# Student Handbook for the

# PhD Program in Integrated Coastal Sciences (ICS)

# 2025-2026

# Table of Contents



**Revision Log**

Created March 2020
Revised January 2025

## Preface

This Handbook is designed to provide students, faculty, and prospective applicants with a concise guide to the policies and procedures of the doctoral program in Integrated Coastal Sciences (ICS) at ECU. It contains information on application to the program, advisory committees, examinations, the doctoral dissertation, professional development, guidance for international students, and relevant rules that govern graduate study at East Carolina University. Excerpts from key Graduate School policies are included for convenience, but students should familiarize themselves with the full and official policies governing graduate study at East Carolina University. These are available in the annual *Graduate Catalog* at http://catalog.ecu.edu/index.php. Faculty are encouraged to review the Department of Coastal Studies (DCS) Unit Code for additional information (https://www.ecu.edu/cs- acad/fsonline/customcf/unitcodes/coastalstudiescode.pdf). ICS will strive for excellence in student scholarship and faculty mentorship and assessment, while prioritizing a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

## I. Introduction

Many of the complex problems affecting coastal and marine environments exist at the interface between the natural, health, and social sciences. Effective solutions to these problems will arise from creative questioning built on theories, tools, and methods integrated across disciplinary epistemologies. Today's coastal scientists need a diverse knowledge base and effective communication skills to work collaboratively across the natural and social sciences to ensure the sustainable management of sensitive coastal resources. The term "coastal" in this context is broadly defined and includes land comprising the coastal plain and its adjacent coastal waters up to and including the continental shelf.

The Integrated Coastal Sciences (ICS) PhD program, initiated in the Fall of 2019, is designed to train students how to conduct cutting-edge research that combines approaches from the natural and social sciences to address complex coastal problems. Students in the ICS program learn to apply interdisciplinary techniques for understanding coastal issues with a focus on natural, health, and social sciences. They also are trained in the acquisition, interpretation, and synthesis of scientific information on coastal environments and populations. Students can conduct research applied to the coast in the field of their choice, including ecology, engineering, geosciences, human health, human dimensions, and economics and policy. In that context, "coast" encompasses the geographical space from the coastal plain to the continental shelf. Students must choose a primary area from either the natural and engineering sciences, or health and social sciences, and a secondary area from the other category. More details are available on the ICS PhD program webpage: https://coastal.ecu.edu/coastalstudies/integrated- coastal-sciences/ .

### Coastal Natural Science and Engineering Concentration

- *Coastal Engineering* – focuses on engineering approaches to address natural and anthropogenic problems and impacts on the built and natural coastal environment, coastal communities, and natural and human coastal assets. Participating departments include Department of Engineering and the Department of Coastal Studies.
- *Coastal and Estuarine Ecology* – focuses on near-shore and estuarine processes important for living marine resources and environmental quality. Participating departments include Department of Biology, Department of Coastal Studies, Department of Earth, Environment and Planning, and the Department of History.
- *Coastal Geosciences* – emphasizes coastal processes, geomorphology, biogeochemistry, hydrology, and climate as they affect use and development of the coastal margin. Participating departments include Department of Earth, Environment and Planning, Department of Coastal Studies, and Department of Health Education and Promotion.

### Coastal Social Science and Health Science Concentration

- *Coastal and Marine Economics and Policy* - economic theory of coastal and marine environmental management and policy. Participating departments include Department of Economics.
- *Coastal Human Dimensions* – focuses on the relationship between human activities and the coastal and marine environment as well as cultural and historical dimensions. Participating departments include Department of Anthropology, Department of Coastal Studies, Department of Education, Department of Earth,

Environment and Planning and Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies.

- *Coastal Health* – human health applications to coastal ecosystems. Participating programs include faculty members in College of Allied Health Sciences and Brody School of Medicine.

## II. Code of Conduct

It is the mission of the faculty in the ICS PhD program to prepare students for the workforce and conduct high-quality teaching, service, and research about coastal processes, materials, and resources that have societal impact and relevance. In support of this mission, our faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility to familiarize themselves with and behave according to the ECU Code of Conduct https://osrr.ecu.edu/policies-procedures/.

There are three areas of critical importance regarding the student code of conduct, **Academic Integrity, Rights and Responsibilities, and the Good Samaritan Policy**. These are described in detail at https://osrr.ecu.edu/policies-procedures/. Violations of the policies in any of these areas can result in severe educational or disciplinary consequences. First, Participants **should do their own work**; any act of plagiarism (copying verbiage or another person's words without proper citation and credit) including unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence, violates the principles of academic integrity.

### *Anti-Harassment Policy*

East Carolina University ("ECU" or "University") prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation as defined in the *Notice of Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy* ("Policy") based on the following protected classes: race/ethnicity, color, genetic information, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy and pregnancy related conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, political affiliation, and veteran status (including relationship or association with a protected veteran; or Active Duty or National Guard service) ("Protected Class"). ECU will promptly, equitably, impartially, and thoroughly resolve complaints of unlawful discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation based on an ECU Protected Class. Participants in the program will not tolerate nor accept harassment in any form. Lastly, as a member of the coastal community at large, everyone is expected to be respectful of each other and assist those who require help.

## III. Admissions

The challenge of addressing an interdisciplinary area of study requires a solid academic foundation, typically based in the arts and sciences, and enriched through personal experience(s). Moreover, participation in the ICS PhD requires commitment, motivation, and excellent academic preparation. Applicants do not need to have a coastal science background prior to application or admission into the program. Since the ICS is a research-intensive PhD program however, students should have a firm understanding and appreciation for the scientific method and experimentation. Applicants must meet all requirements for admission to the Graduate School of East Carolina University. February 15 is the priority deadline for fall semester admission in the same year. Generally, we do not accept applicants for the spring semester, though there is an October 15$^{th}$ deadline for the spring. Applications for admission in the spring semester will be accepted after

consultation with the program director. Early applications are encouraged.

