

Requirements for Admission to The Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences M.S. Biology Program: US National Students

1. Determine if you meet the Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences minimum undergraduate course requirements:

- (a) Completion of a B.S. degree in Biology, Wildlife Biology, or related field.
- (b) 15 – 18 hours of undergraduate biology not including freshman level courses, with a minimum grade of a “C” in each course. Note that graduate supervisors (discussed in section 3 below) may individually require the successful completion of specific courses.
- (c) Minimum GPA of a 3.0 in all biology and related science courses (typically Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Math courses) including those at the freshman level.

2. All applicants must take the GRE exam. The Biology Department has the following guidelines regarding the GRE exam:

Your overall GPA	Sum of Verbal & Quantitative Percentile
≥ 3.0	≥ 70 with minimum individual percentile score of > 30
< 3.0	Will not be admitted into program regardless of GRE scores

3. Prior to applying for admission to the program, applicants should first contact biology faculty in the department and identify a faculty member who is willing to serve as their graduate supervisor. Applicants must include a summary of their discussions with faculty members in their essay, particularly the one who agreed to serve as their graduate supervisor. All applicants, whether declaring thesis or non-thesis, must secure a graduate supervisor prior to submitting their application. Applicants will not be admitted to the program without a graduate supervisor. Faculty biographies can be found on the [department faculty website](#).

4. Upon securing a graduate supervisor, apply for admission to West Texas A&M University Graduate School. The application and application instructions can be accessed through the [WTAMU Graduate School’s webpage](#).

Please note: You DO NOT NEED a GRE score to start the application process. GRE requirements are determined solely by the Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences, as outlined in (2) above. Although not required to submit your application, you will need to have official GRE scores submitted before your application is processed.

5. Submit, along with your application, a completed questionnaire. This questionnaire includes the following:

- (a) Your specific areas of interest.
- (b) Whether you are seeking a thesis or non-thesis degree and the name of the biology faculty member that has agreed to serve as your graduate supervisor.
- (c) A 1000-word minimum discussion of your goals, both personal and academic, and how a M.S. in Biology from WTAMU will further those goals. You must also include a summary of your discussions with potential faculty supervisors in this essay (as outlined in section 3 above).
- (d) A list of any laboratory and/or field techniques with which you have current working knowledge.

No application will be considered complete until the application, complete questionnaire, and official GRE scores are received by the WTAMU Graduate Office. Once all of your application materials have been received, the Department graduate faculty will determine whether or not you will be admitted to the Biology Graduate Program. You will be notified through the WTAMU Graduate Office.

5. Please be aware of the following Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences graduate admissions deadlines. All of the above application materials must be received by the Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences

(NOT by the Graduate Office) prior to the application for the semester in which you wish to enter and begin graduate study. Late applications will not be accepted.

Semester of Entry	Application Deadline
Fall Semester	August 1
Spring Semester	December 1
Summer Semester	May 1

Additional Requirements For International Students

In addition to all of the above requirements for US National Students, international applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Applicants from Universities following the US GPA format will be assessed following the table provided above under US National Students. Students from Universities not following the standard US GPA format require an average verbal and quantitative percentile of >40.
2. The curriculum criteria as outlined above for US National Students, including some indication of grade interpretation for Universities not following the standard US GPA and grading system.
3. Students for whom English is a second language require a minimum TOEFL score of ≥ 90 (iBT) or PTE score of ≥ 62 or IELTS score of ≥ 6.5 overall.

More information on international graduate admissions can be found online through the [International Student Office](#).

Faculty members respond to inquiries from prospective students interested in their field of study and recruit their own students. As far as positions in their labs, this is contingent on (1) if they have the space in their lab (i.e., if they can take on a new student), (2) if they have financial support, including support for research (e.g., research grant, assistantship through the university or department), and (3) if the interests of the student actually align with that of the faculty member.

Our department has five Graduate Teaching Assistantships available. These are competitive, and because students are generally granted two years on an assistantship, not all assistantships are open each year. Applications are solicited in January or February and are usually awarded in April following evaluation by a committee. Faculty members are encouraged to seek outside funding, but these may or may not lead to a student research assistantship.

Students may certainly propose their own projects, but these must align with the faculty member's expertise and be feasible with the resources available here. Students can apply for small research grants (ca. \$3000) through our Killgore Research Center to help fund projects (supplies, small equipment items, travel); faculty members sometimes have grant support for research, which can also help defray costs of research. We are always hopeful that students will publish their theses, and projects are designed with that in mind.