



Frequently Asked Questions: Marine Studies Initiative (MSI)

What is the MSI? The [Marine Studies Initiative](#) at Oregon State University fosters innovative approaches to solving societal challenges for our ocean and coasts through collaboration and a transdisciplinary approach. The MSI is built upon three major goals.

- To provide a new transformational educational experience, highlighted by a new undergraduate major and minor in marine studies.
- To advance leadership in transdisciplinary marine research and scholarship through a variety of research focus areas.
- To increase societal impact in Oregon and beyond via expanding partnerships and increasing access to education in marine studies.

The goal of the MSI is to build upon the excellence in marine programs across OSU and the state, including in Corvallis, Newport and along the Oregon coast, by amplifying existing efforts and catalyzing new opportunities.

How do I get involved? What opportunities will I have in MSI?

[Undergraduates](#) can enroll in courses, degrees, and certificates related to the ocean and coasts. With exceptional facilities and mentoring in existing marine science programs, and the development of the new [Marine Studies major and minor](#), OSU is home to a culture of student research. Field and study abroad programs provide further opportunities for experiential education. OSU students also have access to clubs that provide personal and professional development activities.

[Graduate students and post docs](#) have unique opportunities to conduct research in a variety of marine-related fields.

[Researchers](#) can get involved in various transdisciplinary MSI focus areas, for example, “Food from the Sea.”

[Community college students](#) can dual enroll, through the [OSU Degree Partnership Program](#), to access the university’s marine programs. Students should talk with OSU advisors about taking marine courses through OSU and scenarios for transitioning to the university. Internship and other experiential educational opportunities are also available through [Hatfield Marine Science Center](#).

[K-12 students](#) can participate in day camps, career days, and lab and field experiences offered through the OSU Hatfield Marine Science Center.

[Life-long learners](#) can take advantage of a number of different opportunities including continuing education and professional development programs at OSU and volunteer activities at Hatfield Marine Science Center.

What Marine Science undergraduate degrees are available?

Our programs are among the few intensive marine and environmental science undergraduate programs in the country, with opportunities to conduct research with faculty and graduate students. These instruction, research, and internship opportunities make OSU an excellent place to pursue the study of marine science. You can also incorporate your love for the ocean into any major by pairing it with one of the marine-focused minors listed below.

[Bachelor of Science degrees in Earth and Life Sciences](#)

College of Science

- Biology – [Marine Biology Option](#)
- Microbiology – [Aquatic Microbiology Option](#)
- [Zoology](#)

College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences

- Earth Science – [Ocean Science Option](#)
- [Environmental Sciences](#)

College of Agricultural Sciences

- [Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences](#)
- [Water Resources Option in Bioresource Research](#)

Minors about the Coasts and Ocean

- Marine Biology and Ecology
- Marine Conservation and Management
- Marine Studies
- Oceanography

Is there going to be a degree in Marine Studies?

Yes. A new liberal arts [Marine Studies BA/BS degree program](#) is being developed and anticipated to soon be available for OSU students. Housed in the [College of Liberal Arts](#), the Marine Studies degree focuses on the dynamic relationship between people and the marine environment. The degree draws on OSU's excellent natural and social science traditions, as well as exceptional arts and humanities programs. Built on foundational knowledge of marine natural science, the degree will focus on the human dimensions of marine systems by emphasizing the social, political, and cultural issues of the ocean and coasts. A minor in Marine Studies will also become available. Interested students should contact an advisor to learn more. Note that students cannot enroll in this program until it becomes available in the course catalog. Keep informed about this program's development by contacting the Marine Studies Initiative and asking to be added to the marine studies degree listserv.

There are a number of different undergraduate degrees focused on the ocean and coasts. How does a student find their best match?

There are several ways in which students can find the best program to match their interests and goals. Talking to an advisor is key. Academic advisors understand the similarities and differences between degree programs and can recommend a pathway. For more information contact Cynthia.Leonard@oregonstate.edu.

With regards to the new Marine Studies degree and how it is different from earth and life science degrees, such as Marine Biology, Fisheries and Wildlife, and Ocean Science: The liberal arts Marine Studies degree, once it becomes available, will focus on human interactions with the marine environment and emphasize liberal arts approaches to address contemporary issues facing the ocean and coasts—social science, arts and humanities.

Which classes can I take now to prepare me for a liberal arts degree in Marine Studies? We encourage students to enroll in existing programs that best match their current interests. Advisors within existing programs can help explore potential options, as can the Marine Studies Academic Advisor. Contact Cynthia.Leonard@oregonstate.edu for more information, including lists of course requirements being planned for inclusion in the new Marine Studies undergraduate degree. Also, see the FAQs about this new degree.

Where do OSU students take classes to learn about ocean and coasts? Courses are offered at OSU's Corvallis campus, Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, and online through [OSU's Ecampus](#) and [Open Campus](#). Also available are an exciting array of other field and study abroad programs.

What research opportunities are available to undergraduate and graduate students?

Both undergraduate and graduate students including community college students are already participating in marine-related research internships at the [Hatfield Marine Science Center](#) and the OSU main campus in Corvallis. In addition, many courses offer research opportunities, which can lead to mentored research and other opportunities. See

<http://marinebio450.blogspot.com>, <https://marinestudies.oregonstate.edu/academics/internship-opportunities> and other course and student research blogs.

Will there be new MSI facilities in Newport and Corvallis? A new teaching and research building is currently under construction at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, OR. For more information, see the MSI Building blog: <http://fa.oregonstate.edu/msi>. New student housing in Newport is currently in the design phase. Following the completion of these facilities in Newport, we will pursue a new education, research, and outreach building to be built in Corvallis which will then become the new headquarters for the marine studies program.

What does Oregon State University offer that is unique? Oregon State University is a strong research university holding a top-tier research designation from the Carnegie Foundation. OSU is also one of only two land, sea, space, and sun grant institutions in the United States. As such, OSU has a multitude of research opportunities that undergraduates and graduates from all disciplines can access. OSU also offers many hands-on experiences both in the field and in labs. The incredible location of OSU allows for easy access to the coast, estuaries, bays, agricultural fields, forests, rivers, streams, lakes, cities, and mountains all while maintaining a small-town feel. Check out: <http://beavernation.is/commercial>

What does the Hatfield Marine Science Center have to offer? HMSC is full of unique opportunities. [Courses](#) and [internships](#): Courses offered at HMSC cover topics such as marine/estuarine birds, marine mammals, marine invertebrates, aquatic invasions, and ecology courses. HMSC also provides many student internships through REU, Sea Grant, and agencies including NOAA. Internships range from atmospheric science to invertebrate and marine mammal biology to management and policy.

[Collaborative research](#): HMSC not only provides a variety of research opportunities, but students study alongside professionals from the [OSU Marine Mammal Institute](#) and [Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station](#), and agencies including EPA, the USDA, ODFW, and NOAA, and the [Oregon Coast Aquarium](#) just a block away. This creates an excellent opportunity for networking with potential future employers.

[Housing while studying and learning](#): Students and interns can spend multiple terms living in student housing facilities in Newport while taking courses that are field-based or completing research and work on the bay, at sea, or in the community.

For more information:

Visit Marine Studies Initiative at: <https://marinestudies.oregonstate.edu/>

Visit Hatfield Marine Science Center at: <https://hmsc.oregonstate.edu/>

General MSI questions email: marinestudies@oregonstate.edu

HMSC academic questions email: HMSCacademic@oregonstate.edu

For academic and advising questions email:

Cynthia Leonard (MSI Academic Advisor) at:

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AND/OR

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