

Concurrent Registration Guide

What is Concurrent Registration?

For motivated Marine Biology and Oceanography majors who are considering continuing their education in the Masters of Science in Marine Science (MSMS) program at HPU, concurrent registration during the senior year is a great way to finish your undergraduate degree and gain up to 12 credits in graduate level courses that can be used towards the MSMS degree. Doing so can give you a head-start on completing the MSMS course requirements. Students should request concurrent registration in the last semester of their Junior year (You are eligible if you plan to complete your B.S. degree within 2 semesters after your current semester).

It is important to understand that the concurrent registration does not guarantee acceptance in to the MSMS program. Concurrent registration allows you to take graduate courses as an undergraduate (in your last year) that count towards your B.S. degree *and* can transfer into the MSMS program, *if accepted* within 1 year of completing the baccalaureate degree. ***Students must still meet MSMS application requirements*** ([link https://www.hpu.edu/cncs/natural-science/msms/index.html](https://www.hpu.edu/cncs/natural-science/msms/index.html)) ***and apply to the MSMS program during their senior year*** (*priority application deadline is January 15*). Acceptance occurs in Spring with a program starting date of the Fall semester after your undergraduate graduation (thesis-track students may be eligible to start in Spring semester if they have a Fall graduation). **Students must have completed 90 credits before applying for concurrent enrollment.**

Registering for Graduate Classes Concurrently

You are eligible for concurrent registration if you have a cumulative HPU GPA of at least 3.0 and will be entering your senior year. You can enroll in up to 12 credits total of concurrent graduate courses. Note, you may not take more than 15 units of total classes (undergraduate and graduate) when you have concurrent enrollment of some graduate classes because graduate classes are more challenging. You must consult with your faculty academic advisor, who will initiate the request for concurrent registration, which consists of filling out a form and stating the graduate classes you will be taking the next semester. It is also recommended that you consult with the MSMS Graduate Program Director (Dr. Olivia Nigro) for more information about the MSMS program.

Note: **each** semester you register for concurrent courses, you must fill out a new concurrent registration form with your undergraduate advisor and obtain approval from the MSMS program director in order to register for the concurrent courses that semester. You should identify the classes you will take with your advisor. Students planning on pursuing the Thesis (T-track) MSMS degree should also identify a potential thesis advisor as early as possible during their undergraduate career, and work with this faculty member in addition to their faculty academic advisor and the MSMS program director to plan their concurrent coursework.

The two different Tracks of the MSMS Program.

An important consideration is whether you will be in Track A (Applied track) or Track T (Thesis track) of the MSMS program. The concurrent courses you might take will depend on your choice of track.

Track-A (Applied)

The applied track is designed for students interested in going into management, policy, NGOs, or non-research positions. Track A is frequently completed in 2 or 2.5 years and varies based on students' progress in classes, and their practicum project. Taking a few classes in the concurrent program will make it easier to finish in 2 years, or possibly less.

The applied track provides students with a broad-based, in-depth knowledge of physical, geological, chemical, and ecological processes in the ocean, coupled with the technical skills necessary to contribute to the exploration of the marine environment and the management of its living resources. Because the MSMS-A track is designed primarily for students seeking careers in applied resource management, this program emphasizes the practical skills and the analytical expertise required to monitor and manage the global ocean system.

Track T (Thesis)

The thesis track is the preferred option if you want to do research and/or a PhD thesis in the future.

Our established thesis track is a research-based program that emphasizes a hands-on approach to learning through the completion of an original thesis project under the direct mentorship of an experienced marine science researcher. The purpose of Track T is to give students the opportunity to develop a strong foundation in research methodology. Individualized programs of study ensure that each student has the best possible preparation based on their interests, background, and abilities. MSMS Track T students take core and elective courses while engaging in an intensive, independent research project. Students work side-by-side with a faculty mentor to discover or synthesize knowledge that contributes to the field of marine science.

If you are interested in doing a thesis, you want to identify a graduate thesis advisor and a thesis topic as early as possible. Ideally, you would identify this during your junior year and could begin or test out a research project during the summer or in the Fall of your senior/concurrent year, possibly as part of the senior capstone courses. The time it takes to finish a thesis is highly variable, depending on students' research, whether they work part- or full-time, and the rate at which they make progress. Most students take from 2.5-3 years, but some take longer. Starting research your senior year could give you a head start, make things go smoother, and potentially reduce the total amount of semesters. You may still be able to do the thesis track if you start the concurrent program without identifying an advisor and project before your concurrent year, but you have to identify a thesis advisor to be accepted into this track of the MSMS program.

The following are the main requirements for each track, but see the MSMS handbook for more details.

Track A students require (39 units):

Core Courses (15 units)

4 MARS core classes in Oceanography (either MARS 6050 or 6090, 6060, 6070, and 6080) and Biometry (Biol 6090)

Foundational Courses/Seminars (9 units)

NSCI 6110 (2 units), 6130 (2 units), 6910 (2 units), 6950 (3 units), which is a practicum experience.

