



**Franklin College of
Arts and Sciences**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

CURRICULUM REQUEST FORM

Please complete a separate request for each curriculum item being submitted. Each request should include either a WORD or PDF file of the curriculum item being reviewed. This form along with the file should be emailed to Kris Petti at pettik@uga.edu.

Date: October 13, 2026

Department/Institute/Program: Department of Marine Sciences

Contact Person: Daniela Di Iorio, Professor and Department Head

Email Address: daniela@uga.edu

Curriculum Item Request: Minor, Scientific Diving

Please provide a justification for this request: see attached proposal

As Department Head, you are affirming that the department procedures have been followed for approval with your unit.

PROPOSAL FOR MINOR PROGRAM OF STUDY

1. **School/College:** Franklin College of Arts and Sciences
2. **Department/Division:** Marine Sciences
3. **Minor Name:** Scientific Diving
4. **Proposed Effective Date:** Fall 2026
5. **Which campus(es) will offer this program?** Athens
6. **CIP:** _____
7. **Program Description:**

The proposed Minor in Scientific Diving aims to provide undergraduate students in a wide range of academic programs with the knowledge, skills, and credentials to engage safely and effectively in underwater exploration and research. This program is designed to enhance students' understanding of the marine environment and its conservation, allowing them to directly observe and collect data on marine habitats and biota, survey archaeological and cultural resources, and support underwater infrastructure. A Scientific Diving minor will also enhance students' employability in marine policy and resource management, coastal engineering and technology, education, tourism and animal care. This hands-on experiential program fosters a deeper understanding of and appreciation for marine ecosystems, ocean processes, and underwater sampling and surveying techniques. Additionally, a minor in Scientific Diving encourages safety and technical proficiency and develops team building and problem-solving skills in challenging underwater conditions. This minor will prepare students with specialized diving certifications and safety training, making them more competitive for advanced research opportunities and professional careers in the marine sciences.

The minor in Scientific Diving will equip students with practical skills that will broaden their academic training. Scientific diving is a critical tool for conducting underwater research in marine biology, marine fisheries, marine ecology, marine paleontology, and ocean engineering and students from Warnell, Odum, Engineering and Franklin have shown interest in this program. The minor will also be of interest to Ocean Science (B.S.) majors because it builds on existing field-based experiences by providing advanced training in underwater research techniques. Finally, the proposed minor will appeal to non-science majors across campus who have an interest in recreational diving, marine tourism, and environmental protection.

The minor in Scientific Diving is consistent with UGA's commitment to experiential learning and interdisciplinary training, offering students a unique opportunity to integrate classroom knowledge with hands-on field experience. The program aligns with nationally recognized SCUBA Schools International (SSI) standards, ensuring that graduates hold widely respected diving credentials. In addition to core diving proficiency, students will gain transferable skills that are highly valued by employers, enhancing student access to internships, research experiences, and professional networks. For example: agencies such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, state Departments of Natural Resources, and environmental consulting firms seek personnel trained in underwater habitat assessment, coral and seagrass monitoring, aquaculture, and fisheries surveys; employers in offshore exploration, coastal engineering, marine technology and renewable energy value employees who can support the installation and monitoring of subsea infrastructure and sensor testing and maintenance; industries such as eco-tourism and aquarium operations (e.g. the GA

Aquarium) view diving proficiency and environmental knowledge as assets for educational outreach, visitor engagement, and animal care.

Student Interest and Demand

The Department of Marine Sciences has offered MARS4740L/6740L Scientific Diving I and MARS4750/6750 Scientific Diving II for several years now, and these courses have enrolled students from across all disciplines at UGA. In the past three calendar years (2022-2024), 231 students have enrolled in MARS 4740L alone from 12 different colleges and schools (see Table 1), with the highest enrollment from Franklin, Terry, Engineering and Ecology. During this same time 26 students have enrolled in MARS 4750 from 8 different colleges and schools, primarily from Franklin, Ecology and Terry. This lower enrollment may be because students are less likely to continue in scientific diving if the course is an isolated elective for their major and does not lead to a formal credential. MARS 4750/6750 is currently only offered in the Fall semester because weather conditions in spring semester are not conducive to diving in natural waters, as students are required to participate in off campus diving trips to complete designated advanced dives and perform tasks related to course topics. With this proposal for a minor, the department plans to also offer this course as a summer Maymester course, assuming there is student demand and funding from the college. Both Scientific Diving I and II have always accommodated all interested students, and we are able to take more students in both courses.

