PROJECT PROPOSAL FORM

Making the Most of Masters aims to improve collaboration between employers and universities by providing opportunities for postgraduate students to undertake work based projects as an alternative to a traditional university dissertation. Projects should address a real need within the host organisation and be beneficial to both host and student.

The Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS), pools the majority of Scotland's marine research capacity. MASTS members provide Masters courses in a range of marine related disciplines and many of their students are keen to undertake applied projects outside of academia.

Notes on Topic Selection

A relevant academic will work with your organisation to refine your proposed topic and ensure it meets both your needs and the academic requirements of the student. Projects should typically be achievable within a 12–16 week timeframe (including writing the final report).

Your proposed project could be:

- A specific project title or topic for the student to deliver;
- A general idea of a business need which requires further development;
- A core research theme to be developed by the student into a bespoke project;
- An intended outcome for the organisation.

The level of detail you provide will determine the extent to which further discussion may be required with the relevant programme director to ensure suitability.

desk-based/data studies that will easily facilitate remote working and remote supervision are welcome, as well as in person and/or experimental based projects where appropriate.

What's Next?

Please send your completed form to the MASTS Programme Coordinator & Deputy Dean of Grad School, Dr Emma Defew (masts@st-andrews.ac.uk) before the deadline.

Following submission of the form, it will be channeled to the leaders of the various Masters programmes that operate within the MASTS community and a representative from the most relevant programme or department will get in touch to discuss the project scope, delivery and the selection of an appropriate student. If more than one student expresses an interest in your project, you will need to ensure discussions take place to enable the most suitable student to be matched with your project. The projects themselves usually won't start until May or June.

MASTS - Making the Most of Masters – Project Proposal Form

Name and address of Organisation:
NatureScot
Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW.

Name of the key contact in Organisation:
Chris Leakey

Contact e-mail and phone number:
chris.leakey@nature.scot

Title of proposed project:
Marine licensing in the Clyde – trends and policy drivers

Project outline and intended outcomes:

Marine plans and their policies provide a strategic framework that guides decision-makers, particularly for the licensing of marine developments. However, Scotland's marine planning and licensing processes are relatively young, with scope for review and refinement. We have a two-tier marine planning system (national and regional); the national plan is undergoing revision, and the first of the regional plans being prepared (including for the Clyde marine region), so the opportunity to take stock is timely.

Research Proposal: Trends in marine licence applications and decisions (including licence conditions for environmental mitigation) for the Clyde region, the coherence of decisions with adopted marine plan policy (National Marine Plan), and the potential for emergent regional policy (draft-Clyde Marine Plan) to enable clearer plan-led decision-making.

This MSc research project opportunity would make use of a list of licence applications compiled by the Clyde Marine Planning Partnership (hosted by NatureScot), combined with publicly accessible information on marine licenses that are granted at https://marine.gov.scot/marine-licence-applications . It would involve sifting the materials to compile key information into a database, structured in a way suitable for tackling the chosen research questions. The analysis could then trigger appraisal and discussion of how to improve licensing processes and their relationship with marine plans as decision-making frameworks.

Research question may include (to be tailored and adapted by a student and supervisory team)

- Has the type and mix of marine development applications changed? Is there a spatial pattern to this within the Clyde marine region?
- Are there patterns/trends (spatially and temporally) to which type(s) of development application are licensed?
- Has/How has the use of license conditions for environmental mitigation changed over

time? Are any of these changes particular to certain development types?
- Is the issuing of licences and license conditions consistent with (or contrary to) existing marine plan policy (NMP1), or is this hard to determine from the specificity of either policies or conditions? Would the draft policies for the Clyde Marine Plan help to plug any identifiable deficiencies in the marine licensing decisions and conditions?
- Is there consistent reference to policies within plans across applications for the same types of developments?) i.e. are applicants demonstrating awareness of policies that they should aim to be compliant with?

If access to other documentation is possible (e.g. from Marine Directorate Licensing and Operations Team) then it may be possible to explore further questions, such as:

- Do there appear to be re-occurring reasons for license rejections?
- Is there any evidence of enforcement or monitoring to determine if conditions have been applied and successful in mitigating environmental impacts?

Any additional comments e.g. details of specific disciplines required, methods to be used, travel involved, where the work would take place (i.e. at the host site or at the University), whether you foresee any Intellectual Property or confidentiality issues (and if so, what form might these take?):

This project would be suited to a student with an interest in the policy and regulatory aspects of marine management. It could be largely done remotely/online but we would be able to work from or visit our offices as appropriate.

NatureScot hosts the staff of the Clyde Marine Planning Partnership, which is partly what helps us enable this project.

It should be possible to compile and analyse a database for analysis without confidentiality or IP risks. It would be beneficial if the database was subsequently available for use by the Clyde marine planners and other project partners, so this should be considered when seeking any research ethics approval.

We invite the student to visit a NatureScot office to meet with relevant colleagues as well as other MSc students carrying out projects within NatureScot. Travel and subsistence may be covered for this journey.