Restricted Elective Courses (9 units)

Students take 9 units of electives that have quantitative components (see list of courses)

Unrestricted Elective Courses (6 units)

See list of courses (graduate level science courses)

Track T students require (36 units):

Research Seminars (12 units)

NSCI 6110 (2 units), 6112 (1 unit), 6120 (1 unit), 6900 (5 units), 7000 (3 units)

MARS core classes (9 units)

either MARS 6050 or 6090, 6060, 6070, and/or 6080

Electives (15 units)

Note that if you take 12 units as a senior (concurrently), you have 24 units remaining if in Track T (and considerable research); you would have 27 units remaining in Track A and are required to complete an independent practicum project. Additionally, note that 9 units is considered full-time for graduate students and 12 units is the maximum number of graduate credits you may enroll in per semester.

Selecting the Appropriate Courses to take Concurrently

To determine which concurrent classes to take in your senior year you should consult with your academic advisor and get approval from the MSMS program director. Ideally, you will take required MSMS courses that will allow you more flexibility in taking classes the following year. Taking electives your concurrent year might reduce your schedule flexibility (and increase workload) the following year. However, it is also ideal to take classes that go towards both your BS and MSMS degree (when possible); otherwise, your MSMS classes are your undergraduate electives.

The classes you enroll in concurrently may depend on whether you are a Marine Biology or Oceanography major and whether you are going into Track A or Track T. Below are several different alternative degree plans. However, there is some flexibility and different approaches one can take for several classes, so you will want to craft your own plan with your advisor.

Students taking graduate classes with Concurrent Enrollment should follow the guide below.

Track A	(units)	Select
MSMS Core courses*	3 or 6	Take at least 1 or 2 Core courses. (MARS 6050, 6060, 6070, 6080, 6090 and/or BIOL 6090)
Restricted elective*	3 or 6	Take at least 1 or 2 quantitative electives (see list).
Unrestricted Electives	0 or 3	You could take 1 elective your concurrent year. Note that A-Track students only take 2 3-unit unrestricted electives.
NSCI 6110	2	Optional (discuss with your advisor)
NSCI 6910	1, 2, or 3	Optional (discuss with your advisor); if you take NSCI 6110, you would probably also take 1 NSCI 6910 seminar; you could potentially take 3 NSCI 6910 seminars.

*Note that MSMS core courses and restricted (quantitative) electives should equal a minimum of 6 of your 12 concurrent units.

Thesis Track	(units)	Select
MSMS Core courses	3-9	Take a minimum of 1 core course, or as many as 3 core courses (MARS 6050, 6060, 6070, 6080, 6090).
NSCI 6110 and 6112	2 & 1	Optional (discuss with your thesis advisor)
NSCI 6910	1-3	Optional
Electives	0-6	Take 0, 1 or 2 elective courses.
MARS 4950/6910	0-3	Take 0-3 Research Credits (consult with your thesis advisor).

Note the following details about a few classes that you might take concurrently.

MARS core classes: These are MARS 6050, 6060, 6070, 6080, and 6090. It should be a priority to take as many of these as you can your senior (concurrent registration) year as they are required (3 of 4 for Track T or all 4 for Track A). Note that either Marine Ecology (MARS 6050) or Biological Oceanography (MARS 6090) can be used as 1 of the 3 for Track T, or 1 of the 4 for Track A, but they cannot both be used (for 2 of the 3, or 2 of the 4). Additionally, for students who are Oceanography majors and take a MARS 4000 level Oceanography core course in their junior year, you may petition to replace that class with an elective as an MSMS student (if you receive a B or better). As a senior, Oceanography majors can register concurrently for the graduate-level MARS core courses that will apply to both their B.S. and MSMS requirements.

Biol 3090/6090: Biol 3090 (Biometry) is required for some Oceanography concentrations and Marine Biology students. It is a prerequisite (or co-requisite) to be taken in junior year before, or along with, Ecology lab. Biol 6090 is required for track A students. Therefore, if you are an Oceanography major going to Track A, you may want to take Biometry (6090) through concurrent registration your senior year. However, students that take Biometry 3090 before their senior year may petition to replace this class for their A-Track MSMS degree with another restricted elective if they receive a B (or better) in Biol 3090. Students entering Track T are not required to take BIOL 6090, so BIOL 3090 should adequately prepare you for the thesis program as long as you receive a B or better.

NSCI 6110: This 2-unit seminar on science communication is required for all MSMS students. In this class you write a scientific literature review and develop your oral presentation skills, both of which you will likely do for other MSMS classes, so you may or may not do this your concurrent year (2 units). It can help you get a head start, particularly if you are in Track T. Consult with your advisor to determine if this seminar is appropriate for you.

NSCI 6112: This 1-unit seminar, *Developing the Thesis Proposal*, may be appropriate for you if you are in a well-developed stage of knowing your thesis research project by spring of your senior (concurrent) year, and have already taken NSCI 6110. This seminar is only required for track T. Consult with your advisor.

MARS 6910: This 1-unit seminar, *The Guest Speaker Seminar*, involves attending guest speakers and reading the speaker's work beforehand. It is a great seminar for both undergraduates and graduates and is recommended to be taken at least once while at HPU (either while concurrent and/or after). It is cross-listed with MARS 3930.

MARS 6910: These 1-unit *Special Topics Seminars* vary by topic in different areas of Marine Science and are a quintessential graduate school experience that could be done in your concurrent year or after. If you take 6110, you can readily take one of these 1-unit seminars in lieu of a 3-unit class. These seminars may be cross-listed with MARS 4940.