10-week summer session. final degree audits are conducted by the Registrar's Office and students should ensure they're compliant by following the links to the doctoral dates already included. Questions about degree audits can also be directed to the Office of Graduate Education.

Important Master's thesis dates and Doctoral dissertation dates are available at the Registrar:
https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/registrar/academic-calendar/masters-dates.php
https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/registrar/academic-calendar/doctoral-dates.php

Information on graduation application deadlines fees is available through the Registrar's Office at:
https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/registrar/degrees-graduation/apply-for-graduation.php

SECTION IV. GENERAL INFORMATION ON GRADUATE STUDIES

General Information

This section of the handbook includes selected standardized information and links about rules and policies pertaining to graduate education at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi. It is not intended to be comprehensive. You are strongly encouraged to read the sections of the catalog (https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/) pertaining to graduate students, which will provide more detail and additional topics that may impact you. You will also find information about your program.

Graduate Admissions

Please refer to the catalog: https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/admissions/

To be admitted to graduate studies, an applicant must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in the United States (or an equivalent foreign institution).1 The applicant must show promise of success in graduate studies. Decisions regarding admission to graduate study will be based on a review of all application materials. Factors that may be considered include the student's grade point average (GPA), the relevancy of previous course work, the applicant's demonstrated commitment to the field of study, and other criteria identified by the degree program. The overall strength of the record will be used to accept or deny an individual.
(Note: The requirement to hold a bachelor's degree does not apply to students enrolling in the RN-MSN option in nursing.)

In order to be considered for a graduate program, a minimum last 60-hour GPA of 2.5 is required. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements; review specific program information elsewhere in this catalog for additional GPA requirements. The GPA calculation is normally based on the last 60 semester credit hours (or equivalent) of undergraduate work and any previous work in a graduate or professional school. The GPA is calculated for the most recent 60 semester hours completed at the time of application. Grades for the entire semester within which the 60th hour appears on the transcript will also be included in the calculation, even if the hours total more than 60. Some programs may also consider the overall undergraduate or graduate degree GPA. For more information, see the catalog section for the specific program.

General Academic Policies and Regulations

From catalog: https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/general-academic-policies-regulations/

Student Responsibility

University personnel may assist students in progressing toward the degree that they are seeking. However, the final and ultimate responsibility for understanding and following the degree requirements rests with the students themselves. Each student is held responsible for knowing degree requirements, for enrolling in courses that fit into degree programs, and for taking courses in the proper sequence to ensure orderly progression of work. The student must seek advice about degree requirements and other University rules when necessary. The student is held responsible for knowing and abiding by University requirements regarding the standard of work required to

continue in the University, as well as those dealing with academic integrity, scholastic probation, enforced withdrawal, suspension, and dismissal. Additionally, the student is expected to comply with the rules and processes in the Student Code of Conduct, which is administered by the Office of Student Conduct & Advocacy. The Student Code of Conduct is accessible at http://www.tamucc.edu/~students.

Registration

Students admitted to the University may register for course work. See the admission classification system in the "Admissions" chapter of the catalog for limits. Former graduate students who have been inactive for two years or more must reapply for admission to the Graduate Admissions prior to the term of re-enrollment. Note that some programs may require re-application after only a one-year leave of absence. Doctoral students must remain continuously enrolled. See the Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence policy for more information. Specific information regarding dates, registration materials, and course offerings may be found in the class schedule for each term (published during the preceding term). Students must register by the specified deadlines for the term in order to be eligible to receive course credit. Registration requires payment of tuition and fees. See "Tuition, Fees, and Financial Assistance" http://businessoffice.tamucc.edu/tuition_and_fees/index.html .

In order to attend a course offered at TAMU-CC (whether in-person or online), an individual must either be enrolled in the course as a student or employed by TAMU-CC and attending the course for a legitimate business need. The instructor of record for the course may also allow visitors to attend a course on a limited basis with prior approval.

Enrollment Status

Graduate students should be aware of their enrollment status, as it may impact financial aid, veteran's benefits, or other important aspects of graduate life. In addition, international students have specific requirements about enrollment status.

Enrollment status for graduate students is as follows:

Full-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 9 hours Combined summer terms = 6 hours
Three-quarter-time graduate student	Fall or spring term = 7 hours Combined summer terms = 5 hours
Half-time graduate student:	Fall or spring term = 5 hours Combined summer terms = 3 hours

Total Hours

From Graduate Student Handbook (Link from: https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/doctoral-students.php)

Normally, the Ph.D. and Ed.D. doctoral degrees will consist of a minimum of 90 hours beyond the bachelor's degree for students admitted to a doctoral program directly after completion of the undergraduate degree. For students who have completed a master's degree, a minimum of 60 hours is generally required for the doctoral degree. The majority of the doctoral degree plan

coursework must be doctoral-level courses. Students should consult with program faculty and advisors; individual program requirements vary.

