

## Biology Graduate Programs Review & Admissions Process

### Overview

To be a successful applicant to the Biology Graduate Programs at NMSU, a student must demonstrate motivation, aptitude and interest for graduate study, as well as teaching qualifications/potential. Once application materials are submitted, they will be reviewed by potential faculty advisors. Once at least one potential advisor has agreed to accept the applicant, the application file will be reviewed by the Department's Graduate Admissions and Assistantship (GAA) committee, who will present their evaluations to the Biology faculty. Once an application has been deemed acceptable for entry by the GAA committee and the Biology faculty, the Department will proceed with admission according to the policies of the Graduate School. All admitted students will be eligible for teaching assistantship (TA) support, but availability of such support is not guaranteed. Note that the GAA committee does screen ALL applicants, and even those with independent or research-related support may not be admitted if their teaching qualification/potential are not deemed sufficient for TA support. For admitted students, research assistantship (RA) support is entirely at the discretion of the investigator responsible for the funding source.

### Reviewability & Eligibility

Students must submit applications via the [online application system](#). To be reviewable by the Biology GAA committee, a student file must be complete including:

- All transcripts from undergraduate, and if applicable, other graduate institutions
- 2-page personal statement that includes information about the student's motivation for seeking a graduate degree from NMSU Biology
- Students who are electing to pursue a thesis Master's (typically completed in 4-6 semesters) or a PhD under the guidance of a primary advisor should list 3 potential faculty mentors in order of preference (see this [website](#) for potential faculty mentors).
- Students who are electing to pursue a non-thesis degree (typically completed in 2-3 semesters) under e.g. the Biotech Master's Program should enter their emphasis program choice (see this [website](#) for more information about the Biotech Master's Program).
- Basic Biographical data required by admissions
- Three letters of reference \*\*
- If you have not graduated from or will not graduate from an accredited United States college or university: valid GRE general test scores\*
- ToEFL/IELTS scores (if applicable – see this [website](#) for more info about language requirements)

\*GRE scores (general test only) are required, but no minimum is set. GRE validity will follow that determined by the Education Testing Services (ETS), who administer the GRE program. Currently, scores are valid for five years from the testing year in which they are taken, which begins July 1. For example, valid scores for 2022 applications would be those taken on or after July 1, 2017. The GAA committee may consider substitution of the GRE by a similar (science-

based) standardized exam, such as MCAT or DAT, if taken within two years of application. This may be allowed on a case-by-case basis at the request of the applicant.

\*\*Letters of reference must be submitted via the online application system. Each letter should be on letterhead for the institution of employment for the evaluator, and should evaluate the applicant's abilities with reference to graduate work, including potential for academic success in research, teaching and classwork. References should not be provided by anyone with a potential conflict of interest, such as personal friends or family members.

### **Biology Graduate Programs Review & Admissions Process**

As per the [NMSU Graduate Catalog](#), to be considered for admission to a **Doctoral program**, an applicant must have a minimum GPA of 3.0

As per the [NMSU Graduate Catalog](#), applicants considered for admission to **Master's Regular** include

- An applicant whose GPA is greater than or equal to 3.0, or a GPA greater than or equal to 3.0 in the last half of undergraduate work
- An international applicant who holds at minimum a four-year bachelor's degree or its equivalent and whose GPA (or its equivalent) is greater than or equal to 3.0
- A continuing graduate student whose GPA is greater than or equal to 3.0, or
- A student with prior graduate work at another institution whose GPA is 3.0

As per the [NMSU Graduate Catalog](#), an applicant whose scholastic record is not satisfactory can be admitted as a Master's Provisional student. This classification includes:

- Transferring graduate students whose cumulative GPA is less than 3.0
- Students whose GPA the last half of undergraduate work is less than a 3.0, but who does have a minimum GPA of 2.5.

A student admitted provisionally must complete his or her first three courses, a total of 9 credits of graduate work, with a minimum grade-point average of a 3.0. A provisional student who does not meet the 3.0 grade-point average after at least 9 credits of graduate work is subject to dismissal. A student admitted on a provisional basis is prohibited from working as a teaching assistant. However, a provisional student may work as a research assistant or a grader for one semester. To hire a provisional student, departments must submit an official letter to the Graduate School requesting permission.

### **Application Deadlines**

#### **For Fall Entry:**

December 15\*

March 1

Applications submitted after March 1 may be reviewed but will not be guaranteed Fall entry. In general, applications submitted after March 1 will be considered for entry the following Spring.

\*Early review applicants not initially accepted will be considered and re-ranked in subsequent review meetings for the same semester. For best consideration, applicants are encouraged to submit their materials fully complete for review at the January meeting.

### **For Spring Entry**

September 1

In general, applications submitted after September 1 will be considered for entry the following Fall.

### **Financial support – Research Degrees (Thesis MS and PhD)**

It is not possible to perform adequately in a research degree program part-time to facilitate external employment. Therefore, no student will be accepted without evidence of documented independent financial support, research assistantship support from their faculty advisor, or a request for a TA. Once accepted by a faculty advisor and admitted to the Department, all Biology research degree-seeking students are eligible for TA support. New students should indicate this on their application and continuing students should respond appropriately when requested by the Department each semester. In all cases, TA offers are made subject to availability of resources and are not guaranteed.

### **Financial support – Non-Thesis MS**

Non-thesis MS students are expected to be self-supported but may be considered for TA support when there is exceptional departmental need.

### **Defer Admission**

Although admittance for entry is approved for a specific semester, deferral for up to one year (i.e. Fall entry deferred to the immediately following Fall, or Spring entry deferred to the following Spring) is possible but only with a specific written request to the Director of Biology Graduate Programs and with the full knowledge and support of the projected faculty advisor. Any delay beyond one semester will require re-application and re-review, with no guarantee of re-acceptance or re-funding. If you must defer your admission semester, please complete and return the [Change of Admission Semester form](#) to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will request an approval from the admitting program before making any changes to your record

### **Contact**

For more information, please contact the Biology Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Tim Wright, at [wright@nmsu.edu](mailto:wright@nmsu.edu)