

The University of Washington

PROGRAM OF STUDIES IN MARINE & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS FOR STUDENTS ENTERING AUTUMN 2025

The School of Marine & Environmental Affairs fosters comprehensive, long term and proactive approaches to marine and environmental policy and management.

I. Introduction

The Master of Marine Affairs (M.M.A.) degree is granted by the School of Marine & Environmental Affairs (SMEA), an academic and research unit of the College of the Environment. The M.M.A. degree program is a two-year graduate course of studies requiring the completion of 59 credits. The M.M.A. is designed to familiarize students with a diversity of conceptual and methodological approaches and fields of inquiry in Marine and Environmental Affairs.

The SMEA offers two tracks—a professional track and a thesis track—for completing the Master of Marine Affairs degree, depending on the student's interests and career plans. Both tracks require completion of the core curriculum and a minimum of 59 credits. Students select their track by **December 12 of their first year.**

Professional Track

Students in the professional track have two options: they can meet the requirements with course work only or complete a team capstone project in addition to course work.

- Students with specific career needs and goals, such as those already established in careers or those intending to change careers, are among those likely to benefit from the **courses-only track**. Under this option, all 59 credits are accrued through coursework. Students wanting to pursue the courses-only track should select a courses-only faculty advisor to help them develop a detailed plan of coursework to submit on or before **April 10 of the first year**.
- Students interested in working in a team to address a specific, client-oriented policy or management problem may choose to engage in a **capstone project**. The capstone project and presentation account for nine of the 59 credits required for graduation. Project titles and abstracts are provided to students at orientation, with detailed capstone project descriptions presented later in fall quarter during which time students can interact with clients/partners and faculty sponsors. Students will have the opportunity to submit their ranked choices of capstone projects by November 7, and then formally commit to selected capstones on or before December 12. Students pursuing a concurrent degree in another UW graduate school/program that prolongs their time-to-graduation and prevents them from engaging in a capstone project in their second year should indicate in writing to the Graduate Program Advisor by December 12 that they would like to delay their track selection decision until their second year. Capstone students will submit a capstone management plan on or before April 10 of their first year.

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Thesis Track

Students in the thesis track are expected to perform research, prepare, and submit a master's thesis that meets the academic and professional standards of SMEA. A manuscript suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal or an equivalent product meets these standards. Fifteen credits of the 59 required for graduation are devoted to thesis research, writing, and oral presentation. Admission to the thesis track requires submission of a brief description of the thesis project and the name of the thesis advisor by **December 12** of the first year. Thesis-track students are required to submit a thesis prospectus by **April 10** and nominate their thesis committee (thesis advisor and committee member) by the last day of spring quarter in their first year. Submission of the complete prospectus will allow the student to enroll in SMEA 700 credits. Students are welcome to submit their prospectus in fall 2025, winter 2026, or by the April 10 deadline to allow for enrollment in SMEA 700 credits in their first year.

Required Credits

The required credits are distributed among the following topics:

- A. The Core Curriculum** typically consists of 26 credits for the professional track and 29 credits for the thesis track:

Core Requirement	Credits
Marine and Environmental Affairs Theory and Practice	3
Environmental Equity & Justice	3
Marine Law	3
Policy Analysis	3
Economics	3-4
Policy Process	3-4
Marine Science	3
Research Methods	3 for professional track; 6 for thesis track
First Year Advising	2

- B. Electives** Students must take *at least* the number of electives required to bring the total number of credits to 59. Typically, this means about 33 credits for the courses-only track, 24 credits for the capstone track, and 15 credits for the thesis-track students, but credits may vary from student to student. A minimum of 9 elective credits must be taken within SMEA and must be listed with an **SMEA** prefix in the time schedule. SMEA 600B (Advising) does not satisfy this elective requirement.

C. Capstone/Thesis

Capstone Project and Presentation The capstone project and presentation account for 9 credits and are required for students in the professional track who choose the capstone option.

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Thesis and Thesis Presentation The thesis and presentation account for 15 credits and are required for thesis track students.

Note: If more than the required number of courses is taken from the Core Curriculum, the surplus credits may count towards elective credits, reducing the number of elective credits required. In any case, the total credits to graduate must be at least 59.

Details of course requirements are discussed in Section III.

II. Progress towards the M.M.A. Degree

The first year of study is devoted to developing a comprehensive understanding of marine and environmental affairs, as well as strengthening analytical skills, demonstrated by making substantial progress toward the completion of the core course requirements and electives.

During the second year of study, students are expected to develop competence in a particular aspect of marine and environmental affairs through additional course work, preparation of the thesis, or completion of the capstone project.

Advising and expected timeline for completion of requirements

SMEA students receive advising from different sources throughout their time in the program based on the type of guidance needed.

