

Biology Graduate Program, University of Central Arkansas
Application Procedures

International Applicants

1. All applicants, particularly students planning to complete a thesis, are encouraged to contact Biology faculty in their area of interest. Applications are particularly strong if a faculty mentor and potential research area have been selected. We want students to be successful in our program; making sure that there is a good match between the needs and goals of the student and the opportunities available at UCA is one way to encourage success. A list of faculty and their areas of interest can be found at <http://www.uca.edu/biology/research/>. Descriptions of faculty research and recent publications are posted on individual faculty web sites. It is unlikely that a student will be admitted to the program unless a faculty member has agreed to advise the student.

2. Students are encouraged to take the general test of the GRE before submitting an application for graduate admission. Students that have not taken the GRE can only be admitted conditionally; they will be ineligible for receiving a graduate assistantship. Students are also encouraged to take the GRE subject test in Biology although this additional test is not required for admission.

3. Along with the GRE scores, international students should submit the following (see International Programs web site for any recent changes):

- Application for International Admission. This form may be downloaded at <http://www.uca.edu/international/admissions/>
- Non-refundable application fee in the amount of \$50.00.
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam score. Graduate applicants are expected to receive a minimum TOEFL score of 550 on the paper-based exam or 213 on the computer-based exam or 80 on the internet-based exam. Applicants who have graduated with an undergraduate degree from a U.S. college or university are not required to submit a TOEFL score.
- Documentation of financial support. The applicant's financial sponsor must provide a letter from his/her financial institution stating that the sponsor is able to provide a minimum of \$14,700.00 in financial support for an academic year of study. The student's I-20 form can not be sent until this documentation is received.

Questions regarding required documentation or immigration issues should be addressed to Lisa Shoemake, Assistant Director of International Programs, at lisas@uca.edu.

- Official transcripts (in both English and native language) from each college or university attended. Copies certified by the appropriate institutional official may be accepted; however, copies certified by a notary public are not acceptable. Students should also submit a certified copy of all degrees or certificates received.

Graduate applicants must have the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.70 or at least a 3.0 in the last 60 semester hours of undergraduate study.

4. The Biology Graduate Program requires an additional application that is available at <http://www.uca.edu/biology/programs/msbiology.php>. Please send this application to: Biology Graduate Coordinator, Department of Biology, UCA, Conway, AR 72035.

5. If you are interested in applying for a Graduate Teaching Assistantship, please submit an application to the Graduate School, University of Central Arkansas, 201 Donaghey Ave., Library 328, Conway, Arkansas 72035-0001. The application can be downloaded from the Graduate School web site at <http://www.uca.edu/graduateschool/assistantshipsandotheraid/>. Select 'Graduate Assistantship Application'. New students are strongly encouraged to submit one or two letters of reference from faculty that specifically comment on the applicant's ability to teach in English and on their potential as an instructor. Teaching Assistants work 20 hours per week typically teaching two or three labs (total 6 hours in classroom). The current stipend (Fall 2010) is \$9,000 for 9 months, plus tuition and most fees. For deadlines and other information please refer to the "*Recommendations for a Teaching Assistantship*" link on the *Masters of Science in Biology* webpage.

6. Application deadlines (see International Programs web site for any recent changes): April 15 for Summer Semester (June – 1st week of August); July 15 for Fall Semester (3rd week of August – December), and December 1 for Spring Semester (January – May). Application files must be complete by these dates in order for students to be admitted for the requested semester. Applications not complete by these dates will be considered for the next available semester.

7. Once all required documents have been submitted and the student has been admitted to the Graduate School, a letter of admission and form I-20 will be issued in order that the student may apply for their F-1 (student) visa at the nearest U.S. Consulate. Helpful information about applying for a visa can be found at: http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1268.html

Because the F-1 visa allows the student to remain in the U.S. only temporarily while completing their education, the student must satisfy the consul that they will return to their home country after graduation. One of the main reasons students are denied visas is that they are unable to provide proof that they will return. For more information on visa denials, please go to: http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/denials/denials_1361.html.

Students who are already in the U.S. on F-1 visas should contact Lisa Shoemake, Assistant Director of International Programs, at lisas@uca.edu for information regarding transferring their I-20 to UCA.

8. Applications for summer research and teaching assistantships funded by the department are not distributed until spring. Students already enrolled in the Biology program are eligible to apply.

9. Transfer credit is granted when the student submits a Petition for Candidacy form after completing 9 hours at UCA. At that time, the student and Advisory committee will determine which courses match the student's degree program. The Graduate School allows only 6 hours of transfer credit for students enrolled in the 30 hour thesis program and up to 10 hours for nonthesis students in the 34 hour program (24 hours must be completed at UCA). A B or better grade is required for transfer credit.

Please see the International Programs web site at UCA for any recent changes in information for international students.