

Frequently Asked Questions About the Biology Major

Can I change my major if I decide to later?

-Absolutely. Go to the other department and fill out their major declaration form, declaring your new major, which will replace the Biology major. Also, please let the Biology Department know if you are changing your major, and also e-mail your biology advisor to let him/her know.

Can I add a double major and how is it done?

-Yes. Go to the other department and fill out their major declaration form, adding your new major. The major listed as your first/priority major will be the major that appears on your diploma (example: Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science). For example, if you are earning a double major in English and Biology, with English as your first/priority major, your diploma will read Bachelor of Arts. If you are earning a double major in Biology and English, with Biology as your first/priority major, your diploma will read Bachelor of Science.

May I choose my advisor?

-Yes, you may request a certain advisor, but if the advisor already has too many advisees or obligations or is on sabbatical, you will be assigned a different advisor who is available.

Can I take a course at my local college during the summer instead of taking it at Emory?

-Yes, you can get permission to take the course from your biology advisor to count it toward your biology major, but if you also want to count it as hours to graduate and appear on your Emory transcript, you must go through the College Office process.

-The Biology Department will also need a copy of the transcript from the other school for your file.

What year do I put on the Declaration of Major form —I have Junior hours but I am in my second year now and plan to stay 2 more years?

-Put the semester and year when you plan to graduate (for example: Spring 2012 or Fall 2010).

If I take a course at another school in summer for my major, does it matter that the letter grade won't transfer, since all courses for major have to be for letter grade?

-No, your Biology advisor will allow you to fulfill the major without a letter grade for certain classes taken elsewhere. This would be most common for classes such as Organic Chemistry, Math and Physics, rather than a Biology class. The College Office authorizes transfer courses from other schools and sends a form introducing the student to the other school and to the student's major department.

-The Biology Department will also need a copy of the transcript from the other school for your file.

How do I decide between the BA and the BS?

-Many students have already taken (or will be taking) the Chemistry (150, 202, and 203), Physics (141), Math (111 and 116 preferred or 112) and QTM100 required for the BS degree because the medical schools require it, so the BS is the most common by far. However some medical or graduate school admissions committees seem to be more impressed by diversity in your background, and you will find different answers to this questions depending upon which faculty member you ask. Many medical or graduate schools also require additional Chemistry, Physics, and Math courses which we do not require for the Biology major.

-The main difference between the BA and BS is that with the BA, you are not required to take Organic Chemistry, Math, QTM, and Physics (but you do need Chem 150 and 202). However, if you plan to have a health-related career or to attend graduate school, you will most likely be required to take four semesters of Chemistry, two semesters of Physics, and two semesters of Calculus.

What shall I take next year?

-Plan this with your advisor. You are required to meet with your advisor every semester prior to registration.

What is the grade point average (g.p.a.) required for the Biology major?

-Students must have a 2.0 g.p.a. (minimum) for the BA or BS degree in order to graduate.

Updated Sept. 2018 by Rachelle Spell, Director of Undergraduate Studies in Biology