

## ***Advising FAQ for the Department of Biological Science:***

There are a number of questions that are asked repeatedly by students and faculty about advising. The Undergraduate Advancement Committee has put together this list of Frequently Asked Questions to help both advisors and students with these questions.

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### **1. So you want to be a Biology Major/Minor**

#### **Q: I'm thinking about adding a Biology Major or Minor but want to take some classes first.**

To take Biology 151 (the first course for the major) only requires that you have completed any remedial work and are ready to enroll in ENGL 101 and MATH 115 or higher. You can do that without declaring the major or minor. It is strongly recommended that you speak with a department advisor if you're interested in the major or minor.

#### **Q: What do I have to do to change my major?**

Complete the appropriate section of the 'Undergraduate Change of Academic Objective' form available at the Admissions and Records office (LH-114). Get the necessary signatures and return the form to Admissions and Records. There is a \$10 fee associated with the change.

#### **Q: What do I have to do to add the Biology minor?**

Complete the 'Request for Minor Objective' form available at the Admissions and Records office (LH-114) and have it signed by the Department of Biological Science (MH-282). Return the form to Admissions and Records. There is a \$10 fee associated with the change.

### **2. General Biology Majors FAQ**

#### **Q: Who is ultimately responsible for knowing and completing all the requirements to graduate?**

You are! The responsibility to know the rules and requirements and fulfill them is yours. Faculty advisors are here to help you, but the faculty advisors are not the responsible party for the completion of your degree requirements.

#### **Q: What do I have to do to declare or change my concentration?**

During advising period (during April and October/November), you may complete the Biology Department's 'Concentration Declaration/Change Form' during your advising appointment and return the form to the Biology Office. At times other than advising period, complete the appropriate section of the 'Undergraduate Change of Academic Objective' form available at the Admissions and Records office (LH-114). Get the necessary signatures and return the

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form to Admissions and Records. There is NO fee for declaring your concentration for the first time, but a \$10 fee for changing your concentration.

**Q: I have been advised to change my catalog year. Why?**

Graduation requirements have been modified occasionally over the past few years. Based on the courses you have taken and plan to take, your adviser may recommend a change of catalog year to help you to fulfill graduation requirements.

**Q: What do I have to do to change my catalog year?**

Complete the Undergraduate Change of Academic Objective form at the Admissions and Records office (LH-114). There is NO fee associated with the change.

**Q: What can I do with my biology degree?**

See the Department of Biological Science Undergraduate Advising Handbook (available in the department office, MH-282).

**Q: Will BIOL 499L units count toward the required upper division lab units for my concentration?**

Yes. A maximum of 3 units of 499L count toward the 5-unit upper division lab/field requirement.

**Q: Do BIOL 499L and BIOL 480 count toward the 6 units of 400 level classes?**

Yes, both do. Be aware that there are limits on the total number of these kinds of units that can be counted for your major (BIOL 480, 482, 495, 498, 499L). See the appropriate Concentration Worksheet in the Undergraduate Advising Handbook for full details on the limits. The information will be found at the very bottom of the Worksheet. For those with a catalog year of Fall 2005 or later, a maximum of 6 units of these courses total count toward the 23-unit upper-division Biol requirement.

**Q: I am taking a summer course that will serve as a pre-requisite for subsequent courses. Will I be able to register for the next course in the sequence if I do not have a grade yet for that course?**

If you are taking a CSUF course, it depends on the department and the course. You should check with the appropriate department. If you are taking a course at a community college or other university you will have to inquire with the appropriate department office about your options. For instance, say you enroll in a CHEM 115 equivalent in the summer at a community college and want to register for CHEM 120A in the fall; you would need to contact the Chemistry Department office about permission to enroll if you have not transferred the grade to CSUF and that grade is not present on your Titan Degree Audit.

**Q: What should I do if the core course I need (BIOL 151, 152, 273, or 274) is completely filled before my registration date?**

You have two options. 1) Put yourself on the waitlist for a section that you can attend. Please make sure you know exactly how the waitlist works - see the registration guide. 2\*) Sign up for an equivalent course at a community college. Use assist.org to determine which course articulates (is equivalent to) the CSUF course you need (at some community colleges two courses are required to be equivalent to one core course at CSUF). \*Note:

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option 2 can affect financial aid—the units taken at another campus generally do not count toward full-time status at CSUF.

