

Dear prospective applicant,

Thank you for your interest in graduate study in the Department of Biology and Wildlife at UAF. We offer M.S. degrees in Biology and Wildlife Biology and the Ph.D. degree in Biological Sciences (with concentrations in Biology, Botany, Wildlife Biology, or Zoology). We also offer an M.A.T. degree in Biology. We have a large and active group of approximately 130 graduate students in our department, and we encourage applications from well-prepared candidates.

Before you apply

Thesis research of our graduate students spans the entire spectrum of biology, from molecules to ecosystems, and may be basic or applied (as examples, see the listings of thesis titles on this website). Competition for available positions in our graduate program is intense. Before applying, you should review the information outlining the research programs of our faculty on the Institute of Arctic Biology (IAB) website (<http://www.iab.uaf.edu/facstaff.php>) and make certain that one or more faculty have research interests that are well matched to your own. ***We encourage you to read and study recent publications of those faculty and to then contact them about possible opportunities for new students on their research projects.*** Generally, faculty accept new graduate student advisees only if they have funded grants or contracts to support the thesis research of additional students. However, occasionally faculty also seek and accept advisees with similar research interests who wish to develop and conduct their thesis research independently.

GRE and English Language Examinations

You also must take the GRE General Test in a timely manner so that the official test results are included in your application materials.

We also strongly encourage you to take the GRE Subject Test in Biology. ***The GRE Subject Test in Biology is required if you are applying to the Ph.D. program and you have not completed a Masters' degree in the biological sciences.*** The GRE Subject Tests are given only a few times each year. Therefore, to take the GRE Subject Test in Biology in a timely manner, carefully review the information on the GRE website (<http://www.gre.org/index.html>) for test dates and registration deadlines.

If English is not your native language, you must report a minimum TOEFL score of 213 (computer exam) or 550 (paper exam), and we strongly encourage you to submit results for the TSE and TWE (see <http://www.toefl.org>).

Application Materials

To apply, complete the Graduate Application Form (see <http://www.uaf.edu/admissions/apply/index.html>). Follow the instructions for timely

submittal of all supporting materials (official transcripts, resume, statement of academic goals, and letters of recommendation).

If you are an international student, you must also submit a financial support form (http://www.uaf.edu/admissions/pdf/intl_financial.pdf) and a student experience form (http://www.uaf.edu/admissions/pdf/intl_experience.pdf).

Be thorough and timely in completing the application form and in ensuring that all supporting materials have arrived by the application deadline. The department does not receive applications to review until ALL required materials have been received by the Office of Admissions.

Application Deadline

Our deadline for receipt of completed applications for the following Fall semester is 15 January. Although we will review applications that aren't completed by 15 January, we make virtually all of our Teaching and Research Assistant offers to applicants who have met the deadline. Ensuring that your application file is complete by 15 January will maximize both the likelihood of acceptance and your opportunities for financial assistance (TA, RA, or fellowship).

The Selection Process

Selection of M.S. applicants is based on undergraduate (and post-baccalaureate) GPA, GRE scores (including the Biology Subject Test), letters of recommendation, and, for some positions, suitable field or laboratory experience. In addition to these criteria, Ph.D. applicants are evaluated on their publications, professional presentations, and previous teaching and research experience. Most students applying for admission to our Ph.D. program already have the M.S. degree, but exceptional students with a bachelor's degree sometimes are admitted directly to the Ph.D. program.

Many highly qualified applicants are not accepted into our program. This occurs because it is not always possible to match the research interests of the prospective student with a faculty member who has funding for a suitable research project. The thesis research of most of our students is funded by research grants to faculty from state and federal agencies or private foundations. We seldom admit students unless funding to support their thesis research is available. Therefore, please be as specific as possible about your research interests when preparing your statement of research goals for your application. This will determine, in part, which faculty evaluate your application.

Once you have completed your application, we encourage you to correspond with one to a few potential advisors, outlining how your research interests may correspond well with theirs if they are seeking additional advisees.

Financial Assistance

For the 9-month academic year, Teaching Assistantship salaries in our department currently (2006-07) range between \$15,284 for a beginning Masters student and \$17,708 for a Ph.D. student after Advancement to Candidacy. Full-time (20 hours/week) TA's also receive a tuition waiver for up to 10 credits of degree-related coursework each semester. Research Assistantship salaries, administered by the Institute of Arctic Biology, are similar to TA salaries and also include a tuition payment.

Students who have TA positions during the academic year and full-time RA positions in the summer currently receive an annual salary between \$26,545 (MS students) and \$30,756 (Ph.D. students after Advancement to Candidacy).

The UAF Graduate School provides general information on financial assistance available for graduate students at <http://www.uaf.edu/gradsch/general/financial/#assistantships>. That website also has links to the National Science Foundation-funded EPSCoR and IGERT fellowships, which currently support 15 students in our department's PhD program. Scholarships, as well as teaching and research assistantships, are awarded based on merit.

Collaborative Ph.D. Program

If you are planning to apply to our PhD program please note that we have a collaborative agreement the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA, Department of Biological Sciences, see: <http://biology.uaa.alaska.edu>) and the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS; Department of Biology, see <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/biology>). Faculty in those programs may advise PhD students with a faculty co-advisor in our department. If you would like to work primarily with faculty members at either UAA or UAS, please review their resumes and read their publications and then contact them about possible openings for new students.

Thank you again for your interest in our program. If you have additional questions please feel free to email the department (fybio@uaf.edu) or call (907) 474-7671.

Best regards,

Richard D. Boone
Chair,
Dept. of Biology and Wildlife