

**MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM**

To: Students applying to the M.S. in Biology Program

From: D. Alexander Wait Ph.D.  
Graduate Coordinator

RE: Application process

Thank you for your interest in our Masters Degree in Biology. This letter is to give you an overview of the program, and to acquaint you with the application process. First and foremost, this is a research-oriented degree. You should expect to spend more time on your thesis project research and writing than on all of your coursework combined. To complete the degree in two years, it is important to start the thesis work as early as possible, and the first steps are to identify a graduate advisor and a thesis project. This advisor is the person with whom you will be working very closely, as a "scientist apprentice" and should be someone with whom you feel comfortable. To this end, we recommend that you look at the enclosed information, and/or the department webpage (<http://biology.missouristate.edu>) and identify 2-5 faculty members whose research area best matches your interests. Contact these faculty members individually (mail, phone, FAX, e-mail) and discuss the possibilities of working in their labs. This process will also allow you to be more specific in completing your Statement-of-Interest form.

If you decide to actually apply to our program, you will need to send (or have sent) materials to two different places. Send your Application for Admission to MSU (back page of graduate catalog, or on-line at the Graduate College webpage: <http://www.missouristate.edu/Grad>), your application fee, GRE scores, and official copies of all transcripts to the Graduate College. To be accepted into the Biology Masters program, you must also send to me your Statement-of-Interest form, three letters of reference, and the application for a Graduate Assistantship. Even if you do not qualify for an assistantship (3.00 GPA), or you are not interested in one, please fill out the later form, as it provides information not otherwise available to us. Just indicate on the top of the form if you are not actually applying. Also, please add your e-mail address.

Once I receive all the materials sent to me, and the Graduate College processes and forwards to me the material sent to them, your file will be complete. Before the Biology Graduate Committee reviews your file and decides whether or not we can accept you, I will show it to the faculty members that appear to match your research interests (based upon your Statement-of Interest form) for their comments. One criterion important to our admission decision is whether or not we have space in a particular research lab. This is where your contact with faculty, prior to them seeing your file, can be to your benefit.

The decision to award Graduate Assistantships is separate from that of admissions. Admissions decisions are usually made within two weeks of the completion of a file, whereas assistantship decisions are made primarily in March/April (for fall semesters) and in October/November (for spring semesters). Students must be admitted to our program before they can be awarded an assistantship.

If I can be of any further assistance, I can be reached by telephone ((417) 836-5802) or e-mail ([AlexanderWait@missouristate.edu](mailto:AlexanderWait@missouristate.edu)).