**Why Biology with Teacher Licensure?**

If you enjoy helping others learn and you find the study of life fascinating, then teaching science might be for you. Our society needs well-prepared biology teachers to ensure we have a scientifically literate populace. For many students, high school biology is the last course they take designed to help them understand the important role of science in general, and biology in particular in our technological world. For other students, biology courses are the first step toward careers in natural resources, biotechnology, medicine, etc. The job of the high school science teacher is critical to the development of our society.

**Major Program of Study**

Students combine a study of the biology, chemistry, physics, and the earth and space sciences with a study of teaching foundations and various field and clinical experiences as they complete this major. Successful completion of this program leads toward a Bachelor of Science in Biology, as well as an Illinois teaching license for grades 9-12 science. The culminating experience for this program is a 16-week student teaching experience. Students considering a major in biology should complete at least one year each of high school biology, chemistry, and physics (if available), as well as four years of English, two to three years of a foreign language, and three years of mathematics.

**Unique Aspects of WIU’s Program**

Faculty from across the University have joined together to create a state-of-the-art teacher preparation program in science, which is nationally recognized by the National Science Teachers Association. The unique opportunities for WIU students seeking teacher licensure in science include:

- Being part of a cohort as they seek teacher licensure in one or more of the sciences;
- Taking part in a number of integrated science and research-based courses taught in a manner consistent with the national standards for teacher preparation and for K-12 student learning;
- Gaining a broad-based understanding of concepts across all the sciences that often leads to more than one area of specialty on their license;
- Engaging in a variety of professional development activities to learn as much about the teaching profession as possible prior to student teaching; and
- Opportunities to participate in projects through the Research Inspiring Student Excellence (RISE) Program.

**Faculty**

Students will work with faculty across the various science departments, including the Departments of Biological Sciences; Chemistry; Physics; and Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences, as well as faculty in the College of Education and Human Services, including the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the Department Educational Studies. Faculty hold degrees from institutions around the United States and the world. The faculty working with our teacher education students are deeply committed to their teaching responsibilities and work diligently to model good instructional practices. Since the faculty are also active in research, they are able to provide students with opportunities to engage in a variety of types of projects, including research projects, to deepen their understanding of the nature of science and the most effective means of teaching scientific concepts.
Scholarships
The Department of Biological Sciences offers a number of scholarships for Biology majors some of which are competitive based upon academic performance and some of which require an application. Several scholarships offered by the Department or by the College of Arts and Sciences are designated for Teacher Licensure students. For more information, contact the advisor or department chair.

Honors in Biology
To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must meet two of the following three criteria: Have an 1160 SAT (24 ACT), have a 3.4/4.0 GPA or higher, or be in the top 15 percent of their graduating class. Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program) must have a 3.4 grade point average on a 4.0 scale based on 12 or more semester hours. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. To find out more, visit wiu.edu/Honors.

General honors seminars in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences provide students with the opportunity to explore key academic issues with distinguished faculty members. In the biology major, honors students take courses for honors credit and, as seniors, complete research and prepare an honors thesis under the direction of a department faculty member. Successful completion of the departmental honors requirements is noted on the official transcript, and program graduates receive special recognition at Commencement.

Student Activities
Biology students in the teacher licensure program participate in a number of activities through their program, including judging science fairs, coordinating events for Science Olympiad and attending the WIU Secondary Science Education Conference, as well as Biology Day. They are strongly encouraged to participate in professional organizations such as the Illinois Science Teachers Association, National Science Teachers Association, and the National Association of Biology Teachers. In addition, students can participate in several departmental organizations such as the Wildlife Society, Sportsman’s Club, Tri-Beta, Botany Club, Pre-Professional Club, and the Fishing Club, as well as the WIU Student Education Association. A wide variety of student activities and organizations are available to all Western students. Learn more at osa.wiu.edu.

Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station
Alice Kibbe, a well-known botanist, had a dream of starting a field station to promote teaching and research in field biology and ecology. Her ideals of promoting teaching, research, and conservation are the cornerstones on which the Alice L. Kibbe Life Science Station was built. The Kibbe Life Science Station rests on 1,689 acres of natural area along the Mississippi River owned by Western, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Illinois Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. The facilities provide housing for 48 people, a community kitchen, a large gathering room, and two classrooms. Each summer, a number of courses are taught at the field station. To schedule research, events, or field courses, contact Sean Jenkins at (309) 298-2045 or James Lamer at (217) 256-4519.

Study Abroad Programs
Biology majors have the opportunity to take classes in popular countries such as Australia, Finland, China, New Zealand, and England. Previous biology students have traveled to Costa Rica and studied the tropical environment, ecosystems, and habitats. There are many classes to choose from which all must be pre-approved by the department chair. Courses offered vary every semester; therefore, course availability cannot be guaranteed.

Career Opportunities
The most popular career option selected by students seeking this degree option is teaching at the high school level. In addition to careers in teaching at public and private schools, graduates are also sought as corporate trainers; education specialists in nontraditional settings, such as parks, museums, zoos (may require a zoo and aquaria certificate depending upon the site); tutors; and on-line teachers, as well as other positions needing an individual who possesses excellent people skills, ability to educate others, and a strong content background.

For More Information
Learn more about the Department of Biological Sciences by visiting wiu.edu/cas/biological_sciences or by calling the department office at (309) 298-1546 or emailing the advisor, Beth Lane, at BM-Harmison@wiu.edu, or director of Secondary Science Education, L. M. Barden-Gabbei, at LM-Barden@wiu.edu.

wiu.edu/cas/biological_sciences