A Concise Ph. D HANDBOOK
Fall 2007

SUMMARY:
1: In the first year, graduate students need to take required course work, pass the comprehensive exam, and form a dissertation committee.
2: In the second year, graduate students need to meet with their committee, agree on a thesis proposal, write a proposal, defend the proposal and past qualifying exams.
3: In the third and subsequent years, students need to meet with their committee and provide an annual progress report. Committee chair should provide a similar concise description of this meeting and whether the student is making satisfactory progress.
4: To graduate, students need to be a PhD candidate and apply to graduate one semester prior to defending. The written dissertation should be made available to the dissertation committee six weeks prior to the oral defense. The written dissertation has to be tentatively approved by the dissertation committee two weeks prior to this defense. The student has to provide a presentation and defend their presentation/research in public.
5: Documentation for committees, committee meetings and description of progress must be provided to the MBF office.
6: It is expected that students will defend their PhD 5 years after entering the MBF graduate student program (4 years if they come with a master degree).

PREFACE:
Graduate student education is a symbiotic relationship between a mentor and the student. The mentor is responsible for advising and supporting a student’s research. The graduate student is responsible for his/her education and becoming an independent scientist. The student’s dissertation committee plays an important role in the maturation and education of a graduate student. This committee is responsible for insuring the quality of research, evaluation a student progress for candidacy and approving the dissertation.

This MBF Student Handbook is designed to aid students and faculty by stating the Division's interpretations of RSMAS policy, and by stating specific division requirements. It is ultimately the responsibility of each student and their advisor to meet all guidelines and requirements of the Division and the School.

TIME LINE:
Year 1: All required courses. Comprehensive exam at the end of spring semester.
Year 2: Student Dissertation Committee formed, proposal written and defended, and qualifying exams given.
Years 3-5: Students must meet annually with their dissertation committee and provide a concise annual progress report.

| Year 1: Fall: Biometry, Biol. Oc., Ecology
  | Year 2: Course work
  | Year 3: Research-committee meeting
  | Year 4: Research-committee meeting
  | Year 5: Finish research, Defend, get out of here
| Year 1: Spring: Physical Oc, Physiology
  | Year 2: Thesis development, 1st committee meeting
  | Year 3: PROPOSAL & Qualifiers
  | Year 4: 1st committee meeting
  | Year 5: Finish research, Defend, get out of here

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS
THE STUDENTS DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

A Student committee is important to the student and to our academic institution because they both provide guidance and are the guardians of a program of excellence. A committee should be formed in the students first year, but must be formed and meet in the students second year. The Committee should meet approximately once per year to review the student's progress. A short report of what was discussed should be sent to the Graduate Studies Office by the committee chairman for addition to the student's file.

Importance of Faculty Participation:

Faculty active participation in a students dissertation committee is very important for a successful and excellent graduate program. The members of a dissertation committee are responsible for overseeing the students research, approving their proposal and evaluating the student for candidacy (passing qualifiers). The committee is responsible for the student’s development into an independent scientist and approving the student thesis.

Dissertation Committee:

The dissertation committee will consist of not less than five members: the chair, three members from the Graduate Faculty and, one from outside the program or division. The chair must be a member in good standing in the graduate faculty. MBF recommend a diverse committee.

Requirements:

A list of proposed committee members should be presented to the divisional academic committee for approval. If approved, an “Appointment to Students Committee” form should be completed, signed by all members, and forwarded to the Graduate Studies Office and the MBF office. Proposed changes in the membership of existing committees must be approved by the committee chairman and must carry the endorsement of the divisional academic committee, before being forwarded to the Graduate Studies Office and the MBF office.

The Committee must meet at least once per semester to review the student's progress. A short report of what was discussed should be sent to the Graduate Studies Office and the MBF office by the committee chairman for addition to the student's file.

No student gains the right to be recommended for the degree simply by fulfilling requirements.