Admission to the ICS PhD program is based on several criteria, considered together in a holistic manner. These include GPAs, writing samples (e.g. first authored or co-authored manuscripts or publications, technical reports, etc.), letters of reference, and a statement of purpose indicating how having a degree integrating coastal natural and social sciences will help them achieve their career goals. Applicants are expected to have previously obtained a bachelor's degree or successfully completed a master's degree or equivalent professional degree with a grade point average of at least 3.0. The Graduate School accepts either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the Duolingo English Test or Pearson Test of English (PTE) and scores must be forwarded to the Graduate School by the testing service. The paper- or computer-based TOEFL exam is accepted by request only. An iBT TOEFL score of 18 on each section for a total minimum score of 78, IELTS score of 6.5, a Duolingo score of 115, or PTE score of 65 (with 60 on each section) are required to enter the Graduate School.

Administratively, the ICS PhD program is housed within Integrated Coastal Programs (ICP), a college-level program. However, ICS was designed to be broadly inclusive of the variety of research conducted at ECU on coastal and marine systems. To foster this cross-campus representation, the Admissions and Curriculum Committees of the program were designed to have a faculty member representing each concentration area but external to ICP and two faculty representing Integrated Coastal Programs. The ICS PhD Admissions Committee has six members, with three active members in natural sciences and three active members in social and health sciences. Two members of the committee are from within the Department of Coastal Studies.

There is no formal campus interview process. However, prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact potential faculty mentor(s) and if possible, visit the ECU campuses prior to applying. This would facilitate meeting faculty members and students in the ICS program and explore broad areas of mutual interest with faculty members in their likely field of concentration prior to formal application. The ICS office (252-328-9406) will be pleased to schedule these visits. In the event such a visit is not possible, the program will be pleased to arrange telephone or virtual interviews with the ICS program director, its affiliated faculty, and graduate students.

***ICS Ph.D. Admissions Checklist***

- Transcripts - Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate courses completed. International student applicants, please note that ECU requires that foreign institution transcripts go through a course-by-course credential evaluation. ECU's list of approved evaluators include WES (World Education Services), IEE (International Education Evaluations, Inc.), ECE (Education Credential Evaluators), Transcript Research, and SpanTran. Such an evaluation will take extra time and should be considered with consideration given to the priority application deadline of February 15.
- Non-English-speaking international students must provide evidence of English proficiency. The Graduate School accepts either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

or the Duolingo English Test. Scores must be forwarded to the Graduate School by the testing service.

- Letters of Recommendation - Three letters of recommendation, two of which should be from those familiar with the applicant's academic performance and potential to conduct scientific research.
- Statement of Purpose - The Statement of Purpose should demonstrate 1) the basis for the applicant's interest in a coastal sciences program that integrates across natural and health or social sciences, 2) how the ICS program will contribute to the applicant's long-term career aspiration, 3) what the applicant can contribute to the program and fellow students, and 4) a clear indication that the applicant recognizes the sustained personal commitment required for successful completion of the doctorate. A preliminary indication of the likely area of concentration, major professor, and secondary area of concentration are also recommended. This document should also highlight the person's past research skills and experiences related to the pursuit of their Ph.D.
- Writing Sample - Examples or excerpts from formal papers or published articles that demonstrate the applicant's writing and analytical skills. White papers or gray literature authored by the applicant are acceptable writing samples.
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae (optional).

## IV. Funding

Students who are admitted are generally awarded 2 years of institutional funding upon entry, which covers the annual stipend at that time, in-state tuition, health insurance and when possible, an out-of-state tuition remission (OSTR). If a student is admitted to the program with an initial financial commitment in place from their major professor (e.g., external award), then the institutional funding may be displaced to subsequent years as needed. Continued student funding beyond the two years is contingent on satisfactory academic progress. At the time of the writing of this draft of the Handbook, the amounts for student funding are noted below:

**Table 1. Annual (2024/2025 rates) Funding for ICS Ph.D. students**

| | 12-month amount ($) |
|---|---|
| Stipend (12 months) | 26,500 |
| Tuition (In-state) | 4,749 |
| Tuition (Out-of-state)* | 13,149 |
| Health Insurance | 2,364 |
| *US Citizens should apply for NC residency as soon as possible. | |

## V. Advisor and Committee Selection

### *Selection of suitable major professor*

The student should have identified a major professor(s), prior to admission to the ICS program. That major professor should represent the student's primary disciplinary concentration area. The major professor is the student's primary mentor.

***Selection of advisory committee***

It is the student's responsibility to explore and identify prospective interdisciplinary doctoral dissertation topics as early as possible, and no later than the end of their first full year of studies. Once a topic has been identified, the student, in consultation with their major advisor, should invite faculty members to serve on a Doctoral Advisory Committee to provide the guidance and oversight required to support the completion of this requirement. The doctoral dissertation committee should be assembled by the end of their first full year of studies.

