# Atlantic Coastal Experience (ACE)

# MSMU Student Handbook

**Mount St. Mary's University Collaboration with Hood College**

**v. 2024**

# ATLANTIC COASTAL EXPERIENCE (ACE)
# STUDENT HANDBOOK

Dear Mount Students,

Welcome to the Mount St. Mary's University Student Guide for the Hood College Atlantic Coastal Experience (ACE) program, also known as the Coastal Semester! We are excited to partner with Hood College to provide this unique study away opportunity focused on environmental science and coastal studies.

Participating in the Coastal Semester will allow you to gain invaluable academic and experiential learning while being immersed in the natural beauty of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This interdisciplinary program combines classroom instruction with hands-on field trips, providing a well-rounded educational experience.

As a Mount student, you'll have the chance to take a set of five courses at Hood College, completing most requirements for the Environmental Studies minor and a significant portion of the Environmental Science major. The program's cohort format and small class sizes will foster a close-knit learning community among participants.

While based at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, you'll have the option to continue living on the Mount's campus and commute daily. This flexibility allows you to maintain your connection to the Mount community while exploring a new academic environment.

Studying away is a transformative experience that broadens perspectives, fosters personal growth, and creates lasting memories. The Office of International Programs is here to support you throughout the application process and ensure a smooth transition to the Coastal Semester program.

We encourage you to review this student guide carefully, as it outlines the application process, course information, financial considerations, and other essential details. Don't hesitate to reach out to the program director for the MSMU Environmental Studies program or the Office of International Programs with any questions or concerns you may have.

Wishing you all the best in your academic endeavors and an enriching study away experience!

Sincerely,

The Office of International Programs
Mount St. Mary's University
goabroad@msmary.edu

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***Overview:***

The Atlantic Coastal Experience program, also known as the Coastal Semester, is a unique study away opportunity offered by Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. Mount St. Mary's University partners with Hood College to allow MSMU students to participate in this program during the fall semester of odd years (2025, 2027, 2029, etc.). The program focuses on environmental science and coastal studies, with an interdisciplinary approach that is open to all majors.

***Program Structure:***

- Participants take a set of five courses at Hood College as part of a cohort, totaling 16 credits.
- The program includes three one-week field trips throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- MSMU students have the option to continue living on the MSMU campus and commute to Frederick daily.

***Courses and Credits:***

Upon successful completion of the Coastal Semester, MSMU students will have fulfilled most requirements for the Environmental Studies minor and a significant portion of the Environmental Science major. The courses typically include:

1. Biology of Marine Organisms (4 credits) - Environmental Science elective
2. Coastal Community Ecology (4 credits) - Fulfills BIOL 325 Ecology requirement
3. Coastal Studies Practicum (2 credits) - Fulfills BIOL 398 Independent Study
4. The Chesapeake Bay (3 credits) - Interdisciplinary course
5. Human Impacts on Coastlines/Watersheds (3 credits) - Interdisciplinary course

*Note:* Course offerings may vary slightly each year, and substitutions may be possible with approval from the MSMU Environmental Science program coordinator and department chair.

***Application Process:***

1. Complete the Coastal Semester application process as communicated by the Hood College Coastal Semester staff.
2. Fill out the MSMU liability form on MyMount (J1) and the MSMU Consortium Agreement form.
3. Pay the program fee directly to Hood College (typically around $1,400, non-refundable after acceptance).
4. Register for a regular MSMU fall semester schedule during advising, in case of program cancellation or changes. You will withdraw from these if the program runs as planned.
5. Complete additional forms and waivers as required by Hood College and MSMU.

***Financial Information:***

- MSMU tuition costs, after scholarships and financial aid, will be paid to Hood College by MSMU. Hood College accepts this tuition as full tuition for Hood College that semester.
- Students are responsible for paying the program fee directly to Hood College.
- If living on campus, students will pay MSMU room and board fees as usual.

***Timeline:***

- January (odd years): Information sessions and program details announced.

- February-March: Application period.
- April: Applications accepted, program fee due.
- May: Placeholder courses registered, course equivalencies finalized.
- July: Virtual preparation meeting with Hood College.
- Fall Semester: Program in session, following Hood College's schedule.

For more detailed information and updates, please contact the MSMU Environmental Science program coordinator or visit the Coastal Semester website at Hood College.