Ph.D. in Biological Sciences

The Ph.D. in Biological Sciences covers a broad array of ecological topics and serves the needs of students whose dissertation research addresses basic, fundamental ecological principles or of those conducting applied research not involving fish or wildlife management. It serves the interests of students primarily interested in research careers in federal or state agencies or in academic careers in ecology departments. Coursework associated with this degree tends to emphasize fundamental principles of ecology.

All students earning a doctoral degree from Montana State University must complete a minimum of 60 credit hours post-baccalaureate, of which 18-28 of must be dissertation credits. (This may include 10 thesis credits from a master’s degree program.) A maximum of 30 credits from a previously earned master’s degree (from MSU or another accredited University) may be applied toward the 60 credit minimum required for the doctoral degree.

1. **Special Topics (591):** Credits allowed toward degree requirements for Special Topics (591) courses may not exceed the number defined by each degree program.

2. **Individual Problems (592):** Not more than six credits of Individual Problems (592) courses may be included on a doctoral Program of Study.

3. **Pass/Fail Credits:** A maximum of nine credits (excluding dissertation) may be included on a doctoral Program of Study. *4XX level courses may be used on a Program of Study: a maximum of 9 credits are allowed.*

4. **Limit on Age of Courses:** The age of courses at the time of graduation for a doctoral degree may not exceed 10 years.

5. **Courses from a master’s program:** The graduate Program of Study lists those courses the student’s committee feels are required to earn the doctoral degree.

6. **Resident Credit Requirements:** A minimum of thirty (30) credits applicable to the degree must be taken from MSU.

7. **Dissertation Credit Requirements:** All Ph.D. candidates are required to register for and complete a minimum of eighteen dissertation (690) credits. An unlimited number of 690 credits may be taken to finish a dissertation; however, only the 18-28 690 credits are applicable toward degree requirements.

Courses taken while in a master’s degree program at MSU, beyond those listed on the graduate Program of Study, may be used on an additional master’s program or a doctoral program at a later time.