ECU's graduate school policy dictates that there must be at least 3 ECU graduate faculty members on a student's committee out of a total of 5 committee members. For the ICS Ph.D. program, at least one faculty member (internal or external) must represent the student's secondary concentration area. Thus, the faculty representation for a full committee could be:
(1) a chair with expertise in the primary area of the proposed research (usually the major advisor), (2) three additional ECU faculty members with expertise in the primary or secondary concentration area, and (3) a committee member external to ECU. The external committee member may be an individual from another university or a specialist whose credentials would qualify them to serve as member of the ECU graduate faculty (https://gradschool.ecu.edu/graduate-faculty-status/). The external committee member's vitae should be reviewed by the ECU committee and program director for approval and filing. **Additionally**, the internal ECU committee members **must formally** approve the external member's role on the committee. Confirmation of this approval should be provided via email, cc'ing the committee to the program director ("The members of (student's name's) committee find (name of external committee member) to be qualified as an external committee member for the dissertation committee").

In the event an ECU committee member is no longer able to serve on the committee, the committee can proceed forward with 4 members, if there are 3 ECU graduate faculty on the committee. Alternatively, a second external committee member may be asked to join.

The Doctoral Advisory Committee must accept and approve both the dissertation research proposal and the dissertation as meeting the requirements of the ICS PhD before it is submitted to the Graduate School.

***Annual student evaluation***

In accordance with ECU Graduate School Policy, all doctoral programs are required to annually evaluate each student's progress toward their degree. Each student (full time or part time), their major advisor(s), and the program director shall meet at least once a year in person, or virtually, to review the student's progress towards completion of milestones. This discussion could include the student's progression in course work and research. Prior to the annual review meeting, the student will submit a written narrative of their progress and self-evaluation, describing their movement towards major milestones including forming their committee, completion of written comprehensive exams, completion of field work, dissertation proposal defense, etc. The student may also provide written feedback (confidential or non-confidential) of their major professor and committee. This feedback will not be used in the evaluation of the professor's performance or promotion and tenure evaluations.

Students are encouraged to meet with the program director to discuss the mentorship and guidance provided by their major professor or committee members through the program of study. These meetings are strictly confidential, unless noted otherwise. ***A Mentor-Mentee Expectations*** document is available on the ICS program webpage. Students and their major professors are encouraged to review and discuss this document together, annually.

## VI. Graduate Program Requirements and Provisions

### *Curriculum and Coursework*

The doctoral program requires a minimum of 57 credits (CR) of course work beyond a relevant baccalaureate degree, 39 CR of which are general requirements taken by all students (Figure 2). The minimum GPA required for good academic standing with the ECU Graduate School is 3.0.

Core courses are designed to provide essential background in the coastal sciences to all concentration areas of the ICS program and develop interdisciplinary problem-solving skills. The available courses are i) ICS 7003 (Natural Dimensions of Coastal Sciences), ii) ICS 7005 (Human Dimensions of Coastal Management), iii) ICS 8000 (Integrative Problem Solving in Coastal Sciences I), iv) ICS 8001 (Integrative Problem Solving in Coastal Sciences II, v) ICS 7007 (Research Design in Marine and Coastal Studies), Ethics (2 CR) and vi) a minimum of 22 CR of dissertation ICS 9000, for a total of 39 CR. In addition to the 39 CR of general requirements, students select 9 CR within their primary area of concentration and 6 CR from their secondary area of concentration. The ICS PhD program has two concentrations: Coastal Natural Sciences and Engineering, and Coastal Social Sciences and Health Sciences. An additional 3 CR of methodology courses should be selected in consultation with their major professor. As noted earlier, any coursework to be applied to the PhD degree should be at the "6000" level equivalent or greater. Students must also pass two comprehensive examinations to maintain funding and move forward in the program.

Additional work and dissertation credits will be determined in consultation with the student's advisor and members of their dissertation committee. No more than 15 CR of classes may be taken in one semester. A student is considered enrolled full-time when registered for a minimum of 9 CR during fall and spring semesters. An exception is that students are considered full time with just one CR on their last semester at ECU (note also that students must be registered for course credits on the semester they intend to graduate). Maintaining an ECU student health insurance plan requires that a student take a minimum of 6 CR per semester.

A list of courses in the Natural, Social, and Health Sciences is provided in the Appendix at the end of this document. Please keep in mind that many of these courses may be appropriate for the Primary or Secondary concentrations, or Research Methods areas but may not be regularly offered. There are also other courses periodically offered in other departments that may fulfill ICS curricular requirements. Please consult the graduate course offerings in the appropriate department as needed. Beyond these, a student may request a faculty member to teach a Directed Study course for 1 to 3 credits. These should

be at the 7000 level or higher.

