

Information for Potential Mentors

The General Biology Master's Program is designed for middle and high school biological science teachers. The majority of the course work is conducted during the summers, allowing the participants to continue to teach full-time.

Requirements include courses in biology and current teaching practices, a biology research experience, teaching a workshop, and writing a thesis. A typical teacher will take 4 years to complete the degree requirements.

The objective of the research experience is to provide teachers with an opportunity to experience the critical thinking, problem-solving process in which scientists engage so they may transfer aspects of this research process to their classrooms. It is not our objective to train teachers to become research scientists. We need good teachers to stay in the classroom!

The magnitude of the research projects the teachers undertake in 1.5 summers is not as great as that of a regular, full-time, "science" master's candidate. Our students are expected to do rigorous, high-quality research; however, the project should be of a lesser magnitude or scope so that it can be completed in the limited time frame.

A problem with this summer-oriented degree program is the loss of contact between students and their thesis advisors during the regular school year. It is essential that the student maintain regular contact with his/her thesis supervisor during the Fall and Spring semesters. We request that our participants contact their supervisors at least once each semester; in the Spring semester this should include a discussion of plans for the coming summer.

A thesis is required in our degree program. It may be based solely on the participant's research project, or it also may include the lesson plan her/she developed during the course of this program.

In addition to the required thesis, each participant must take a minimum of 32 units, 9 of which are electives. Many participants experience difficulty in finding electives to take, as most courses are offered during the regular school day. We urge you to consider teaching a course during the evenings, on Saturdays, or during the summer, and we hope you will encourage colleagues in your department to do the same.