

BIOLOGY MAJOR

Bachelor of Science

Dr. Stephen Mech, Program Director

Biology Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Biology Program is to educate each student in understanding the living world and fundamental life processes and to help them acquire the skills and knowledge base needed work as a biologist, pursue graduate work, professional school or to teach biology. Each student is encouraged to think critically using their acquired knowledge base to make informed decisions in their future career and life enabling the student to use their skills to productively contribute to their community.

Program Description

The Biology program at UC provides a rigorous curriculum grounded on a variety of biological disciplines (organismal biology, molecular biology, environmental science, and biomedical science), along with intensive laboratory courses, field work, experiential learning, and research opportunities. By the time our students graduate, they will be equipped with the theoretical and practical skills necessary to be competitive and successful applicants for employment or admission to professional or graduate school in the biological, medical or conservation sciences.

We foster a student-centered atmosphere where student learning, discovery, and self-reflection are embedded throughout the curriculum. Innovation, analytics and critical thinking are cultivated by providing opportunities for independent research projects both inside and outside of the curriculum. Most of our upper division courses are inquiry- based courses which help in bridging the gap between understanding foundational biological concepts to practicing scientific inquiry. The biology core courses are complemented by foundational chemistry, physics and mathematics courses which ensure our graduates are not only well rounded in the natural sciences but have acquired the necessary requirements for any professional and graduate program.

Our diverse faculty is dedicated to excellent teaching, service in all areas, and research. Our departmental teaching philosophy is based on the belief that using a combination of passive and active learning activities in small class sizes will help develop self-regulated independent students who will be life-long learners. In addition, our facilities, laboratories, and equipment support this teaching philosophy.

Biology Program Learning Outcomes

The graduate will:

- 1. The graduate effectively communicates ideas and presents results using proper English grammar, vocabulary, and conventional scientific format in both written and oral formats.
- 2. The graduate demonstrates comprehension of biological content knowledge from atoms to ecosystems through coursework.
- 3. The graduate demonstrates the application of science, evidence-based and grounded in observation, experimentation, hypothesis testing and data visualization.
- 4. The graduate demonstrates the ethical use of resources, data, and behavior.
- 5. The graduate demonstrates the ability to integrate content from math, chemistry, physics into biology.

Concentration Specific Outcomes

- 6. General Biology graduates integrate knowledge of general biology, including biological molecules, the cell, genetics, regulation, structure and function, interaction with the environment, and evolution.
- 7. Conservation Biology graduates demonstrate knowledge and understanding for the scope, unity and diversity of life in the biosphere, including the classification of plants and animals the ways species influence, and are impacted by, natural and human-altered ecosystems.
- 8. Biomedical sciences graduates evaluate, integrate and apply how the principles of science apply to human health and disease.

What You Will Study

Core Program of Study

The Bachelor of Science in Biology requires at least of 120 credit hours of coursework. The student must fulfill 27 credit hours in General education requirements for the University. Through thoughtful and intentional advising, we make sure the general education choices count toward the student’s graduate or professional school requirements. Biology majors must take 46 credits which are a foundational set of Core courses listed below.

CORE Science courses – 46 CREDIT HOURS		
BIOL 130	Introductory Biology for Majors (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 230	Introduction to Cell Physiology and Biochemistry (with lab)	4 credits

BIOL 331	Microbiology (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 332	Genetics (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 496	Biology Capstone	3 credits
NSCI 220 or MATH 240	Statistics for Science and Research or Probability and Statistics	3 credits
CHEM 101	General Chemistry I (with lab)	4 credits
CHEM 102	General Chemistry II (with lab)	4 credits
CHEM 201	Organic Chemistry I (with lab)	4 credits
CHEM 202	Organic Chemistry II (with lab)	4 credits
PHSC 201	Physics I (with lab)	4 credits
PHSC 202	Physics II (with lab)	4 credits

In addition, students take 24 credits in four keystone areas of biology: organismal biology, molecular biology, ecology, and biomedical sciences. All biology courses are classified into each of these areas. Every student in the major will be required to take courses in each keystone area, but they can choose from this pre-approved list. Some courses may be listed in more than one area but shall only count once. This flexible approach ensures that everyone who graduates with a Biology Degree from UC has taken courses in these keystone areas. This coursework better prepares graduates in current areas of biology, and it allows students to explore the areas of emphasis before they commit to one.