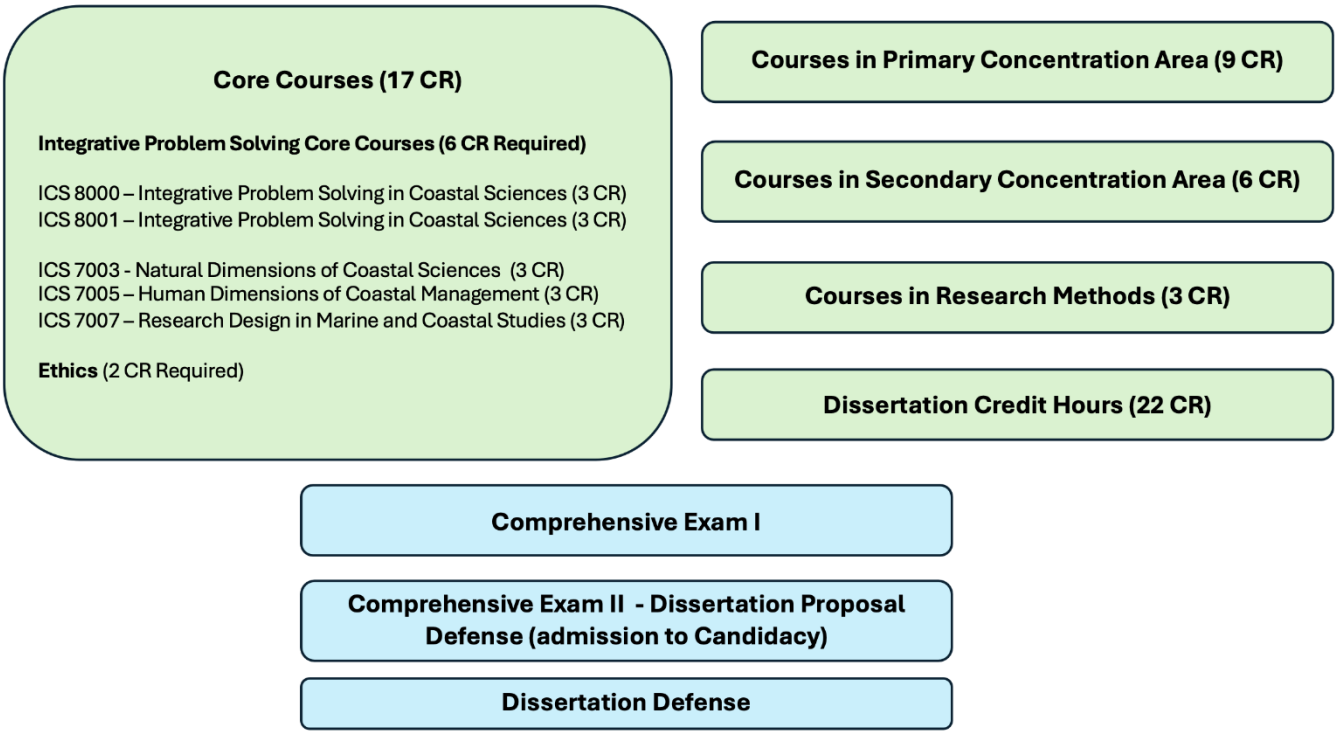


Figure 2. ICS PhD Curriculum Summary. Students enter the program with primary concentration area (Coastal Natural Sciences and Engineering or Coastal Social Science and Health Science) identified.

## VII. Comprehensive Exams

Students in the ICS PhD must pass two comprehensive examinations, the Qualifying Examination and the Dissertation Proposal Defense.

***Comprehensive Examinations (Part 1) - Qualifying Examination***

The Qualifying Examination must be completed by the end of the second fall semester, and no later than the end of the second spring semester. The student's Qualifying Examination Committee will consist of the members of their advising committee, and students are required to assemble this committee by the end of their first summer in the program.

The purpose of the qualifying exam is to assess the student's mastery of fundamental concepts in the coastal science disciplines of their primary and secondary concentrations, as well as their ability to integrate knowledge across natural and social sciences. The examination aims to prepare students to develop a well-founded dissertation proposal.

The exam will include three sections: one focused on disciplinary knowledge in the student's primary concentration, one focused on disciplinary knowledge in the student's secondary concentration, and one that assesses the integration of natural and social sciences.

The members of the Qualifying Examination Committee are the 5 members of the student's dissertation committee. This committee will develop an exam pertinent to the subject areas relevant to the student's likely dissertation work. The committee will provide students with the relevant reading/study materials for the exam. Further details of the examination are available upon consultation with the instructors.

The exam should take approximately one day (~8 hours) to complete. Students are bound by the Honor Code to complete the exam according to the guidelines provided. Although the exam may allow use of a computer for typing the exam, consultation of external sources (e.g. internet, textbooks, smartphone) is not allowed. Students requiring accommodation for the exam based on a disability should contact ECU's Department of Disability Support Services located in Slay Hall 138 (252-737-1016) to request special accommodation at least 2 weeks prior to the exam.

The examination committee members will grade the exam questions for each of their sections. Based on the expected answer as outlined in rubric or written form by the committee member prior to reading the students answers, each committee member will provide a grade of Pass/Fail for their section. An 80% is considered a passing grade. If a student does not pass one subject area, it is up to the instructor of that subject to determine appropriate remediation for that subject in consultation with the program director and the student's advisor. If the student does not pass two subject areas, then by default, the student will be required to have a follow up oral re-examination. Any student required to have a follow up oral re-examination should meet with the appropriate examiners before the re-examination. The re-examination should occur before the beginning of the fall semester immediately following the summer in which the exam was initially taken. The re-examination will last approximately two hours. Each oral re-examination will cover primarily the sections failed in the original exam.

The ICS program director and the student's advisor may also be in attendance in the reexamination. However, the re-examination is to be conducted by the examination committee. The program director shall serve as an independent observer, and as a mediator if the need arises.

At the end of the oral re-examination, the examiners will make one of three recommendations:

1. PASS - no further action required related to core courses.
2. ADDITIONAL REMEDIATION - this recommendation can include additional course work at a future date and may delay the student's advancement to candidacy. This option is tantamount to probation and may also result in suspension of institutional funding.
3. FAIL - recommend that student's program of study be terminated. The student may appeal their dismissal formally through the Graduate School.

The student is only allowed one re-examination and must take remediation action as soon as possible after the re-examination.

