

Change in Admission Requirements for the Department of Biological Sciences

The admission requirements have changed for the Department of Biological Sciences, beginning with students applying for the Fall 2010 semester. Students still must submit all transcripts, a personal goals statement describing their background and interests (specific instructions can be found at <http://www.wiu.edu/biology/graduate>), and 3 letters of reference. These requirements have not changed.

Our new requirements insist that students now have a faculty member agree to advise the students' thesis or non-thesis project. Students will NOT be accepted into the Department of Biological Sciences unless a faculty member agrees to be their graduate advisor! Thus, it is very important that interested students contact faculty members in their area of interest early in the application process. A list of faculty members, their research interests, and contact information can be found at <http://www.wiu.edu/biology/faculty/>.

If you have any questions about the new policy, please contact the Department's graduate coordinator, Dr. Timothy Spier (tw-spier@wiu.edu).

FAQ about the New Policy

Q: Why did you change this policy?

A: The thesis or non-thesis project is the centerpiece to a graduate education. These projects require a great deal of time and effort, so the earlier a student begins their research the better. We feel that students will benefit greatly by having more advice and guidance early in their careers. Also, most graduate programs in biology at other institutions have similar requirements.

Q: How do I find an advisor for my graduate thesis or non-thesis project?

A: Our entire faculty, their area of interest, and their contact information can be found at <http://www.wiu.edu/biology/faculty/>. Once you have identified a faculty member that works in your areas of interest, you should call or email them to introduce yourself and to ask if they are interested in being your advisor. Most faculty members will wish to see your application materials before they make a decision.

Q: Ok, I found someone willing to be my advisor. What now?

A: Ask the faculty member to contact the Department's graduate coordinator, Dr. Timothy Spier (tw-spier@wiu.edu). Dr. Spier will have a form that the faculty member needs to sign.

Q: I am not sure with whom I want to work, and I don't want to make a hasty decision. What should I do?

A: Students should contact potential advisors early in the admission process so that everyone has sufficient time to make a decision. Also, students can apply as a non-degree seeking student, which allows them to take classes while they are contacting potential advisors. Finally, students can also apply for the Post Baccalaureate Certificate program.

Q: I am not sure if I want to pursue a thesis or a non-thesis program. What is the difference?

A: A comparison of the two programs can be found at <http://www.wiu.edu/biology/graduate/Thesis%20vs.non-thesis.pdf>.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A: A great deal of information can be found at the Department's graduate studies web page (<http://www.wiu.edu/biology/graduate/>), the WIU School of Graduate Studies web page (<http://www.wiu.edu/GRAD/>), or you can contact the Department's graduate coordinator, Dr. Timothy Spier (tw-spier@wiu.edu).