Major Requirements– 24 CREDIT HOURS		
Organismal Biology	Select 3 from the following:	
BIOL 215	Botany (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 224	Zoology (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 251	Anatomy and Physiology I (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 252	Anatomy and Physiology II (with lab)	4 credits
Molecular Biology	Select 1 from the following:	
BIOL 333	Immunology (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 451	Cell and Molecular Biology (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 453	Virology (with lab)	4 credits
CHEM 410	Biochemistry	4 credits
Ecology	Select 1 from the following:	
BIOL 320	Conservation Ecology	3 credits
BIOL 400	Ecology (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 413	Systematic Botany (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 425	Tropical Ecology	3 credits
Biomedical Science	Select 1 from the following:	
BIOL 333	Immunology (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 370	Physiology of Exercise	3 credits
BIOL 420	Pathophysiology I	3 credits
BIOL 421	Pathophysiology II	3 credits
BIOL 422	Embryology (with lab)	4 credits
BIOL 453	Virology (with lab)	4 credits

Concentrations

The biology program offers 3 concentrations listed below. Each area requires 12-16 credits hours. These credits are in addition to the core requirements, the major requirements, and the General education requirements, and these credits count towards the 120 credit hours needed to complete the bachelor’s degree. These concentrations help students to provide structure to electives, develop in their fields of interest and provide expertise in a field within biology for students seeking admission to post-baccalaureate programs or employment.

The concentrations are:

General Biology

Biomedical Sciences

Conservation Biology

General Biology

The General Biology concentration is the most universal of the tracks, offering a flexible yet robust curriculum for students interested in a broader understanding of biology. The additional 16 credit hours required are chosen from the list of upper division courses shown above, one from each major category (organismal biology, molecular biology, ecology and biomedical sciences). Even though this concentration prioritizes breadth over focus, it is still appropriate for all professions that require a major in biology and will prepare students for graduate school, professional school or employment. If a student is unsure about what to do with their biology major and/or wants to take a wider variety of courses which are part of the Biology curriculum, then the General Biology concentration may be the best choice for them.

Students in this concentration take one additional course in each major area. Courses in the concentration must be different than those taken as part of the core major requirements.

One additional Organismal biology course with lab

One additional Molecular biology course with lab

One additional Ecology course with lab

One additional Biomedical sciences course with lab

Biomedical Sciences

This concentration is designed for the undergraduate student with an aptitude for the biological sciences and who plans to attend a professional school in the health sciences including but not limited to Medical school, Pharmacy school, Physician Assistant program, Dental school, Chiropractic school, and Physical Therapy school.

While many of the courses in our biology curriculum core ensure our graduates have acquired the necessary requirements for any professional and graduate program, this concentration allows students to take more specialized courses in areas of human health that will make them stand out as candidates. Students can explore topics such as pathophysiology, embryology, virology and more. Students may also consider taking approved classes from other departments to expand the breadth of their degree. For example, some courses in Health Sciences and Psychology may be used to fulfill the requirements of this concentration.

Students in this concentration take four additional courses in the biomedical sciences area. Courses in the concentration must be different than those taken as part of the major requirements and are chosen in consultation with the student's academic advisor. Note that some professional or graduate schools may have additional prerequisite requirements such as Calculus or Economics.

BIOL 333 Immunology (with lab)

BIOL 362 Adv Anatomy: The Nervous System

BIOL 420 Pathophysiology I

BIOL 421 Pathophysiology II

BIOL 453 Virology (with lab)

EXER 370 Exercise Physiology

EXER 400 Exercise Metabolism and Energy Sources

PSYC 353 Physiological Psychology

PSYC 358 Health Psychology

Conservation Biology

The Conservation Biology concentration is designed to provide students with a foundation in conservation sciences and population, organismal, and evolutionary biology. Students will explore regional organismal processes and the environments in which they thrive. Ecology, conservation and restoration of biodiversity are also a focus. Conservation and restoration field work and internships with local conservation agencies are some of the opportunities are recommended for students on this track. Course requirements for professional certification by several societies (e.g. Ecological Society of America) can be met within this concentration. Students with expertise in Conservation biology can work for local environmental agencies, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Natural Resources, The National Park Service, US Forestry Service, Department of Commerce, the Environmental Protection Agency, and many others. Students in this track will also be prepared for graduate school in biological and environmental sciences.