**Q: I feel like am behind. Can I take two core courses (e.g. 151, 152) at the same time?**

No.

**Q: For biology classes with labs, how do I make sure I get the lab section I want? Can I mix and match lab sections with lecture sections?**

Lab sections are linked to certain lecture sections, so there is no mixing and matching of labs and lectures. Generally, sections that are linked are numbered sequentially like this: 01-discussion is linked to 02-laboratory, 03-discussion is linked to 04-laboratory, etc. Therefore, you want to find the linked lecture and lab section that works best for you and choose the LAB section when registering. You will then automatically be enrolled in the linked lecture section.

**Q: How do I get into a lab for a BIOL 299L/480/499L experience?**

1. Find out about the research interests of faculty members from faculty members' web sites and publications, and/or from current or past lab members.
2. Then, contact the faculty whose research interests you and let them know that you are interested in their specific field of research as well as why and how your interest and involvement in research are related to your academic goals.
3. If you are interested in research, another option is to apply for summer research experiences elsewhere, including international experiences. Often you can receive credit for these programs toward the Biology major at CSUF.  
NSF REU Programs: <http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/>  
HHMI Summer Student Program:  
[http://www.hhmi.org/research/investigators/summer\\_student.html](http://www.hhmi.org/research/investigators/summer_student.html)

**Q: If a student wants to take statistics and doesn't need it for our major requirements, are there other options or is MATH 338 the only appropriate choice?**

In general, MATH 338 is the best option. However, if you are doing a minor in a discipline that has a discipline-based statistics course (e.g. Psychology or Health Science) and you do not need statistics as part of the biology degree (Catalog Year before Fall 2011) you could take one of those. If you are taking statistics to fulfill a prerequisite for a professional program, it is recommended that you choose your course in consultation with an advisor or with the Health Professions Advisor or look for acceptable courses on the website of the program(s) to which you intend to apply.

**Q: I want to improve my GPA. Can I take a course again that I passed with a C and have the C replaced?**

No, if the original grade was a C or better then it cannot be replaced ("grade forgiveness," 16 units maximum, cannot be applied). You can take the course again, but your grade will be averaged with the first grade ("grades averaged," 12 units maximum). It is just as effective and probably a better learning experience to take a different course and do well in it than to retake the previous one since this has the same effect on your GPA and would demonstrate mastery of more advanced material.

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**Q: Does English 301 also fulfill a general education requirement?**

No, ENGL 301 fulfills the upper-division writing requirement and does not count towards your upper division GE unit requirement.

**Q: How can I look up which GE classes satisfy the Cultural Diversity (Area Z) requirement?**

Go to the Academic Advisement Center website, ([www.fullerton.edu/aac](http://www.fullerton.edu/aac)), and click through to the GE Requirements page: Bachelors Degree Unit Requirements > General Education Requirements for an updated listing of the approved GE courses.

**Health Professions-related FAQ (MD, DO, OD, PharmD, DDS/DMD, PA, Podiatry, DVM)**

**Q: Do I have to be a Biology major if I want to go to medical school?**

No, but Biology and Biochemistry are the most efficient majors to fulfill the prerequisites for professional schools. It is strongly recommended that you research the requirements of the profession you are interested in and that you discuss your plan with both an advisor and the Health Professions Advisor ([http://www.fullerton.edu/health\\_professions/](http://www.fullerton.edu/health_professions/)).

**Q: I want to go to medical school or into other health professions. Which biology concentration should I choose?**

You can fulfill the requirements for medical school or other health professional schools with any concentration. Choose the concentration that you are most interested in, but ensure that you research the requirements of the health profession in which you are interested and discuss your plan with an advisor and the Health Professions Advisor ([http://www.fullerton.edu/health\\_professions/](http://www.fullerton.edu/health_professions/)), so that you can select your courses to meet both the health profession requirements and those for the chosen concentration.

