



**MA/MS in Biology**

**MA/MS in Biology  
Program Handbook**

May 2020



# Opening & General Information

## Welcome to West Liberty University

Welcome! We are honored you have chosen to pursue a MA/MS in Biology at West Liberty University! We have created the Student Handbook to:

- Provide you with an introduction to the University
- Support you as you get started in your program and help address questions
- Provide you pertinent information about your course structure
- Inform you of policies and how they impact you
- Offer a listing of offices/services available to support you and your academic pursuit

It's imperative you take the time to review this handbook, the catalog, and any other resources associated with your program of study to become informed of expectations. WLU makes every attempt to remain flexible, however, rules and penalties will not be waived or exceptions granted just because someone is unaware of specific policies or procedures.

In addition to this handbook, West Liberty's webpage (<http://westliberty.edu>) also provides up-to-date information about the University, courses and procedures that you will find invaluable.

As a West Liberty University graduate student, you will have access to experienced and accomplished professors, rich course content, and relevant library resources.

## Background and History

West Liberty University is a forward-looking, public university steeped in a rich heritage as West Virginia's oldest institution of higher education. Established as West Liberty Academy in 1837 (26 years before the state was admitted to the Union), it was created to respond to the need for higher educational opportunities west of the Appalachian ridge. The institution is named for the town in which it is located. West Liberty was so named in the late 18th Century as the westernmost point of the new liberty provided through the Declaration of Independence.

## Mission

To provide our students the opportunity for a high quality undergraduate, graduate, and professional education through appropriate formats and venues.

## University Catalog

The WLU catalog is the authoritative source for information. The catalog is found online (<http://www.westliberty.edu/registrar/west-liberty-university-bulletin/>).

## Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity

West Liberty University is an Equal Opportunity-Affirmative Action institution. In compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, West Virginia Human Rights Act, Title IX (Educational Amendments of 1972), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other applicable laws and regulations, the institution provides equal opportunity to all prospective and current members of the student body, faculty, and staff on the basis of individual qualifications and merit without regard to race, sex, religion, age, national origin, disability, or veterans status as identified and defined by law. The institution neither affiliates knowingly with, nor grants recognition to, any individual, group or organization having policies that discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or veteran's status as defined by applicable laws and regulations. Inquiries concerning the application of the above statement should be addressed to: Human Resources/Affirmative Action Officer, West Liberty University, 208 University Drive, College Union Box 131, West Liberty, WV 26074; Phone: 304.336.8029.

## Campus Security and Emergency Procedures

Campus police officers enforce state, local and college rules and regulations governing underage drinking, the use of controlled substances, weapons, and all other incidents requiring police assistance. They are also responsible for public safety services, such as crime reports, medical emergencies, fire emergencies, and traffic accidents. Monthly reports are reported to the West Virginia State Police, who are consistent with the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) systems.

**TopperNet** is used to notify the campus community in the event of an emergency.

1. Go to: <https://www.getrave.com/login/westliberty>. Click on "Join Now."
2. Complete the information on the "Create Account" page, agree to the Terms of Service, and click "Next."
3. A confirmation screen will appear, explaining that Rave has sent you an e-mail. Go to your e-mail account and click the link.
4. When you click the link, a 4-digit code will be sent to your phone. A screen will open on your computer asking you to type in that code.
5. This will take you to your main account screen. You're finished!

# Getting Started

## COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS

### Learning Management System Technology Requirements:

Your experience is important to us. In order to ensure you can access everything you need to be successful, it's important your computer meets the minimum requirements listed below:

- PC Windows 7 (or newer) or Mac OS
- Most tablets, iPads and smart phones\*
- Any current browser such as Chrome, Firefox, Safari or IE10
- Flash Player (<https://helpx.adobe.com/flash-player.html> )
- Acrobat Reader (<https://get.adobe.com/reader/> )
- 512 MB of RAM (1 GB or more preferred)
- Broadband connection (courses may include video content)
- Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display
- A soundcard and speakers or headphones (Highly recommended)
- Current anti-virus software that is kept up-to-date
- Web camera (Highly recommended)
- Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software used by faculty, students, and staff. LibreOffice (<https://www.libreoffice.org/download/libreoffice-fresh/>) is a free alternative that may be used. You may also use the google software equivalent (<https://www.google.com>). You may request a free Microsoft 365 account by contacting the WLU IT Services help desk (email: [helpdesk@westliberty.edu](mailto:helpdesk@westliberty.edu) )

\* While students may view course assignments and view and complete discussion board posts via tablets and smartphones, a desktop or laptop computer may be necessary to fully access and complete course requirements.

## TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS

West Liberty University utilizes and provides the following platforms for all courses:

**SAKAI** – WLU's online learning management system (LMS) that allows students to access their courses and interact with other students and faculty.

**LiveText** – WLU's electronic portfolio system, which allows students to upload, store, and share their work. LiveText also allows faculty to provide feedback and readily evaluate each student's work.

**TurnItIn** – A plagiarism detection system, which reviews student papers and publications to ensure that students maintain academic integrity.

**WINS** – Student Portal-- Access unofficial transcripts, view grades, make payments, and update personal/profile information.