The DNP degree curriculum is 40 semester credit hours. Students should study their program handbook carefully for sequencing and timing of requirements.

Continuous Enrollment and Doctoral Residency

Unless on an approved leave of absence (see below), students in terminal degree programs **must be enrolled continuously for at least 3 semester credit hours per long semester (**fall and spring semesters) and pay designated tuition and fees.

Individual programs may have additional credit hour requirements. Students working on research/scholarly activity toward their dissertation should enroll in the number of credit hours that reflects the extent of their study or research activity. Students who have completed their dissertation/thesis/culminating project, including successful defense and submission to ProQuest but were unable to do so by the deadline for graduation may be eligible to take only one (1) semester credit hour in their graduating semester. Students should consult with their individual colleges for additional program directions. International students may have additional registration requirements depending on their visa status and should consult with the Office of International Education to obtain current information. Students who are not continuously enrolled and do not have an approved Leave of Absence may be required to reapply to their program. Readmission is not guaranteed.

In addition, some terminal degree programs require students to continuously register in courses for a minimum of two consecutive terms, which may include summer. The purpose of the residency is to permit professional interaction with program faculty and students. The residency provides an opportunity for sustained intellectual effort/creative output by enhancing exposure to new concepts in the discipline, to research methodologies, and to development of research competency with the outcome resulting in a dissertation containing original research or a final project. For specific residency requirements, consult the degree requirements sections of the individual terminal degree programs

Students must be enrolled the semester in which the dissertation defense/final examination occurs and in the semester in which they graduate.

Request for Leave of Absence

Students facing circumstances that prevent them from maintaining active status through required long semesters (fall and spring) should consult with their faculty advisor and request a leave of absence through the Office of the University Registrar, especially if the leave affects credit recency determinations. A student in good standing may petition for a leave of absence up to two full academic terms, with a maximum of two leave requests allowed per program. Approval must be obtained from the Office of the University Registrar in advance, and if approved, registration requirements will be waived during the leave period.

A leave of absence suspends all degree-related activities, including the use of university facilities and faculty advising. The degree completion timeline pauses during the leave and resumes upon re-

enrollment. Unapproved absences, based on program and degree level (doctoral or master's), may require students to reapply to the program or university.

In cases of extenuating circumstances, the Office of the University Registrar may extend a one-semester leave of absence up to a maximum of two semesters. Students returning after an approved leave do not need to reapply to their program. A leave of absence cannot exceed one academic year. Students should consult with their academic/faculty advisor and relevant offices to assess the impact of a leave on financial aid, scholarships, assistantships, veteran benefits, etc. International students should consult with the Office of International Education to understand how a leave of absence may impact their stay in or re-entry to the U.S. who will initiate the process.

Maximum Course Load

Graduate students may not register for more than 12 hours in a regular semester without the approval of the dean of the college in which they are enrolled. Approval from the academic dean is also required for more than 12 hours of coursework in the combined summer session (not counting Maymester).

Repetition of a Course

A course in which the final grade is C or lower may be repeated for a higher grade. A course in which the final grade is a B may be repeated only with the permission of the Associate Provost. **A maximum of two courses** may be retaken during graduate study at the University. **Each course may be repeated only one time**. **All grades** received for the course will be **computed in the grade point average**.

Time Limit to Degree

The requirements for Ph.D. and Ed.D degrees at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi must be completed within ten years subsequent to enrollment in the terminal degree program. The ten-year period begins with the first semester in which the student enrolls and is calculated from the date of degree conferral. Students have a maximum of five years to advance to candidacy and a maximum of 5 years from candidacy to successfully defend the dissertation. Students who exceed the candidacy deadline may request an extension. Candidacy extensions require strong justification in writing from the student and must include a plan for timely completion of the comprehensive examination, the proposal, and the final dissertation. The extension must be approved by the student's faculty advisor, the department chair, the College Dean, and the Graduate Dean. Credit that is more than ten years old will not count toward a terminal degree. Exceptions will only be considered for courses completed at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and will require **strong** justification in writing from the student requesting the exception as well as a revalidation plan. Written approval from the major department chair, the Dean of the college from which the degree is offered, the Graduate Dean, and the Provost are required.

