

Graduate Study in Biology at CSUN.

First, see <http://www.csun.edu/biology/grad/>

Steps in the Process:

Admission to the University:

Take the General GRE; request scores be sent to CSUN Admissions and Records.
CSUN GRE Institutional Code is 4707.

Take the Biology Subject GRE if required (see below); request scores be sent to
CSUN Admissions and Records. CSUN GRE Institutional Code is 4707.

Fill out the University application through CSU Mentor.

Request official transcripts be sent to CSUN Admissions and Records.

Do this as early as possible; this is often a source of delay.

Admission to the Department:

Contact Biology full-time faculty who share your research interests.

See research interests at: <http://www.csun.edu/biology/faculty.html>

Fill out the Department application.

Send application materials and unofficial copies of transcripts and GRE scores to:

Graduate Coordinator

Department of Biology

18111 Nordhoff Street

Northridge, CA 91330-8303

You need to apply to both the University and to the Department, using separate applications (available on the web); deadlines to apply are October 15 for Spring semester admission, and March 15 for fall semester admission.

FAQ's

Do I need to take the General GRE, and what scores do I need to achieve?

Yes, you need to do in the top 50% of students taking the test at that time in any one of the subsections.

Do I need to take the Biology GRE, and what scores do I need to achieve?

Often. The rules say that if you were a biology major as an undergrad and your GPA in your biology courses was 3.0 or more, then we will take that as evidence of sufficient background preparation. If your undergrad major was not biology, or your undergrad biology GPA was less than 3.0, then yes you need to take the Biology GRE and do in the top 50% of students taking the test at that time in any one of the subsections.

Can the DAT, MCAT, or other such test be used instead of the GRE?

No.

What if my scores are not available when I apply?

Apply anyway, and get us as complete an application as you can as fast as you can. Note on your application that you have taken the test but don't yet have scores, or that you will be taking the test on such and such a date. Depending on the strength of the rest of your application, we may be able to admit you with GRE scores pending.

How do I find a thesis advisor?

See their research interests, and contact faculty whose interests overlap yours. We will happily show your file to the faculty you list on your application as faculty you would be interested in working with, however it is your responsibility to find an advisor, and you can not be admitted without one.

What is the difference between fully classified and conditionally classified status?

You could be admitted to the program despite deficiencies in your application. Remediating those deficiencies would then be a 'condition' on your graduate status. If you are 'conditionally classified' you have 12 units of coursework within which to remedy those deficiencies and become 'fully classified.' Naturally there is paperwork to fill out for this; you do not automatically become fully classified, unless you were admitted as 'fully classified.'

How many units are required, and how long does it take to get a degree?

31 units of coursework, however up to 12 of those units can be related to your research. The MS is not primarily a coursework degree. You finish when you meet all of the requirements and successfully defend an original research thesis. How long that thesis takes is very variable. Generally, students in ecology and evolution disciplines might take three years, whereas students in cell and molecular disciplines might take two.

How can I support myself while studying at CSUN?

A few faculty have research grants that provide student salaries. Most graduate students either work outside of the department, or support themselves as Teaching Assistants (TA), or Graduate Assistants (GA). The graduate students are now unionized and have collective bargaining agreements with the University. The amount of support varies with hours worked etc., but most graduate students who need financial support receive enough TA/GA hours to support themselves, but perhaps not in any high style. Applications for assistantships are online through the Biology graduate website.

What about money for research supplies?

This again varies by faculty member. All fully-classified graduate students are able to apply for several thousands of dollars of on campus research support, and are encouraged to apply for other sources of funding.

When all else fails: email biograd.coordinator@csun.edu