

Biology

Biology is an exciting, diverse field that ranges from the molecular biology of individual cells to interactions among entire populations of organisms. Members of the biology faculty are recognized internationally for their research, and they bring a variety of strengths and teaching styles into the classroom. The major program in biology provides a thorough education in the history of scientific discovery in biology, the logical and statistical procedures used to formulate and test biological hypotheses, and the technical skills needed to conduct contemporary biological research.

The biology major program emphasizes the hierarchical nature of biological complexity and the major structures and functions that emerge at the molecular, cellular, organismal, populational and ecosystem levels. Each student masters at least one dimension of contemporary research in sufficient detail to describe the major hypotheses currently being tested and to demonstrate techniques used to test those hypotheses. Mastery of this material is evident in a student's ability to critique published data, to identify ambiguities and uncertainties in the conclusions drawn from those data, and to evaluate the societal importance of the research. Biology majors are prepared to make creative contributions to biology.

The biology major program provides a wide range of research opportunities. Because more than 400 faculty members conduct research in biology and biomedical sciences at Washington University, it is easy to find a project that suits a student's main interests. Many students complete their research projects at the Washington University School of Medicine, one of the top-ranked medical schools in the country. Summer research fellowship programs are available, funded by sources including the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Children's Discovery Institute, the National Science Foundation, and the Washington University Office of Undergraduate Research. Detailed information about finding a research mentor is available online.

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