The **Graduate Program Advisor (GPA)** is an SMEA staff member who collects track selection and completion documents, committee nomination forms, exceptions, waivers, and graduation forms to add to the student file. They also provide add codes, instructor codes, notification of upcoming deadlines, program requirements, and graduation logistics.

The **Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC)** is an SMEA faculty member who serves to 1) review student requests for waivers, change of track and/or change of advisor, 2) review degree progress reports and transcripts for graduation, and 3) notify students of unsatisfactory progress (if necessary).

SMEA Faculty Advisors help guide students throughout their time in the program to build a rigorous course of study and to ensure progress towards completion of the degree.

During the first quarter of study, the faculty advisor assists students in course selection, in preparation of the plan for additional course work or capstone selection (professional track students), or in exploration of potential thesis topics and identification of a potential thesis advisor (thesis-track students). Faculty advisors are expected to meet with their advisees on a regular basis. ***It is the shared responsibility of students and advisors to ensure that regular meetings are held and that the advising needs of the students are met.*** Advising in the first quarter of the program is intended to orient students to the SMEA program and select a track.

Students are required to register for one credit of advising (SMEA 600B) during each of autumn and winter quarters of their first academic year. One independent study credit is consistent with an expectation that students will engage in three hours per week of work in relation to this requirement, which can include time spent planning coursework and research, reading relevant literature, and meeting with faculty during each quarter for which they are so registered. Students should communicate their informational and academic needs to their advisor, including adjustments that could enhance student academic success.

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The primary purpose of autumn quarter advising is to help students determine the most appropriate track and option for advancement in the program. By December 12, students will select a specific track and option and identify a likely faculty advisor. See Section D of this Program of Studies for requirements for the professional track and Section E of this Program of Studies for requirements for the thesis track.

The primary purpose of winter quarter advising is for the planning and preparation of fulfilling the ~~completion of the~~ degree requirements in the selected track and option. (Once again, see Section D of this Program of Studies for requirements for the professional track and Section E of this Program of Studies for the requirement for the thesis track). At this time, students **must** select a faculty advisor who guides their academic development and progress. Students selecting the courses-only option will be advised by Professor Sunny Jardine. Students selecting the capstone track will be advised by the faculty capstone advisor after opting into a specific capstone. The thesis committee chair serves as the faculty advisor for thesis-track students.

Policies to guide advising and course selection:

- 1) At the start of winter quarter, student and advisor develop a course plan for the remainder of year. This plan is recorded on the Degree Progress Report form and approved by the faculty advisor (with the understanding that course availability and academic priorities can change as a student's focus and priorities change). The course plan reflects SMEA course requirements, academic needs, professional development, course availability, and student interest.
- 2) Student and advisor review (and if necessary, revise) the above plan every quarter, accounting for academic needs and/or changes in course offerings.

It is expected that in most cases, students will register for SMEA 600B with their courses-only faculty advisor, thesis committee chair, or faculty capstone advisor in winter quarter 2026. Students, especially thesis-track students, are encouraged to engage early with faculty whose research interests them to identify their faculty advisor/thesis committee chair. Once an agreement has been reached between the advisor and the student, the faculty member will assume the role of faculty advisor and assist the student in further planning her/his academic program, developing a thesis or capstone research strategy, and selecting additional thesis committee member(s). This will culminate in the submission of a thesis prospectus, capstone management plan, or courses-only course plan to be submitted to the Graduate Program Advisor on April 10 of the first year, followed by the thesis committee nomination form on the Friday of finals week in spring quarter of the first year for thesis track students.

If a student has not selected a degree track and faculty advisor by December 12 of the first year, the student will be placed in the courses-only option in the professional track.

Satisfactory Progress

"Satisfactory progress" refers to a student's ability to meet the academic standards set by the University of Washington Graduate School and the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs. Students are required to maintain consistent progress towards completing core, elective, and track-specific requirements, as well as a quarterly and cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (B). Students falling below this minimum will be notified by the Graduate Program Coordinator, and, if necessary, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss corrective action. Depending on the situation, not making satisfactory progress may not be accepted into the thesis track or capstone option. Course grades below

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2.7 will not count toward graduation nor will they fulfill core requirements. Please ensure you review SMEA's Satisfactory Progress Policy in your handbook and online to fully understand what is required to maintain satisfactory progress throughout your time in the program.

