**Ph.D. Student Timelines**
A student’s path through our Ph.D. program will be dependent upon their starting condition! Below we outline suggested guidelines for two different types of students, depending upon their highest degree and relevant academic and institutional background.

(1) BS student coming from either UNCW or another institution entering into the M.S. program

**Semester 1**
Courses: BIO 501
Core courses for selected M.S. program
Other courses as needed or requested by thesis committee

Other Landmarks:
- Select and meet with thesis committee
- Complete first draft of thesis research prospectus
- Carry out research

**Semester 2**
Courses: Continue fulfilling core courses
Other courses as needed or requested by thesis committee

Other Landmarks:
- Present research plan at Graduate Student Prospectus Symposium
- Complete thesis prospectus and present to thesis committee
- Carry out research

**Semester 3**
Courses: Courses as needed or requested by dissertation committee
BIO 599s as needed

Other Landmarks:
- If continuing with M.S. before entering Ph.D. program – take oral preliminary exam (near beginning of third semester) and continue research
- If transitioning to Ph.D. program (with support of major advisor) – apply to the Ph.D. program

**Semester 4**
Courses: If continuing with M.S. before entering Ph.D. program – BIO 599 or GRC 600
If transitioning to Ph.D. program (with support of major advisor) – begin Ph.D. course work (see below – likely can begin near year 2 of schedule)

Other Landmarks:
- If continuing with M.S. before entering Ph.D. program Departmental seminar and complete and defend thesis
- If transitioning to Ph.D. program (with support of major advisor) – follow timeline below as needed

(2) M.S. student coming from another institution with related background, but missing a biological oceanography course.

**Year 1**
Courses: BIO 564: Biological Oceanography (prerequisite for BIO 601)
Begin Marine Biology Seminar series
Other courses as needed or requested by dissertation committee

Other Landmarks:  Select and meet with dissertation committee  
Develop and discuss with committee dissertation research plan  
Carry out research

**Year 2**

Courses:  
Continue Marine Biology Seminar series  
BIO 694: Teaching Practicum  
Other courses as needed or requested by dissertation committee  
BIO 698 and/or 699  
(Likely most required course other than BIO 690 will be completed.)

Other Landmarks:  Prospectus  
Prospectus seminar  
Candidacy exam

**Year 3**

Courses:  
Courses as needed or requested by dissertation committee  
BIO 698 and/or 699

**Years 4 and 5 (if needed)**

Courses:  
BIO 690: Seminar  
BIO 698 and/or 699

Other Landmarks:  Final departmental seminar  
Complete and defend dissertation

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**Checklist of forms and processes**

**Year 1**

_____ Form committee (Ph.D. Committee Composition Form)  
_____ Discuss and agree on publication plan (Ph.D. Authorship Agreement Form)  
_____ Meet with committee (Ph.D. First Dissertation Committee Meeting Form)

**Year 2**

_____ Present first departmental seminar presentation  
_____ Meet with, and present dissertation research plan to committee for approval and discuss oral exam  
(Ph.D. Interim Dissertation Committee Meeting Form)

**Year 3**

_____ Take Oral Comprehensive Exam (Results of Ph.D. Oral Comprehensive Exam Form)  
_____ Meet with committee (Ph.D. Interim Dissertation Committee Meeting Form)

**Years 4 and 5 (if needed)**

_____ Defend dissertation – public departmental seminar and private committee defense (Results of Dissertation Defense Form)