

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 cellular and molecular biology, ecology, environmental sciences, evolution, genetics, microbiology, plant biology, neurobiology, and wildlife biology.

The M.S. degree in Biological Sciences prepares students for a range of employment opportunities, as well as additional study at the graduate level. Students must conduct research, and write and defend a thesis for the M.S. degree. Most M.S. students conduct lab- or field-based research on some biological question, but opportunities exist in other relevant areas such as educational methods in biology. 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/>)).

Graduate Assistantships

Once an application for the Biological Sciences graduate program has been made to Graduate Admissions, students who are interested may also apply to become a Graduate Teaching Assistant or Graduate Research Assistant. To do so, visit the Human Resources website's Employment section, select "Graduate Assistant Employment," and search for listings under Biological Sciences. GA positions come with a tuition benefit and stipend. 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. 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 that meets all program and university requirements must be submitted 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 members (including the student's advisor) by the end of their first year. At least two committee members must be faculty in the Department of Biological Sciences. Students must meet with their committees at least once within their first year and at least once per semester in subsequent years.

- Only grades of C or better may be used to fulfill degree requirements and no more than six hours of C may be applied toward fulfilling the degree.
- Students must complete a minimum of 18 hours in Biological Sciences coursework.
- A Marshall University course taken at the 400 level cannot be retaken at the 500 level; it will not be applicable to the graduate degree.
- At least one-half of the minimum required hours for the student's master's degree must be earned in classes numbered 600 or greater.
- See the catalog section on Academic Requirements and Regulations for additional information.

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.
- Students must earn between a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 12 hours of Thesis credit BSC 681 Thesis
- 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. BSC 662 can be taken up to 2 times.
- Not more than 4 times 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, and these may only be applied beyond the minimum 18 hours in BSC graduate credits.
- Not more than 4 semester hours credit in Independent Study (BSC 585 Independent Study to BSC 588 Independent Study), or Special Problems (BSC 650 Special Problems to BSC 652 Special Problems) may be used to complete the 36-hour requirement, and these may only be applied beyond the minimum 18 hours in BSC graduate credits.
- Students may elect to take 6 hours of graduate work in a minor field.
- M.S. students must complete an original research-based thesis, and defend their thesis to their committee.
- The final thesis must be approved for publication by the university before graduation.