DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Geraldine Grant, Chair

Phone: 703-993-1050
Website: biology.gmu.edu

Administration

• Geraldine Grant, Chair
• Charles Madden, Assistant Chair
• Deborah Polayes, Director of Undergraduate Studies
• Anne Verhoeven, Director of Medical Laboratory Sciences

The faculty in the Department of Biology is known for teaching excellence. Drs. Madden, Kocache, Forkner, Tondi, and Rockwood have all received teaching awards within the past several years, the latest being a university award presented to Dr. Kocache in May of 2017. Biology is the largest program in the College of Science; there are more than 1,300 students in the major and the department grants degrees to almost 300 students per year. Biology offers a broad spectrum of coursework in the biological sciences to both biology majors and to students in other departments, schools, and colleges.

Undergraduate Programs

The bachelor’s degree programs in biology provide a sound liberal arts education with substantial experience in quantitative and analytical thought, along with preparation for a related profession. In addition to ensuring the strong background necessary for graduate study in the many fields of biological science, the broad range of courses available at Mason allow students to develop careers in many areas, including secondary school teaching, environmental management, microbiology, molecular biology, biotechnology, genetics, and natural history. Alternatively, students may prepare for postgraduate studies in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, wildlife management, fisheries biology, or marine science.

The department also offers the Medical Laboratory Science, BS (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/science/biology/medical-laboratory-science-bs/), please visit the program’s catalog entry for details.

Additional information can be found at the Department of Biology’s website (http://biology.gmu.edu/) or by visiting the department in Exploratory Hall, Suite 1200.

Graduate Programs

The Biology, MS (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/science/systems-biology/biology-ms/) is offered by the School of Systems Biology (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/science/systems-biology/). The Department of Biology supports the concentration in Evolutionary Biology within the MS degree. Students interested in this concentration should consult the Department of Biology’s website (http://biology.gmu.edu/) for a list of faculty and their research interests.

Student Clubs

A variety of biologically-oriented student clubs are available for students. Each club has its own website, for more information visit the Department of Biology’s website (http://biology.gmu.edu/).

Faculty

Department Faculty

Professors
Gillevet, Kocache, Lawrey, Madden, Polayes

Associate Professors
Edwards, Forkner, Grant, Laemmerzahl, Olmo, Tondi, Verhoeven, Weeks

Assistant Professors
Chiari, Crerar, Davis, Epstein, Fondue, Froelich, Hanley, Hunt, Lim, Luther, Masterson, Scherer

Instructor
Tomson

Adjunct Faculty
Beck, Brown, Buckley-Beason, Einhorn, Hermoso, Holbeck, Hunnell, Jones, Kaushik, Munse, Radosavljevic, Rodriguez, Shirazi, Skacel, Starolis, van der Ham, Veerareddy, Wellner

Affiliate Faculty

Affiliated Faculty
Andalibi, Couch, Deluycker, Fox, Lee, Lewis, Freeman, Gilmore, Lessard-Pilon, McNeil, Nix, Perilla, Verardo

Requirements & Policies

Requirements

Advising
All biology majors are strongly encouraged to see an academic advisor regularly to help in planning their schedule so that they can graduate on time. Biology majors should see an advisor for permission to register prior to their first semester, again after completing 60 credits, and lastly after completing 90 credits.

Medical Laboratory Science, BS (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/science/biology/medical-laboratory-science-bs/) majors must see the director of the medical laboratory science program to obtain permission to register each semester.

Students returning from suspension are required to meet with the director of undergraduate studies or designee prior to being allowed to register.

For more information on advising or to set up an appointment, visit the Department of Biology’s website (http://biology.gmu.edu/).
Residency Requirement for Transfer Students
Students majoring in biology are required to complete 16 credits in the
major at the 300 and 400 levels at Mason in addition to meeting the
university residency requirement of at least 30 credits at Mason.

Policies

Policy on Using Biology Program Laboratories
Only authorized experiments and exercises may be carried out in any
research or teaching laboratory and must be done under the supervision
of a university faculty or staff member. No unauthorized work is allowed
in any laboratory.

Policy on Using Organisms in Classes
Direct observations of actual organisms are considered an essential
part of learning biology at all levels. Direct observations of organisms
may involve the use of living or preserved specimens, dissections of
organisms or parts of organisms, and microscopic examination of
organisms or parts of organisms. All use of live animals conforms to
National Institutes of Health guidelines for the use and care of laboratory
animals. Activities specified above may be a required part of a course and
thus serve as a basis for grading in the course. Any questions about the
administration of this policy should be directed to the course coordinator
or instructor.

Writing-Intensive Requirement
Mason requires all students to complete at least one course designated
as "writing intensive" in their majors at the 300-level or above.
Students majoring in biology fulfill this requirement by successfully
completing BIOL 308 Foundations of Ecology and Evolution. Medical
laboratory science majors fulfill the requirement by completing MLAB 300
Science Writing.

Minor in Biology
Information about this minor can be found in the Biology Minor (http://
catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/science/biology/biology-minor/)’s
catalog entry.

Premedical, Predental, Prepharmacy, and Preveterinary
Students
Web: prehealth.gmu.edu
Many students planning to enter medical, dental, pharmacy, veterinary,
optometry, or other health professional schools choose to pursue a major
in biology. These students should consult the health professions advising
web site on required coursework and overall preparation.

Teacher Licensure
Students who wish to become teachers should pursue either the Biology,
BA (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/science/biology/biology-
ba/) or the Biology, BS (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/
science/biology/biology-bs/) in addition to obtaining teaching certificates
through the College of Education and Human Development (http://
catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/education-human-development/).
For more information, visit the Graduate School of Education’s website
(https://gse.gmu.edu/).

Biology for Non-majors
Students who are not majoring in science or mathematics and wish to
fulfill their natural science requirement may enroll in the biology classes
listed in the Mason Core Natural Science (http://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-
core/) section. Chemistry, physics, and mathematics majors should
consult with their faculty advisor to determine which biology courses to
take.

Programs

- Biology Minor
- Biology, BA
- Biology, BS
- Career Changer’s Biological Sciences Undergraduate Certificate
- Medical Laboratory Science, BS