

General procedures for submitting a petition to the Biology Department

If you wish the Biology Department to waive or alter one of its requirements as it applies to you, you must submit a petition to the Department Chair with your request. The following guidelines are intended to help you in preparing your petition.

1. The petition must be legible (i.e., printed from a computer).
2. It should include your name, email address, and telephone number in case the Department needs to contact you, for example to ask a question about your petition. It should also include the name of your academic/major advisor.
3. It should begin with a clear statement of what you want. If you are asking that a rule be waived or altered, explain what rule that is. If you wish to substitute some course that is not normally part of the major for a course that normally is, identify the two courses. An example would be: "I request that the Biology Department allow me to substitute a course in Biological Economics for one of the upper division Biology courses that is required for the major."
4. You must provide a compelling reason for the Department to grant your request. In preparing your petition, keep in mind that the Department has constructed its major to provide its students with a broad and coherent view of modern biology and its relation to other disciplines, such as chemistry and mathematics. We believe that students who complete the required program will know and be able to do certain things that are not only important to biologists, but to any educated person. Because we have put a lot of thought and work into designing the major, and because this program makes sense best as a complete package, we are reluctant to grant students exceptions to the program that is described in the College Catalog. If you are asking for an exception, therefore, you must convince the Department in your petition why it is educationally desirable for you to do something different from the standard program. Why will what you propose give you a better education in biology than the standard curriculum? If you cannot convince the department of that, your petition will be denied.

The following arguments would not be favorably received by the Department:

- Taking the required courses is inconvenient for the student.
- The student is not particularly interested in a particular area of biology and would like to waive the coursework required in that area.
- The student is not planning to be a professional biologist and therefore doesn't really need a full-blown biology major.
- The student believes that completing the prescribed curriculum in Biology will adversely affect their GPA.