Course Information and Requirements:

Sixty credits are the minimum requirement for the Ph.D. and not less than half of the total credits must be in work only open to graduate students (600-level and above). The students are expected to take 24 credit in graduate courses and the rest can be dissertation research. At least twenty-four of the sixty credits must be taken in residence at the University of Miami, and may include those course credits taken as part of the Masters of Science degree. A minimum of 12 dissertation credits must be taken. Students transferring into the school with a Masters of Science degree are normally given credit for up to twenty-four course credits, if the degree is in the discipline. Since a maximum of 60 credits are paid for by RSMAS (if student are supported by federally funded research), the faculty advisor and student need to consider carefully how many credit to transfer.

Course offering are listed at the end of this document.

All students must maintain a GPA higher than 3.0 at all times. This is a requirement of the Graduate School and is checked each semester by the Graduate Studies Office. A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 is automatically placed on RSMAS academic probation. If the GPA is not increased to 3.0 in the subsequent semester, the student may be dismissed from the program.
Student are required to take MBF 604 Biological Oceanography, MBF 508 Biometrics, MBF 610 Physical Environment of Marine Organism and MBF 602 Graduate Student Seminar. Notice: these requirements are likely to change by 2008

**REQUIRED CORE COURSES:**

Students most likely will not enroll in MBF Graduate Student Seminar (MBF 602) during their first year but they are expected to attend all seminars every year they are an MBF student. Students need to enroll **once** for 1 credit prior to the semester they defend their dissertation. All students will attend the MBF graduate seminar and after the first year give an annual seminar.

**FIRST YEAR**

**FALL: 9 CREDITS**

- 3 credits MBF 604 Biological Oceanography MBF
- 3 credits MBF 508 Biometrics
- 3 credits MBF 515 Tropical Ecology

All qualified student should attend the workshop on applying for NSF Graduate Fellowship.

**SPRING: 9 CREDITS**

- MBF 610 Physical Environment of Marine Organisms.
- MBF 5xy Graduate Physiology: Understanding the biochemistry and physiology of organisms

**Note: as of 2007-2008, two more additional courses will be required: Tropical Ecology (MBF 515) and Molecular Physiology.**

**OTHER courses:**

First years student should be encouraged to take courses in which they have an academic deficits and to prepare for the comprehensive exam. The University requires a written Comprehensive Exam and student and faculty should anticipate that this exam will be covering the diversity of research topics in MBF. Always select your courses in consultation with your advisor. The MBF Academic Committee is available for advice.

After the first year student may take advantage of special course offering in their field of interest. Additionally, all students are expected to be full-time as a combination between course work and research activities:

a) graduate students taking 9 or more graduate credits
b) graduate students enrolled in a one credit hour of Master's Thesis, Doctoral Dissertation research course 710, 730, or a minimum 1 credit charge of residency research (course 720,750).

**WAIVER OF THE CORE COURSES:**

Any student who has successfully completed one or more equivalent courses at an accredited institution may petition the MBF Academic Committee to waive the requirement for the relevant core course(s). This is accomplished by interviewing with the core course instructor, after which the instructor will send his/her recommendation to the MBF Academic Committee in the form of a memorandum.

**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

At the end of the first year a **written** comprehensive examination is required of all RSMAS students. This test is currently designed to evaluate the breadth of knowledge and the student is expected to understand the diversity of research represented by the MBF faculty. In the event of a failure, a student may be re-examined once upon the advice of the student's committee and at the
discretion of the MBF Academic Committee. If granted, the re-examination must be given before the end of the following semester. The Graduate Studies Office should receive written notification of the examination results.

The Second Year.

**Dissertation Proposal:**

The dissertation proposal is the foundation for qualifying exams and both must be completed by the end of the 2nd year.

Students should approach the proposal in the same manner as they would a proposal for funding directed to a government agency. The first step in designing a research project is to formulate clearly stated hypotheses. Students are advised to "be specific and informative and avoid redundancies. The proposal should be in NSF style (see http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg).

