

# Biology

## (Interdepartmental Undergraduate Program)

Iowa State University is a major center for research and education in the biological sciences. With over 200 faculty in the life sciences, students have the opportunity to learn from some of the nation's leaders in biological research and teaching and to participate in innovative, meaningful research projects that explore frontiers of biology. Few other universities have such a wealth of faculty expertise available to undergraduate students, making Iowa State's Biology Program the logical choice for those who want to participate in a thriving academic community.

The faculties of the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Organismal Biology and the Department of Genetics, Development and Cell Biology jointly offer the undergraduate biology major. This high quality academic program has the flexibility to accommodate a range of career goals while taking advantage of the university's strengths in science and technology. A bachelor's degree in biology provides excellent preparation for graduate study in biological disciplines ranging from the molecular to the ecological levels, and for entrance into various professional schools, such as human medicine, physical therapy, or veterinary medicine. The major is well suited for those who plan to teach biology, who wish to enter government or industrial employment in health or environmental professions, or who prefer educational breadth as an end in itself. By working with our professional and faculty advisers, it is possible to design a unique program of study that will meet student needs and objectives.

Students with special interests and aptitudes should consider combining biology with a minor or a second major in another subject, such as chemistry, environmental studies, journalism, mathematics, music, statistics, or many other subjects offered by the university.

### Customizing a degree

Biology encompasses an amazing diversity of disciplines and scales of study ranging from molecules to the biosphere. The Biology major offers a rich variety of coursework addressing most of the areas of biology. The major's curriculum requirements offer tremendous flexibility in creating an individualized program of study to facilitate achievement of a student's career goals, while simultaneously assuring some exposure to all areas of biology and providing complementary knowledge from supporting courses in chemistry, physics, and math/statistics.

While flexibility is the hallmark of the Biology major, the breadth of the field can also be challenging. Thus, in an effort to provide more guidance to students who desire such, the major also provides five advising tracks, or areas of specialization, for students who wish to focus on subfields of biology or who have specific career goals in mind. Course plans for each area of specialization are listed on the Biology web site. The areas are:

**Pre-medical and Human Health Professions**--This area emphasizes preparation for further study in medical school or allied human health professions such as dentistry, optometry, genetic counseling, physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician assistant, nursing, chiropractic, and others. It also will prepare students for a broad range of careers in the biological sciences. Students are urged to determine the specific entrance requirements for the professional schools where they might study and to plan a program of study accordingly, in addition to following the basic plan.

**Pre-veterinary**--An eventual degree in Veterinary Medicine can lead to a wide variety of careers, including private clinical practice in small animal medicine or agricultural animal production. But, pre-veterinary students can also prepare themselves for careers in animal research, public health, laboratory animal medicine, food safety, regulatory medicine, and education. Specific requirements for entrance to the Iowa State Veterinary College or other schools should be consulted as programs of study are planned, in addition to following the basic plan.

**Molecular and Cellular Biology**--Students specializing in this field will explore the structure, function, and interactions of the molecules and sub-cellular features that make up living cells. This area is particularly designed for those who plan to pursue a career in research in molecular or cell biology or in related areas such as biochemistry, genetics, microbiology, developmental biology, human medicine, or veterinary medicine. Many students in this area will choose to go on to graduate school.

**Ecology and Conservation Biology**--Ecologists examine the interactions and relationships that living organisms have with each other and their environment. Conservation biologists study the nature and status of Earth's biodiversity with the aim of protecting species, their habitats, and ecosystems from excessive rates of

extinction and loss. Students who choose this specialization may go on to work for a non-profit environmental group; an environmental consulting firm; a local, state, or federal agency; or other related organizations. Many students in this area will choose to go on to graduate school.

**Evolution and Biodiversity**--This area provides students with a sound understanding of evolutionary principles and the biological patterns that result from evolutionary change. Students have the opportunity to explore, in depth, the biodiversity found within a wide range of groups of organisms. Students who choose this specialization may go on to work for a non-profit environmental group; an environmental consulting firm; a local, state, or federal agency; or other related organizations. Many students in this area will choose to go on to graduate school.

### Other opportunities

**Teacher licensure**--Biology majors seeking licensure to teach biology in secondary schools must meet requirements of the Teacher Education Program as well as those of the Biology Program. In addition, they must apply formally for admission to the teacher education program. See the section on Teacher Education (<http://catalog.iastate.edu/careerpreparation/teachereducation>) for a list of licensure areas, degree requirements, and other information about this program.

**Undergraduate research**--Students who have interests in biological research are encouraged to become involved in the research projects of faculty members on campus. Those doing so may receive credit for the experience in BIOL 499 Undergraduate Research Experience. Making the effort to find a suitable research mentor and engaging in research work can be one of the most valuable experiences of an undergraduate education. Internship experiences are often available at other universities, zoos, museums, governmental and non-governmental entities focused on environmental issues, and at industrial or government laboratories. Students participating in such projects may receive internship credit in BIOL 494 Biology Internship.