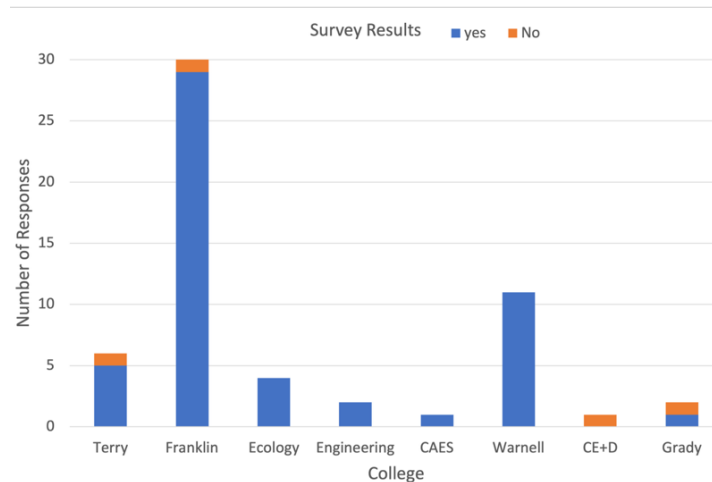
Table 1. Student enrollment in MARS4740L Scientific Diving I for calendar years 2022-2024.

Franklin	85		FaCS	5
Terry	68		VetMed	4
Engineering	24		SPIA	4
Ecology	14		CoEd	2
CAES	9		CE+D	1
Warnell	7			
Grady	5		No College Designation	3

Table 2. Student enrollment in MARS4750 Scientific Diving II for calendar years 2022-2024.

Franklin	10		Engineering	1
Ecology	5		CAES	1
Terry	4		Vet Med	1
Warnell	3		FaCS	1

To gauge student interest in a potential minor in Scientific Diving, the Department of Marine Sciences carried out a Qualtrics survey in spring 2025 that was administered to all past students enrolled in MARS4740L and 4750, to students enrolled in the Ocean Science major, and to students enrolled in the Biology major with an Area of Emphasis in Marine Biology. We received 57 total responses from students in various colleges and schools with 53 of 57 indicating that they would be interested in the minor (see figure below). What is most compelling is that 24 of the 53 students were outside of Franklin College and indicated that they would be interested in the minor. These data show that the Scientific Diving minor would appeal to students across UGA.



8. Program of Study/Requirements:

Students are encouraged to take the following courses, with at least one lab, to prepare for upper-level MARS courses:

MARS 1010, The Marine Environment (3 hours)

AND MARS 1010L, Introduction to Marine Science Lab (1 hour)

MARS 1020, Biology of the Marine Environment (3 hours)

AND MARS 1020L, Introduction to Marine Biology Lab (1 hour)

Completion of the Minor in Scientific Diving involves eight (8) hours of required coursework and seven (7) hours of electives for a minimum of 15 credit hours. All chosen courses used to satisfy the Minor requirement must be completed with a grade of “C” (2.0) or higher.

Required Courses (8 hours)

MARS 4400/6400, Introduction to Marine Policy (3 hours)

MARS 4740L/6740L, Scientific Diving I (2 hours)

MARS 4750/6750, Scientific Diving II (3 hours)

Elective Courses (7 hours)

A minimum of 7 hours must be upper-division (3000-level or above).

Students can take all 7 credit hours of electives with MARS if they choose, or they can take 4 from MARS and 3 from other departments.

Recommended Electives offered by the Department of Marine Sciences

Any upper-division MARS courses*

*Note that no more than 3 credit hours may be taken from the following list of MARS courses:

MARS 3900, Introduction to Experimental Marine Sciences (1-3 hours)

MARS 4600, Field Experiences in Coastal Georgia (1 hour)

MARS 4850, Advanced Topics in Ocean Science (1-3 hours)

MARS 4960R, Faculty-Mentored Undergraduate Research I (1-3 hours)

MARS 4970R, Faculty-Mentored Undergraduate Research II (1-3 hours)

MARS 4980R Faculty-Mentored Undergraduate Research III (1-3 hours)

MARS 4990R, Undergraduate Research Thesis (or Final Project) (1-3 hours)

Recommended Electives offered by other Departments

A maximum of 3 credit hours may be taken from the following courses:

ANTH 3150, Water Worlds (3 hours)

ANTH 4005/6005, Ancient Ships and Seafaring (3 hours)

ANTH 4095/6095, Underwater Archaeology (3 hours)

ECOL 3220, Biology and Conservation of Marine Mammals (3 hours)

ECOL 4280/6280, Coral Reef Ecology (3 hours)

GEOG 4350/6350-4350L/6350L, Remote Sensing of Environment (3 hours)

GEOG 4370E/6370E, Introduction to Geographic Information Science (3 hours)

GEOG 4370/6370-4370L/6370L, Geographic Information Science (3 hours)

GEOG 4090/6090, Marine Geology (3 hours)

GEOG 4510/6510, Marine Micropaleontology (3 hours)

GEOG 4530/6530-4530L/6530L, Principles and Environmental Applications of GIS (3 hours)

Other courses chosen in consultation with advisor

Total = 15 hours