A. 1 page or less **Summary** describing the specific aims and the importance of the research,

B. **Project Description** (15 pages) with these sections:

1. Specific Aims. Provide a list of aims that state concisely and realistically what the research described in this proposal is intended to accomplish and/or what hypothesis is to be tested. Do not exceed one page.

2. Significance and Background. Briefly sketch the background to the hypothesis, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify how the research will advance the field. State concisely the importance of the research by relating the specific aims to longer-term objectives.

3. Progress Report/Preliminary Studies. This section provides an account of the investigator's preliminary studies pertinent to the research.

4. Experimental Design and Methods. Should discuss in detail the experimental design and how these experiments address the specific aims. Should provide detail procedures for those approaches or techniques that are novel or not well established.

5. Provide a tentative sequence and timetable for the investigation. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims.

6. Literature Cited. List all publications cited in the proposal are not part of the page limitation. Use a standardized format such as from a scientific journal in your field that includes all pertinent information such as the authors, title, and location of the work. Cited literature is not included in the 15 page limit.

**Recommendation in the event of numerous revisions:**

It is recommended that numerous revisions of the proposal be avoided if possible. The chair of the committee is primarily responsible for a sound document is provided to the student’s dissertation committee. The committee is responsible for approving the proposal and experimental approach. If there are many questions concerning experimental design, a committee meeting should be held to discuss these problems.

**Qualifying Examination:**

At the end of the second year a **written** qualifying examination is required of all students admitted to the doctoral program. Having passed the qualifying exam and meeting all other requirements, a student becomes a candidate for a Ph.D. The purpose of the Qualifying
Examination is to demonstrate that the MBF doctoral student has the necessary level of understanding and expertise in her/his research and related fields to complete the dissertation research and to demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge commensurate with earning a doctoral degree from RSMAS.

For MBF the qualifying examination is based on the student written proposal. The qualifying exam should focus on the subject matter needed to complete the research proposed by the students. The topic areas to be covered by the written examination should be agreed by the student, chair and the dissertation committee during or soon after the proposal defense. The student is strongly encouraged to discuss the specific topics with each member of the Dissertation Committee, well in advance of the examination, to clarify the expected questions. The committee is encouraged to provide specific reading or area of knowledge they will test the student on.

Typically the qualifying exam is two to four partial days (4-6 hours) on questions written by their committee. It is the chair's responsibility to provide the test and to have the student’s committee grade this in a timely manner. The scheduling of the exam sessions is the responsibility of the student's major advisor, but in all cases the written portion of the examination shall be completed within one week.

In the event of a failure, a student may be re-examined once upon the recommendation of the student's committee and at the discretion of the MBF Academic Committee. If granted, the re-examination must be given before the end of the following semester. In addition, an oral qualifying examination may be required by the student's committee. However, the oral examination may not serve as a substitute for the written examination, which is a Graduate School requirement. That is, the student must pass a written exam, and the oral exam may be used at the discretion of the dissertation committee to verify or further test the student. The decision of passing or failing the qualifying examination is through the Dissertation Committee. The qualifying examination (written and, if required, oral) must be successfully completed, as documented by the Dissertation Committee, before the student can be admitted to candidacy.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY:

Students should advance to candidacy at the end of their second year but must advance at least one semester prior to defending and graduation. Advancement to candidacy requires the completion of all course work and passing qualifying exams. The form requesting advancement to candidacy is available in the Graduate Studies Office.

The Degree

Students are expected to finish in five years. Students are required to meet annually with their committee and provide a succinct one page progress report to be kept on file in the MBF office. The chair is expected to provide a statement summarizing this committee meeting and the student progress.

DISSERTATIONS;

The written dissertation should be provided to the committee six weeks prior to the oral defense. The committee is responsible for returning any required changes two weeks prior to the oral defense. In no case will the oral defense proceed without written comments from each member of the committee.