- Full-time status. Some graduate funding sources, for example RA- and TA-ships, require full-time status, which is typically defined as 10 credits during the academic year and 2 credits during summer quarter.
- Length of Studies. M.M.A. requirements are normally completed in five to seven academic quarters. (Summer quarter attendance is optional, and generally accelerates progress towards the degree). The Graduate School requires completion of the degree within 6 years from the time the student begins the program.
- On-Leave Status. To maintain graduate student status, all students must register for credits each quarter (except summer) or officially go on leave. Students must apply for 'On Leave Status', have their application approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator, and pay the required fee by the last day of the on-leave quarter. This must be renewed each quarter for which leave status is desired. If a student fails either to register for credits or go on leave, the student will have to apply to the Graduate School for reinstatement and pay an additional reinstatement fee.
- Incomplete Grades. Students must complete all courses with "Incomplete" grades by the last day of the following quarter (summer quarter excluded). If any of the required courses have an "Incomplete" grade upon graduation a contingency will be placed on granting the degree. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved in writing by the faculty advisor and the Graduate Program Coordinator.

General SMEA Policy on C/NC

The SMEA policy regarding the C/NC option specifies that all core and elective courses be taken for a grade. Exceptions to this policy exist if the course is offered **only** on a C/NC basis. All other requests for an exception must be approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator. Approval to substitute the C/NC option for a grade must be obtained in writing from the GPC at the **beginning** of the quarter in which the course is offered. Approval will not be granted after the course is completed.

SMEA 550 (Special Topics) may be offered as C/NC at the discretion of the instructor. SMEA 600B, SMEA 650, and SMEA 700 are exceptions to this requirement and may be taken for C/NC. For courses outside SMEA, students must obtain permission from the Graduate Program Coordinator to take as S/NS **before the start of the quarter** to count these credits toward graduation. This document must appear in the student's file.

Procedures for Academic Dispute Resolution

The following options are available to students in the event of academic disputes:

Academic unit's internal process; initiated by the student:

- Talk with the professor involved (this is the first and most appropriate step);
- Talk with the appropriate faculty advisor;
- Consult with the GPC;
- Communicate the issue to the SMEA Director.

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- In cases where the student feels it is necessary to go beyond SMEA, they can:
 - Contact the University Ombudsman.
 - Reach out to the College's Student Academic Grievances Committee to request a hearing;
 - Students contesting their individual grades or evaluation: cases initiated by the student are covered by the **University Handbook**, *Vol. Four, Part III, Chapter 11, Section 2*;
 - Students addressing discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran: cases initiated by the student are referred to the **Resolution of Complaints Against University Employees** Procedure contained in University of Washington Administrative Policy Statement 46.3.

In a case where a faculty member needs to refer a student for disciplinary proceedings:

- Faculty initiated complaint against a student for misconduct, including plagiarism and cheating fall under the provisions of the Student Conduct Code contained in the **University Handbook**, *Vol. Three, Part III, Chapter 1* and *Chapter 478-120 WAC*.

III. Master of Marine Affairs Degree Requirements

Conferral of the M.M.A. degree depends upon meeting the standards of academic performance established by the University of Washington Graduate School and upon satisfactory completion of the Master of Marine Affairs Degree Requirements. Course descriptions and required prerequisites for the courses may be found in the University of Washington General Catalog (<http://www.washington.edu/students/crscat/smea.html>).

Note: Students are responsible for ensuring that courses offered outside SMEA meet the intent of the SMEA requirement. Course instructors and content often change, frequently at the last minute, but course numbers and course titles remain the same. Consult the GPC to determine whether a course meets the goals of the SMEA requirement.

A. The Core Curriculum

The SMEA core requirements include classes from each of the following core areas of knowledge and skills:

1. *Marine and Environmental Affairs Theory and Practice, SMEA 500 (3 credits)*

Marine and environmental affairs (MEA) draws together perspectives and approaches across the natural and social sciences, humanities, policy, law, and environmental justice to address complex issues in marine and coastal systems. This course will introduce students to the practice of MEA by exploring interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives and multiple ways of knowing in MEA; approaches to collaborative problem-solving and decision-making; and ethical engagement with communities in environmental management contexts. Students will gain practice in reading, writing, communication, and teamwork to

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provide a foundation for working in diverse teams in policy, research, and community-engagement settings.

2. *Environmental Equity and Justice (3 credits)*

Environmental equity and justice manifest themselves differently in local, national, and international realms. This requirement offers students a choice of examining environmental equity and justice concerns in various arenas, each with distinct intellectual lineages and histories, overlapping concerns, and recent fruitful cross-pollination by scholars working across two or more fields.

Currently, two permanent courses within SMEA (SMEA 572, SMEA 474/574) and one SMEA 550 topics course satisfy this requirement; others may be added over time:

- SMEA 572 Environmental Justice and Political Ecology Field Course:
Indigenous Perspectives, Coalitions and Activism
- SMEA 474/574: Environmental Justice in a Changing World

SMEA 550 Topics Courses:

SMEA 550: Indigenous Knowledge, Politics & Environmental Justice - *Planned for Spring 2026*

Many undergraduate and graduate courses in the departments of Geography, Anthropology, Comparative History of Ideas, American Indian Studies, the Jackson School for International Studies and American Ethnic Studies potentially satisfy this requirement, provided they substantively engage with issues of race, Indigeneity, or other dimensions of equity and justice.