**Q: I need career, GE, or medical school pre-requisite advising. Where do I go for this?**

There are different sources for these three different types of advice:

- For *general career advice*, there is a career center on campus with many student services (<http://campusapps2.fullerton.edu/career/>).
- For all *GE-related concerns*, there is a GE advising office, Academic Advising, in University Hall (<http://www.fullerton.edu/aac/index.asp>).
- For *specific medical school or other health professions advising*, you should contact the Health Professions Office ([http://www.fullerton.edu/health\\_professions/](http://www.fullerton.edu/health_professions/)).

**Q: If I am pre-Health Professions, which math courses should I take?**

For most Biology majors with catalog years of Fall 2011 or later, MATH 130 AND 338 are recommended. In general, MATH 150A and 150B are recommended only if you plan to apply to optometry or pharmacy school. See [http://www.fullerton.edu/health\\_professions/](http://www.fullerton.edu/health_professions/) for more information.

**Q: I want to go to medical school. Don't I have to take Anatomy (BIOL 361)?**

No. Most medical schools do not require undergraduate anatomy. Again, check with the Health Professions Advisor ([http://www.fullerton.edu/health\\_professions/](http://www.fullerton.edu/health_professions/)) if you are interested in other careers (e.g., Dentistry).

**First-time Freshman FAQ:**

**Q: When can I take my first biology course if I am in ENGL 99, MATH 30, or MATH 40?**

You must pass ENGL 99 –AND- either MATH 30 or MATH 40 before you can register for a biology course. Therefore, if you are taking any of these 3 classes in the Fall semester, you must wait until at least Spring semester before taking biology.

**Q: Should I take BIOL 101 if I can't get into BIOL 151?**

Not if you are committed to the biology major. BIOL 101 only counts for GE credit (Biol 151 and 152 fulfill the same GE requirement) and is meant for non-majors.

**Q: I did not get into BIOL 151/BIOL 152 this semester. How can I increase my chances of getting in next semester?**

It is important to register as soon as your window opens, so be sure to take care of any holds on your registration before your registration date. You can also consider taking an equivalent course at a community college; many local community colleges offer 151- and 152-equivalent courses, but make sure to check [www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org) to verify that the class(es) you plan to take at the community college articulates with (is equivalent to) the CSUF course you need. Review this information carefully, because at some community colleges two courses are required to be equivalent to one core course at CSUF. Note that the community college option only works if you are at least 4 units under the transfer maximum, and that units taken at community colleges do not count toward CSUF full-time status for financial aid.

**Transfer Student FAQ:**

**Q: Are there any differences in the drop policy here at Cal State Fullerton compared to the community college?**

The official drop deadline (dropping a class with no record of enrollment) is the end of Week 2, which is very early compared to many community colleges. You may request a withdrawal after that date, and before the 13<sup>th</sup> week of classes, for specific extenuating circumstances described in the CSUF withdrawal policy (see UPS 300.016), but this results in a W grade on the transcript.

**Q: Advising is a one-time thing, right?**

No, you must go to mandatory departmental advising in order to release your registration hold. You will receive an email at your official [csu.fullerton.edu](mailto:csu.fullerton.edu) email address about the advising schedule every semester, but it is normally in October/November and April.

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**Q: Is there a maximum number of units that I can transfer to CSUF?**

The maximum number will depend on the type of school where the class was taken. See the 'Bachelor's Degree Unit Requirements' page on the Academic Advisement Center website ([www.fullerton.edu/aac](http://www.fullerton.edu/aac)).

**Q: I took organic chemistry at a community college. Why do I need to take extra upper division units at CSUF?**

All community college courses are lower division (course numbers 299 or less). Therefore, they do not count toward the 40 upper division units required to graduate from CSUF (listed near the end of the TDA). ANY class with a course number 300 or higher from any department will fulfill this requirement.

**Q: What if I take a 4-unit Chem 120A or 120B equivalent elsewhere?**

As long as the course is equivalent (see [assist.org](http://assist.org)), it will fulfill the general chemistry requirement for the Biology degree. However, students should be cognizant that they need 120 units to graduate; check your TDA to make sure that the CHEM120A or B requirement has been fulfilled and that the Supporting Courses requirement is fulfilled (e.g. there is a "+" for this category) once Math, Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, and Physics have been completed. If not, alert your Biology advisor.