***Comprehensive Examination (Part 2) – Dissertation Proposal Defense***

Prior to beginning their dissertation, students are required to prepare and defend a proposal to their doctoral advisory committee. The proposal should provide a literature review of the topic proposed for study; a statement of the objectives and hypotheses or research questions guiding the study; a description of the proposed methodology; and a statement about the contribution the proposed project will make to the broad area of coastal science, and a timeline for completion of the dissertation. The dissertation proposal should address a single overarching coastal research question or topic which can be broken down into discrete subunits (i.e., chapters). The proposal should demonstrate integration across the natural and social sciences, either as distinct chapters in both fields, or integrated within the proposed chapters. A successful proposal is expected to outline at least one chapter (or equivalent content across chapters) that focuses on the secondary concentration chosen by the student. **The final decision on whether the integration across concentrations is sufficient will rest with the committee.** The proposal must be written in consultation with the faculty dissertation committee and should ideally be no more than 20 double-spaced pages in length plus references. The student is required to submit the completed dissertation to their committee at minimum two weeks prior to the proposal defense date. The dissertation proposal must be approved by the student's doctoral advisory committee *prior to preparation of the doctoral dissertation*.

The proposal defense presentation is open to the university community at large. The proposal defense is the opportunity for the student to demonstrate that they are knowledgeable about coastal matters in general and more specifically, adequately prepared to undertake their proposed research. The format of the oral proposal defense is determined by the advisor(s) and dissertation committee. Typically, the defense will begin with a brief introduction of the student by their advisor, followed by a 30-minute presentation by the student. After the presentation, there will be a period of oral questioning, first by the audience and then in a closed session with the committee members.

Although this questioning is designed to specifically address the student's ability to successfully execute their dissertation research, fundamental questions from the core courses, if applicable to the dissertation research, may be asked. To pass the dissertation defense, the student should be able to successfully answer any reasonable questions about their research or general coastal knowledge posed by the audience or committee. At the end of the proposal defense, the student may be asked by the committee to take additional course work relevant to their proposed research. The student may also be required to make additional revisions to the proposal and hold additional meetings with the committee, before final approval is provided.

Students actively working on their dissertation research, including the dissertation proposal, may register for ICS 9000. Students will receive either a "S" for satisfactory or "U" for unsatisfactory, as a grade for ICS 9000, based on adequate progress on their dissertation research.

Students who have completed all fundamental coursework, passed the Qualifying Exam, and the Dissertation Proposal Defense, should complete the "Admission to Candidacy" form and obtain the required signatures for that form. The Admission to Candidacy form should be submitted to the ICS PhD program director for signature and subsequent submission to the Graduate School. The Admission to Candidacy form may be found here – PhD Candidacy Form.

## VIII. Dissertation

Each ICS student is to write and orally defend a dissertation of high quality, representing original and meaningful interdisciplinary research that contributes to the literature in the field of coastal science. It is essential that the dissertation be written so that it addresses both the natural and social science aspects of the dissertation topic as discussed during the proposal defense. Ideally, students should have asked an overarching question, design a study with objectives or testable hypotheses or research questions, for which the answer involves gathering and integrating data from natural and social science disciplines. The format for the ICS PhD Dissertation should follow one of two models. The data collected may be parsed out into several chapters, each of which may be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Alternatively, students may choose to draft their dissertation as one large book-like document. In either case, students and their advisors are encouraged, but not required to submit their research as peer-reviewed publication(s). The content of the dissertation must represent study in both the student's declared primary and a secondary concentration area(s) as defended earlier in the form of a proposal.

The student shall submit a final complete draft of the dissertation to the members of the doctoral advisory committee. The committee members, either separately or jointly, should advise the student as to how the dissertation might be improved. The committee should keep in mind that the student may receive conflicting advice and should allow freedom for the student's judgment to operate.

The final dissertation should demonstrate integration across the natural and social sciences, either as distinct chapters in both fields, or integrated within the dissertation chapters. A

successful dissertation is expected to contain at least one chapter (or equivalent content across chapters) that focuses on the secondary concentration chosen by the student.

When, in the judgment of the advisory committee, the dissertation is essentially complete, the student, in consultation with the committee chair and members, shall schedule a formal presentation and defense of the research design to the public. The student should provide their committee members with the final draft of the dissertation at least two weeks prior to their public defense. Upon completion of the public presentation, the student will defend their dissertation before their committee. The defense should last approximately three hours, with one hour reserved for the public defense (45-minute presentation and 10-15 minutes of questions) and two hours for a closed-door session with the student's committee. Upon satisfactory completion of this oral defense and appropriate modifications of the thesis manuscript, the student will complete the 'Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy' form and route it to his committee and the Program Director acknowledging that the student has completed the requirements to receive the doctoral degree. After the dissertation is completed and defended the student will submit the Dissertation and its signature page through VIREO. The Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy, Dissertation Signature Page, and instructions on how to submit the final dissertation document are available here under the 'Thesis-Dissertation & Candidacy Forms' header https://gradschool.ecu.edu/graduate-program-director-tools/.

A suggested timeline for a student's progress through the program is noted in Table 2 below.