To determine whether a course will satisfy the requirement, obtain a copy of the syllabus from the instructor and send it to Prof. Beaudreau with a 1-paragraph rationale for using this course to satisfy the requirement.

3. *Marine Law (3 credits)*

The law requirement is designed to give students exposure to a body of legal principles developed through treaties, statutes, and/or judicial and administrative decisions affecting a specific marine affairs topic. U. S. Ocean and Coastal Law, constrained to a significant extent by the International Law of the Sea, provides the basis for most of the policies that are applied within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone and the coastal zone.

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The course that meets the Law requirement is:

SMEA 515 U.S. Coastal and Ocean Law (3 Credits)

4. Policy Analysis (3 credits)

The purpose of this requirement is for students to be exposed to the various theories and tools of policy analysis (e.g., cost/benefit analysis, feasibility study, forecasting) and how those tools are applied by practitioners.

The course that meets this requirement is:

SMEA 519. Marine Policy Analysis (3 Credits)

5. Economics (3 credits)

The SMEA economics requirement assures that SMEA students understand the basics of microeconomics in application to marine policy. SMEA students may satisfy their economics requirement in two ways.

SMEA 536. Applied Microeconomics for Marine Affairs (3 credits)

PUBPOL 594. Economics of Environmental Management (4 credits)

Note: This course is typically offered in spring quarter.

FISH 561. Resource Economics for Management & Policy (4 credits)

Note: This course is typically offered in autumn quarter.

6. Policy Process (3 credits)

The Policy Processes requirement provides students with an understanding of the dynamics that drive policy formulation, adoption, and implementation at various levels. An explicit analytical approach is used to study the how, why, and what of policy processes at the state, national, or international level. The following course fulfills this requirement:

SMEA 521. Climate Change Governance (3 credits)

PPM 508. Public Policy Processes (4 credits)

Note: This course is typically offered in autumn quarter.

7. Marine Science Requirement (3 credits)

The objectives of the science requirement are to familiarize SMEA students with the physics, chemistry, and biology of the ocean; with hypothesis-testing

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approaches as they are used in marine research; and with methods of data collection and analysis for marine research purposes.

The recommended science course for SMEA students who do not have a strong undergraduate background in oceanography and marine science is:

SMEA 591. Marine Science in the Coastal Zone (3 Credits)

Students who have completed *more than one upper-division marine science course* at the undergraduate level may apply for a waiver from SMEA 591. Contact Prof. Klinger directly for consultation. Students who are waived from SMEA 591 are *required to take at least one 400 or 500-level science course*. Multiple advanced science courses offered within the College can be used to meet the science requirement for those waived from SMEA 591. Within SMEA, the following course meets this requirement for students waived from SMEA 591:

SMEA 510. Topics in Marine Ecology* (3 credits) *requires permission of the instructor*

**Course to be offered winter 2026*

8. Research Methods (3 credits for professional track; 6 credits for thesis track)

The research methods requirement ensures that SMEA graduates are able to apply intermediate level statistics. In addition, students are encouraged to take courses in advanced statistics, qualitative research methods, research design, or professional skills.

All students are expected to demonstrate a minimum level of competency with respect to quantitative (statistical) analysis. This level of competency can be met with an upper-division undergraduate course in statistics. The required skill level is equivalent to intermediate statistics, including an understanding of point estimates, confidence intervals and regression equations. Students not meeting this requirement through undergraduate courses prior to admission to SMEA will be required to take one appropriate course in their first or second quarter at SMEA. Students who have completed such a course prior to enrollment in SMEA are encouraged to take more advanced courses in quantitative or qualitative research methods and design.

SMEA 584. Statistics for Policy Analysis* (3 Credits)

**Course to be offered in Autumn 2025*

Alternate recommended courses include:

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Q SCI 482. Statistical Inference in Applied Research I: Hypothesis Testing and Estimation for Ecologists and Resource Managers (5 Credits).

PUBPOL 527: Quantitative Analysis I (4 credits) and PUBPOL 528: Quantitative Analysis II (4 credits)

Students may also select an appropriate course from the Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CS&SS), with approval.

