MASTER OF ARTS IN BIOLOGY

The Master of Arts in Biology is a non-thesis program primarily designed for secondary education teachers who wish to increase their competency in the field of biology. The program allows students to elect a twelve hour secondary field that logically supports the biology major. Students who plan to pursue doctoral studies are strongly encouraged to pursue the M.S. in Biology (https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/college-departments/science-and-engineering-technology/biological-science/biology-ms/).

Applicants seeking admission to the graduate program in biology must submit the following directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions (https://www.shsu.edu/beabearkat/graduate-journey/):

1. Graduate Application (https://www.shsu.edu/apply/)
2. Application Fee (https://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-admissions/application-fee.html)
3. Official transcript(s) of all previous college work
4. Two letters of recommendation from faculty in the student's major at the undergraduate degree-granting institution
5. Statement of Purpose outlining the student's goals in the program

To be granted regular admission, applicants must have an undergraduate degree in biology or a related field. Applicants having an undergraduate degree in a discipline other than biology must successfully complete the equivalent of an undergraduate minor in the biological sciences before being considered for regular admission.

Applicants from non-English speaking countries must also present a score of at least 78 on the internet-based (iBT), 550 on the paper version (PBT), or 213 on the computer version (CBT) of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). In addition, International Students are required to have an SHSU Biological Sciences Graduate Faculty member write a letter of support for their application to the program.

More detailed information on admission, competitive GRE scores, and undergraduate GPA can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook (https://www.shsu.edu/academics/biological-sciences/programs/graduate-biology-program.html).

There are two different plans leading to the Master of Arts in Biology. Plan 1 requires 32 semester hours of graduate credit in biology. In Plan 2, students take 26 hours in biology with 12 hours of supporting coursework in a chosen minor for a total of 38 hours of graduate credit.

All graduate students are required to pass a comprehensive examination on general biological concepts based on their coursework. The nature of this examination, which may be written and/or oral, will be determined by the student's comprehensive exam committee. Students must be enrolled the semester they take the comprehensive examination.

In addition, a literature-based review paper is prepared in consultation with the student's faculty advisor. Students must defend the literature-based review before their advisor committee and present it to the faculty in seminar format.

Plan 1 - M.A. in Biology

Code	Title	Hours
Master of Arts in Biology (Plan 1)		
Specified Course		
BIOL 5301	Seminar in Biology Research I	3
BIOL 5095	Independent Graduate Study in Biology	2-3
or BIOL 5394	Special Topics In Graduate Biology	
Electives		
Select nine graduate courses in BIOL in consultation with the Graduate Advisor, excluding Thesis courses		27
Total Hours		**32-33**

Plan 2 - M.A. in Biology with a Secondary Field

Code	Title	Hours
Master of Arts in Biology (Plan 2)		
Specified Course		
BIOL 5301	Seminar in Biology Research I	3
BIOL 5095	Independent Graduate Study in Biology	2-3
or BIOL 5394	Special Topics In Graduate Biology	
Electives		
Select seven graduate courses in BIOL in consultation with the Graduate Advisor, excluding Thesis courses		21

Secondary Field	
Select four graduate courses in an approved secondary field in consultation with the Graduate Advisor	12
Total Hours	**38-39**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) marketable skills initiative is part of the state's **60x30TX plan** and was designed to help students articulate their skills to employers. Marketable skills are those skills valued by employers and/or graduate programs that can be applied in a variety of work or education settings and may include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas.

The MA in Biology is designed to provide graduates with the following marketable skills:

- Master the depth of knowledge required for a master's degree in biological sciences.
- Demonstrate critical thinking.
- Communicate effectively.
- Work collaboratively.