| Table 2: Suggested ICS PhD Timeline | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Semester** | **Program Year** | **Credits *** | **Courses - a minimum of 9 credits (CR) must be taken each semester** |
| Fall | 1 | 9 | ICS 7003 – Natural Dimensions of Coastal Science (co-taught across disciplines) (3 CR)<br>ICS 7005–Human Dimensions of Coastal Management (3CR)<br>Primary Concentration Area[1] (3 CR) |
| Spring | 1 | 9 | ICS 8000 – Integrative Problem Solving in Coastal Science I (3 CR)<br>Primary Concentration Area[1] (3 CR)<br>Secondary Concentration Area[1] (3 CR) |
| ***Summer 1: Research begins and Dissertation Committee Members Chosen*** | | | |
| Fall | 2 | 9 | ICS 8001 - Integrative Problem Solving in Coastal Science II (3 CR)<br>Research Methods (3 CR)<br>Secondary Concentration Area[1] (3 CR) |
| ***Comprehensive Exam I - Qualifying Exam (Suggested by the end of Fall 2, mandatory by end of Spring 2)*** | | | |
| Spring | 2 | 9 | ICS 7007– Research Design in Marine and Coastal Studies (3 CR)<br>HUMS 7004, or equivalent - Ethics and Research (2 CR)<br>ICS 9000 – Dissertation Credit Hours (4 CR) |
| Fall | 3 | 9 | Primary Concentration Area[1] (3 CR)<br>ICS 9000 – Dissertation Credit Hours (6 CR) |
| ***Comprehensive Exam II - Dissertation Proposal Defense (suggested by end of Fall 3, mandatory by end of Spring 3)*** | | | |
| Spring | 3 | 9 | ICS 9000 – Dissertation Credit Hours (9 CR) |
| Fall | 4 | 9 | ICS 9000 – Dissertation Credit Hours (9 CR) |
| Spring | 4 | 9 | ICS 9000 – Dissertation Credit Hours (9 CR) |

* Must take 9 CR per semester to be a full-time student.

[1] ICS students must take 9 credits in their primary concentration area and 6 credits in their secondary concentration area.

### *Compliance*

Federal and state governments have several health and safety, legal, and administrative laws and regulations that directly affect students and faculty conducting research, particularly those projects funded by external sponsors. The University is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all students and faculty comply with these rules. Below is a listing of major compliance areas (Table 3).

| **Table 3. Dissertation Research Conduct and Compliance Websites** | |
|---|---|
| ***Research Area*** | ***URL*** |
| Animal Welfare | https://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/iacuc/ |

| | |
|---|---|
| Innovations and New Ventures | https://rede.ecu.edu/innovation/ |
| Research Administration (proposals, grants and contracts) | https://rede.ecu.edu/ora/ |
| Responsible Conduct | https://rede.ecu.edu/oric/responsible-conduct-of-research-policies-and-sops/ |
| Protection of Human Participants | https://rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/human-research-participants/ |

**IX.** Residency Requirements

**Domestic students must make every attempt to immediately declare themselves North Carolina (NC) state residents and minimize their tuition charges. Out-of-state tuition waivers are not guaranteed. Students should consult the following website to determine their eligibility for NC residency and in state tuition (NC Residency). Here are some actions students should take *immediately* upon arrival in NC to make a successful case for NC** residency: change their driver's license to one issued from the state of NC, register their vehicle in NC, and maintain an NC address as a place of residence. Students should establish financial independence from their families if they are residents of another state, for purposes of filing NC state income taxes. Students may apply for NC residency one year after their arrival in the state. Please note that NC residency is not guaranteed.

## X. Withdrawal from the Program

Students desiring to withdraw officially from the university should apply for withdrawal through the Office of the Registrar. Students will need to complete the Application for Semester/Session Withdrawal form by obtaining the signatures of the designated officials and submitting the form to the Office of the Registrar for final approval. The contact person for official withdrawals is the Assistant Registrar (328-6524). Students withdrawing for medical/counseling reasons should complete the procedure within 30 days after the last class attendance. All other students withdrawing should complete this procedure immediately after the last class attendance. After classes have ended, no withdrawal, except in the case of severe medical emergency can be filed. During the first thirty class days of a semester, a student may withdraw from school without receiving grades for courses in which he or she enrolled. After the first thirty class days, a student withdrawing from school shall receive grade of F for all classes that he or she is failing. If you have any questions, please contact the Assistant Registrar at 328-6524.

## XI. Time Limits for Degree Program

Students enrolled in the ICS program must complete all degree requirements within six years of their entry into the program. Exceptions may be made for illness or Leave of Absence, but must be accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Graduate students who have previously registered for all credits in a graduate degree

program but who have not completed all requirements (e.g., dissertation) must continue to register each semester (except summer terms) until all degree requirements are completed and filed with the registrar. Under special circumstances, an exception to continuous registration may be approved by the dean of the Graduate School. Students must be registered for the semester of graduation (except summer, if registered for the prior spring semester). ICS students should not register for dissertation research hours (ICS 9000) until all fundamental course requirements have been completed and the student has passed their Core Competency Exam.

Non-resident students must register for a minimum of 1 CR in the final term of their study.

## XII. Leave of Absence

A student may take a leave of absence from the program after consulting with the ICS Director. The ICS Director must inform the Dean of the Graduate School of the planned leave and obtain permission prior to authorizing it.

## XIII. Readmission

Any student who interrupts his or her graduate program by not registering for courses on or off campus during any one semester of the regular academic year must apply for readmission before being allowed to resume graduate work. Applications for readmission are to be made using forms furnished by the Graduate School. Payment for processing fees varies annually but must be made prior to an application being considered for readmission. This readmission fee may be waived only under extenuating circumstances after consultation with the program director. These applications should be presented to the Graduate School at least one week prior to the opening of registration for the semester or summer term in which the student wishes to resume graduate work.

When a graduate program is interrupted for one calendar year, the student will not be readmitted unless he or she meets admission requirements current at the time of the request for readmission. The Graduate School Administrative Board will consider requests to waive this rule in specific cases when a student's major school or department recommends waiver.

