

# MARINE BIOLOGY (PH.D.)

<https://colsa.unh.edu/biological-sciences/program/phd/biological-sciences-marine-biology>

## Description

The Marine Biology (MB) option is intended for students interested in marine, coastal, and estuarine ecosystems, and the organisms that inhabit them, at all levels of inquiry. Some UNH faculty use marine organisms as model systems for molecular phylogeny, cellular metabolism, and neurobiology, while others study the structure and function of marine ecosystems. Some faculty members focus primarily on basic research; others work in more applied areas such as aquaculture and fisheries; many combine the two. Students who have earned advanced degrees at UNH lead agencies involved in managing valuable marine resources, teach marine biology in academic and public settings, own aquaculture companies, or earn a living as researchers. In addition to on-campus facilities, UNH owns the [Coastal Marine Laboratory](#) and the [Jackson Estuarine Laboratory](#), and a range of research vessels. UNH has an excellent SCUBA diving program for students interested in becoming certified to dive as part of their research. The Marine Biology option is also affiliated with UNH's [School of Marine Sciences and Ocean Engineering](#).

## Requirements

### Ph.D. Degree Requirements

Students work with their advisor and their Doctoral Guidance Committee to plan a program of study including the required core courses and competencies, and develop a viable research proposal. The Guidance Committee is normally established by the end of the first semester, and should meet by the end of the second semester. The student presents to the Guidance Committee a preliminary research proposal in which the soundness, originality, and feasibility of the planned research are clearly described. The Guidance Committee is responsible for approving the proposal, and also oversees the qualifying examination through which the student is admitted to doctoral candidacy. The Doctoral Dissertation Committee is established at this point. To earn the Ph.D. degree, students must complete an original dissertation project, present the results at a public seminar, pass an oral dissertation defense consisting of questions from members of the Dissertation Committee, and have the dissertation approved by the Dissertation Committee and accepted by the Graduate School.

### Number of Credits Required

There is no specific credit requirement for the Ph.D., though students must take required core courses and meet competency requirements. The Biological Sciences Program specifies 2 credits' worth of required coursework (BIOL 901 Introductory Graduate Seminar); most students use 6 more credits to satisfy the competency requirement in experimental design/analysis (BIOL 811 Experimental Design & Analysis or ANFS 933 Design, Analysis, and Interpretation of Experiments, 4 credits) and recommended coursework in writing/communication (BIOL 902 Writing and Publishing Science or BIOL 950 Scientific Communication, 2 credits). Other graduate coursework approved by the student's committee can substitute for any of these courses except BIOL 901 Introductory Graduate Seminar.

Up to 8 credits of graduate credit from another institution may be transferred, provided the credits were not counted toward another degree, and the course grade was a B or higher. Petitions requesting transfer credit must be supported by the advisor and graduate committee, and approved by the UNH Graduate School.

## Required Courses, Competencies, and Electives

All students in the Biological Sciences Graduate Program are required to take Introductory Graduate Seminar (BIOL 901) and fulfill all applicable competency requirements (these may vary by option). Those with teaching assistantships (TAs) must enroll in College Teaching (LSA 900) before or concurrent with their first teaching assignment.

1. **Core Course.** Introductory Graduate Seminar (BIOL 901). This first-semester course focuses on key information and skills for a successful transition into the graduate program, familiarizing students with program requirements and faculty and providing an opportunity to meet others in their cohort.
2. **Competency in experimental design and analysis.** This may be fulfilled by previous graduate coursework (as determined by the student's advisor and committee), or by taking one graduate-level course. Two advanced courses in experimental design and analysis are offered, normally in alternate years. The first is Applied Biostatistics II (BIOL 811), and the second is Design, Analysis and Interpretation of Experiments (ANFS 933). Either course, or an equivalent approved by the student's advisor and committee (e.g. NR 909 Analysis of Ecological Communities and Complex Data), can be used to fulfill this competency requirement.
3. **Electives.** Students will work with their advisor and committee to identify additional courses appropriate for their area of specialization and their career objectives. Recommendations often include coursework in professional writing and communication: Scientific Writing (BIOL 902) is taught fall semester, and open to students at any stage of the program. Scientific Communication (BIOL 950) is usually taught in spring. A course in Grant Writing (NR 905) is offered by the Department of Natural Resources.

## Additional Information/Requirements

All students in the Biological Sciences Program are expected to present their research in public seminars (including the UNH Graduate Research Conference), and acquire teaching and/or mentoring experience.

A summary degree requirements is available at <https://colsa.unh.edu/biological-sciences/program/phd/biological-sciences-marine-biology>, along with the program's graduate handbook, which includes expectations, guidelines, and detailed policies.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate expertise in quantitative skills including (a) basic math and statistics; (b) spreadsheet software; (c) graphical presentation of quantitative data.
- Students will demonstrate writing skills that enable them to prepare a scientific research paper in standard format for their field.
- Students will demonstrate competency in experimental design, including the ability to articulate a testable hypothesis and design an appropriate experiment to test it.

- Students will demonstrate communication skills including the ability to clearly explain scientific information to both professional and general audiences.
- Students will demonstrate broad understanding of fundamental areas of biology, especially areas relevant to their research project.