Thesis-track students have higher requirements for research methods given the research focus of the thesis project. Depending on faculty availability in any given year, SMEA offers a variety of such courses. They include Case Study Methods (SMEA 581), Research Design (SMEA 583), Coding in R (SMEA 580), Spatial Data Manipulation and Visualization (SMEA 586), Qualitative Methods: Theory and Practice for Environmental Social Science (SMEA 587), some SMEA 550 special topics courses, and other research methods courses offered in departments across campus. **Students are expected to discuss the above options with their faculty advisors and select their research methods courses in consultation with the thesis committee chair.**

Many other skills are of value to policy professionals, such as planning, budgeting, mediation, and negotiation. SMEA students are encouraged to pursue such professional skills through the electives they take elsewhere on campus.

9. *Marine Affairs Advising (2 credits)*

SMEA 600 B. First year advising (1 each, autumn and winter quarters for first-year students)

Waivers and Substitutions for Core Courses

No substitutions are permitted for the Introductory Course (SMEA 500), which is intended to be completed in the first quarter of study at SMEA. Permission to defer this course until the second year of study *must* be approved by the GPC.

In each of the core areas of knowledge, each student must satisfy the graduation requirement by taking one or more courses covering the subject while enrolled in SMEA. Students with little or no background in a subject area will satisfy the specified requirements with a basic course covering the fundamentals of the subject. Students with a stronger academic background in the subject (e.g., majoring in the subject as an undergraduate) can fulfill the subject area requirements by taking a more advanced course. For example, a student with little or no marine science background will take the introductory course SMEA 591, while a student with a stronger marine science background will choose from a number of more advanced marine science courses.

Waivers for core requirements are provided only if a student can demonstrate substantial prior coursework in a topic area *and* that additional coursework would be redundant. *In special cases*, a

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student with a strong background in a subject area may seek a waiver of that graduation requirement. For example, a student holding a law degree could seek waiver for the law requirement. ***We distinguish between waiving requirements for specific courses (e.g., SMEA 519 or 591) and waiving the obligation to take courses in a specified category (e.g., Policy Analysis, or Economics).***

In no case can waivers be used to reduce the total number of credits required for graduation. Requests for waivers are to be submitted to the faculty listed below and decisions are to be made by them. Any changes must be recorded in writing by and placed in the students' files, along with the necessary transcripts.

Marine Law: *Ryan Kelly*

Policy Analysis: *Erendira Aceves Bueno*

Policy Process: *Nives Dolšak*

Marine Science: *Terrie Klinger*

Intermediate Statistics: *Ryan Kelly*

Economics: *Sunny Jardine*

Environmental Equity and Justice: *Anne Beaudreau*

B. Electives (24-33 credits for professional track, 15 for thesis track, or the number required to bring total credits to 59)

Elective courses are intended to enhance the student's knowledge of Marine Affairs in areas pertinent to the student's research and career goals. Electives provide the needed depth of understanding in substantive fields of inquiry and in methods of research and analysis. At least 9 credits from a minimum of 3 courses must be taken from the SMEA curriculum. For the full list of SMEA courses, see <http://www.washington.edu/students/crscat/smea.html> (some courses may not be offered regularly so check with the GPA or GPC). A list of our regularly offered courses can be found on our website <https://smea.uw.edu/students/smea-courses/>. While the same course may not be used to satisfy both elective and core requirements, any SMEA course not used to satisfy a core requirement will qualify for elective credit. **Independent Study (up to 8 credits of SMEA 600) may be used to satisfy elective credit requirements, but NOT the 9 credits of SMEA electives.**

Elective credits must qualify as graduate credit (typically 400 or 500-level courses) offered in any UW department or school. In general, courses 400 level or higher offered at the University of Washington will qualify for graduation credit so long as the course is pertinent to the student's area of study or career goals. **Students should consult with their faculty advisors or thesis committee chairs in**

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choosing elective courses. Additional advice on elective course offerings can be sought from other faculty, thesis committee chairs, and the Graduate Program Coordinator.

C. Independent Study Courses (SMEA 600A)

Students may use independent study (SMEA 600A) to explore topics that have relevance to their course of study **but for which no organized course exists**. SMEA 600A credits **may not** be used for preliminary thesis research or preparation of the prospectus, nor can they be used to substitute for regular classes. To enroll in SMEA 600A students must have faculty approval to register, using the **SMEA Independent Study Agreement form**. Receipt of credit is contingent on completion of work products agreed to in advance. No more than 8 Independent Study credits (600A) can be counted towards the M.M.A. degree.

Note that while graduate-level independent study is a flexible category at the University of Washington, expectations and products or deliverables must be clear between faculty supervisors and students before the Independent Study Agreement is signed. Students may receive “I” (incomplete) grades if expectations are not met by the end of quarters during which Independent Study is elected and ultimately loss of the credits if the expected work is not completed by the end of the following quarter. The University’s general rule is that 1 independent study credit equals 3 hours per week of work.