## XIV. Financial Information, Travel Authorizations, Program Milestone Timeline

### *Stipends, Tuition, and Health Insurance*

Financial assistance may be extended beyond the first 2 years based on the student's progress in the program and attempts by them and their major professor to obtain external funding via scholarships and grants. Students are encouraged to pursue external award funding themselves via student scholarships and grants. Doing so will improve critical thinking, hone proposal writing skills, and bolster the student's academic credentials. The following website include examples of such fellowship opportunities: https://apps.grad.illinois.edu/fellowship-finder/. Moreover, the mentor should be aggressively pursuing funding for their student(s). Contracts should be signed by the student as soon as they begin full time study but no later than Census Day for the semester.

Limited funds are available to support professional development opportunities for students, including workshop participation and travel to professional conferences.

***Sources of Graduate Student Funding***
Graduate students may be funded directly by institutional stipends, departmental teaching assistantships, faculty research assistantships, or fellowships from external funding agencies.

***Prioritization for Institutional Funding***
Institutional funding is limited, and the bulk of institutional support goes to funding stipends. Qualified new students are highest on the priority list to receive institutional funding. In general, most highly qualified students who are accepted by the Admissions Committee are made an offer of funding which includes an academic year stipend beginning in Aug of the 1st fall semester, health insurance, and in-state tuition remission and then in the second year, a full calendar year stipend, health insurance, and in-state tuition remission. However, there are no guarantees of funding beyond the 2nd year of enrollment. Therefore, *faculty mentors as well as students are expected to aggressively seek funding to offset the costs of stipends, insurance and tuition remission, and student research expenses*.

Prioritization for institutional funding will be based on availability of funds, successful and timely completion of milestones by the student (see Table 2), as well as the advisor's history and attempts at funding their ICS student stipends and research. Additionally, ICS students who have been accepted into Candidacy for their degree, may be instructor of record for undergraduate or introductory level graduate courses after they have completed 18 graduate level credits in that discipline. In such cases, those instructors may receive institutional funding from the program to compensate their efforts at teaching a course.

**Faculty who have neither attempted to obtain stipends for their PhD students nor been successful in providing stipend support for their students, or already have more than one student funded through institutional assistantships should not attempt to recruit or mentor additional PhD students.**

***Travel***
All ICS students are required to complete a blanket travel authorization to ensure insurance coverage for day travel outside Greenville and the ECU campus even if this travel is not reimbursable. Blanket travel authorizations are to protect the student if they are traveling on any work-related matters, even if that travel is not reimbursable. Additional trip-specific travel authorizations are required for all overnight travel and all travel where expenses are to be reimbursed by state or grant funds.

## XV. Guidance for International Students

International students bring diverse thinking and expertise to our Ph.D. program. ECU offers various resources to assist in the transition to graduate work in the United States.

***Ms. Colleen Roland*** is the Student Services Specialist. She is the first point of contact for admissions and enrollment steps prior to arrival. Email: rolandc@ecu.edu | Office: +1 252 328 6012

The ***International Enrollment & Engagement*** team within the Office of Global Affairs is a great resource if you are an international student. You may find the staff of that team at this link: https://global-affairs.ecu.edu/about/.

Here are some ways that the Office of Global Affairs can assist you as you transition to the United States:

1. There is a shuttle service from Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU) to ECU at the start of each semester.
2. While primarily targeted towards incoming students, continuing students are welcome to register.
3. The specific date and time(s) are arranged in advance and communicated with students with at least 4 weeks' notice to reserve their spots. The fee is approximately $50 USD but is subject to change.
4. Local pick up from Pitt-Greenville Airport (PGV) can also be arranged at no cost.
5. F-1 Student Visa Advising. East Carolina University sponsors F-1 student visas and therefore works with each student to share the requirements, ensure they are compliant, and answer any questions they have about the regulations and benefits of their student visa. The CIP code for the ICS PhD is 03.0205 (Water, Wetlands, and Marine Resource Management, and it carries a STEM designation with the U.S. government.

Students can audit ECU Language Academy classes (reading, writing, grammar, listening/speaking) at no charge while enrolled in a degree program at ECU. Please inform the ICS program director to help facilitate this. The Manager of ECU Language Academy, Ed Chaffin, may be reached at chaffine22@ecu.edu.

English Language Support is offered to international students in the following areas: Writing Bootcamp (Career Services), understanding CPT & OPT, the Job Search, Cover Letters, Interviewing.

***Curriculum***:

Full time is 9 credit hours per semester for graduate students. Per federal regulations, 6 of those credit hours must be conducted in the face-to-face format for international students. This means the course must be Main Campus 008 and Instructional Method 01 in Banner. The remaining credit hours can be face-to-face or distance education.

Continued enrollment in summer sessions is considered optional and therefore does not have a minimum credit hour requirement. Official enrollment verifications are issued by the Registrar. Students can request this via registrar.ecu.edu/enrollment-verification/

International students studying on an F-1 visa are allowed to work on campus. They are allowed to work part-time during the semesters (maximum 20 hours) and full-time (maximum 40 hours) during breaks (winter and summer).

International students studying on an F-1 visa are not allowed to work off-campus unless reviewed and approved by their International Student Advisor. Work must be related to their academic discipline and have an academic purpose.

International students who have been offered an on-campus position can apply for a social security number (SSN) with the social security administration in Greenville. They must first have:

1. An offer of employment (the offer letter from ECU's Graduate School).

2. A permanent US address (temporary addresses such as AirBnB, hotel, etc. do not qualify).
3. Printed letters from Dr. Mallett.

Regarding taxes, international students who earn wages during their time at ECU are expected to file taxes each year. The Office of Global Affairs provides licenses to GLACIER Tax Prep as a courtesy to our international students. GLACIER Tax Prep specializes in non-resident alien tax compliance. To utilize this service, students need to request information from Dr. Mallett each year.