The West Liberty University Information Network System (WINS) serves as the on-

line student self service center. Students complete course registration, access grades, and view transcripts on-line via WINS. Student account information and financial aid information can also be viewed in WINS. Students can access WINS by clicking on the WINS icon from the WLU web site (<http://westliberty.edu/wins>). To log in, students use their BANNER/Student ID as the USER ID and their **six-digit** birth date (mmddyy) as their PIN. After initially logging into WINS, students are required to change their PIN. **The Enrollment Services Center should be contacted for assistance in accessing WINS.**

WLU is excited to welcome its new students. In order to ensure students are prepared to excel in their classes; six key things are helpful to get started at West Liberty University and the biology graduate program.

**(1) Access your WINS account** (<http://westliberty.edu/wins>) using your WLU nine (9) character ID. If this is your first access, your first password is your mmddyy date of birth without the first two digits (i.e.19). Contact Enrollment Services if you are unable to access your account: Telephone: (304)336-8007  
E-mail: [WLUREG1@westliberty.edu](mailto:WLUREG1@westliberty.edu)

**NOTE:** the WINS, EMAIL and SAKAI accounts are related but each has a separate password. Changing one of the three passwords does NOT change the other two.

**(2) Look at your current course registrations and schedule.** If you have questions or concerns, contact one of the Program Directors

Biomedical questions:

Dr. Joseph Horzempa ([joseph.horzempa@westliberty.edu](mailto:joseph.horzempa@westliberty.edu))

Ecology / Zoo Science questions:

Dr. Zachary Loughman ([zloughman@westliberty.edu](mailto:zloughman@westliberty.edu))

**(3) Pay tuition.** Tuition is due the Friday before the first day of your classes. To ensure access, please pay this prior to the deadline. Lack of payment prior to the start of each term could result in lack of access to courses. Students who may receive reimbursement of their tuition costs must also satisfy these payment requirements to avoid losing access to their coursework and being administratively withdrawn for nonpayment.

**(4) Access your WLU email account (Gmail)** at <http://westliberty.edu/gmail> If this is your first access your email address SHOULD be first initial, middle initial, last name @westliberty.edu – for example for John Thomas Smith: JTSMITH@westliberty.edu Your email address is not case sensitive. Your initial password should be your mmddyyyy date of birth (include the first two digits of your birth year, i.e. 19). At the first login you will be prompted to change your

password.

Contact IT Services for assistance with your WLU email 304-336-8886 or use the online form: <http://www.westliberty.edu/it/contact/>

Please read the **Email Policy** (<http://www.westliberty.edu/it/student-technology-serv/email-policy/> )

**NOTE:** your WLU email will be the account used for billing, course communications, and other important communications from the university.

**(5) Access your SAKAI account** (<http://sakai.westliberty.edu> ) using your WLU ID (9 character) for the user name and your mmddy (6 digits, no first two digits of your birth year, i.e. 19) date of birth for your initial password.

After logging in, you may change your password by using the ACCOUNT, MANAGE from the left menu on your MY WORKSPACE page.

Contact the Office of E-Learning at 304 336-8432 for assistance with SAKAI.

**(6) Textbooks and Syllabi** - Read the syllabus when emailed to you by the instructor. Be prepared for the course by getting the textbook or other required materials BEFORE the course starts.

**Course sites for the upcoming term will NOT APPEAR IN SAKAI until the Saturday before the term begins.**

## **ACADEMIC CALENDAR AND IMPORTANT DATES**

The MA/MS in biology will follow the standard WLU Academic Calendar. The current calendar for 2017-18 is available online:

<http://westliberty.edu/registrar/files/2010/02/acad-cal-2017-18.pdf>

# West Liberty University Policies & Procedures

## **CREDIT HOUR POLICY**

West Liberty University assigns and awards credit hours conforming to commonly accepted practices in higher education. The school employs the Federal Credit Hour Definition in the assignment and awarding of credit hours as stated in the following policy:

At WLU a credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than: one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours.

The basic credit hour is defined as at least 15 hours of lecture, discussion, seminar, or colloquium as well as 30 hours of student preparation, homework, studying, and application.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM COURSES**

A student who officially withdraws from a course by the end of the class day marking the two-thirds point of the semester or summer term shall receive a grade of "W." A grade of "WP" is given if a student officially withdraws from a course any time after the two-thirds point and before the last scheduled class meeting, including the final examination, providing he or she is passing the course at the time of withdrawal. A "WF" will be given if a student officially withdraws any time after the two-thirds point and before the last scheduled class meeting, including the final examination, if he or she is failing the course at the time of withdrawal. A student who does not officially withdraw from a course shall receive a grade of "FIW," indicating failure because of improper withdrawal. Grades of "WF" and "FIW" are computed as "F" for grade-point average.

Students can drop courses in WINS until the last date to enroll for the respective semester.



If you withdraw from a class, any tuition refunds are given in accordance with current WLU policy as noted on page 20 of the University Catalog (**2017-18**).

During the first and second weeks .....90% Refund

During the third and fourth weeks .....70% Refund

During the fifth and sixth weeks .....50% Refund

Beginning with the seventh week.....No Refund

### **Repeating a Course**

If you must or desire to repeat a course, both grades will appear on your transcript.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY**

Students who find it necessary to withdraw from the university during the course of a semester or summer term must complete the official withdrawal procedure. The necessary forms may be obtained from the Enrollment Services Center. The Enrollment Services Center will review the form with the student. The withdrawal is not official until these forms are received and processed by the Enrollment Services Center.

