

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES MS

The Master of Science in Biological Sciences is designed for students who wish to transition from an undergraduate degree to the workforce in professional science or for students who desire additional research experience before entering a postgraduate degree program. Several tracks of study are available based on the faculty's strengths in cellular/molecular biology, plant science, ecology, and microbiology. The curriculum is composed of several core courses within a discipline followed by courses selected by the student's individual needs or interest.

Our faculty conducts active research in general ecology, evolutionary biology, microbial ecology, molecular genetics, conservation biology, restoration ecology, cell biology, and plant pathology.

The department maintains high expectations and standards for professional conduct and productivity which prepare students to meet their specific goals.

Advising Requirement

Advising is mandatory for this program. Consult your department advisor or program coordinator for information.

Requirements for the MS in Biological Sciences

Completion of all requirements as established by the departmental graduate committee, the Graduate Advisory Committee, and Graduate Studies, to include:

1. Completion of an approved program consisting of 30 units of 400/500/600-level courses as follows:
 - a. At least 18 units in the discipline of biological sciences.
 - b. BIOL 600, to be completed during the first fall semester.
 - c. At least one unit of BIOL 605, to be completed during the first year.
 - d. At least 18 of the units required for the degree in 600-level courses.
 - e. Not more than 15 units taken before admission to classified status.
 - f. Not more than four units of Independent Study (697) and six units of Master's Thesis (699).
2. Completion and final approval of an independent research project resulting in an acceptable thesis as specified by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee.
3. Presentation of a seminar based on the student's master's thesis research. This seminar will usually be given during the semester in which the student plans to complete the degree requirements.
4. Approval by the departmental graduate committee and the Graduate Council on behalf of the faculty of the University.

The Option in Botany

Students may additionally consider completing a Master of Science in Biological Sciences with an Option in Botany. Upon completion, the option in botany will be included with the posted degree on the academic record and on the diploma.

This is a four-semester sequence of graduate level coursework that includes field, laboratory, and primary literature based courses. It differs from the ecological, evolutionary, and organismal or cellular and

molecular biology emphasis that can be completed as part of the general MS in biological sciences, in that it *requires at least 8 units of plant related courses at the 400 level or above.*

1. Completion of all requirements for the MS in biological sciences as noted above.
2. At least 8 units of 400/600-level plant related courses.
3. At least 60% of the units required for the degree must be 600-level courses.

Course	Title	Units
Select at least eight units from the following:		8
BIOL 414	Plant Physiology	
BIOL 442	Plant Morphology	
BIOL 446	Plant Pathology	
BIOL 448	Plant Diversity and Identification	
BIOL 451	Plant Geography	
BIOL 613	Population Ecology	
BIOL 614	Topics in Ecology and Systematics	
BIOL 616	Foundations of Ecology	
BIOL 617	Foundations of Evolutionary Biology	
BIOL 672	Plant Ecology	
Total Units		8

Graduate Grading Requirements

All courses in the major (with the exceptions of Comprehensive Examination - 696, Independent Study - 697, Master's Project - 699P, and Master's Thesis - 699T) must be taken for a letter grade, except those courses specified by the department as ABC/No Credit (400/500-level courses), AB/No Credit (600-level courses), or Credit/No Credit grading only. A maximum of 10 units combined of ABC/No Credit, AB/No Credit, and Credit/No Credit grades may be used on the approved program (including 696, 697, 699P, 699T and courses outside the major). While grading standards are determined by individual programs and instructors, it is also the policy of the University that unsatisfactory grades may be given when work fails to reflect achievement of the high standards, including high writing standards, expected of students pursuing graduate study.

Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average in each of the following three categories: all coursework taken at any accredited institution subsequent to admission to the master's program; all coursework taken at Chico State subsequent to admission to the program; and all courses in the approved master's degree program. Failure to maintain a 3.0 average in any category will result in academic notice in the master's program. Failure to remedy the deficiency within one semester with appropriate courses approved by the program coordinator may result in disqualification from the master's program. See Graduate Education Policies (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/graduate-requirements/graduate-education-policies/#academicstanding>) for more information.

Continuous enrollment is required. At the discretion of the academic program, a maximum of 30 percent of the units counted toward the degree requirements may be special session credit earned in non-matriculated status combined with all transfer coursework. This applies to special session credit earned through Open University, or in courses offered for academic credit through Professional & Continuing

Education. Correspondence courses and UC Extension coursework are not acceptable for transfer.

Graduate Time Limit

All requirements for the degree are to be completed within five years of the end of the semester of enrollment in the oldest course applied toward the degree. See Master's Degree Requirements (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/graduate-requirements/masters-degree-requirements/>) for complete details on general degree requirements.

Graduate Requirement in Writing Proficiency

All students must demonstrate competency in writing skills as a requirement for graduation. Biological sciences students will demonstrate their writing competence through satisfactory completion of BIOL 600.

Prerequisites for Admission to Conditionally Classified Status

1. Satisfactory grade point average as specified in Graduate and Postbaccalaureate Admission Requirements (<https://catalog.csuchico.edu/graduate-requirements/graduate-postbaccalaureate-admission-requirements/>).
2. Approval by the department and Graduate Studies.
3. An acceptable baccalaureate in biological sciences from an accredited institution, or an equivalent approved by Graduate Studies.
4. Letter of Intent and two letters of recommendation.
5. Acceptance by a California State University, Chico faculty member.

Prerequisites for Admission to Classified Status

In addition to any requirements listed above:

1. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 in the 60 units of undergraduate work.

Advancement to Candidacy

In addition to any requirements listed above:

1. Satisfactory completion of BIOL 600.
2. Establishment of a Graduate Advisory Committee.
3. Submission of an Approved Program Plan.
4. Successful completion of a qualifying exam.