All graduate students at ECU who are studying under an F1 visa are required to enroll at full-time status (9 graduate credits, or more) AND at least 6 of those credits must be face-to-face. This means the course must be on Campus 008 and Instructional Method 01 in Banner.

***Housing***

There are several ECU Housing groups on Facebook to look for housing and/or roommates:

- https://www.facebook.com/groups/779788658756739
- https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecuhousing/
- https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecuhousingsubleasesroommates/

**Please note that Facebook pages and other social media not officially vetted by ECU and ECU does not accept any responsibility for the content in the websites noted in this section.**

On-campus and off-campus housing options are available for ECU students. For on-campus housing, international students can contact the office at https://campusliving.ecu.edu/contact-us/ or call them at 252-328-6131. More information regarding on-campus housing can be found at https://housing.ecu.edu/.

- Additionally, several off-campus housing choices are available, which offer ECU bus and safe ride transit services. To explore the available routes, visit https://transit.ecu.edu/.

***Social organizations***

The ECU Office of Global Affairs organizes regular weekly meetings and gatherings at the International House, providing a great opportunity to meet other international students and learn about their cultures. Additionally, the ECU Office of global Affairs hosts a Canvas page that regularly shares information about Greenville festivals and events both on and off-campus. **Potential topics to consider include student safety and student health.**

In case of any emergency, call 911. ECU students can also contact the ECU Police at 252-328-6787 for any emergency on campus 24/7.

## XVI. Appendix - Courses Applicable to the ICS PhD Program*

ANTH 6020. Advanced Physical Anthropology Methods and Theory
ANTH 6050. Advanced Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology
ANTH 6104. Research Design
BIOS 7021. Biostatistics for Health Professionals I
BIOL 6800. Population Ecology
BIOL 6820. Systems Ecology
BIOL 6850. Advances in Ecology, I
BIOL 6860. Advances in Ecology, II
BIOL 7010. Estuarine Ecology
BIOL 7020. Marine Biology
BIOL 7200. Invertebrate Biology
BIOL 7300. Landscape Ecology
BIOL 7310. Ecological Modeling and Simulation
BIOL 7320. Ecological Dimensions of Coastal Management
BIOL 7330. Ecosystems of Coastal Cities
BIOL 7360. Fisheries Management
BIOL 7400. Wetland Ecology and Management
BIOL 7630. Fish Physiology
BIOL 7900. Ecological Statistics
BIOL 7920. Conservation Biology
ECON 8540. Environmental and Resource Economics
ECON 6300. Coastal Populations
ECON 6301. Econometrics I
ECON 6302. Econometrics II
ECON 6401. Microeconomic Theory I
ECON 6402. Microeconomic Theory II
ECON 8111. Microeconomic Theory I
ECON 8310. Econometrics
ECON 8350. Applied Research Methods
ECON 8411. Risk Analysis I
ECON 8510. Applied Welfare Analysis
ECON 8540. Environmental & Resource Economics
EHST 5010/5011. Principles of Toxicology/Laboratory
EHST/MPH 6010. Fundamentals of Environmental Health
GEOG 6250. Advanced Environmental Impact Analysis
GEOG 6270. Advanced Water Resources Management and Planning
GEOG 6150. Quantitative Methods in Geography
GEOG 6220. Advanced Coastal Geomorphology
GEOG 6410. Advanced Cartography
GEOG 6420. Advanced Remote Sensing
GEOG 6430. Advanced Geographic Information Systems
GEOG 6440. Spatial Analysis of Coastal Environments
GEOG 6460. Advanced Digital Terrain Analysis
GEOG 6510. Meteorological Measurement Systems
GEOG 6540. Advanced Coastal Storms
GEOG 6590. Advanced Tropical Meteorology
GEOL 6250. Stratigraphic Analysis

GEOL 6300. Sedimentary Environments
GEOL 6301. Sedimentary Environments Lab
GEOL 6310. Principles of Paleoecology
GEOL 6311. Principles of Paleoecology Lab
GEOL 6340. Micropaleontology
GEOL 6342. Micropaleontology Lab
GEOL 6350. Environmental and Global Change
GEOL 6400. Geochemistry
GEOL 6950. Geological Data Analysis
GEOL 7002. Coastal and Marine Geology
GEOL 7003. Coastal and Marine Geology lab
GEOL 7500. Marine Isotope Geochemistry
GEOL 7600. Remote Sensing of Coastal Environments
GEOL 7710. Groundwater Modeling
GEOL 7930. Principles of Biogeochemical Interactions
GEOL 7910. Sediment Transport and Depositional Processes
GEOL 7920. Advanced Surface Water/Groundwater Hydrology
HLTH/MPH 6011. Introduction to Epidemiology
HIST 6010. Maritime History of the Atlantic World, 1415-1815
HIST 6525. Sea Power, 480 BC to the Present
HIST 6805. History and Theory of Nautical Archaeology
PHAR 7680. General Toxicology
PHAR 7682. Advanced Toxicology
PHAR 7777. Practical Problems in Biometry
PLAN 6015. Hazards and Emergency/Disaster Planning
PLAN 6055. Coastal Planning and Policy
RCLS 6100. Risk Management and Legal Liability in Recreation, Leisure, and Recreational Sport
RCLS 6080. Recreation Facilities Management
RCLS 6110. Research Methods in Recreation Services and Interventions
SOCI 6212. Social Statistics
SOCI 6312. Multivariate Techniques and Analysis
SOCI 6400. Social Issues in Regional Development
SOCI 6600. Society and Coastal Policy

- Please keep in mind that this list is not comprehensive and that some of these courses may not be offered regularly. Consult each department's website for course offering schedule.