Program Information for Prospective Students

Master of Sciences in Biology

MSc Biology
University of Colorado Colorado Springs
College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences
Department of Biology
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June 2016
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NOTE: The faculty of the Department of Biology reserve the right to make changes whenever necessary and without prior notice.
General Information

The Department of Biology offers a program leading to the degree of Master of Sciences (MSc) with options in Molecular & Cellular Biology, Exercise Science, and Ecology & Evolution. Graduate students pursue coursework in biology and one other science discipline (e.g., physics, chemistry, mathematics, geography), providing students with a diverse curriculum and an understanding of how various science disciplines relate to each other.

This interdisciplinary program offers students a broad science education with few restrictive requirements compared to traditional graduate science programs. It allows for development of a plan based on individual needs.

Thesis and Capstone Project Options

The MSc degree is designed for students intending to become professional biologists. The standard MSc degree plan requires a thesis and is appropriate for those seeking advanced graduate work. See “Requirements of the Thesis Option” Section below for more information.

A Capstone Project option is offered for students who are not focused on graduate work beyond the MSc. Students completing a Capstone Project will enroll in Biol 6050, Biology Master’s Capstone Project course, instead of thesis hours, and must complete additional course work to complete the degree. See “Requirements of the Capstone Project Option” Section below for more information.

Students may switch to the capstone project option on consultation with their major advisor and the MSc program advisor.

MSc Discipline Options

- Ecology and Evolution
- Exercise Science
- Molecular and Cellular Biology
MSc advisors

Dr. Jeremy Bono  
evolution and ecology  
(719) 255-3668; jbono@uccs.edu

Dr. Jeffrey Broker  
exercise science and biomechanics  
(719) 255-3441; jbroker@uccs.edu

Dr. Lisa Hines  
epidemiology  
(719) 255-3192; lhines@uccs.edu

Dr. Robert Jacobs  
human bioenergetics  
(719) 255-3638; rjacobs@uccs.edu

Dr. Meghan Lybecker  
microbial pathogenesis  
(719) 255-4101; mlybecke@uccs.edu

Dr. Emily Mooney  
ecology  
(719) 255-3616; emooney@uccs.edu

Dr. Olesnicky Killian  
neurobiology  
(719) 255-3727; eolesnic@uccs.edu

Dr. James Pearson  
integrative physiology  
(719) 255-3292; jpearso5@uccs.edu

Dr. Jon Pigage  
wildlife biology and ecology  
(719) 255-3835; jpigage@uccs.edu

Dr. Andrew Subudhi  
exercise science and integrated physiology  
(719) 255-3938; asubudhi@uccs.edu

Dr. Thomas Wolkow  
yeast molecular and cellular biology  
(719) 255-3663; twolkow@uccs.edu

MSc Program Advisor is the primary point of contact for additional information

Dr. Sandy Berry-Lowe  
OSCE B337; (719) 255-7552; sberrylo@uccs.edu
Duration of Program

Students must be enrolled continuously and those enrolled in the thesis option must dedicate a minimum of 15 hours per week in the laboratory or field doing research. Therefore, the MSc Program in Biology usually requires 2-3 years to complete. Students who plan on continuing their education by applying to a professional school (e.g., veterinary, medical and dental school) or to graduate school (towards a Ph.D.) should be aware that many of these schools do not accept students until they have completed the MSc.

Financial Aid

Applicants to the MSc Program in Biology may be offered a MSc Biology Graduate Teaching Assistantship. This award provides a stipend for teaching 2 sections of the General Biology laboratory or the Anatomy & Physiology laboratory both fall and spring semesters. A second component of the award is a scholarship. Some faculty may be able to support a graduate student with grant money as well. Prospective students should discuss this with potential sponsors. Prospective students should also contact the Office of Financial Aid at UCCS for information about student loans (for domestic students, FASFA must be completed). Students are encouraged to apply for external fellowships as well as research options for scholarship through the Graduate School office.