Academic Requirements for Graduate Work

Grade Point Average. To remain in good standing as well as maintain eligible for university funding such as scholarships and assistantships, the university requires students to maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) for all graduate work undertaken. TAMU-CC uses

a 4.0 scale for calculation of GPA. Please note that TAMU-CC calculates GPA based on all graduate coursework taken at TAMU-CC and not just coursework in the degree program. Students should ensure they are knowledgeable about both overall GPA required for good standing as well as GPA in the program in which they are enrolled.

Only grades earned at this university will be used to calculate the TAMU-CC grade point average as used in determination of eligibility for graduation. Grades are made available to students at the end of each grading period at http://sail.tamucc.edu

Texas 99 Hour Rule

The Texas State Legislature has enacted a rule that provides that students at all state universities with over 99 doctoral hours may be subject to the payment of nonresident tuition. A student will generally be able to study at A&M-Corpus Christi full-time for five complete academic years, including summers, before being affected by the 99-hour rule. For students staying beyond five years, in a number of cases there is still the possibility of a programmatic or individual exemption from the rule. For more information, contact the coordinator of your graduate program.

Academic Integrity

From catalog: https://catalog.tamucc.edu/graduate/general-academic-policies-regulations/

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, which include but are not limited to illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, plagiarism or collusion in any of these behaviors.

Responsibility of the Student: It is the responsibility of the student to become educated regarding University Rules, Regulations and Policies regarding academic misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to, seeking clarification from each faculty member regarding acceptable behaviors and guidelines for completing individual assignments. A failure to become educated with the University Rules, Regulations and Policies or the instructor's individual guidelines will not excuse the student from accountability for violations of such policies.

Responsibility of the Faculty Member: The faculty member should maintain a policy regarding academic misconduct within their syllabus and provide clear expectations regarding behaviors that will and will not be permitted regarding the completion of in and out of class assignments. The faculty member shall address all matters of suspected academic misconduct with the student in question and may choose to document and refer the matter to Student Conduct & Community Standards. The burden of proof shall lie on the faculty member when presenting cases of academic misconduct to Student Conduct & Community Standards.

Disciplinary action for academic misconduct is first the responsibility of the faculty member assigned to the course. The faculty member is charged with assessing the gravity of any case of academic misconduct and with giving appropriate sanction to any student involved. The faculty member must file an Academic Misconduct Incident Form.

Sanctions that may be recommended by the faculty member for individual cases of academic misconduct include one or more of the following:

Written reprimand (an official letter of reprimand will be issued by the Student Conduct & Community Standards);
Requirement to re-do work in question;
Requirement to submit additional work;
Lowering of grade on work in question;
Assigning grade of "F" to work in question;
Assigning grade of "F" for course;
Recommendation for more severe punishment, such as suspension, dismissal from program, or expulsion from the University.
If the faculty member recommends more severe sanction, such as dismissal from program or expulsion from the program or from the University, the matter will automatically be reviewed by Student Conduct & Community Standards and may be referred to an Academic Integrity Hearing Panel. Additionally, if the student has a history of academic misconduct, the matter will be reviewed by the Academic Integrity Hearing Panel.

The faculty member must file a record for each case of academic misconduct, including a description of the incident, the disciplinary action taken, the assignment, the instructions for the assignment, and evidence indicating misconduct, and a current syllabus for the course to the Student Conduct & Community Standards. The faculty member should also provide a copy to the chair of their department. The Student Conduct & Community Standards will maintain records of such cases for a period of five years after the student's last enrollment date.

For additional information regarding this process students should refer to University Rules and Procedures 13.02.99.C0.04: Student Academic Misconduct Cases.

Additional Information

Information, policies, and procedures about tuition, fees, financial assistance, scholarships, and other topics important to graduate students can be found in the catalog. In addition to the catalog, web pages for offices and services on campus provide expanded information, forms, and contact names/phone numbers. Some of those webpages include the following:
Graduate Education
Student Financial Assistance
International Education
Scholarships
Assistantships

SECTION V. DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

Your dissertation must conform to CMSS program and Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi institutional standards. The following guidelines will help ensure your dissertation is completed and submitted appropriately. Consult the Graduate Student Handbook (Link from: https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/doctoral-students.php) for specific formatting and submission requirements.

The CMSS Dissertation

Students will complete a study of the accepted standards of scholarly ethics and scientific integrity. The Ph.D. dissertation is a book-length, formal document that argues in defense of a particular thesis. Two important adjectives used to describe the dissertation are "original" and "substantial". The research performed to support a thesis must be both, and the dissertation must show it to be so. In particular, a dissertation highlights original contributions. Once data collection and analysis are completed, the research should be organized into a meaningful format and explained in a written narrative. The written narrative follows the style and format standard to scientific papers.