SMEA 600B credits are limited to a total of 2, one in each of autumn and winter quarter of the first year and are devoted to advising.

D. Professional Track

Students in the professional track take one of two paths to the degree: a course of study that includes additional course work (9 credits) or completion of a capstone project (9 credits). Students interested in a team capstone project should indicate their interest to the faculty coordinating the capstones. Capstone assignments and reconciliation will then occur by **November 21**. Each student on a capstone should submit a project management plan to the Graduate Program Advisor (GPA) by **April 10** in spring quarter of their first year. If this deadline is missed the student will be re-assigned to the courses-only track. Capstone students will typically register for 9 credits of SMEA 650 in their second year but are eligible to enroll in spring or summer of the first year if the project requires it. If students wish to extend their capstone experience beyond the 9 credits required, students may (with the approval of the capstone faculty advisor) enroll in SMEA 600A credits for this purpose. Students are required to give a formal presentation of their capstone research to the SMEA community in addition to any presentation that the capstone client may require. Approval from the faculty capstone advisor is necessary before the SMEA presentation can be scheduled. Capstones in Arctic or Canadian Studies topics may be eligible for the FLAS Fellowship. If interested, contact the Capstone Coordinator in autumn quarter to inquire if any such capstones are being considered. Students may also initiate their own capstone with the agreement of a faculty member willing to serve as the capstone advisor and by obtaining the minimum number of participating students. This process must happen prior to orientation.

Students who wish to complete the degree by taking additional course work must submit a brief justification explaining how the courses-only approach will help them meet their career goals. This

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must be submitted to the GPA by **December 12** of the first year, followed by a detailed plan, approved by the faculty advisor, of additional course work no later than **April 10** in spring quarter of their first year. The plan for additional coursework must specify some or all of the following:

- 1) The content/topics the student wishes to learn; how those topics contribute to the student's career goals; a list of courses and departments that offer them.
- 2) The analytical skills the student plans to acquire; how those skills contribute to the student's career goals; a list of courses and departments that offer them.
- 3) The professional skills the student plans to acquire; how those skills contribute to the student's career goals; a list of courses and departments that offer them.

A word of explanation is necessary regarding the requirement for 9 additional credits of study in lieu of a capstone project or thesis. The UW Graduate School requires that different paths to the same degree be distinct from each other and that there be equity in the requirements of each relative to the other. Equity in the additional course work option vis-à-vis the capstone and thesis requirement lies in the additional advanced courses pertinent to each student's professional objectives. These courses amount to nine credits.

Both options within the professional track require that students complete a total of 59 credits and be enrolled in a minimum of 2 credits in the quarter in which they graduate.

E. The Thesis and Thesis Presentation (15 credits – for thesis track students)

Conferral of the M.M.A. Degree for students in the thesis track depends upon satisfactory completion of a research project presented in thesis format and prepared under the supervision of a thesis committee.

While doing thesis research the student is required to take a minimum of 15 credits of SMEA 700.

SMEA 700. Master's Thesis Research (15 Credits)

Prerequisite: A thesis prospectus must be approved by the student's thesis committee chair prior to enrollment in SMEA 700. Only 15 SMEA 700 credits will count towards the M.M.A. degree, independent of the number of credits of SMEA 700 actually taken.

Students are required to give a formal presentation of their research to the SMEA community. Approval from the chair of the student's supervisory committee is necessary before the presentation can be scheduled.

Thesis Process The SMEA thesis is a significant paper communicating the results of research and analysis of a problem or opportunity. Some attempt to explain and/or predict phenomena important to marine or environmental affairs. Others seek to identify policy issues, adopt an approach to policy development or evaluation, and make recommendations. Still others provide a detailed description and explanation of a marine or environmental affairs issue, problem, or case study, but do not attempt either to predict or evaluate outcomes. Appropriate models for such papers appear in peer-reviewed professional journals, and students are encouraged to consult such journals and work with their thesis committee to determine scope, length, and style appropriate to the discipline. In some cases, students

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may choose to produce a thesis that does not conform to the constraints of a journal publication. Such a thesis must meet the same standards of academic excellence as the traditional thesis, and it must involve sufficient documentation to satisfy Graduate School requirements. An acceptable thesis

- * demonstrates independent thought and research,
- * contributes to understanding or potential resolution of a problem in marine or environmental affairs, and
- * communicates effectively to a relevant audience.

Thesis Prospectus

Students pursuing the thesis track will 1) choose a thesis committee chair from among the eligible SMEA faculty; 2) work with the chair to identify a research topic; 3) choose one or more thesis committee member(s); and 4) formulate a written prospectus that specifies the hypothesis or research question to be addressed, the research methods to be used, and the anticipated time-line for completion of the research. The student's Thesis Committee Chair must approve the thesis prospectus by April 10 in students' first year. If that deadline is missed the student will be re-assigned to the courses-only track. Once the prospectus is approved, students are eligible to enroll in SMEA 700. Registration must be authorized by the Chair, using SMEA's Thesis Credit Approval Form every quarter a student enrolls in SMEA 700. A minimum of 15 credits of SMEA 700 is required and can be distributed over several quarters.

