DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY

Courses offered by the Department of Developmental Biology are listed under the subject code DBIO on the Stanford Bulletin’s ExploreCourses web site.

A fundamental problem in biology is how the complex set of multicellular structures that characterize an adult animal is generated from the fertilized egg. Recent advances at the molecular level, particularly with respect to the genetic control of development, have been explosive. These advances represent the beginning of a major movement in the biological sciences toward the understanding of the molecular mechanisms underlying developmental decisions and the resulting morphogenetic processes. This new thrust in developmental biology derives from the extraordinary methodological advances of the past decade in molecular genetics, immunology, and biochemistry. However, it also derives from groundwork laid by the classical developmental studies, the rapid advances in cell biology and animal virology, and from models borrowed from prokaryotic systems. Increasingly, the work is directly related to human diseases, including oncogene function and inherited genetic disease.

The Department of Developmental Biology includes a critical mass of scientists who are leading the thrust in developmental biology and who can train new leaders in the attack on the fundamental problems of development. Department labs work on a wide variety of organisms from microbes to worms, flies, and mice. The dramatic evolutionary conservation of genes that regulate development makes the comparative approach of the research particularly effective. Scientists in the department labs have a very high level of interaction and collaboration. The discipline of developmental biology draws on biochemistry, cell biology, genetics, molecular biology, and genomics. People in the department have a major interest in regenerative medicine and stem cell biology.

The department is located in the Beckman Center for Molecular and Genetic Medicine within the Stanford University Medical Center.

COVID-19-Related Degree Requirement Changes

For information on how Developmental Biology degree requirements have been affected by the pandemic, see the "COVID-19 Policies tab (p. 1)" in this section of the bulletin. For University-wide policy changes related to the pandemic, see the "COVID-19 and Academic Continuity (http://exploredegrees.stanford.edu/covid-19-policy-changes)" section of this bulletin.

Master of Science in Developmental Biology

University requirements for the M.S. are described in the "Graduate Degrees (http://exploredegrees.stanford.edu/graduatedegrees)" section of this bulletin.

Students in the Ph.D. program in Developmental Biology may apply for an M.S. degree, assuming completion of their course requirements and preparation of a written proposal. The master’s degree awarded by the Department of Developmental Biology does not include the possibility of minors for graduate students enrolled in other departments or programs.

Students are required to take, and satisfactorily complete, at least three lecture courses offered by the department, including DBIO 210 Developmental Biology. In addition, students are required to take three courses outside the department. Students are also expected to attend Developmental Biology seminars and journal clubs. In addition, the candidate must complete a research paper proposing a specific experimental approach and background in an area of science relative to developmental biology.

Doctor of Philosophy in Developmental Biology

University requirements for the Ph.D. are described in the "Graduate Degrees (http://exploredegrees.stanford.edu/graduatedegrees)" section of this bulletin.

The graduate program in Developmental Biology leads to the Ph.D. degree. The department also participates in the Medical Scientists Training Program (MSTP (http://mstp.stanford.edu)) in which individuals are candidates for both the M.D. and Ph.D. degrees.

Students are required to complete at least five courses, including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>DBIO 210</td>
<td>Developmental Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DBIO 215</td>
<td>Frontiers in Biological Research (1 unit per quarter; students are required to take at least two quarters)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An advanced graduate course in genetics or genomics;
An advanced graduate course in cell biology or biochemistry;
A course in quantitative or computational biology.

Students are expected to attend Developmental Biology seminars and journal clubs.

Completion of a qualifying examination is required for admission to Ph.D. candidacy. The examination consists of an off-topic proposal on a subject different from the dissertation research. The final requirements of the program include presentation of a Ph.D dissertation as the result of independent investigation and contributing a contribution to knowledge in the area of developmental biology. The student must pass the University oral examination, taken only after the student has substantially completed research. The examination is preceded by a public seminar in which the research is presented by the candidate. The oral examination is conducted by a dissertation reading committee.

COVID-19 Policy Changes to Degree Requirements

On this page: Winter Quarter (p. 2) • Spring Quarter (p. 2) • Doctoral Programs (p. 2) (if applicable)

For a complete overview of academic policy changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic, see the "COVID-19 and Academic Continuity (http://exploredegrees.stanford.edu/covid-19-policy-changes)" section of this bulletin.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Stanford University made a number of emergency changes to policies and procedures that impacted Winter and Spring quarters 2019-20. Those changes, as they relate to degree programs, are compiled on this page. These changes reflect the disruption that students and instructors experienced when the...
University transitioned to online learning on March 9, 2020, in addition to the disruption to the Stanford community caused by the pandemic itself.

**Winter Quarter 2019-20**

- University-wide Winter Quarter Academic Changes (http://exploredegrees.stanford.edu/covid-19-policy-changes/#winterquarteracademicchangestext)

The Committee on Undergraduate Standards and Policy (C-USP) and the Committee on Graduate Studies (C-GS) approved an exception for Winter Quarter 2019-20 to permit students to request late class withdrawals and/or changes to class grading basis to CR/NC (for those classes that had CR/NC as an option).

**Graduate Degree Requirements**

**Grading Requirements**

The Department of Development Biology counts any Winter Quarter 2019-20 class in which the student received a final grade of 'CR' towards graduate degree requirements that otherwise require a letter grade.

**Other Requirements**

If a student has difficulty completing a graduate degree requirement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, (e.g., a study abroad requirement, a laboratory research requirement), the student should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies to identify academic options to fulfill degree requirements.

**Spring Quarter 2019-20**

- University-wide Spring Quarter Academic Changes (http://exploredegrees.stanford.edu/covid-19-policy-changes/#winterquarteracademicchangestext)

The Faculty Senate approved a policy requiring that all undergraduate and graduate classes in Spring Quarter 2019-20 be offered only on the 'S/NC' (Satisfactory/No Credit) grading basis.

**Graduate Degree Requirements**

**Grading Requirements**

The Department of Development Biology counts any Spring Quarter 2019-20 class in which the student received a final grade of 'S' towards graduate degree requirements that otherwise require a letter grade.

**Other Requirements**

If a student has difficulty completing a graduate degree requirement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, (e.g., a study abroad requirement, a laboratory research requirement), the student should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies to identify academic options to fulfill degree requirements.

**Doctoral Programs**

The Faculty Senate confirmed that doctoral programs have discretion to delay candidacy decisions through the end of Autumn Quarter 2020-21. It also confirmed that students have the option to defer the candidacy process (e.g., qualifying exams) to Autumn Quarter 2020-21 without penalty.

The Department of Developmental Biology recommends that all students discuss the candidacy process with their advisors to identify whether the current circumstances suggest a need to defer candidacy to Autumn Quarter 2020.