Department: Biological Sciences

Degree Objective: Master of Science in Biology

What can I do with this degree? What kind of jobs do people with this degree typically obtain?

Many of our MS Biology students are interested in an academic/research career, and go into Ph.D. programs after completing their Masters. Many also successfully obtain research technician jobs at local academic institutions or biotechnology companies. Some also teach at community colleges, work in environmental consulting firms, or government agencies.

Will this master's program prepare me for a Ph.D. program?

Yes, our Masters program requires independent research and a written thesis, both of which prepare students for independent research at the Ph.D. level.

How do I apply to your graduate program?

Information on our department application procedures and the MS Biology application form can be found here: http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/biol/ms-applications-biological-sciences. In addition to the preparation of your application materials, it is highly recommended that you communicate with potential faculty research mentors within the department to determine whether they are planning on accepting any research students in their lab.

What is the GPA requirement for admissions into your program?

Applicants may be admitted to the degree program in classified or conditionally classified standing. Classified standing is granted to those accepted applicants who have a minimum 2.75 grade point average in their last 60 semester units attempted. Conditionally classified standing is granted to those accepted applicants whose grade point average in their last 60 semester units attempted is between 2.5 and 2.74.

Does your program require the GRE?

Yes, the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is required. However, the Department of Biology has no minimum score requirement.

How many recommendation letters does your degree program require?

Our application requires three letters of recommendation.

Whom should I get the recommendation letters from, professors or employers?

It is preferable to have recommendation letters that can speak to the types of skills and strengths you will need to succeed in graduate school, e.g., academic ability, problem-solving skills, experience with independent research, work ethic, and communication skills. If an employer can comment on these capacities, then they might be an appropriate letter writer, but typically a professor or research advisor is in a better position to observe these qualifications.

Do you have any tips on how to write a personal statement?

The personal statement shouldn’t be personal. Instead of focusing the narrative on your personal aspirations for graduate school, describe the research question / area that you find compelling, they type of research project you want to carry out, any previous technical preparation for your chosen research path, and your career aspirations (this last component is probably as personal as you want to get).
Writing constitutes a very significant component of your graduate career, so make sure your statement is well edited and concise: your writing skills might be your biggest selling point for getting into graduate school.

**When do you accept students into your graduate program in Fall or Spring or both?**

Both.

**What are the admission deadlines?**

You can find the University and Department application deadlines at this website: [www.calstatela.edu/admissions/deadlines](http://www.calstatela.edu/admissions/deadlines)

**What is the cost to attend graduate school?**

You can find information regarding tuition and fees on the Student Financial Services website at [http://www.calstatela.edu/sfinserv/cashiers-office](http://www.calstatela.edu/sfinserv/cashiers-office)

**Does your department offer any GA or TA positions? If so, what is the eligibility requirement to apply for a GA or TA position?**

Yes, any of our current graduate students can apply for a TA or GA position in the department. The application requires one letter of recommendation, which can be supplied by the student’s faculty research mentor or one of their instructors. Students should see our Department Manager, Judy Guzman, for information about TA and GA positions and the application process.

**Is this degree program co-horted?**

All of our incoming graduate students take the Graduate Orientation class (BIOL 5000) in their first fall semester, and most take BIOL 5100 (the Department seminar series) their first two semesters, which creates a cohort effect.

**How long will it take me to complete the degree if I enroll in 3 or 6 units per semester?**

The Biology MS program is 30 units in total, so it would take 5 semesters (2.5 years) to complete at 6 units per semester. The program is designed to be completed in 2 years (4 semesters), and many students enroll in 6-8 units per semester in order to complete their program within this timeframe.

**Do you offer any Winter Intersessions classes or any classes during the Summer?**

Our Department often offers several upper division (4000-level) electives during the Winter and Summer Intersessions, which can be taken by graduate students to apply towards their 9-unit elective requirement. We do not typically offer 5000-level graduate seminars outside the regular fall and spring semesters.

**When are your graduate classes typically offered, during the day or at night?**

Our graduate classes are taught by our full-time faculty, and are thus typically offered during the day.

**Whom can I contact in the department, if I have additional questions?**

The Department Graduate Advisor is Kirsten Fisher, who can be reached at: kfisher2@calstatela.edu If you have questions about the status of your application materials, these can be directed to our Graduate Program Coordinator, Moises Olavarrieta, at: molavar3@calstatela.edu

**Are there any additional resources or funding opportunities for graduate student at CSULA?**

For resources and funding opportunities, please visit the Graduate Studies webpage at [http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatestudies](http://www.calstatela.edu/graduatestudies)