Students who leave the university without officially withdrawing will receive failing grades (“FIW”) in all courses for which they are enrolled. The final grade in each course will be determined by each instructor in accordance with the institutional grading policy.

### **POLICY REGARDING STUDENTS CALLED TO ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE**

As a result of a national military emergency, university students may be among the military reservists called to active duty. While there are federal regulations in effect which impose certain obligations on employers with respect to employees in active military service, these laws have not been extended to students called for active military service. Consequently, the following procedure is to be used in those instances wherein students from West Liberty University are called to active military service and can provide to university officials a copy of their official orders.

When a student is notified to report for active military service, the student should contact each of his or her individual instructors and inform them of the situation. It is then the responsibility of the instructor to determine an appropriate grade for the student. If the student has made sufficient progress and the instructor feels that sufficient material has been covered to warrant a final grade in the course, the instructor should issue a grade of “incomplete.” Due to potential variables involved, there may be other arrangement that could be expedited and this will be left to the discretion of the faculty member. In all situations, care should be taken to ensure that credit earned by a student in a class, up to the point of the student’s leaving for military service, be granted to the student or preserved for a future grade determination.

If a student is required to withdraw from classes before a letter grade or an

incomplete can be given, a 100% refund of tuition and fees will be issued. Tuition and fees will be charged only for those courses for which a letter grade of an incomplete is given. The unused portion of room and board payments will be refunded.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY**

Academic Dishonesty, in whatever form, belies the stated philosophy of West Liberty University “to promote the development of the intellectual, cultural, social, physical, emotional, moral, and vocational capacities of all persons within its sphere of influence.” Individuals who commit acts of academic dishonesty violate the principles, which support the search for knowledge and truth. The academic community has established appropriate penalties and disciplinary action for such behavior. For full information on types of academic dishonesty, penalties, appeals, and procedures related to academic dishonesty, please review the University Catalog.

### **GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE/POLICY**

A student who wishes to appeal or question a final grade in a course must first contact the faculty member who assigned the grade within fifteen (15) class days of the semester following the semester for which the grade was issued. The student must arrange one or more informal conferences with the professor/instructor to attempt to resolve the conflict before a formal appeal is initiated. The grade appeal must be based on a faculty member’s alleged capriciousness, prejudice, or arbitrariness. The professional competence of the faculty member will not be an issue. For procedural information on the grade appeal process please review the University Catalog.

### **APPROPRIATE COMPUTER USE**

The Appropriate Use Policy (AUP) is designed to establish acceptable use of computer and information systems as well as to protect our students, faculty, and staff. As good net citizens, we encourage all users to use electronic communications in a manner respectful to others.

### **PERFORMANCE**

Users must take precaution that their actions and the computers they own or are assigned to them for use do not negatively affect the WLU computer network. You must properly maintain your systems by having up-to-date anti- virus protection and performing operating system patches.

### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

You are expected to use software and electronic materials in accordance with copyright and licensing restrictions. You may not use WLU networks, equipment, or software to violate the copyright terms of any license agreement.

### **GOOGLE**

WLU and Google have partnered to provide Google Gmail, Calendar, Contacts, Drive, Groups, Sites, Talk, and Video to all applicable WLU users. Use of these

services are governed by the contract between Google and WLU. Google's Privacy Policy is available for review at <http://www.google.com/intl/en/policies/privacy>.

## **SHARED RESOURCES**

Tying up network resources for illegally downloading or sharing music, software and files, sending harassing email, sending large volumes of mail, etc. are not appropriate use of WLU network resources. The bandwidth demands of this usage can be excessive.

## **GENERAL**

Attempting to impersonate any person, using forged headers or other identifying information is prohibited. Activities which adversely affect the ability of other people or systems are prohibited. Attempts, whether successful or not, to gain access to any computer system, or user's data, without consent is prohibited.

## **WEB HOSTING**

WLU will not host web sites which involve illegal activities such as the illegal transfer or use of copyrighted materials or any fraudulent solicitation. WLU will not host web sites of an offensive nature such as ones of pornography, gambling, extreme violence, racial or ethnic hatred. WLU reserves the right to protect its systems and its users by not hosting sites that would be deemed generally offensive and be likely to provoke responses such as Denial-of-Service attacks upon its servers or systems.

## **FINANCIAL**

Re-selling service without express written consent from WLU is prohibited. Offering any public information service, such as running a web server or FTP server is also prohibited without express written consent from Information Technology Services (ITS). Using programs to defeat system timers limiting inactivity is prohibited.

## **PRIVACY**

It may be necessary for ITS employees to examine system logs and other records to resolve system problems. WLU reserves the right to access an account's mailbox to resolve system problems or mail system errors.

In addition, WLU will cooperate with the appropriate legal authorities in investigating claims of illegal activity, including but not limited to illegal transfer or use of copyrighted material, postings, or email containing threats of violence, or other illegal activity.

WLU makes no guarantee and assumes no liability for the security of any data on any server including "secure servers."

