

Department of Biology Honors Program

Program Application

Due Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025, 5 PM (PDT)

Please direct all questions to the Honors Coordinator, Dr. Francine Arroyo

farroyo@csufresno.edu

You are invited to participate in the Department of Biology Honors Program. The Honors Program provides you with the opportunity for advanced studies and interaction with a community of your intellectual peers and to work closely with a faculty mentor of your choosing toward the completion of a research project. The program requires a three-course commitment. Therefore, students with Junior or Senior standing will be eligible to apply as long as they have four semesters remaining, including the Fall 2025 semester.

Three 1-unit courses are taken in the following order. Starting in the spring of your Junior year, students will take Honors Research Methods (BIOL 111H). In the fall semester of your Senior year, students will take Honors Science Communication and Leadership Seminar (BIOL 112H). During the last semester of your senior year in the spring, students will take Biology Honors Colloquium (BIOL 113H). The Honors program will culminate with your honors thesis (BIOL 199H) for 3 units with your faculty mentor. In total, 6 units are required for completion of the Department of Biology Honors Program.

<https://csm.fresnostate.edu/biology/degrees/undergraduate/honors.html>

Admission Requirements:

Complete the application using the following google forms link

<https://forms.gle/hV6ZqKu5MUSTQk7f8>. The application will request the following information and uploads of the required documents. Letters of support will be submitted using a separate link (see below).

- Cumulative GPA of 3.5 (in last 60 units)
- Grades of B or better in BIOL 1A, 1B and 1BL, CHEM 1A and 1AL, CHEM 1B and 1BL, Statistics (MATH 101 or MATH 102), and Calculus (MATH 70 or 75), or their equivalents
- Currently enrolled at Fresno State (with 4 semesters left, including Fall 2025)
- CV/Resume (maximum 2 pages)
- A maximum 500-word typed personal statement of purpose explaining why you wish to participate in the honors program
- A writing sample from recent college course assignment (can come from community college course)
- A copy of your current unofficial transcript
- **Three Letters of recommendation**

All mentors and those in support of the student must complete this google form, where they will upload their letters at: <https://forms.gle/vpBbjEURcFmSSthB6>. Share this link with your mentors. It is the applicant's responsibility to make sure

that the mentors receive this link and submit on time. The application will be considered incomplete if it is missing your letters of support **by Dec. 3, 5pm (PDT)**.

- Letters of recommendation sent to Dr. Arroyo via email will not be considered.
- **One** letter of recommendation/nomination on letterhead and signed by a Fresno State faculty member willing to serve as your mentor/adviser who can speak to your ability to successfully complete the honors program and to assist you with the successful completion of the honors thesis.
- **Two additional letters** on letterhead and signed from individuals who can address your ability and aptitude. The letters must also include how long they have known you.

Applications are accepted until **Thursday, December 3rd by 5 pm (PDT)** for Spring 2026.

Seeking out a research mentor:

Applicants should independently seek out a research mentor for their Honor's thesis project. I recommend taking the following steps:

1. For potential faculty mentors in the biology department, review the research faculty list found here:
<https://csm.fresnostate.edu/biology/msinbiology/research/index.html>. Note, that this list is specific to recruitment for graduate students, but it highlights potential research areas that might interest you. This is not an exhaustive list. You may also reach out to faculty mentors adjacent to biology in the CSM like chemistry. If you are unsure, please contact me to discuss options.
2. Contact your prospective mentor via email or by attending their student support hours. Share with them your interest in their research and ask if they would be willing to mentor an Honors student in their lab.
3. Make an appointment to meet to discuss more in person. At the meeting, ask questions about the types of projects you might be working on, what their expectations are for an undergraduate student in their lab, and the type of mentorship they provide (e.g. hands-on, working in small groups, independent, etc.).
4. Feel free to talk with other students in prospective member's labs to learn more about their experiences and types of projects they are working on.
5. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Questions should be sent to: **Dr. Francine Arroyo**; farroyo@csufresno.edu

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR FACULTY MENTOR

As the student's mentor, you and the honors student will design a research project that will make up the student's honors thesis. You should work with the student to ensure that their honors research experience is appropriately challenging and engaging. You should help the students with their course of study to maximize their research experience. This may be accomplished by suggesting units that can be selected from existing undergraduate or graduate courses in the major, independent study courses, or existing courses outside of the student's major. These courses would be in addition to the required 6-units that make up the Honor Program and thus cannot be required.

The Department of Biology honors program encourages students to cross the traditional disciplinary boundaries through study and practicum as well as through discussion with faculty and fellow students across the Department's various research foci. Honors students enjoy the many benefits of working closely with you, their mentor, toward completion of a research or creative project of his or her choice.