

Genetics, Development and Cell Biology

The Department of Genetics, Development and Cell Biology (GDCB) is dedicated to biological discovery and excellence in undergraduate and graduate education. The research and teaching mission of the department is to achieve a greater understanding of fundamental principles of life by focusing on basic cellular and subcellular processes, including genome dynamics, cell structure and function, cellular response to environmental and developmental signals, and molecular mechanisms of development. Recognizing that student education is of paramount importance, GDCB strives for excellence in teaching and research. GDCB plays a leading role in undergraduate and graduate training through a variety of activities including traditional courses, undergraduate internships in research laboratories, and advanced graduate seminar and literature-based courses. Innovative approaches to learning are emphasized throughout the curriculum.

Undergraduate Study

The GDCB Department offers undergraduate majors in conjunction with other departments. Students interested in the areas of genetics, development and cell biology should major in Biology, Genetics or Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (BCBio). The Biology Major is administered and offered jointly by the GDCB and EEOB departments. The GDCB faculty, together with those in EEOB and BBMB, administer and offer the Genetics Major. Each of these majors is available through the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or through the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. BCBio is administered by GDCB and the Departments of Computer Science and Mathematics, and is available through the college of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The Biology Major and the Genetics Major prepare students for a wide range of careers in biological sciences. Training in Biology or Genetics may lead to employment in teaching, research, or any of a variety of health-related professions. Some of these careers include biotechnology, human and veterinary medicine, agricultural sciences and life science education. BCBio majors are prepared for careers at the interfaces of biological, informational and computational sciences in the above fields. These majors are also excellent preparation for graduate study in bioinformatics, molecular genetics, cell and developmental biology, neuroscience and related fields. Faculty members in GDCB contribute to the undergraduate courses listed below. The full descriptions of these courses can be found in the Biology, Genetics and BCBio sections of the catalog.

BIOL 101	Introductory Biology	3
BIOL 110	Introduction to Biology	1
BIOL 111	Opportunities in Biology	0.5
BIOL 155	Human Biology	3
BIOL 211	Principles of Biology I	3
BIOL 211L	Principles of Biology Laboratory I	1
BIOL 212	Principles of Biology II	3
BIOL 212L	Principles of Biology Laboratory II	1
BIOL 255	Fundamentals of Human Anatomy	3
BIOL 255L	Fundamentals of Human Anatomy Laboratory	1
BIOL 256	Fundamentals of Human Physiology	3
BIOL 256L	Fundamentals of Human Physiology Laboratory	1
BIOL 258	Human Reproduction	3
BIOL 313	Principles of Genetics	3
BIOL 313L	Genetics Laboratory	1
BIOL 314	Principles of Molecular Cell Biology	3
BIOL 328	Molecular and Cellular Biology of Human Diseases	3
BIOL 330	Principles of Plant Physiology	3
BIOL 352	Vertebrate Histology	4
BIOL 394	International Field Trips in Biology	1-4
BIOL 423	Developmental Biology	3
BIOL 423L	Developmental Biology Laboratory	1
BIOL 428	Topics in Cell Biology	3
BIOL 436	Neurobiology	3
BIOL 444	Introduction to Bioinformatics	4
BIOL 490	Independent Study	1
BIOL 494	Biology Internship	1-3

BIOL 495	Undergraduate Seminar	1-3
GEN 110	Genetics Orientation	1
GEN 409	Molecular Genetics	3
GEN 410	Analytical Genetics	3
GEN 490	Independent Study	1-5
GEN 491	Undergraduate Seminar	1
BCBIO 110	BCBio Orientation	0.5
BCBIO 211	Introduction to Bioinformatics and Computational Biology	3
BCBIO 401	Fundamentals of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology I	3
BCBIO 402	Fundamentals of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology II	3
BCBIO 444	Introduction to Bioinformatics	4

Graduate Study

Understanding the genetic blueprint and the functions of cells is critical to virtually all aspects of biology. The basic mission of the Department of Genetics, Development and Cell Biology is to achieve a greater understanding of fundamental principles of life. The GDCB faculty and students conduct hypothesis-driven research into the biology of animals, plants and microbes. While research in GDCB is often based on discovery and analysis of molecular mechanisms of life processes, a true understanding of living organisms will ultimately require the integration of molecular mechanisms in the context of dynamic structural components of the living cell. Thus, research efforts within GDCB use molecular, genetic, biochemical, computational and imaging techniques to study systems at increasingly complex levels of organization.

GDCB faculty contribute to a broad but integrated array of cutting-edge research topics, implementing interactive and multidisciplinary approaches that bridge conventional boundaries, and incorporating experimental and computational biology as complementary approaches. Examples include using genetics and molecular biology to investigate the cellular basis of development, or combining biochemical and computational approaches to study basic subcellular functions, signal transduction or metabolism.

The faculty in the GDCB department train graduate students in several interdepartmental majors/programs including Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Genetics, Immunobiology, Plant Biology, Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies, Microbiology, Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, Neuroscience and Toxicology. Graduate work leading to both Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees are available.

Prospective graduate students need a sound background in the physical and biological sciences, as well as Mathematics and English. Interested students should check the links on the GDCB web site (www.gdcb.iastate.edu/) for specific admissions procedures and the latest information about individual faculty and their research programs. The interdepartmental majors and programs require submission of Graduate Record Examination (GRE) aptitude test scores. Advanced GRE scores are recommended. International students whose native language is other than English must also submit TOEFL scores with their application.

Students who are enrolled in the interdepartmental graduate majors and who have affiliations with GDCB are required to actively participate in seminars, research activities, and to show adequate progress and professional development while pursuing their degree. Completion of either the M.S. or Ph.D. degrees requires that research conducted by the student culminates in the writing and presentation of a thesis or dissertation. The Graduate College, the GDCB Faculty, and the individual student's major professor and Program of Study Committee provide requirements and guidelines for study. General information about graduate study requirements can be found at the web site for the Graduate College (www.grad-college.iastate.edu/) and requirements for the interdepartmental majors can be found by following the links from the GDCB web site above. Although not a formal requirement, the GDCB faculty recommends that students pursuing the Ph.D. include teaching experience in their graduate training.