Our users are reminded that no computer system should be considered safe from intrusion. Email may pass through many computer systems, and should not be

considered a secure means of communication unless it is encrypted. Even then, information is only as secure as the encryption method.

## **RATIONALE**

This document provides a general understanding of WLU's policy on the Appropriate Use of WLU's information technology services. Common sense and judgment are a necessary part of any system of rules, and this Appropriate Use Policy (AUP) is no exception. Of course, flagrant or repeated violations of the policy are viewed in a very different light than minor infractions.

Protection of our customers and our resources, the ability to provide quality service to our customers, conformance with existing law, and the protection of our reputation as a service provider are all contributing factors to decisions on AUP violations.

If a WLU account is used to violate the AUP, various action may be taken including, but not limited to the following:

- suspension or revocation of computing privileges
- reimbursement to WLU for resources consumed
- other legal action including action to recover damages
- referral to law enforcement authorities

Computer users will be referred as follows: Students will be referred to the Judicial Coordinator and Instructor/College Dean

Please see the current **West Liberty University Catalog** for additional information about specific institutional policies and procedures.

(<http://westliberty.edu/registrar/west-liberty-university-bulletin/>)

## **The MA/MS in Biology**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION (from the WLU Catalog)**

The traditional MA in Biology provides a bridge program for students desiring coursework at the graduate level to prepare for more competitive professional school entrance or for advancement in the workplace. Coursework in the traditional MA in Biology can be selected from a variety of dual-listed electives to allow focusing of study as needed. The use of dual-listed courses (upper level courses in undergraduate biology offered with differentiated learning at the 500-level to graduate students) allows maximum efficiency in programming. The MA in Biology, Zoo Science option is specific for professionals in animal management fields holding 4-year degrees from accredited institutions of higher education who wish to extend their education at the graduate level. The designated 30 credit hours of coursework required is specific to the challenges within animal management fields and will be offered in an online format to facilitate program completion across the nation. The traditional MS in Biology features 14 credit hours of graded biology

coursework, the option for independent study, and a traditional thesis.

## **MS BIOLOGY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION:**

### **Mentor/ Committee**

MS students will assemble a thesis committee consisting of a mentor and two to three other faculty members. Co-mentorship is not permitted. The mentor must be a faculty member of the Biology Program at West Liberty University. The size of the committee shall be no fewer than 3 individuals, and no larger than 4. In addition to the mentor, one other committee member must belong to the Biology Program at West Liberty University. At least one of the remaining committee members must belong to a program outside the Biology program at West Liberty University. Assembly of the committee must be completed before the end of the first semester following matriculation. Students without a committee after the first semester will be switched to the MA program or will not be permitted to register for additional classes.

Below are acceptable examples of potential thesis committees:

Student: Jane Doe

Mentor: Zachary Loughman

Committee member (internal): Melinda Kreisberg

Committee member (external): Douglas Swartz

Student: Stan Lee

Mentor: Deanna Schmitt

Committee member (internal): Matthew Zdilla

Committee member (external): Gary Rankin (Marshall University)

Committee member: Joseph Horzempa

Students, mentors, and committee members should sign and submit the thesis committee agreement form (prior to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester) which can be obtained from the program director or Ms. Bree Blum.

Students should meet with their mentors regularly (at least once per week on average) to discuss progress, data, troubleshoot, and for advice. Students are required to arrange at least one full committee meeting per year. Additional meetings can/may be scheduled if necessary if requested by the thesis mentor. In the first meeting, the student will present the proposed work and outline of their thesis research. The second meeting should be held at least one month prior to the thesis defense and will consist of an update on the research progress associated with the thesis. Alternatively, at the discretion of the thesis mentor, the defense can serve as the second meeting.

The responsibility of the thesis committee is to provide feedback on research and to evaluate the progress of the graduate student. The responsibility of the mentor is to oversee the research of the student, advise the student, critique the writing of the thesis, and to provide mentorship. Committee members may critique thesis writing after a draft has been approved for review by the thesis mentor.

In the event that a student has an issue/ problem with their committee or mentor, the student should inform the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director will evaluate each situation individually and will take an appropriate course of action. The Graduate Program Director may seek advice from senior faculty and administration regarding an appropriate course of action. In the event that a student should have an issue or problem with their mentor or committee member, and this individual is the Graduate Program Director, then the student should inform the Dean of the College of Sciences, Dr. Karen Kettler - [kkettler@westliberty.edu](mailto:kkettler@westliberty.edu)

### **Thesis**

MS students must prepare and defend a thesis comprised of original work in the field of biological and/or biomedical sciences. Theses must contain a comprehensive literature review of material pertaining to the research topic or objectives. Discussion of the conclusions, implications, and future directions for the research must also be included. After submission of the written thesis, students must successfully present the research in an open forum and defend the research to their thesis committee.

All theses will have a title page, a signature page, an acknowledgements page, an abstract, table of contents, list of tables, and a list of figures.

In addition to these aforementioned sections, the main text of the thesis can be constructed in one of the following formats:

- 1) Traditional. This format follows that of a manuscript where the thesis will have the following sections: Introduction (which serves a comprehensive literature review), Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, References.
- 2) Chapters. For this format, the thesis will contain an introduction (that serves a comprehensive literature review), chapters that correspond to individual specific aims of the thesis (that may each individually be manuscripts with an abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, and discussion sections), and a culminating comprehensive discussion tying the chapters together.

