

Student Learning Outcomes for the Biology Program in the Department of Biological Sciences

Biology

1. Students will be able to apply the scientific method to questions in biology by formulating testable hypotheses, gathering data that address these hypotheses, and analyzing those data to assess the degree to which their scientific work supports their hypotheses.
2. Students will be able to present scientific hypotheses and data both orally and in writing in the formats that are used by practicing scientists.
3. Students will be able to access the primary literature, identify relevant works for a particular topic, and evaluate the scientific content of these works.
4. Students will be able to apply fundamental mathematical tools (statistics, calculus) and physical principles (physics, chemistry) to the analysis of relevant biological situations.
5. Students will be able to identify the major groups of organisms and be able to classify them within a phylogenetic framework. Students will be able to compare and contrast the characteristics of organisms that differentiate the various domains and kingdoms from one another.
6. Students will be able to use the evidence of comparative biology to explain how the theory of evolution offers the only scientific explanation for the unity and diversity of life on earth. They will be able to use specific examples to explicate how descent with modification has shaped organismal morphology, physiology, life history, and behavior.
7. Students will be able to explain how organisms function at the level of the gene, genome, cell, tissue, organ and organ-system. Drawing upon this knowledge, they will be able to give specific examples of the physiological adaptations, development, reproduction and behavior of different forms of life.
8. Students will be able to explicate the ecological interconnectedness of life on earth by tracing energy and nutrient flows through the environment. They will be able to relate the physical features of the environment to the structure of populations, communities, and ecosystems.
9. Students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in the experimental techniques and methods of analysis appropriate for their area of specialization within biology.