Students in this concentration take four additional courses in the organismal or ecology areas. Courses in the concentration must be different than those taken as part of the core major requirements and are chosen in consultation with the student’s academic advisor.

- BIOL 215 Botany
- BIOL 224 Zoology
- BIOL 320 Conservation Ecology
- BIOL 350 Special Topics in Biology (by permission only)
- BIOL 400 Ecology (with lab)
- BIOL 413 Appalachian Flora (offered on demand)
- BIOL 425 Tropical Ecology
- BIOL 426 Tropical Ecology of Costa Rica (2-credit lab)
- BIOL 495 Research in Science (on demand and by permission)

*Electives to stay as full-time student may be other coursework of interest or of requirement for professional/graduate school. It may also be fulfilled by math coursework. Students may also consider a minor.

Courses in the concentration are chosen by the student in consultation with their advisor to meet total credit hour requirement for the degree.

Admission Requirements

Students must gain general admission to the University of Charleston.

Additional Requirements

In order to graduate, students must earn a C or better in all courses required for the major. Competencies for all students will be assessed each semester. Demonstration of competencies is viewed as a continuous process. Once achieved, competencies must be maintained and further refined as each student progresses toward graduation.

The University of Charleston comprehensive examination requirement for Biology majors is met through completion of the senior capstone in Biology BIOL 496.

Biology Minor

The Biology Minor consists of at least 19 credit hours. Required classes include:

- BIOL 130 and BIOL 130L Introductory Biology for Majors and lab (4 credits)
- A Statistics Course (NSCI 220 Statistics in Science and Research (3 credits) or MATH 240 Probability and Statistics (3 credits) or PSYC 315 Psychological Statistics (three credits))
- BIOL 224 and BIOL 224L General Zoology

OR

- BIOL 215 and BIOL 251L General Botany (4 credits)

The students must also take 8 additional credits from among the following courses:

Course	Title	Credits
BIOL 230/230L	Introduction to Cell Physiology and Biochemistry (with lab)	4
BIOL 251/251L	A&P I and lab	4 credits
BIOL 252/252L	A&P II and lab	4 credits
BIOL 331/331L	Microbiology for Majors and lab	4 credits
BIOL 332/332L	Genetics and lab	4 credits
BIOL 333/333L	Immunology and lab	4 credits
BIOL 400/400L	Ecology and lab	4 credits
BIOL 419/419L	Microbial Ecology of Health and Disease	4 credits
BIOL 451/451L	Cell and Molecular Biology and Lab	4 credits
BIOL 453/453L	Virology and lab	4 credits

Chemistry-Biology Dual-Major (BIOCHEM)

This specially designed BS degree plan allows interested students to be prepared strongly in two areas, chemistry and biology, within a four-year timeframe. Students interested in pursuing this option should consult the section of this *Academic Catalog* describing the [Chemistry Program](#) for a full description of the coursework needed to complete the Dual Major.

Pathways for Admission to UC Physician Assistant Program (UCPAP)

Two admission pathways have been developed for the UC PAP. For more information, students should refer to the Biology student handbook and make an appointment with their advisor as soon as possible during their freshman year to discuss their choices.

Fast Track

The PA Fast Track is only available to full time students who are currently enrolled at UC. Students can apply as early as their freshman year and can apply during any spring semester until they graduate. Students accepted into the PA fast track program matriculate in the master's degree of Physician Assistant Studies (PA School) after completion of their pre-requisites.

Direct Admission

Students also have the option of earning their Bachelor's Degree and applying to the UC Physician Assistant Program, or other PA Programs across the nation, through the Direct Admissions Pathway.