Dissertation research will not always go according to plans. Students must be prepared to adopt new methods of data collection or analysis if necessary and in consultation with the graduate advisory committee. Students should plan to take advantage of any opportunities to pursue side projects, as time and resources permit, to enrich understanding of the research topic.

The Graduate Student Handbook (Link from: https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/doctoral-students.php) outlines the guidelines and requirements for formatting the dissertation. Templates for the title page, copyright page, and committee member page are on the Office of Graduate Education's website: https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/dissertation-thesis.php.

CMSS students may choose between two models for organizing the dissertation content: 1) the traditional model, and 2) the journal manuscript model. The "traditional" model presents the dissertation research content in a single, cohesive manuscript. Information is presented sequentially and no section stands alone as a publishable document. The "journal manuscript" model presents dissertation research as several discrete articles, each appropriate for submission to a journal, bound together as the dissertation document. In the journal manuscript model, information may be repeated as necessary between articles so that each can stand alone as an academic work. The journal manuscript format must also include an overarching introduction, a summary/conclusions section that brings the entirety of the research into context, and a literature cited section that encompasses the entirety of the manuscript. Regardless of whether the traditional or journal manuscript model is chosen, the entire document must be submitted in one format style. In other words, in the journal manuscript model, even though it is likely that articles will be submitted to several different journals, the entire dissertation must be presented in the style of only one journal. Headings and subheadings, punctuation, reference citations, and other details should follow the journal format exactly with few exceptions.

When the draft is ready, submit it to the chair of your advisory committee. Submit the draft as if it were the final – make it as perfect as possible with respect to writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling, journal formatting requirements, and with all figures and tables in final format. Be prepared to go through the revision process numerous times before the committee chair is comfortable letting the rest of the committee review the document.

When the committee chair is ready for the document to be submitted to the rest of the committee, enough copies should be reproduced so that each member can have a copy. Ideally, committee members should return the corrected dissertation within two weeks of receipt. Students should check with committee members to ensure they have the time to review the document. A final draft delivered to the advisory committee one month prior to the dissertation seminar, would allow two weeks before the scheduled final defense/oral examination date for the student to make recommended changes. After the committee has returned the corrected draft, students should review suggested changes with their advisory committee chair, and make the suggested changes, unless the chair directs otherwise. (Note: A request to schedule the defense/final examination must be submitted by the published deadline (https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/registrar/academic-calendar/doctoral-dates.php) on the appropriate form found at https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/forms/index.php (+Doctoral Program; Form E).

Students should be prepared to go through the revision process more than once before the committee members are comfortable signing off on the final document.

Students should be sure to give their advisory committee chair enough time to review the manuscript and leave themselves enough time to make changes. In other words, students should make sure that they have left ample time prior to deadlines for all members to have adequate time to review the document and for all the changes suggested by the committee to be made. **The dissertation should be essentially complete before the dissertation seminar and final defense/oral examinations.** Any member of the graduate committee or the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies can reject the dissertation at any stage of the submission and approval process. Rejection of the manuscript can occur for many reasons including (but not limited to):

1. The manuscript does not conform to the required format
2. The manuscript is messy, poorly reproduced, or contains grammatical or spelling errors
3. The manuscript describes scientific data inconsistent with the research project approved in the dissertation proposal
4. The paper contains errors, inappropriate analysis of data, erroneous conclusions, or other scientific inaccuracies
5. The paper contains plagiarized work.

After a student has successfully presented the dissertation seminar, completed the defense/oral examination, and completed all changes to the dissertation manuscript that have been requested by the committee, the Dissertation Defense/Final Examination (Form F) report will be electronically routed for signatures and submitted to Graduate Education (https://www.tamucc.edu/academics/graduate-education/forms/index.php).

The CMSS faculty expects students to submit dissertation research (in proper format) to scholarly journal(s) for publication. If the advisory committee chair or other person(s) including other faculty or scientists from funding agencies, etc., made a significant contribution to the research or writing of the manuscript to be submitted, then the person should be listed as a co-author on the published

article. The student and the advisory committee Chair should agree on the order of authorship. Seriously consider co-author status if a person:

1. Supported the work through a grant that was authored by them
2. Did a significant portion of field or laboratory work
3. Contributed materially and intellectually to the research
4. Contributed to the writing

In all cases, acknowledge the chair of the advisory committee, other members of the graduate advisory committee, other people that offered assistance and TAMU-CC in the publication. It is courteous to acknowledge persons, who assisted in any major way including moral support, lab/field assistance, and of course, any source of financial assistance.

