or many people, a marine career conjures up images of scientists working on ships far out at sea, marine mammalogists studying whales and dolphins, and scuba divers exploring the depths of the ocean. But the marine field actually offers a much wider variety of interesting and challenging work. Marine careers can be found in state and federal agencies, colleges and universities, and various industries, such as oil, gas, and seafood.

Deciding on a career within marine studies involves defining interests and aptitudes. Marine work is often conducted outside, in or on the water. Furthermore, it frequently requires working under adverse weather conditions. It is often necessary to work after hours and perform repetitive tasks. Spending long hours on a computer is usually a given.

**Training for a Marine Career**

It takes commitment and preparation to enter any field of science, including marine science. A large number of marine careers will require college preparation. If academic marine careers are planned, preparation at the high school level is very important. It is not uncommon for first-year college students to discover that they are ill prepared for college coursework and must take remedial courses. The best approach is to take college preparation courses in high school and be sure to include chemistry, math, and physics. This will ensure a solid science background in the faster-paced college courses that are difficult to master. Good writing and English skills are needed in most careers, including marine science.

**Marine Areas of Interest**

Marine science encompasses many fields.

**Marine biology.** The study of the behavior and ecology of organisms that live in the marine environment is the focus of marine biology.

**Oceanography.** Oceanography embraces many scientific fields: biology, chemistry, geology, and physics are applied to the study of the oceans.

**Ocean engineering.** Engineers design and build instruments, equipment, vehicles, and structures used in the marine environment.

**Related fields.** Fisheries, fisheries management, tourism, and education are just some of the areas that offer marine careers.

**Selecting a College or University**

As we have seen, marine careers can be found in many disciplines, including physics, chemistry, fisheries, zoology, and biology. An undergraduate degree in one of these disciplines builds a strong foundation for entering the marine field. A few colleges and universities offer training at the undergraduate level in marine science, oceanography, or marine biology. However, a major in one of the basic scientific disciplines can also lead to a career in marine science, and most local colleges and universities offer these degrees. Check with their admissions office for information.
A publication titled *University Curricula in the Marine Sciences and Related Fields*, published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA Office of Sea Grant, Rockville, Maryland, lists all colleges with programs in marine topics. Your local librarian may be able to obtain a copy on interlibrary loan. (It is too large a publication to photocopy.)

Marine Career Web Sites

Marine Careers.Net
(Sea Grant, Woods Hole, Massachusetts):
http://www.marinecareers.net

Careers in Oceanography, Marine Science and Marine Biology
(University of California at San Diego Science Library):
http://scilib.ucsd.edu/sio/guide/career.html

General Information about Marine Careers
(Virginia Institute of Marine Science):
http://www.vims.edu/adv/ed/careers/

Careers in Marine Science
(University of Delaware Sea Grant College Program):
http://www.magazine.noaa.gov/stories/mag179.htm

Internships and Work Experiences

College students often have an opportunity to acquire seasonal experience in a marine discipline. Any active participation provides students with a good opportunity to explore a career. Those with such experience find it a plus when seeking employment.

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