Thesis text should be double spaced with 1.5 inch margins on the left, and at least 1 inch margins on the top, bottom, and right sides. Pages should be consecutively numbered beginning with the signature page.

Use of one of the following fonts (10 point to 12 point) with black ink is preferred:

Times New Roman

Arial

Helvetica

Calibri

Courier New

Figures should consist of electronic images imbedded into the final document. The final draft of the thesis should be submitted to the committee at least 21 calendar days prior to the scheduled thesis defense. For May graduation, students should submit the final draft of their thesis to their committee members no later than the first week of April. Non-compliance will result in a delayed graduation date.

### **Defense**

Upon completion of course requirements and the thesis, MS candidates must pass an oral thesis defense. During this defense, committee members may ask questions pertaining but not limited to the research design of the thesis, interpretation of results, methodology used, and knowledge of the subject matter.

Successful thesis defense requires signatures from all members of the committee.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

All MA students must complete a written comprehensive examination in the field of biological sciences. This exam will be composed of questions that encompass many of the subdisciplines of the biological sciences including (but not limited to) molecular biology, cell biology, biochemistry, ecology, organismal biology, and genetics. Questions for this exam will be developed by a committee of biology faculty (at least three individuals) and approved by the biology graduate program director. Successful completion of the graduate program in biology requires a GPA of 3.0 or higher and a comprehensive examination score of 75% or higher. Students may take the comprehensive examination a total of two times to achieve or surpass the minimum score.

## **CURRICULUM GUIDE**

Curriculum guides for the traditional MS, MA, 3+2, and Zoo Sci options can be accessed through these links:

**MS in Biology (traditional):**

[http://westliberty.edu/mamsbiology/files/2017/05/MS\\_Bio\\_Trad.2017.pdf](http://westliberty.edu/mamsbiology/files/2017/05/MS_Bio_Trad.2017.pdf)

**MA in Biology:**

[http://westliberty.edu/mamsbiology/files/2017/05/MA\\_Bio\\_Trad.2017.pdf](http://westliberty.edu/mamsbiology/files/2017/05/MA_Bio_Trad.2017.pdf)

**MAB (Biomedical Science Major):**

[https://westliberty.edu/mamsbiology/files/2018/03/MA\\_Bio\\_Biomedical\\_2018.pdf](https://westliberty.edu/mamsbiology/files/2018/03/MA_Bio_Biomedical_2018.pdf)

**MS in Biology (3+2):**

[http://westliberty.edu/mamsbiology/files/2017/05/32MS\\_Bio.2017.pdf](http://westliberty.edu/mamsbiology/files/2017/05/32MS_Bio.2017.pdf)

**ASSIGNMENT/COURSE COMPONENTS**

It's important to familiarize yourself with SAKAI, WLU's LMS early in the process. An online **SAKAI 11 Student Guide** ([https://longsight.screenstepslive.com/s/sakai\\_help/m/59830](https://longsight.screenstepslive.com/s/sakai_help/m/59830)) is available to help answer your questions.

For additional SAKAI questions, specific to the MA/MS in Biology, please contact: [arose@westliberty.edu](mailto:arose@westliberty.edu) or call 304 336-8180. These are monitored during non-work hours.

The analysis and application assignments are major performance assessments in all courses. The assignments are research-based, practical, and relevant projects to apply immediately in your current or future work setting.

**ACADEMIC GUIDELINES**

Successful completion of the graduate program in biology requires a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Biology graduate students are required to earn "A", "B", and no more than 6 credit hours of "C" grades. "C" grades beyond the 6 credit hours and any grade below a "C" may not be applied to the total hours for graduation, but will be used to calculate GPA.

Students who earn a GPA below 3.0 **at any time** during enrollment will be academically dismissed from the biology graduate program. Regardless of GPA, students who have collected more than 6 combined course credits for which they have earned a C, W, WP, WF, D, F, or FI will be academically dismissed from the biology graduate program.

Final grades are usually available through Wins after a term/course end date.



Good Standing is defined as 3.0 GPA or better and progressing towards graduation during the allotted timeframe.

Appeals to dismissal will follow the university guidelines outlined in the graduate catalog.

Criteria of Appeal: a. A student, who believes that his/her suspension, probation, or dismissal either from the Institution or from an Academic Program was based on inadequate evidence or prejudicial judgment, may appeal this action in writing to the Program Director within ten (10) working days of the receipt of such notification. b. The Program Director may establish a meeting with the student and other faculty members with whom the Program Director needs to consult to discuss the appeal. The Program Director will make a recommendation to the College Dean. c. The College Dean will deliver a decision within five (5) working days by certified mail to the student with copies to the Registrar, the student's advisor, the Program Director, and the Provost. d. If the decision is not satisfactory, the student may request, in writing, a hearing before the Appeals Committee. This written request is to be sent to the Provost within five (5) working days of receipt of the College Dean's decision. e. The Provost will convene the Appeals Committee, which will be composed of three (3) faculty members and two (2) students, none of whom may be from the Department or College involved.