Dissertation Seminar & Final Defense/Oral Examination

The comprehensive exam must be passed and courses in the plan of study completed with a GPA of 3.0 or greater before the dissertation defense/final examination will be scheduled. Once the dissertation is completed and approved by the advisory committee, the results of the research must be presented orally and publicly. The dissertation defense/final examination must cover, but is not limited to, the dissertation. The defense must be scheduled for a minimum of **six weeks** prior to graduation. The seminar should be scheduled and completed prior to the final defense/oral examination. The final defense/oral examination usually takes place immediately following the seminar, but it can be scheduled on a separate day if necessary to accommodate the schedules of committee members.

Subsequent to the dissertation defense/final examination, and **only** after all changes to the dissertation manuscript requested by the committee have been made, the student will submit an electronic copy of the dissertation, no later than **four weeks** prior to graduation, to ProQuest/UMI as a single PDF file (see Graduate Student Handbook for detailed instructions).

Students not completing all requirements of the Final Dissertation Defense by the end of the semester, such as turning in an approved final draft after published deadlines, will receive a grade of In Progress (IP). The student must register for the same course in the subsequent semester, paying all the appropriate tuition and fees, to receive a final grade for the course.

After your **Dissertation Defense & Final Examination Report** (Form F) is submitted and all requested changes have been made, you can submit your dissertation electronically.

Dissertation Seminar

The Dissertation Seminar is a formal oral and visually supported presentation of the results of the research or of some pertinent aspect of the research. Although it will generally be longer than a paper presented at a scientific meeting, it should be similar in format and design. The defense should review parts of the dissertation including the background and relevance of the research, the methods, the results, and the conclusions. Professional quality visual aids must complement the oral presentation. As a general rule, the oral presentation should last about 45 minutes and at least 15 additional minutes should be allowed to answer questions at the end.

Students must prepare and submit a formal announcement of the dissertation seminar to their committee chairperson for approval at least **two weeks** prior to the seminar date. It is the student's

responsibility to contact each committee member and arrange a time and place for the event. All committee members must attend the seminar. The student is responsible for posting the seminar notice as an e-mail to all appropriate listservs at least one week prior to the seminar date. Email a copy of the seminar notice to the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor) and CMSS Administrative Assistant.

Final Defense/Oral Examination

The purpose of the final defense and oral examination is to allow advisory committee members to gauge the scope of the student's understanding of the principles and significance of the discipline of the dissertation research. It complements the qualifying examination, which gauged overall knowledge in the field, by allowing a more detailed assessment of specific knowledge as it applies to the dissertation research. The exact format and scope will vary among students depending on both their advisory committee and the nature of their research.

The graduate advisory committee will decide whether a student has passed the final defense and oral examination. Regardless of whether the student passes or fails, the committee will discuss with the student their assessment of the student's performance. If a student fails, the exam may be retaken only once, and only after at least four months have passed.

SECTION VI. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: CMSS Program Application Checklist

- ❑ Complete the Texas Common Application and submit the application fee. Online applications are preferred.
- ❑ Submit an essay of not more than 1000 words describing educational backgrounds, career interests, goals and challenges. Include any relevant supplemental materials such as publications or resumes of relevant experiences, and contacts made with professors in the CMSS program.
- ❑ Request 3 letters of evaluation/recommendation.
  - You should request evaluations/recommendations from individuals who are familiar with your academic achievement and potential and provide them with the required evaluation forms.
  - If you have been out of school for a number of years and are unable to contact former professors, you may request evaluations/recommendations from people such as employers who are familiar with you and who can comment on your potential to succeed in the program.
  - Completed evaluation/recommendations should be signed over the flap of the envelope by the person completing the form/letter and be mailed directly to Graduate Education.
- ❑ Request official transcripts documenting all senior-level post-secondary institutions you attended. Transcripts must be sent directly to Graduate Education. An official statement of the award of the degree or diploma is required for each degree completed.
- ❑ Request that the required test scores (GRE and/or TOEFL) be sent directly from the Educational Testing Service to GRADUATE EDUCATION (Code 6849)
  - GRE and TOEFL scores must be not more than 5 and 2 years old, respectively
  - International graduate students seeking assistantships must also obtain "English Proficiency Certification"
- ❑ Apply separately to College of S&E for financial assistance.
- ❑ Priority deadlines are:

Student Type	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Domestic Students	December 1	August 1	December 1
International Students	December 1	June 1	December 1