Applying to the MSc program

Requirements for regular admission

- A Bachelor’s degree from an accredited College or University
- An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Completion of 40 hours of natural and physical science and mathematics courses.
- Two semesters of calculus or one semester of calculus and one semester of statistics.
- GRE, general test
Required application materials

- Online graduate application: [http://www.uccs.edu/graduateschool/prospective-students/admissions.html](http://www.uccs.edu/graduateschool/prospective-students/admissions.html)
- A cover letter stating intent and interest in obtaining an MSc degree in Biology.
- Resume or curriculum vitae
- One copy of official transcripts from all institutions of higher education attended.
- Three letters of recommendation
  - The letters should **not** be mailed to faculty or to the MSc Biology program advisor.
  - The names of those recommending the applicant are included in the online application. Once the application has been submitted, they will be contacted by UCCS for their recommendation letter.
- Original GRE results.
- A sample of written work if required by the Sponsor/Major Advisor.
- A Sponsor Agreement form will be required upon acceptance into the program.

All application materials should be submitted using the online application, including the letters of recommendation.

Transcripts should be submitted by mailing one official copy to the following address:

Admissions Services, Main Hall 108  
University of Colorado Colorado Springs  
1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918
Provisional admission

Under certain circumstances, applicants not meeting the criteria for admission as a regular degree student may be recommended by the faculty for admission as a 'provisional admissions' student. The department may assign course work and/or examinations that must be taken to make up deficiencies. When the conditions for regular status are met, the Program Advisor will reclassify the student to regular status.

Transfer credits

From CU campuses

Up to 12 credit hours of appropriate upper-level course work with a grade of B or better that are not counted toward a degree and earned at any CU campus may be requested for transfer into the MSc program. Double counting of undergraduate and graduate courses is not allowed. These credit hours are computed into the students’ graduate GPA but the undergraduate transcripts remain unchanged (i.e., there is no physical movement of courses on the transcripts).

From Outside Institutions

Up to 9 credit hours of appropriate upper-level course work with a grade of B or better that are not counted toward a degree and completed at an institution other than the University of Colorado may be requested for transfer into the MSc program. These credit hours are not computed into the students’ graduate GPA.

The application process

- The MSc Program in Biology reviews applications annually.
- All application materials are due February 1.
- Applicants are encouraged to contact potential sponsors before beginning the application process.
- Qualified applicants will not be accepted into the program unless they have a sponsor. Please see below for information about the sponsor and the sponsor agreement.
- Applicants will be notified of their acceptance into the program by March 31 for the following fall semester.
The Sponsor and Sponsor Agreement

The Sponsor is any faculty member on the Graduate Faculty who agrees to function as a Major Advisor and mentor to the student during their tenure as a graduate student. Thus, the Sponsor is the Major Advisor and the term Major Advisor will be used throughout this document. The ‘Sponsor Agreement’ form must be signed by both student and Sponsor. The form is available online: http://www.uccs.edu/Documents/biology/SponsorForm13.pdf

Finding a sponsor

- Current students at UCCS should meet with the appropriate faculty member about graduate school and discuss the possibility of working with that faculty member.
- Students new to UCCS should make an appointment with potential faculty advisors (see list on page 4) to discuss the possibility of working with that faculty member.
- Prospective students who are living out-of-state are encouraged to contact potential advisors by email or telephone and arrange a visit to UCCS prior to applying.
- Alternatively, prospective students may familiarize themselves with UCCS and potential advisors by enrolling in a course as an ‘unclassified student’.

Changing sponsors

During the first year in the MSc program the student may determine that he/she wishes to change his/her project, and therefore his/her Major Advisor.

- The student must meet with his/her Major Advisor to discuss the change.
- If an alternative faculty member agrees to function as the Major Advisor, a new ‘Sponsor Agreement’ form will be completed and put into the student’s file.
- If there is no alternative faculty member the student may decide to withdraw from the MSc program. The student must then give written notification to the MSc Program Advisor.