

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, M.A.

Program Description

The Department of Biological Sciences offers Master of Science (M.S.) and Master of Arts (M.A.) degrees with a major in Biological Sciences. Students in these programs may work under a faculty mentor in a range of areas such as aquatic biology, aquatic toxicology, biological anthropology, cellular and molecular biology, ecology, environmental sciences, evolution, genetics, microbiology, plant biology, neurobiology, and wildlife biology.

The Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Biological Sciences trains and prepares students for a range of employment opportunities, as well as additional study at the graduate level. Students must write and defend a thesis for the M.S. degree. An M.S. student must be mentored by a faculty member, so applicants are encouraged to contact potential faculty advisors about research projects and graduate assistantships prior to application for admission. Information about faculty may be accessed at the Biological Sciences website (www.marshall.edu/biology) (<http://www.marshall.edu/biology/>).

The Master of Arts (M.A.) degree does not require a thesis and allows students to strengthen their education in Biological Sciences through the completion of advanced coursework.

Graduate Assistantships

Once an application has been made to Graduate Admissions for admission to the Biological Sciences graduate program, students who are interested may also apply to become a teaching or research assistant. To do so, visit the Human Resources website's Employment section, select "Graduate Assistant Employment," and search for listings under Biological Sciences. Open positions are generally posted in late spring and late fall; offers are made on a rolling basis.

Admission Requirements

Applicants should follow the admissions process described in this catalog or at the Graduate Admissions website at www.marshall.edu/graduate/admissions/how-to-apply-for-admission (<http://www.marshall.edu/graduate/admissions/how-to-apply-for-admission/>).

Applications for admission to the program are accepted throughout the year. However, graduate teaching assistantship (GTA) positions are open until filled beginning April 1 for GTA positions for the fall semester and October 15 for GTA positions for the spring semester. Later applicants may not be awarded a GTA if all the positions for the upcoming semester are filled.

In addition, applicants should send the following materials directly to the Graduate Admissions office:

- three letters of recommendation from academic or professional references;
- a written statement of educational and professional goals that identifies a member of the graduate faculty from either the Department of Biological Sciences willing to serve as the student's advisor (250-500 words).

Applicant must also have:

- An overall undergraduate GPA and a GPA in biology courses of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

Program Requirements

Requirement for All Degrees

A Plan of Study approved by the student's advisor must be submitted for approval to the dean before the student registers for his or her 12th semester hour. The Plan of Study is a student's "blueprint" for completing graduation requirements. Students must also assemble a thesis committee (M.S.) or advising committee (M.A.) consisting of no fewer than three faculty (including the student's advisor) by the end of their first year. Students must meet with their committees at least once within their first year and at least once per semester (excluding the defense) in subsequent years.

M.A. Degree Requirements

Students who select the M.A. option must complete a minimum of 36 hours of graduate coursework. At least 18 credits must be at the 600 level.

M.A. candidates do not conduct thesis research. The graduate seminars, BSC electives, Independent Study/Special Problems, GPA, "C" grades, and comprehensive oral exam requirements are as stated for the M.S. degree.