Any student who has been dismissed from the MA/MS in Biology Program must sit out at least three semesters following their final academic term at West Liberty University before seeking re-admission. Students who desire re-admission into the program must apply through the university application portal and provide the necessary materials required for consideration. In addition, the student must detail in their cover letter how they have improved academically and professionally during the time following their dismissal.

### **Incompletes**

Incompletes will not be given for late work submissions. In extenuating circumstances, an incomplete (I) may be an option. The program director will authorize the instructor's request. At the time of the request, a firm deadline for completion of the work will be agreed upon in writing by the instructor, the student, and the program director. Failure to complete the course work by the stated deadline will not result in an extension, rather a 0 will be given for the work. Typically, incompletes are only given when the student has performed well in the class and in the last week of the classes something happened that did not allow the student to complete the class.

### **Grade Change**

In rare situations, computational or technical errors may occur with posting grades. When this occurs, a faculty member or program director can initiate an official grade change after official grades are posted. Grades may also be changed from an "I" to an earned grade.

## **ACADEMIC WARNING**

Students who earn below a 3.0 GPA will be immediately dismissed from the Biology graduate program. There is no academic warning or probation policy. Faculty may provide guidance and advise students who receive substandard grades following the midterm period of their first semester.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students are expected to adhere to the code of conduct outlined in the University Student Handbook.

## **RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH**

Biology graduate students are expected to complete training on conducting research responsibly, laboratory safety, and bloodborne pathogens. All training modules must be completed before students may begin laboratory courses or thesis research. Safety training modules can be found here: <https://westliberty.edu/health-and-safety/health-safety-training/>

Students who violate laboratory safety practices, guidelines, and/or laws may be subject to suspension and/or dismissal from the program.

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

Students are expected to act in a professional manner while enrolled in the biology graduate program. Students are expected to attend all classes, to take exams on the dates designated in the course syllabus, and to treat others with dignity and respect. Approval of the professor is required for missing class or exams. Students should not engage in unprofessional behaviors including but not limited to harassing the faculty or staff at West Liberty, pestering professors for additional points or bonus work, disruptions during class, and tardiness to name a few. Infractions in student professionalism may result in their dismissal from the program.

# **Offices and Services**

**SHORTCUT for Helpful Links:** <http://westliberty.edu/go-wlu/>

## **ENROLLMENT SERVICES**

**Registrar's Office** <http://westliberty.edu/registrar>

Location: Shaw Hall, Room 121

Hours: Monday-Friday / 8 am – 4 pm

Telephone: (304)336-8007

Fax: (304)336-8220

E-mail: [WLUREG1@westliberty.edu](mailto:WLUREG1@westliberty.edu)

The Registrar's Office coordinates course registration and maintains academic records for all students. All academic records (grades, transcripts, etc.) are maintained in the Registrar's Office. Any changes in degree program, advisor, telephone number and address must be processed through the Registrar's Office. The following services are also performed by the Registrar's Office staff:

- Graduation Certification
- Transcript Requests
- Transient Approval to take Courses at another college or university
- Athletic Certification
- Enrollment and Degree Verification
- Veteran's Certification
- Registration
- Assistance with WINS

**Financial Aid Office** <http://westliberty.edu/financial-aid/>

Location: Shaw Hall, Room 121

Hours: Monday-Friday / 8 am – 4 pm

Telephone: (304)336-8016

Fax: (304)336-8088

E-mail: [finaid@westliberty.edu](mailto:finaid@westliberty.edu)

This office processes all federal, state, and institutional financial aid for enrolled students. All students receiving financial aid (grants, loans, work-study or scholarships) will receive an institutional award letter. **Please contact them directly for more information about financial aid opportunities for graduate students.**

**Office of Student Services**

Location: Shaw Hall, Room 107

Hours: Monday-Friday 8am – 4 pm

Telephone: (304) 336-8343

Fax: (304) 336-8220

E-mail: [dbush@westliberty.edu](mailto:dbush@westliberty.edu) or [cookscot@westliberty.edu](mailto:cookscot@westliberty.edu)

The Office of Student Services supervises the Division of Student Services, in addition to Enrollment Services, which includes the following departments: Health Services, Housing and Student Life, the Learning & Student Development Center, and the College Union. The Office of Student Services is available to assist students on any student related issue.

**NOTE: ENROLLMENT SERVICES** will accept and process student

payments. You may also use the **e-Accounts link** on the <http://westliberty.edu/go-wlu/> website to make your payment.

### **BUSINESS OFFICE**

(<http://westliberty.edu/business-office>) Location:

Shaw Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

Hours: Monday-Friday 8 am – 4 pm

Telephone: (304)336-8013

Fax: (304)336-8312

E-mail: [businessoffice@westliberty.edu](mailto:businessoffice@westliberty.edu)

The following student services are subdivisions of the Business Office.

#### **Student Billing**

The Business Office is responsible for the electronic billing of all charges assessed to each student account. **Payment in full is due 10 days before the first day of class for each semester.** Payment in full is due prior to the first day of class for each summer term. Late fees will be assessed to accounts if payments or prior arrangements have not been made before the first day of classes.

Web payments can be made via your WINS account or the Business Office webpage or check payments can be sent directly to the Business Office. Please refer to the Business Office webpage for information on payment plan options.

