

Fifth Year Masters Program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

The Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Brown University offers a Fifth Year Masters program for students completing a Bachelors degree in one of the approved concentrations in the Program in Biology. The combined program of course work, independent research, and Masters Thesis leads to a Master of Science degree in Biology.

The goal of the program is to allow students to build a stronger foundation of courses in a selected topic area, to concentrate on a research project that will lead to a Masters thesis, and to develop skills as an independent researcher in the area of ecology and evolutionary biology. The goals are not simply to extend the course work taken as an undergraduate. Rather, students should identify an integrated set of courses that will enhance their knowledge, and propose an independent research project that will be carried out in close supervision with a faculty mentor in the EEB Graduate Program.

Students are required to complete four courses each semester, for a total of eight courses. Two of these courses are considered foundation courses that extend their undergraduate training, one course will be the EEB graduate seminar (BIOL 2430, 2440), and one course will be graduate independent research (BIOL 2980, 2990). The nature of the two foundation courses will be tailored to each student depending on their undergraduate transcript and the goals of their research project. Courses in statistics or computer science are strongly recommended. Students may use two of their undergraduate science courses to meet the course requirements listed above, with the following stipulations. Students graduating with an A.B degree may use two courses provided that neither of these courses was used to complete their A.B. program. Students graduating with an Sc.B. may use two courses from their undergraduate science courses, one of which may have been used to complete 'Thematic Cluster' of advanced courses for the Sc.B. concentration. For example, if a student completed a B.A. in Biology and took Marine Biology (BIOL1440) and Evolutionary Genetics (BIOL 1410), but did not need either course for any aspect of the degree requirements, both courses can count toward 5th Year Masters course credit. An Sc.B. concentrator who, for example, use used BIOL 1410 Evolutionary Genetics as part of their Thematic Cluster, and had one additional course that was not needed for any aspect of the Sc.B. degree could apply both of these courses to the 5th year masters foundation course requirements.

These adjustments for the course requirements are designed so that 5th year masters students can focus the majority of their time the research plan developed in collaboration with the designated faculty mentor. In many cases, the 5th year masters program will help a student develop their undergraduate thesis project into a more complete, ideally publishable, form. The nature of this research should be stated clearly in the Application, as part of the Personal Statement that is required on the Application. In addition, the applicant should provide two (2) recommendations to be completed, using the designated Graduate School forms. One of these recommendations should be from the proposed faculty mentor. All application materials should be reviewed and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies (David_Rand@brown.edu) before submitting the application.