Specific requirements for the format of the dissertations are set by the Graduate School. These guidelines are available in the Graduate Studies Office. Students must read these guidelines.
and strictly adhere to them. Otherwise the dissertation may not be accepted by the Graduate School and the student will not graduate.

A student's dissertation/thesis must be signed by all committee members and turned in to the Graduate School prepared for binding by the end of the subsequent full semester following the date of defense.

**DEFENSE:**

The MBF requires a public oral presentation of a student dissertation. The public presentation should occur only after the committee has been sufficient time to review the written dissertation. Thus, the defense should take place two-weeks after receiving comments from each committee member on the written dissertation. Students should consult closely with their advisor and advisory committee members throughout the course of their studies to minimize any possibility for dissension at the defense.

*Procedure if there is dissension on the acceptability of a thesis or dissertation:*

Note that there is a School-wide policy on Academic Appeals. See page 18 of the RSMAS student handbook (on-line) for a description of this procedure. Alternatively for MBF students, the following may be applied.

If during the final phase of evaluating a draft thesis/dissertation, or at the defense, a committee member refuses to approve the document, and this result in less than a requisite number of signatures, the following procedure can be followed:

The student and his or her advisor will recommend to the MBF Academic Committee a third party reviewer to read the document and render an opinion as to its acceptability. The MBF Academic Committee can approve or disapprove the reviewer, and if it disapproves, the student and advisor will recommend alternates until approval is obtained. The MBF Academic Committee can provide the student and advisor with acceptable suggestions as well. The reviewer should have expertise in the research area and preferably be a senior scientist. Once a reviewer has been approved, he or she will read the thesis/dissertation, attend the defense (if possible), and provide the MBF Academic Committee with a written evaluation. It is also expected that the MBF Academic Committee members will attend the defense if possible. The MBF Academic Committee will then render a decision regarding the acceptability of the thesis/dissertation, weighing all evidence including the reviewer's report.

This decision will be conveyed to the Division Chairperson in the form of a recommendation, and depending on the requirements for committee composition, with either the chairperson or Associate Dean signing the document. Dissenting members of the Thesis/Dissertation Committee do not sign the document but may register a minority report.
Degree Progress, Warnings, Problems and Academic Probation:

The MBF Academic Committee monitors each student's progress each semester. The expected time to completion for degrees is as follows:
M.S. - 2 to 2.5 years
Ph.D. - 4 to 5 years

Recency of Credit:

The Graduate School has a firm policy concerning the time elapsed since earning academic credits. Students must complete all degree requirements within 8 years, including leaves of absence. If the student remains for a Ph.D. after completing a M.S. at RSMAS, the date of entry is enrollment in the Ph.D. program, and credits from that time forward are the only ones affected by this policy. Credits are reinstated for 4 years after completion of the Qualifying Examination. For further information, students are urged to contact the Graduate School on the Coral Gables Campus.

Academic Warning and Probation:

Students will not be allowed to enroll in the fall of their second year unless they have passed their comprehensive exams.
Student will not be allowed to enroll in the fall of their third year unless they have defended their proposal and passed their qualifying exams.
Student will not be allowed to enroll in fall of their 3rd or subsequent years unless they document their annual dissertation committee meeting.

If there is a problem with the student's progress, the student and advisor will be called to appear before the MBF academic committee to discuss the problem and possible solutions. If meeting with the Academic Committee does not solve the problem with the student's progress, the MBF Academic Committee can recommend that the student be dismissed from the University.

Students and their advisors can at any time speak to any member of the Academic Committee about a situation that is causing delays in the student's progress. Confidentiality will be maintained as necessary and appropriate.

Resetting the timeline for degree completion:

If a student falls significantly behind the schedule for a degree because of a major event such as a change of advisor, change of research project, personal hardship, or other unforeseen events, the student and advisor may petition the MBF Academic Committee to "reset the clock" for completion of the degree.