Appendix 2: CMSS Ph.D. Program First-Year Checklist

- ❑ Meet with CMSS Program Coordinator prior to enrolling for first semester classes
- ❑ Form Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) by end of first semester
    - Speak with individual faculty about research interests
    - Committee must include at least 3 CMSS PhD. Faculty
    - Decide on a primary advisor (Committee Chair)
    - Form and meet your committee *no later than* the end of second semester
- ❑ Prepare the Tentative Degree Plan with your GAC no later than the end of second semester
    - Leveling coursework
    - Elective coursework
    - Dissertation topic
    - Formulate Research Prospectus
- ❑ Graduate Education appoints a Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR)
- ❑ Meet GAC at least annually to update progress

Each time an item is checked off this list, send an email with the date completed to the CMSS Administrative Assistant.

Appendix 3: CMSS Ph.D. Program Degree Requirements Checklist

I. Coursework

- ❑ Leveling coursework (if necessary) as specified by GAC
- ❑ Tentative Degree Plan and Research Prospectus approved by Graduate Education and copy to the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor) by end of second semester, but no later than **18 months** after beginning the doctoral program
  - Minimum 90 hrs beyond bachelor's degree, or 60 hrs beyond master's degree
  - 15 hrs Core Curriculum, including 3 hrs CMSS 6312 Seminar
  - 3.0 minimum GPA
  - Research Prospectus (2-5 pages) developed with GAC
  - Final Degree Plan for signature approval to Dept. Chair, College Dean, and Graduate Education no later than **the census day (12th class day)** of the semester prior to the graduating term.
  - Deadline to apply for graduation is the last day of classes in the semester prior to graduation.

II. Research Proposal

- ❑ Independent, detailed, original, systems-based inquiry
- ❑ Research Prospectus presented to committee and submitted to Graduate Education by end of the second semester (2-5 pages)
- ❑ Dissertation Research Proposal
  - Modified from Research Prospectus with GAC input
  - Submit draft to Committee Chair for approval
  - Present, after Chair approval and public announcement, a proposal seminar
  - Present to GAC for approval signatures
  - Signed version submitted to College Dean; Copies to College Advisor, CMSS Administrative Assistant, and GAC members
  - Should be approved by end of second year of graduate study

III. Admission To Candidacy [Major Decision Point]

- ❑ Residence requirement: At least 9 credit hours in 2 consecutive semesters
- ❑ Completed *formal* coursework on Tentative Degree Plan
  - Excluding research hours and CMSS 6312
  - 3.0 minimum GPA
- ❑ Dissertation Proposal on file with College
- ❑ Qualifying Examinations
  - Written examination from each GAC member
  - Oral examination with GAC
  - Schedule when within 6 hrs of completion of *formal* coursework: Notify Graduate Education
  - Must be registered for credit at time of exams
  - Speak with each GAC member to prepare
  - Must pass within 12 months of coursework completion
  - Notify Graduate Education of outcome

IV. Teaching Experience

- ❑ A relevant teaching experience of at least 3 credit hours as instructor of record is required
  - Consult with the CMSS Program Coordinator to make arrangements for a teaching assignment
  - Currently (July 2026) this requirement is **waived**.

V. Dissertation

- ❑ Data collection and analysis completed
- ❑ Choose format and prepare according to guidelines
  - Multiple iterations of editing
  - With Chair approval, provide copies to GAC *at least* 1 month prior to final defense
  - Committee returns corrected versions within 2 weeks
  - Review and incorporate suggested changes along with Chair
  - Additional review by GAC may be required
- ❑ Submit final corrected version of Dissertation to Graduate Education following successful defense
  - See Graduate Student Handbook for instructions
- ❑ Note: Completion of the CMSS Ph.D. is driven by the dissertation as a product of research, rather than by external factors or commitments

VI. Dissertation Defense

- ❑ Must have been admitted to Degree Candidacy at least 1 year prior to defense
- ❑ Must be registered for credit for semester in which the final defense takes place
- ❑ Apply for graduation in College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor) by published deadline. The student must complete all requirements for the degree at least three weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the degree will be conferred.
- ❑ Contact GAC to schedule Dissertation Seminar and Final Defense
  - Must be held at least six weeks prior to graduation
- ❑ Submit formal seminar announcement to committee chair at least 2 weeks in advance
- ❑ Schedule rooms for seminar and defense
- ❑ Post announcement to relevant Listservs at least 1 week in advance
- ❑ Email copy to College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor)
- ❑ Present Dissertation Seminar and stand for the Final Defense
- ❑ Complete all requirements for the degree at least three weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the degree will be conferred.

