

Frequently Asked Questions for the Marine Science Minor

1. What's the difference between a minor in Marine Science and a concentration in Marine Biology?

The minor in Marine Science is a formal program of study through the University of South Alabama's Department of Marine Sciences; as such, the minor includes coursework relative to *all* aspects of marine science (physical oceanography, geological oceanography, chemical oceanography, biological oceanography), including Marine Biology. For example, in addition to the typical courses taken for a concentration in Marine Biology, students declaring a minor in Marine Science must take:

MAS 134 (w/lab): Ocean Science
MAS 331: Marine Science I
MAS 332: Marine Science II

2. What is the Dauphin Island Sea Lab? Is that part of USA?

The University of South Alabama is a member institution of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL). Founded in 1971 by the Alabama Legislature, DISL is the administrative home of the Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (MESC), a state-funded, not-for-profit entity of the Alabama System of Higher Education. Designed to avoid program duplication, the MESC includes 22 four-year colleges and universities from the state of Alabama. Neither the DISL nor the MESC can grant degrees; degrees are granted by the member institutions. DISL is well equipped, and maintains large vessels like the R/V *Alabama Discovery* and the R/V *E.O Wilson*. Other facilities at DISL include a large indoor wetlab, an expansive series of outdoor experimental mesocosms, and a fleet of vehicles and small vessels. Buildings on DISL campus include the Marine Science Hall (MSH), the Richard C. Shelby Center for Ecosystem Based Fishery Management, and a new state of the art Marine Mammal Research Center.

3. Why doesn't USA offer a Bachelors Degree in Marine Science?

The Department feels that a minor in Marine Sciences best prepares undergraduates for the job market following graduation. For example, a USA graduate with a degree in Biology and a minor in Marine Sciences is well suited to a range of jobs in the fields of Biology, Marine Science, Marine Biology and Fisheries. Using this same example (a BS in Biology, a minor in Marine Science), a student is well qualified to enter a Master's Degree program in Marine Sciences. Given an increasingly competitive job market, a USA graduate with a minor in Marine Sciences has access to job opportunities in that field, in addition to job opportunities through their major field of study.

4. What types of jobs can I expect with a minor in Marine Science?

Diverse career options exist for a USA graduate with a Marine Science minor. Graduates are qualified for jobs in the federal and state government, for example NOAA Fisheries, or the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division. In addition, jobs are available at non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Alabama Coastal Foundation (ACF). Finally, industry and consulting jobs; for example, Barry Vittor and Associates is a local environmental research and consulting firm that has employed previous USA graduates.

5. To fulfill the requirements for the Marine Sciences Minor, how much of my summer needs to be committed to coursework at DISL?

DISL in the summertime is a vibrant mixture of Marine Science students from across Alabama's 22 member institutions. To maximize the course opportunities available to summer students, DISL offers four summer sessions: Mayterm, Summer I and Summer II. When fulfilling the 2-3 elective course requirements for the Marine Science minor, USA students could take classes in one or all of the summer sessions; that way, elective requirements could be completed one at a time during multiple summers, or all at once during a single summer. Since USA is one of several DISL member institutions, students taking classes on DISL campus must register with *both* the Academic Coordinator for USA Marine Sciences (Jan Keyser, keyser@southalabama.edu), and the DISL College Programs Registrar, (Regina Kollegger, rkollegger@disl.org).