Required Minimum GPA:

All students must maintain a GPA higher than 3.0 at all times. This is a requirement of the Graduate School and is checked each semester by the Graduate Studies Office. A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 is automatically placed on RSMAS academic probation. If the GPA is not increased to 3.0 in the subsequent semester, the student may be dismissed from the program.

Entry into the Ph.D. Program:

Correcting Errors in Degree Program:

Occasionally, a student who intended to enter the Ph.D. program is registered as an M.S. student at the time of acceptance. To correct this error, a memorandum signed by the student's advisor is sent to the Graduate Studies Office with a copy directed to the MBF Academic Secretary. The same process is followed for Ph.D. students who had intended to complete a Masters.

Entry into the Ph.D. program after completion of the M.S. at RSMAS:
Completion of the M.S. degree in MBF does not guarantee acceptance to the Ph.D. program. If admission to the doctoral program is desired by the student, the Thesis Committee must recommend this at the time of the M.S. defense in the form of a memo to the MBF Academic Committee. The student must then complete a readmission form. Finally, there must be a faculty member with funds available to act as the student's advisor. It is recommended that this process be initiated at least three months in advance of the entry date desired.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE:**

All leaves must be approved in advance by the MBF Academic Committee and the Associate Dean. Leave is usually granted for one year at a time, with possible extensions under extreme circumstances. Leaves are requested for the student by his/her advisor or advisory committee by means of a memorandum sent to the MBF Academic Committee. This memorandum should indicate the advisor's approval. When returning, the student must file a readmission form. The form is available in the Graduate Studies Office, and must be approved by the MBF Academic Committee. Any time the student is not registered at the University for a period of one or more semester, she/he must request a leave of absence. Students are cautioned that under the Regency of Credit rule set by the Graduate School, they must complete all degree requirements within 8 years of entry, including leaves of absence.

**FUNDING:**

Most students in the Division are supported by research assistantships, although a few are supported by teaching assistantships. Support is typically offered for tuition, stipend, and research funds. Maytag, and University Fellowships provide support for 12 months. The RSMAS Fellowships cover 8 months with the remaining 4 months (summer sessions) to be covered by the student's advisor.

Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants are awarded tuition scholarships under the terms of current RSMAS policy. See the Graduate Studies Office for any questions on this policy. Most fellowships/scholarships are available only to doctoral students. MBF-distributed scholarship funds are listed in appendices. Files of information on non-UM fellowships as well as a fellowship database are available from the MBF Academic Secretary.

**STUDENT FILES:**

The MBF Academic Secretary keeps a copy of all MBF student files, although the official student file is in the Graduate Studies Office. Since the progress of MBF students is mainly followed by the Division, students should submit all paperwork, other than course registration forms, through the MBF Secretary. The appropriate forms are forwarded to the Graduate Studies Office.

**APPEALS AND CHANGES IN POLICY:**

The student may appeal any decision made by the MBF Academic Committee to the RSMAS Academic Committee, and, if necessary, subsequently to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. All students should be aware that there is no right to a degree, and that the M.A., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees are conferred only with approval of the thesis/dissertation committee and completion of all degree requirements issued by the Division, the School, and the University. The MBF Academic Committee recognizes that the guidelines for obtaining degrees will evolve in any healthy program. Any faculty member or student who has recommendations should contact the MBF Academic Committee.
Appendix 1 2007

MBF Graduate Faculty

FACULTY 2007
Cowen, Robert, Chairman
Ault, Jerald
Babcock, Elizabeth
Baker, Andrew
Bakun, Andrew
Brand, Larry
Crawford, Douglas
Die, David
Ehrhardt, Nelson
Fell, Jack
Fieber, Lynne
Fleming, Lora
Glynn, Peter
Grosell, Martin
Gruber, Samuel
Hitchcock, Gary
Langdon, Chris
Lirman, Diego
McDonald, Danielle
McManus, John
Oleksiak, Margie
Pikitch, Ellen
Schmale, Michael
Serafy, Joseph
Smith, Sharon
Sponaugle, Su
Thomas, Gary
Wood, Chris
Worden, Alexandra
### COURSES

