

## **Combined Degree Program BS Degree in Geology and MS Degree in Hydrogeology**

Geology undergraduates at Clemson University may begin a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Hydrogeology while completing their Bachelor of Science (BS) degree and use up to 12 credits to satisfy the requirements of both their undergraduate and graduate degrees. Because admission to the MS program is automatic, students in the combined BS/MS program are not required to pay the graduate application fee or take the GRE. The following specific requirements apply:

### **A. Undergraduate/graduate transition**

1. Undergraduate students must have completed the BS curriculum through the junior year (minimum 90 credits), must have an overall GPR of 3.4 or higher to be admitted to the program, and are expected to maintain this GPR to continue enrollment in the combined program.

2. Up to 12 semester hours of 6000- or 8000-level GEOL courses may be used to satisfy the requirements of the BS degree. The hours taken at the undergraduate level towards the MS degree will replace an equivalent number of hours of courses needed for the technical elective category for the BS degree. These courses are listed as "Hydrogeology Requirement" for the hydrogeology concentration and as "Environmental Science Requirement" for the environmental science concentration. For the non-concentration track in the BS degree program, the technical elective category is listed as "STEM Requirement."

Alternatively, 6 of the 12 maximum credit hours used for the combined BS/MS program may be taken as a 6 credit hour graduate-level summer field course which will replace the 6 credit undergraduate field course requirement for BS students. With this option, students are highly encouraged to take the Clemson University field course GEOL 8750. The remaining 6 semester hours would then be used toward the technical elective category for the BS degree as described above.

3. Under no circumstances can 6000-level counterparts of 4000-level courses required for the bachelor's degree be counted toward master's requirements.

4. Graduate assistantships or fellowships cannot be accepted until full graduate student status is attained. Assistantships are contingent on availability of funds in alignment with departmental policy. Non-thesis students are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

### **B. Graduate program**

1. Students may be accepted into either the thesis or the non-thesis program. Most students will be non-thesis. One or more additional semesters will likely be needed to complete a thesis.

2. The graduate-level credit hours earned by an undergraduate student and approved for use in the combined program will count toward the credit hours required for the MS degree. This reduces the number of credit hours that must be taken as a MS graduate student from 30 to as few as 18 credit hours. Course requirements for the MS degree apply to students in the combined degree program.

3. The total credit hours taken for the two degrees (BS plus MS) must be at least 150 unique credit hours. That is, the credit hours counted towards the BS degree plus the credit hours taken after the BS is awarded must total at least 150. In addition, a maximum of 6 credit hours of thesis research may be counted toward the 150 total unique credit hours.

All credit hours to be included in the 150 total that are completed after receiving the BS degree must be in 6000-level or higher courses.

4. Students in a combined degree program are conditionally accepted to the graduate program until completion of the BS degree requirements.

5. Hydrogeology MS students at Clemson University are required to take a modeling course and a six-credit hour summer field course. GEOL 8080 and GEOL 8750 are typically used to satisfy these requirements. One or both of these courses may be taken while the student is an undergraduate. For this option, GEOL 8080 would satisfy 3 credit hours of the BS technical elective requirement and GEOL 8750 would satisfy the 6 credit hour BS field course requirement.

### **Path Forward**

Students interested in this combined degree program should first consult with their advisor. The Graduate Program Coordinator for the Hydrogeology degree and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator for the Geology degree should also be consulted. Application for this program should be made by the end of the junior year (minimum 90 credits), but no later than one semester prior to the expected BS graduation. Application details are specified in the Clemson University Graduate School Policies and Procedures handbook available at the Graduate School website ([www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/policies-procedures/index.html](http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/policies-procedures/index.html)).