**Field trip courses** -- The Biology Program offers two field trip courses: BIOL 393 (North American Field Trips in Biology) and BIOL 394 (International Field Trips in Biology). In recent years field trip opportunities to the Boundary Waters area of Minnesota, Honduras, and Spain have been available. These courses involve a pre-trip seminar followed by one-week to one-month long field trip at a time when academic year classes are not in session. The classes are low enrollment and allow extensive interaction between instructors and students in locations of biological interest.

**International experience**--Because major discoveries in science often result from global efforts, biology majors are encouraged to include an international or study abroad component in their degree programs. This can be done by participating in international field trips originating from the ISU campus in BIOL 394 International Field Trips in Biology. In addition, many students choose to study abroad, attending a university in another country for up to a year as an exchange student. Minors in a foreign language can also add an international emphasis to a degree in biology.

### Courses offered at other locations

In addition to biological science courses taught on campus, students may take courses at various remote locations and arrange to have the credits count toward the advanced courses required in the biology major. Attending a summer field station adds an important component to an undergraduate program of study.

**Gulf Coast Research Laboratory**--The Gulf Coast Research Laboratory is affiliated with the University of Southern Mississippi. Iowa State students may register for marine biology courses and transfer credit to their degree programs under the number BIOL 480 Studies in Marine Biology. Written permission of the Biology Program Director is required for this arrangement. Courses that are available each summer are listed at [www.coms.usm.edu](http://www.coms.usm.edu) (<http://www.coms.usm.edu>).

**Summer Biological Field Stations**--Courses taken at summer field stations may be transferred to Iowa State University as credit in BIOL 481 Summer Field Studies. Such stations are found throughout the country and often offer courses that emphasize the adaptation of plants and animals to unique environments. See [www.biology.iastate.edu](http://www.biology.iastate.edu) for links to Iowa Lakeside Laboratory and other field stations in different biomes, e.g. marine/coastal, Great Lakes, taiga, deciduous forests, deserts, Rocky Mts., etc.

**Organization for Tropical Studies**--Iowa State students may register for courses in tropical biology taught in Costa Rica by the Organization for Tropical Studies. Credit is transferred to Iowa State as BIOL 482 Tropical Biology. For further information see [www.ots.duke.edu](http://www.ots.duke.edu) (<http://www.ots.duke.edu>) or contact the Biology Student Services Office in 103 Bessey Hall.

Undergraduate Study

Biology majors start their studies in the biological sciences by taking a unified biology core curriculum consisting of six integrated courses, including four with labs. The first year provides a broad introduction to the nature of life.

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

During the first year, students also take BIOL 110 Introduction to Biology and BIOL 111 Opportunities in Biology, which are half semester courses designed to introduce the student to the discipline of biology and opportunities for careers in biology. Students transferring into the Biology major take BIOL 112 in place of BIOL 110.

Students then explore concepts of ecology in BIOL 312; the principles of genetics in BIOL 313 and BIOL 313L; cell and molecular biology in BIOL 314; and evolutionary biology inBIOL 315. Biology majors must take an additional 21 credits of biological science at the 300 level, or above, from an approved list of courses. Of these, at least 9 credits must be taken as BIOL courses, and a minimum of two BIOL laboratory or field courses must also be included.

Biology majors should carefully consider their selection of upper-level courses to allow them to emphasize one, or more, of the sub-disciplines of Biology relevant to their post-baccalaureate objectives. Most biology courses numbered 300 or above can be used to satisfy the additional credit requirement. Some courses taught in other departments can also be applied to the biology major. Advanced students should consider including 500 level courses in their programs. The Biology Program's web site has a complete listing of acceptable upper-level life science courses.

Biology majors must demonstrate competency in their understanding of the biological sciences. Thus, grades of C- or better in all biological science courses applied to the major are required. Furthermore, in order to graduate, a student must have a cumulative average in the major of at least 2.00.

General requirements

Students may earn the B.S. degree in Biology from either the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences must fulfill the foreign language and general education requirements for that college. Students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences must meet the general education requirements for that college. Contact the Student Services Office for details regarding differences in general education and course requirements that are specific to these colleges.

Supporting course requirements-- Understanding biology requires a basic understanding of the physical sciences and mathematics. Consequently, a minimum number of credits in general chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry, and physics is required. See the Biology Program Web Site for specific supporting science requirements.

The Math requirement is competency based. After demonstrating competency in algebra and trigonometry, biology majors must take two semesters of calculus; or two semesters of Statistics; or one semester of calculus and one semester of Statistics chosen from a list of approved courses available on the Biology Program Web Site and in the Biology Program Office.