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<th>MBF</th>
<th>COURSE schedule</th>
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<th>Semester</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core courses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>MBF 602</td>
<td>Biological Oceanography seminar</td>
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<td>ALL</td>
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<td>MBF 604</td>
<td>Biological Oceanography</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBF 508</td>
<td>Biometrics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBF 51?</td>
<td>Tropical Ecology</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MBF 610</td>
<td>Physical Environment of Marine Organisms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBF 5xy</td>
<td>Graduate Physiology</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fisheries</strong></td>
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<td>MBF 613</td>
<td>Marine Population dynamics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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<td>MBF 614</td>
<td>Population Modelling and Management</td>
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<td>MBF 615</td>
<td>Advance Biometrics</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>MBF 610</td>
<td>Ocean instrumentation</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<td><strong>Biological Oceanography</strong></td>
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<td>MBF 531</td>
<td>Plankton Ecology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBF 640</td>
<td>Biology and Ecology or Marine Phytoplankton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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<td>MBF 6??</td>
<td>Marine Microbial Ecology</td>
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<td><strong>Tropical Reef Ecology</strong></td>
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<td>MBF 514</td>
<td>Field:tropical Marine Biology</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<td>MBF 518</td>
<td>Ecology and Physiology of Coral reefs</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>MBF 687</td>
<td>Biology and systematics of fishes</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<td>RSM 620</td>
<td>Object oriented programming</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>MBF 515</td>
<td>Tropical Marine Ecolo</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>MBF 519</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td><strong>Molecular and Biomedical</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>MBF 586</td>
<td>Environmental Biology of fishes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBF 533</td>
<td>Physiological adaptations of marine organisms</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBF 550</td>
<td>Analytical Techniques in Marine Biology</td>
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<td>MBF 576</td>
<td>Diseases of Marine Organisms</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<td>MBF 607</td>
<td>Biochemical Toxicology</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBF 6??</td>
<td>Evolutionary Genetics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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FELLOWSHIPS

Fellowships are gifts that enable qualified students to devote all their time to graduate study without the need to seek employment.

ROSENSTIEL FELLOWSHIP (15th February)  $12,344 (MA/MS) and $13,688 (PhD) stipend / 8 months plus tuition scholarship of 18 credits. One fellowship awarded per division for a meritorious student. All applicants to the Rosenstiel School are considered.

MAYTAG FELLOWSHIPS (1st February)  $18,000 stipend / 10 or 12 months plus tuition scholarship of 18 credits. Student applies to program head. Fields eligible: Marine Biology, Biology (limited areas in Psychology and Chemistry). Deadline for all application material: January 1st.

UM FELLOWSHIPS (1st February)  $18,000 stipend / 10 or 12 months plus tuition scholarship of 18 credits. Three-year award (with satisfactory progress). All UM doctoral departments eligible. Deadline for all application material: January 1st.

ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL/ CELEBRITY CRUISES OCEAN FUND SCHOLARSHIP (March)  The fellowship funds will be used to pay one half of an annual stipend and one half of the annual (18) tuition waivers. The division (faculty member) will be responsible for the other one half of the annual stipend and the Graduate Studies Office will cover the other one half of the waivers from the regular waiver pool. Two student scholarships per year will be awarded. Each division will be allowed to nominate two (2) candidates. The funds will be used to support NEW incoming students.

Harding Fellowship:  A $30,000 fellowship plus tuitions for Biological Oceanographic research in honor of Harding B. Michel, a zooplanktologist from the Rosenstiel School at the University of Miami. Students in their 3-5 year of their Ph.D. program who have passed into candidacy and have valid need to complete a meritorious research program are eligible.