Notes:

Tracking progress toward the degree is very important and the responsibility of the CMSS Program Coordinator. Each time the student has accomplished a milestone on this list, the student should send an email with the date completed to the CMSS Administrative Assistant.

Appendix 4: CMSS Ph.D. Program Timeline

Milestone	Entering with BS or MS		
	Deadline	**Grace**	**Comments**
Committee formed	1st sem	2nd sem	
Degree plan	1st sem	2nd sem	
GFR added	2nd sem		
Prospectus	2nd sem	3rd sem	
Proposal/Seminar	3rd sem	4th sem	
Core courses	2nd sem	4th sem	
Candidacy Exam	4th sem	6th sem	
Final Dissertation	10 years (20 sem)	0	Courses expire after 10 years, must be retaken or revalidated

(NB: sem = fall, spring, and 10-week summer semesters)

*Deficiency must be made up before registering for next semester, and students must be registered full-time to be eligible for any graduate assistantships or scholarships.

Appendix 5: Course of Study

Credit hour progress through time. Semester, Year, Months, Credit Hours Equivalency Table. (not included in Handbook)

Semester	Semester Year	End Months	Credit Hours	
			Semester	Cumulative
1	Fall 1	4.5	9*	9
2	Spring 1	9	9	18
	Summer 1	12	3	21
3	Fall 2	16.5	9*	30
4	Spring 2	21	9	39
	Summer 2	24	3	42
5	Fall 3	28.5	9*	51
6	Spring 3	33	9	60
	Summer 3	36	3	63
7	Fall 4	40.5	9	72
8	Spring 4	45	9	81
	Summer 4	48	3	84
9	Fall 5	52.5	9	93
10	Spring 5	57	9	102
	Summer 5	60	3	105
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
20	Summer 10	120		

*Assumes student takes only 9 hours in first 3 fall semesters, but many students take 10 hours because they take three 3-hr classes + one 1-hr seminar course.

Appendix 6: Format of the Research Proposal and Dissertation Seminar Notice

Format of the Research Proposal Title Page

TITLE SHOULD APPEAR IN ALL CAPITALS AND BE CENTERED

a research proposal prepared by YOU A. STUDENT
MONTH, YEAR

for
The Graduate Committee
Coastal and Marine System Science Program
Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi, Texas

Approved:

_____
Dr. A. Palmtree, Chairperson

_____
Dr. B. Waves, Member

_____
Dr. C. Gull, Member

_____
Dr. D. Sand, Member

Format of the Research Proposal Budget

Table 1. Proposed budget for dissertation research.

Budget Item	Costs ($)			
	TAMUCC	Personal	Other	Total
Salary				
Monthly (15 months)			*15567.75	15567.75
Equipment				
Desktop	on hand/no			
Laptop	cost	on hand/no		
Microscope		cost		
	on hand/no			
	cost			
Supplies				
Petri dishes			60	60
Microslides			40	40
Chemicals			500	500
Travel				
Boat/Vehicle (4 trips)	120.00		400.00	520.00
Food			**100.00	100.00
Hotel			**200.00	200.00
Preparation of Documents				
Thesis Expenses		200.00		200.00
Publication and reprints	300.00			300.00
Total	420.00	740.00	22567.75	24327.75

* Grants to Dr. A. Palmtree.
** Travel award from Elite Program

Also include a section entitled "Budget Justification" that describes in detail each line in the budget.

Format of the Research Proposal Seminar Announcement

(Note: Time, date, and room are examples only)

RESEARCH PROPOSAL SEMINAR NOTICE
COASTAL AND MARINE SYSTEM SCIENCE PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI

SUBJECT:	Official Title of Your Research Proposal
SPEAKER:	You A. Student
DATE:	Tuesday, March 15, 2005
GRADUATE ADVISOR:	Major Professor(s)
TIME:	3:00 p.m.
PLACE:	Building Name, Room Number

ABSTRACT

A 50–200-word abstract of your research proposal should appear here.

[NOTE: Students should post this notice electronically to faculty members and graduate students involved in the CMSS and other graduate programs via the cmss-list (cmss-list@listserv.tamucc.edu) and Scitech-list (scitech-gradstudents@listserv.tamucc.edu) listservs. Ensure you email a copy of the announcement to the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor martha.simcik@tamucc.edu) and CMSS Administrative Assistant.]

Format of Research Proposal

Make all narrative material of the dissertation proposal clearly understandable to the reader through careful, well-organized writing, meaningful figures and tables, and adequate utilization of references. Several publications available in the TAMU-CC library answer specific questions regarding the style of scientific writing, including the Council of Science Editors (CSE) Style Manual, the United States Government Printing Office Style Manual, and others. No corrections of letters or figures should be visible on the final copies.

