

BIOLOGY (MS IN BIOLOGY)

In addition to Biology graduate requirements stated here, students must also satisfy all other Arts & Sciences Graduate Requirements to earn the M.S. degree.

Each student must have a thesis committee consisting of a major advisor and at least two other faculty members from the department. This committee will be responsible for supervising the student's research, advising the student regarding coursework and other aspects of the program, and administering a final oral exam at the time of the thesis defense.

Course Requirements

M.S. students must complete 24 credit hours of courses numbered in the 500s or 600s and 6 credit hours of BIOL 700 Thesis.

The total number of credit hours required for the M.S. in Biology is 30 credits.

Required Courses

Code	Title	Hours
BIOL 601	Introduction to Graduate Studies	1
BIOL 602	Research Design/Methods	3
BIOL 682	Research Seminar (at least 2 credits, with no more than 3 credits toward the 30 credit hours)	2-3
BIOL 695	Dir Thesis Master's Research (at least 9 credits, with no more than 9 credits toward the 30 credit hours)	9
BIOL 700	Thesis (generally taken in the fourth semester)	6

With the approval of the thesis committee, and the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, an M.S. student may take courses in other departments or schools at William & Mary, but the credit hours may not total more than 6 of the elective course credits required.

In addition, students may be required to complete one or more undergraduate courses to fill in any gaps in their background from their undergraduate degree that are either necessary as prerequisites for their graduate coursework or are foundational for their teaching obligations and successful completion of their research thesis. Essential levels of mathematics and chemistry depend on what is appropriate for the individual student. Undergraduate courses taken to fulfill this requirement cannot be applied toward credit hours of graduate courses required for the master's degree.

Thesis Requirement

M.S. students must successfully complete and defend a thesis. Successful completion of a thesis will normally involve the production of a piece of original research that is of publishable quality and acceptable to the thesis committee. Each student must present this work in a seminar open to all members of the department; the seminar is followed by an oral examination administered by the committee.

Comprehensive Exam Requirement

Each student must pass a Graduate Student Comprehensive Examination covering basic and advanced principles of biology. The exam is given in the student's second semester and must be passed or passed conditionally no later than May 30 of the first year of residency. Details

of the examination and other procedures are provided in the Biology Department Graduate Handbook.

Foreign Language Requirement

There is no foreign language requirement.

Residence Requirement

A minimum residency period of one year is required.

Satisfactory Progress

Each student must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale in all courses undertaken for graduate credit at William and Mary after admission to the graduate program. A student who receives a grade of C+ (2.3) or lower in a course may repeat that course one time for credit, upon approval of both the instructor of the course and the graduate director for the student's program. When such a repeat attempt is approved, the grades for both attempts will count in the cumulative GPA, but only the most recent attempt will count toward the degree. No credit toward a degree will be allowed for a course in which a student receives a grade below a C (grade point=2.0).

Regular students who drop below a 3.0 average will be given a one-semester probationary period to bring up their average. Failure to attain a 3.0 cumulative average, with a course load of at least 6 credits, by the end of the following semester will result in suspension from the program.

To ensure timely completion of the M.S. degree, students matriculating in the fall must have their research advisor selected by Nov. 1 and a thesis committee selection form submitted to the Biology Office by November 15. The first committee meeting must be held no later than the first week of the spring semester. A comprehensive exam must be passed or passed conditionally no later than May 30 within the first year of residency. It is recommended that the comprehensive exam be scheduled before April 1. Petitions to deviate from the above schedule must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and research advisor or the student risks being suspended from the program.

Students may be considered for Spring matriculation. For students matriculating in a spring semester, a schedule for research advisor and thesis committee selection, committee meetings, and comprehensive exam dates must be developed by the student in consultation with her or his likely research advisor and approved by the Graduate Program Director.

For additional information regarding requirements, consult the Department of Biology Graduate Handbook (<https://www.wm.edu/as/biology/documents/graduate-handbook-department-of-biology-college-of-william-mary-version-202526.php>).