

Biology 490R Guidelines

The Biology Program encourages students to include Independent Study (Biology 490R) in their program of study in Biology. Up to six credits of Biology 490R can be applied to meet their upper-level biology course requirements. To register for Biology 490R students must first identify an instructor (typically a faculty member in EEOB or GDCB) who is willing to serve in that role. Assistance in identifying Biology 490R instructors can be obtained from the student's academic advisor.

Time Requirements

Biology 490R credits are considered to be equivalent to "laboratory" credits. Therefore, the minimum time commitment expectation is 30-45 hours (e.g., 2-3 hours per week for the 15 weeks of a semester) per credit. Students can register for up to a maximum of 4 credits of Biology 490R in a given semester.

Options

There are two options for earning Biology 490R credits: 1) Participating in a laboratory or field research project; and 2) Doing library research on a topic of mutual interest between the student and the instructor.

Laboratory or Field Research Project (1-4 credits)

The student works on a research project under the supervision of their Biology 490R instructor or an appropriate person designated by the Biology 490R instructor. The work carried out by the student should include a substantial component of actual research and not be limited to chores such as washing glassware or cleaning field equipment. The student should provide a final report of their activities in writing, an oral presentation, or a poster presentation.

Library Research Project (1-2 credits)

The student works, under the supervision of their Biology 490R instructor, to do library research on a topic of mutual interest. The minimum requirement for the scale of the library research project is the production of a 15-page paper with at least 15 references. The references should primarily consist of primary research papers. It is strongly recommended that production of the paper should include review by the Biology 490R instructor of at least one draft of the paper before accepting a final product.

Registration and Deadlines

Ideally students will register for Biology 490R credits at the beginning of the semester, though other options may be possible. Deadlines for the submission of first drafts, final reports, etc., are set by the Biology 490R instructor, in consultation with the student.