#### **Financial Aid Disbursements**

The Business Office distributes Financial Aid and/or loans to each student account. All residual monies are then refunded to the student through our partner United Bank. Please refer to the Business Office webpage for additional information on refunds.

**As a graduate student in an online WLU graduate program, you are offered the same services and opportunities as those attending on campus. The following information may be helpful.**

### **CAMPUS LIFE AND COLLEGE UNION**

**OFFICE** (<http://www.westliberty.edu/college-union>) Location: College Union, Lower

Level

Telephone: 304.336.8273

Hours: Monday – Friday / 8 am – 4 pm; evening hours by request

E-mail: [michelle.stack@westliberty.edu](mailto:michelle.stack@westliberty.edu)

The College Union Office houses many services, including the University mailroom and the Topper Card Office. Functioning as the main office for the College Union, we oversee the building and take care of reserving facilities within the Union, Quad and Chapel. To make a reservation, please stop by our office or email us at [colleageunion@westliberty.edu](mailto:colleageunion@westliberty.edu).

### **Mailroom**

The College Union Office houses the University mailroom, where employees and residential students pick up their mail (at this time, we unfortunately do not offer mailboxes to students living off campus). We receive daily deliveries from USPS, UPS, and FedEx; we then sort mail into corresponding employee or student boxes. All residential students are encouraged to check their mailboxes regularly, as University departments use our 'campus mail' service quite frequently. You can also drop off your outgoing mail here, with the correct postage already placed on the item, to be delivered.

### **Topper Card (optional)**

A Topper Card, which is your University-issued student I.D., is your all-around access card. It is your identification card that will get you into your residence hall, classrooms that have swipe access, your meal card for both the Marketplace Cafeteria and the restaurants in the College Union. It can also be used like a pre- paid card: when you put Topper Dollars on your Topper card, it can then be used in the Bookstore, at Subway, and the vending and laundry machines.

The Topper Card Office is located within the College Union Office. We can take your picture, print your card, and add Topper Dollars to your card. We can also see your balance of Sodexo Dollars and Topper Dollars. If you lose your Topper Card, we can freeze the card to make sure it is not used; we can also issue you a replacement card for a small fee.

### **BOOK STORE**

(<http://westliberty.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?catalogId=10001&storeId=51055&langId=-1>) – you may order online

Location: College Union – Basement

CUB 107

Phone: 304.336.8211

Fax: 304.336.8336

### **LEARNING AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

(<http://westliberty.edu/lcdc/>) Location: Main Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> floor East Wing

Hours: Monday – Friday / 8 am – 4 pm; evening hours by request  
Telephone: (304) 336-8018  
Fax: (304) 336-8363  
E-mail: [bdawson@westliberty.edu](mailto:bdawson@westliberty.edu)

The Learning and Student Development Center is a one-stop shop for counseling, career, tutoring and accessibility services.

### **Tutoring Services**

Tutoring is provided by upper class student tutors who have received training so that they may successfully provide assistance to students in specific academic areas. These tutors excel in the subject that they are tutoring and are recommended by professors at West Liberty University.

In order to be assigned a tutor, students should contact the Developmental Advising Specialist located in Main Hall or by phone at (304) 336-8126. Students will receive an appointment time with a qualified tutor. Tutors are available to:

- Explain course material in which assistance is needed
- Assist with test preparation
- Assist with research paper design
- Assist in improving note taking, test preparation, test taking and time management skills.

Once a tutor is assigned, the student and tutor may meet as often as needed. It is recommended that students request assistance early in the semester, as studies show that early intervention is especially helpful for academic success. A number of workshops are provided throughout the semester on various topics related to academic success. These include: time management, study skills, and test anxiety.

For additional information about tutoring services call (304) 336-8185.

### **Personal Counseling**

College is a period of great personal growth. Frequently, students are challenged with becoming self-sustaining adults, building satisfying friendships, negotiating conflict, making responsible decisions, clarifying values, and establishing an individual identity, anxiety, alcohol and drug use, depression, eating disorders, and traumatic life experience(s).

Many students make use of counseling to assist them with their personal development. The counseling process helps students learn more about themselves, identify coping strategies, and emerge with enhanced self-confidence. The Counseling Service provides students with assistance and support to function optimally with regard to emotional, academic, social and psychological issues.

Students experiencing personal problems are encouraged to contact the Learning and Student Development Center located in Main Hall, Room 139 or call (304) 336-8215 to schedule an appointment with a counselor.

### **Accessibility Services**

Assistance is offered to any student with a qualified disability. Following the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Learning and Student Development Center staff members are available to arrange reasonable accommodations for students. A student who recognizes that his or her academic and/or campus activities are limited are in some way restricted due to a mobility, visual, hearing, learning, or psychological disability should contact the Developmental Advising Specialist located in Main Hall, Room 144. The purpose of these services is to encourage and enable all students an equal opportunity within the college setting.