Given the important role of communications in the modern sciences, biology majors must demonstrate communication competency by earning a minimum of C in both ENGL 150 Critical Thinking and Communication and ENGL 250 Written, Oral, Visual, and Electronic Composition or equivalent composition courses and in one advanced writing course numbered ENGL 302 through ENGL 316, or JL MC 347, or SP CM 212.

Minor

A minor in Biology is offered by the Biology Program. The minor requires 15 credits in Biology and includes the completion of the specific courses listed below and 7 credits in biology courses numbered 300 or above. Nine (9) credits of the required courses must apply only to the minor. For more information, see the Biology Program web site or contact the Student Services Office in 103 Bessey Hall.

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

Total Credits 8

Graduate Study

Biology is an undergraduate major only. Persons interested in graduate study in the biological sciences should apply directly to one of the life science graduate programs at Iowa State University. Interdepartmental graduate offerings in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology; Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; Genetics; Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology; Neuroscience; Plant Biology; Toxicology; Immunobiology; and Environmental Science are also available. (See Index. )

A non-thesis master's degree in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies (biological sciences) has been established particularly for those who wish to have a more diversified program of advanced study than that generally permitted by specific departments and programs.

Curriculum in Biology

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Administered by the Departments of Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology; and Genetics, Development and Cell Biology. Students should consult the Biology Student Services Office, 103 Bessey (or biology@iastate.edu ) for the appropriate course selections for professional or graduate school preparation.

Total Degree Requirement: 120 cr.

Only 65 cr. from a two-year institution may apply which may include up to 16 technical cr.; 9 P-NP cr. of free electives; 2.00 minimum GPA.

International Perspective: 3 cr.

U.S. Diversity: 3 cr.

Communications Proficiency (with a C or better)

English composition	3
Speech fundamentals	3
Total Credits	6

Communication/Library

ENGL 150	Critical Thinking and Communication	3
ENGL 250	Written, Oral, Visual, and Electronic Composition	3
LIB 160	Information Literacy	1
One of the following:		
SP CM 212	Fundamentals of Public Speaking	3
ENGL 312X	Biological Communications (3 cr.)	
Total Credits		10

Humanities and Social Sciences

Humanities course	12
Social Science course	9
Total Credits	21

Mathematical Sciences 7 cr.

MATH 160	Survey of Calculus	4
or MATH 181	Calculus and Mathematical Modeling for the Life Sciences I	
or		
MATH 165	Calculus I	3-8
& STAT 101	and Principles of Statistics	
or STAT 104	Introduction to Statistics	
MATH 165	Calculus I	8
& MATH 166	and Calculus II	
or		
MATH 181	Calculus and Mathematical Modeling for the Life	8
& MATH 182	Sciences I	
	and Calculus and Mathematical Modeling for the Life	
	Sciences II	
or		
STAT 101	Principles of Statistics	4
or		
STAT 104	Introduction to Statistics	7
& STAT 401	and Statistical Methods for Research Workers	

Physical Sciences

General chemistry 5 cr. minimum

CHEM 163 & 163L	College Chemistry and Laboratory in College Chemistry	5
or		
CHEM 177 & 177L	General Chemistry I and Laboratory in General Chemistry I	5
CHEM 178 & 178L	General Chemistry II and Laboratory in College Chemistry II	4
CHEM 231 or CHEM 331	Elementary Organic Chemistry Organic Chemistry I	3
Organic chemistry: 4 cr. minimum		
CHEM 231 & 231L	Elementary Organic Chemistry and Laboratory in Elementary Organic Chemistry	4
or		
CHEM 331 & 331L	Organic Chemistry I and Laboratory in Organic Chemistry I	4
and		
CHEM 332 & 332L	Organic Chemistry II and Laboratory in Organic Chemistry II	4
Biochemistry: 3 cr.		
BBMB 316	Principles of Biochemistry	3
or		
BBMB 404	Biochemistry I	3
or		
BBMB 420	Physiological Chemistry	3
Physics: 4 cr. minimum		
PHYS 115X Physics for Life Sciences (5 cr.)		
or		
PHYS 111 & PHYS 112	General Physics and General Physics	10

**Biology: 24 cr.**

All graded courses minimum C-; 2.00 GPA average required.

BIOL 110	Introduction to Biology	1
BIOL 111	Opportunities in Biology	0.5
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 312	Ecology	4
BIOL 313	Principles of Genetics	3
BIOL 313L	Genetics Laboratory	1
BIOL 314	Principles of Molecular Cell Biology	3
BIOL 315	Biological Evolution	3
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>23.5</b>

**Advanced Biology: 21 cr.**

All graded courses minimum C-; 2.00 GPA average required. See the Biology Program web site for list of approved Advanced Biology courses, or consult an adviser in the Biology Student Services office, 103 Bessey Hall.

Two Advanced BIOL courses with lab or field components (from approved list)

Biology advanced courses (from approved list)	9
Additional approved biology advanced courses	12
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>21</b>