Approval or exemption by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Human Subjects Division (HSD) may be required for students to carry out their research. Projects involving collection or observation of non-human vertebrates and some invertebrates require IACUC approval. Students should discuss this possibility with their thesis advisor and consult the following website: <http://www.washington.edu/research/hsd/> to determine if an additional approval or waiver is necessary. If documentation is required students are to complete all of the requisite paperwork and provide a copy of the prospectus and approval to the Graduate Program Advisor upon receipt.

Thesis Supervision

Supervision of the student's thesis preparation is the primary responsibility of a committee composed of a Chair (or Thesis Advisor) and at least one committee member. *The Chair and at least one-half of the total membership must be members of the UW Graduate Faculty.* UW graduate faculty are listed on the UW Graduate Faculty Locator site: <https://grad.uw.edu/for-faculty-and-staff/graduate-faculty-locator/>. At least one of these committee members must be formally associated with SMEA as a regular, affiliate, adjunct, or research faculty member. The Chair will assist students in recruiting members to the committee whose expertise will contribute to the design and execution of the thesis research. All committee members are required to hold a Ph.D. or J.D. degree to serve on the thesis committee. In rare cases where a potential member does not hold one of these degrees but has what the thesis chair deems to be equivalent expertise and experience in a particular subject matter pertaining to the thesis topic, a petition may be submitted to the GPC for review. The GPC will then determine if the potential member is qualified to serve as either a second or third member of the committee, or not at all. If the petition results in third member approval, another member of the UW Graduate Faculty will need to be added to the committee as a second member for the approved third member to serve.

2025 MMA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

Once the committee members have been established, a committee nomination form must be signed by all members and submitted to the Graduate Program Advisor. The GPA will then submit the names of the student's committee members to the UW Graduate School. Any changes made after the initial nomination will require immediate notification to the GPA. The committee will continue to meet with the student as needed until completion of the thesis.

Thesis Presentation

Each student will present their thesis results to the SMEA community during the fall, winter, or spring quarter on pre-arranged presentation dates. The presentation dates will be determined at the beginning of the year and announced as early as possible so that every effort can be made by the student's thesis committee to attend the presentation. If physical attendance is not possible we strongly encourage attendance using a live stream or virtual meeting program. Summer presentations should be arranged in consultation with the thesis chair, thesis committee members, and the Graduate Program Advisor.

Thesis Submission

At the time of degree completion, the student *must be enrolled in a minimum of two credits* or make use of the registration waiver which grants the student an additional two weeks past the quarter end date to make final edits and submit the thesis. The UW Graduate School requires electronic submission of theses via the UW Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Administrator Site <https://www.etdadmin.com/washington>. The final approved thesis must be submitted no later than 11:59 pm PST on the last day of the quarter or on the 14th day following the end of the quarter with use of the registration waiver. Guidelines for writing and the submission of the thesis can be found at the following website <http://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/thesisdissertation/>. As a part of the thesis submission process, the signed Supervisory Committee Approval Form should be uploaded to the UW ETD Administrator site when submitting your thesis, and the Committee Signature Form and a copy of the thesis turned into the GPA.

F. Changing Tracks and Advisors

Changing Tracks

In the event a student needs to change the track/option subsequent to the **December 12** deadline, they can request a track/option change at least 3 quarters prior to graduation. For example, students wanting to graduate in spring quarter of their second year will need to submit a track/option change request to the SMEA Graduate Program Coordinator at the latest, by the end of week 1 of the autumn quarter in their second year (students planning a winter graduation must submit their petition by the end of week 1 of the summer term). The petition must first be approved by the advisor in the proposed new track. To submit a track/option change request, students submit the request and a justification signed by both the student and new track faculty advisor (with the advisor cc'ed) to the SMEA Graduate Program Coordinator and Graduate Program Advisor.

If a student has completed capstone or thesis credits in their previous track they **cannot be applied** to the new track as elective or core requirement credits and will be **forfeited** upon track change approval.

2025 MMA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

Continuing students, students on leave, or students who have withdrawn from the program are expected to return to the program in the same track from which they departed. That is, students in the thesis track return in the thesis track, and students in the professional track return in that track. A student in the thesis track **may not** use the professional track option to avoid completion of the thesis requirement.