### **Career Services**

Career Services is committed to assisting students and alumni in designing an individualized portfolio that incorporates aspects of leadership and career development. In this developmental process, students are encouraged to develop their potential by gaining experiences and skills through the academic environment, campus involvement, volunteering/service activities, internship opportunities, and career exploration. The ultimate goal is for students and alumni to be able to successfully conduct their own self-directed job search as well as manage their goals into viable career objectives. Services provided through this office include:

- Leadership and career/interest inventories
- Career workshops/classroom presentations Internship exploration/identification
- Resource center and reference library
- Job vacancy listing
- On-campus interview opportunities/ Job fair/ graduate school fairs
- Graduate school catalogs and test registration materials
- Job search assistance

### **LIBRARY** (<http://westliberty.edu/library/>)

Location: Paul N. Elbin Library (main floor and upper level) Hours: Monday-Thursday 8 am-11pm  
Friday 8am-4pm  
Saturday 12pm-4pm Sunday 5pm-11pm  
Telephone: (304) 336-8035

The Library endorses the core values of West Liberty University: Student-centered

Caring  
Professionalism  
Commitment to excellence through continuous improvement.

The Library supports the curriculum of the University through its acquisition and preservation of informational resources in all academic areas. A professional librarian is available to help with informational needs and able to access the most current print and digital resources.

Students may access most library resources via the Internet at: <http://westliberty.edu/library/>

**TOPPERCAT**—online catalog of books at the library **Databases**—access thousands of full-text journals, newspapers, legal documents

**For remote/online access to databases, please contact the library for the current (changes annually) login information.**

Other services include:

- Wireless access
- Computer lab
- Technology project development room
- Digital imaging capability
- Copy center
- Library and research instruction
- Interlibrary loan
- Movies
- West Liberty University Special Collections

The Paul N. Elbin Library provides interlibrary loan service so that current WLU staff, faculty and students may obtain research materials that the WLU library does not own or have access to. This service is governed by the American Library Association's Interlibrary Loan Code and the US Copyright Revision Act of 1976 (17. United States Code. 101 et seq.) and its amendments.

Materials will be borrowed from and loaned to libraries that are members of groups which the WLU library has joined. WLU library staff will attempt to borrow materials from libraries that do not charge for loans. In the event that there is a charge for borrowing an item, the patron will be informed via email in order to obtain permission.

Materials that have been borrowed from other libraries that have not been returned by the due date may incur an overdue fine.

Patrons who have items overdue will have their interlibrary loan privileges



and access to library reference services revoked. Students will have a financial hold placed on their account, which prevents future enrollment and release of transcripts.

Patrons who submit a request agree to copyright laws and library policies.

### **LIBRARY ONLINE REFERENCE**

The Paul N. Elbin Library staff provide online reference services via email requests. A response will usually be sent within 48 hours from receipt of the email.

### **WELLNESS CENTER**

Located on main floor of ASRC

Normal Hours of Operation (during Academic Year)

Monday 7am – 10pm

Tuesday 7am – 10pm

Wednesday 7 am – 10pm

Thursday 7 am – 10pm

Friday 7 am – 10pm

Saturday 10 am – 4pm

Sunday 1 pm – 10pm

Summer Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 10 am – 7pm

### **Identification Required for Access**

Students, Faculty and Staff who have a WLU Topper Card will be required to present their Topper Card at the front desk of the facility and sign in with the Wellness Center monitor on duty at the time of their entry. They will then be returned their Topper Card when they exit as they sign out the time they leave the facility. These measures help to ensure the safety of our guests.

For members of the campus and local community who may not have a Topper Card, you may request a guest pass (<http://westliberty.edu/student-life/wcquest/> ).

### **Additional Safety Features**

In addition to requiring identification for access, the Wellness Center will be monitored at all times that it is open by a trained student monitor. There are cameras installed for security purposes and door access controls. These measures help the University to keep the Wellness Center guests safe, and also to keep the facility well-maintained. Wellness Center monitors will be responsible for basic cleaning of equipment throughout the day. Additionally, antibacterial wipes will be on hand for guests to utilize as well.

### **Equipment**

The Wellness Center currently has several cardiorespiratory machines, including treadmills, stair climb machines, elliptical machines, and stationary bikes. The facility also has several weight machines and free weights, including dumb bells, kettle bells, and weight plates for barbells.

**HEALTH SERVICES** (<http://www.westliberty.edu/health-services/>)

The Health Service staff provides personal medical care to all full-time students (residents and commuters) on both an appointment and walk-in basis. By emphasizing health, not just the treatment of disease or injury, a high level of outpatient care is offered to meet the needs of young adults. Preventive health care information is presented to students through educational programming and activities, the distribution of educational literature, and one-to-one counseling. All treatment, medications, supplies, tests, and services are provided free of charge to WLU students.

The primary mission of the West Liberty University Health Service is to enable you to take full advantage of your academic experience by maintaining and improving your health. Please contact them for more information about their services.

**Nurse Available:**

Monday through Friday  
7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Physician Available on campus:**

Monday through Friday  
7 a.m. to 8 a.m. (schedule subject to change)

The physicians are also available at Doctors Urgent Care  
(<http://www.westliberty.edu/health-services/doctors-urgent-care/> )

**Signature Page**

All Biology graduate students must print, sign, and return the signature page to Dr. Joseph Horzempa c/o Ms. Bree Blum, 208 Arnett Hall.

I have read, and understand the MA/MS in Biology Program Handbook.

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(printed name)

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(signature)

(date)