Prepare the manuscript using styles in your word processor. Styles allow you to reformat the document quickly. The font should be 10 or 12 characters-per-inch (cpi) type size with a plain book-type font such as Helvetica or Times New Roman, not some unusual font. Follow your format journal in italicizing or underlining scientific nomenclature, foreign words, abbreviations and titles. When underlining a word, use a continuous underline; do not leave a space in the underline between letters. Separately underline each word of a multiword term, leaving a gap between adjacent words. In general, double-space your dissertation proposal and dissertation manuscript. The exceptions to this rule are for quotations exceeding six typed lines (inset and single-space these) and footnotes (which you should avoid). Figure and table captions should also be single-spaced. One line should separate a table caption from the table header and two lines should separate any embedded figure or table from text on the same page. Number all pages in the dissertation proposal or dissertation manuscript except the Title and Approval pages. Number the preliminary pages of the dissertation proposal with lower case Roman numerals. The Abstract page is the first numbered page; it follows the Title and Approval pages and is numbered iii. The style and format for all headings and subheadings in the dissertation proposal and dissertation manuscript should follow the standard practice of the format journal. Start each major heading (i.e., Methods, Study Area, Results, Discussion, etc.) on a new page. Subheadings should fall naturally within the text, but should never appear alone as the last line on a page ("orphan"). If a subheading is the last line of text, start it at the beginning of the next page.

Tables and figures, regardless of size, may appear on separate pages or within the text itself. Place them in the manuscript as close as possible to their first reference in the text (generally the page on or immediately following the first reference). Make sure that figures and tables are relevant and useful to the reader, and use as many as are necessary to fully report on the results of your research. If a figure or table is relevant, but represents ancillary information or "raw" data, include in an appendix rather than in the main text of the manuscript. If you place tables or figures in landscape format on a page, the top of the table or figure should be on the left side. Give each table or figure a number and caption, and transcribe these exactly on the List of Tables or List of Figures page; if a figure or table caption is more than one sentence, then put only the first sentence into the list. Make captions as concise as possible, but clearly describe the content of the figure or table. Follow exactly the format and style for figures and tables prescribed by the Format Journal.

Construct tables using the "Table" function found in all word processors. Titles for tables must appear on the same page as the table, and should be placed above the table. Make horizontal rules mimic the Format Journal. Vertical rules should not be used. If a table is more than one page long, there should be no closing line on the first page and the second page of the table should have a caption reading "Table #. Continued." Multi-page tables should always begin on a new page; in other words, the first few lines of a multi-page table should not appear embedded within the text.

Use the caption style of your word processing program for figures, which usually places the caption below the figure.

Footnotes should not appear within the regular text of the manuscript (they are permissible as explanatory notes in tables) except in rare circumstances. If they are absolutely necessary and the Format Journal permits their use, follow the journal format exactly. Cite all references to the literature in the text using the name-date system which is the method most widely used in the sciences, e.g., Stilt (2000) or (Heron, 1995; Seagull 1996; Seagull and Plover, 1996). Choose a Format Journal that uses this system. Do not cite sources by number, i.e. (1). If you use or adapt a figure from another author, cite the source in the figure caption. Generally, follow the format in the Format Journal when you develop the Literature Cited section. Use the same system of abbreviations, punctuation, underlining, and italics as the Format Journal. There is one exception (mainly applies to chemistry Format Journals): if the Literature Cited section of your Format Journal does not list the title of an article, make sure that you include it to enhance the usefulness of your citations to readers.

Format of the Dissertation Seminar Notice

(Note: Time, date and room are examples only)

DISSERTATION SEMINAR NOTICE
COASTAL AND MARINE SYSTEM SCIENCE PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI

SUBJECT:	Official Title of Your Dissertation
SPEAKER:	You A. Student
DATE:	[Insert Day, month date, year]
GRADUATE ADVISOR:	Major Professor(s)
TIME:	3:00 p.m.
PLACE:	Building Name, Room Number

ABSTRACT

The abstract of your dissertation or graduate project should appear here (shortened version if necessary). An abstract of 50-200 words length is recommended for inclusion in the Graduate Seminar Notice.

[**NOTE:** Students should post this notice electronically to faculty members and graduate students involved in the CMSS and other graduate programs via the cmss-list, scitech-list, escifac-list, and escistu-list listservs. Ensure you email a copy of the announcement to the College of Science Dean's Office (Academic Advisor) and CMSS Administrative Assistant.]