Changing Advisors

Should a student need to switch to another advisor while changing tracks, or independent of a track change, after the December 12 deadline of year one, they should consult with other faculty members to inquire about a potential match in interest, necessary areas of expertise, and availability. To make a request to switch advisors, the original faculty advisor must be notified and the new faculty advisor must be cc'ed on an email request to the Graduate Program Coordinator and Graduate Program Advisor. The proposed faculty advisor should follow up with their approval to advise the student should the request be approved. This process can be congruent with, or separate from, a track change.

IV. Options

A. Certificate Programs & Concurrent Programs

Several graduate certificate programs and concurrent graduate degree programs are available to SMEA students. Graduate certificate programs generally require 15-22 credits. There are no restrictions on credit sharing between a graduate certificate and a graduate degree program. Students should review Graduate School's Policy 1.2 to ensure all requirements are met. Certificates that may be of interest to SMEA students include the following:

American Indian Studies

- Graduate Certificate in American Indian and Indigenous Studies

Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences

- Graduate Certificate in Climate Change and Health
- Graduate Certificate in One Health

Evans School of Public Policy and Governance:

- International Development Policy and Management Certificate
- Nonprofit Management Certificate

Program on Climate Change:

- Graduate Certificate in Climate Science

Department of Philosophy

- Graduate Certificate Program in Ethics

2025 MMA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

Center for Humanities:

- Certificate in Public Scholarship

Interdisciplinary Science, Technology and Society Studies:

- Certificate in Science, Technology and Society Studies

Students pursuing a concurrent graduate degree in another UW school or department must meet graduation requirements in BOTH schools as outlined in the UW Graduate School policy for Informal Concurrent Degree Programs: *“To earn two master’s degrees, a student must fulfill the existing degree requirements for EACH degree for a minimum of 72 credits. If one or both of the individual programs require more than the minimum of 36 credits, up to 12 of the credits beyond 36 may be ‘shared’ and applied to both sets of degree requirements. The total number of credits must be at least 72 and BOTH programs must approve the shared credits counting toward both degrees. Theses and thesis credits may not be shared.”* ([Graduate](#) School Policy 1.5.2.4: Concurrent Degree Programs)

Students must receive SMEA approval for the “shared credits”. To initiate approval of the “shared credits” in SMEA, students follow the procedure outlined in the Program of Studies for non-SMEA electives and/or for obtaining waiver of a course requirement in the “Core Areas of Knowledge and Skills”.

See the Graduate School’s Policy 1.5 online for all concurrent degree program requirements.

Past SMEA students have completed informal concurrent degrees of an M.M.A. and one of the following:

- Master of Mechanical Engineering
- Master of Public Administration
- Master of Urban Planning
- M.Sc. in School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences
- M.Sc. in Oceanography
- Juris Doctor of Law

SMEA’s only formal concurrent degree arrangement is with International Studies in the Jackson International School. For details and JSIS concurrent degree requirements please see the Graduate Program Advisor.

Graduating with a Certificate or Concurrent Degree

It is the responsibility of the student to submit a transcript highlighting which courses ~~a written list of courses that~~ apply toward each respective degree or certificate at the time they file an application for the master’s degree. This highlighted transcript, also referred to as a manual audit, must be approved by both programs and submitted to the Graduate School by the last day of the student’s final quarter.

There is more information on the graduate certificate programs and concurrent graduate degree programs on the SMEA website.

2025 MMA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

B. Foreign Languages

There is no foreign language requirement for the M.M.A. degree. In cases where the special interests of students concern specific areas of the world (e.g., the Far East, South America), competence in a foreign language may be essential. The need for a foreign language will be determined by the student's supervisory committee.

Competency in spoken and written English is essential to successful completion of the Program of Studies.

C. Internships

Practical experience can be advantageous to professional development. Ideally, internship opportunities will be associated with a small stipend, and students interested in internships are encouraged to seek paid internships.

For *unpaid* internships, and with permission, independent study credit hours may be earned during an internship assignment by arranging an SMEA 600 independent study project under the supervision of an appropriate faculty member and with written approval of the Graduate Program Coordinator. Additional work and deliverables beyond the internship itself are required to obtain course credit, and internships should be carefully selected to contribute to the student's research and professional career goals.

V. Summary of Critical Dates and Deadlines in the First Year

September 18 – Capstone projects announced at orientation

October 9 – Track selection overview session

October 16 – Capstone faculty & client capstone presentations for first year students

November 7 – Students Submit their First and Second Choices for Capstone Projects

November 21 – First year prospective capstone students receive notification of their capstone matches

December 12 – First year students submit one of the following: capstone selection, thesis rationale, courses-only rationale

April 10 – Deadline for first year students to submit one of the following: capstone management plan, thesis prospectus, courses-only course plan

June 12 – Deadline for first year students to submit thesis committee nomination forms