

Department of Biology
School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering
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Program Description

The Department of Biology offers a graduate program leading to a Master of Science in Biology degree. The Master of Science with a thesis option is intended to prepare students for professional positions in state and federal agencies, the environmental consulting industry, and for further graduate studies. The Master of Science with a non-thesis option is intended for working professionals, especially public school teachers, and emphasizes course work. A broad range of faculty research interests, easy access to diverse biological environments, and a range of modern research facilities permit the student to select from a broad spectrum of research topics.

Faculty interests include field biology, conservation biology, physiology, comparative morphology, plant ecophysiology, plant anatomy, plant pathology, micro- and molecular biology, molecular evolution, ecology, systematics, and behavior.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Application for the Master of Science in Biology

Persons seeking an MS in Biology must apply to both the Office of Admissions and Records for admission to the university and to the MS Biology graduate program for admission to this specific graduate program. Students may be admitted to the University in the unclassified category, such students are eligible to take some graduate courses in Biology, but without the assurance that their course work will count as credit towards the MS degree at CSUB. Students who are admitted to the university and who are also admitted into the MS in Biology program will be admitted with either conditionally classified or classified status.

Admissions requirements for the Master of Science in Biology

1. An earned bachelor's degree in the biological sciences or a bachelor's degree in a related science with minimum course work equivalent to BIOL 3010 (Genetics), 3020 (General Physiology), 3110 (General Ecology), and 3120 (Research Design and Analysis).

2. An undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 in the last 90 quarter or 60 semester units of course work, and Graduate Records Examination scores of greater than the 50th percentile in both the verbal and quantitative sections of the exam.
3. Formal decision by the Departmental Graduate Committee to accept the student into the graduate program. The decision will be based on a formal application procedure, which includes evaluation of GPA, GRE scores, letters of recommendation, and other materials that may be required by the Committee and/or offered by the student.

Graduate Student Classifications

Unclassified Post Baccalaureate Status

The Unclassified Post Baccalaureate status allows students to take graduate level courses on a course-by-course basis without being formally accepted into the MS program. Requirements for Post Baccalaureate status are listed below.

1. An acceptable baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.
2. An undergraduate GPA of at least 2.5 in the last 90 quarter or 60 semester units of course work or an approved petition to the Graduate Committee of the Department waiving this requirement by proposing other evidence of adequate prior academic preparation.

Classified Graduate Student

Acceptance as a Classified Graduate Student indicates that space has been made available for the student within the program and that the student has met the minimum preparation requirements to commence the program as listed below.

1. An acceptable baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and course work equivalent to BIOL 3010 (Genetics), 3020 (General Physiology), 3110 (General Ecology), and 3120 (Research Design and Analysis).
2. An undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 in the last 90 quarter or 60 semester units of course work, and Graduate Records Examination scores of greater than the 50th percentile in both the verbal and quantitative sections of the exam.
3. Acceptance into an academic advising relationship with a departmental faculty member (thesis-option).
4. Acceptance will only be granted if space is available for the student in the program.

Conditionally Classified Graduate Student

Students who fail to meet entirely one or more of the criteria for admission as a Classified Graduate Student may, at the discretion of the Biology Graduate Admissions Committee, be admitted as a Conditionally Classified Graduate Student. These conditions may include, but are not limited to, specific prerequisite courses, GPA, GRE scores, etc. Once the student has "remedied" all conditions specified by the Biology Graduate Admissions Committee, the student can apply to the Graduate Committee to have their classification changed to

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Classified Graduate Student. Students must meet all requirements, apply for Classified status, and be fully admitted to the program following completion of 10 semester units of coursework and before taking any additional coursework. Students that do not meet this requirement will not be permitted to remain enrolled in the program.

Students admitted as a Conditionally Classified Graduate Student are not allowed to enroll in any 6000-level courses. They are restricted to 5000- and 4000-level courses for which they have met prerequisites.

Advancement to Candidate Status

Acceptance as a candidate indicates that the student has completed at least 30 quarter or 20 semester units within the approved Plan of Study and that there is a reasonable expectation that the student will complete all remaining requirements within one year. Classified Graduate Students will be advanced to Candidate Status when they have met the following criteria:

1. Completion of all requirements for Classified Status.
2. Completion of at least 30 quarter units or 20 semester units of courses applicable to the Master of Science Degree in Biology with a grade of "B-" or better in all required courses and graduate GPA of at least 3.0.

Students in the thesis track must also:

3. Obtain approval of the student's Master's thesis research topic by the Departmental Graduate Program Coordinator and the Thesis Committee.
4. Obtain certification by the student's thesis advisor that there is a reasonable expectation that the student will satisfactorily complete the Master's thesis within one year.

Time limits have been set for completion of requirements at each level of status. Admission to Classified Status must be accomplished within two calendar years after acceptance as a Conditionally Classified Graduate Student. No more than 10 semester units may be taken for graduate credit until all requirements for Conditionally Classified students have been satisfied. Admission to Candidate Status must be attained within two calendar years after acceptance as a Classified Graduate Student. All requirements and graduation are to be completed within five calendar years after acceptance as a Conditionally Classified Graduate Student. The five-year time limit can be extended by petition to and approval from the Departmental Graduate Committee.

Completion of all requirements for the Master of Science in Biology require satisfactory completion of all courses in an approved Plan of Study and satisfactory completion of an exit examination or thesis, including oral examination and any revisions required by the Thesis Committee or Departmental Graduate Committee, and maintaining a 3.0 GPA.

Requirements for the Master of Science in Biology

1. **Thesis-Option** (30 units)
BIOL 5100 (4), 5010 (6), 6010 (2), 6911 (5), 6921 (1)
*Electives (4000-, 5000-, or 6000-level courses) (12 units)
2. **Non-Thesis-Option** (33 units)
BIOL 5100 (4), 5010 (6), 5710 (4), 6010 (2), 6901 (1)
*Electives (4000-, 5000-, or 6000-level courses) (16 units, with 12 of these units at the 5000- or 6000-level)
3. ***Elective Courses**
BIOL 4100, 4310, 4320, 4330, 4340, 4350, 4410, 4420, 4420, 4440, 4450, 4460, 4510, 4520, 4530, 4540, 4550, 4700, 5010, 5710, 5901

*Selection of elective courses must be approved by Graduate Director (non-thesis option) or Thesis Committee (thesis option).