

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, M.S.

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 Biological Sciences website (www.marshall.edu/biology (<http://www.marshall.edu/biology/>)).

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Graduate Assistantships 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 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.S. Degree Requirements

- Students must complete at least 32 hours of graduate coursework, including the thesis. At least 16 hours must be taken at the 600 level. The maximum amount of credit that may be earned for the thesis (BSC 681 Thesis) is 12 hours.
- Candidates for the master's degree must register for and participate in three hours of graduate seminars; BSC 660 Seminar I should be taken in the first semester, and BSC 662 Seminar II should be taken in what is expected to be the final semester.
- Not more than 4 hours of seminar (BSC 660 Seminar I, maximum 2 credits; BSC 662 Seminar II, maximum 2 credits) may be used to complete the minimum hour degree requirement.
- Not more than 4 semester hours credit in Independent Study (BSC 585 Independent Study, BSC 588 Independent Study) or Special Problems (BSC 650 Special Problems, BSC 652 Special Problems) may be used to complete the minimum hours degree 32-hour requirement, and these may only be applied beyond the minimum 18 hours in BSC graduate credits.
- Not more than 4 semester hours credit in Seminar may be used to complete the 32 hour requirement, and these may only be applied beyond the 18 hours in BSC graduate credits.
- Students may elect to take 6 hours of graduate work in a minor field.
- Successful completion of the program in Biological Sciences requires a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and no more than 6 credit hours of "C" grades may be applied to the total hours for graduation. Upon completion of course requirements and the thesis, M.S. candidates must pass a comprehensive oral examination.