



Department of Natural Sciences

Undergraduate Handbook

Fall 2025

Department of Natural Sciences: Policies & Procedures

I. Undergraduate Program Overview

Department of Natural Sciences offers Bachelor's degree programs in Biology & Life Sciences and Chemistry. Biology & Life Sciences program equips students with the knowledge and skills required to pursue master's and doctoral programs in biology. The Applied Sciences concentration under Biology and Life Sciences program is designed for students who are interested in pursuing professional programs in medicine, pharmacy and physician assistant. The Chemistry program offers concentrations in Biochemistry and Computational Chemistry. Natural Sciences programs prepare students for employment in research labs in Universities and Federal and State agencies, and in pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and chemical industries.

Contact information:

- Dr. Mintesinot Jiru, Chair; Email mjiru@coppin.edu Phone: 410-951-4139
- Dr. Kavita Hegde, Biology & Life Sciences, Undergraduate Program Coordinator; Email: khegde@coppin.edu Phone: 410-951-4137
- Dr. Fred Nesbitt, Chemistry, Undergraduate Program Coordinator; Email: FNesbitt@coppin.edu Phone: 410-951-4119

Department of Natural Sciences: Policies & Procedures

II. Academic advising and grade policies: <https://catalog.coppin.edu/index.php?catoid=13>

- **Advising:**
Advising for up to 59 credits will be primarily at Eagle Achievement Center (EAC). Students must consult their faculty advisor at least twice/semester after they declare their major. Faculty advisor will be assigned by the department upon declaration of major.
Academic hold will be removed only after advising for the next semester is completed. Students will receive updated checklists from the department at the beginning of every semester to help with course selection for the upcoming semester.
Students must schedule appointments with the faculty advisor. Departmental Administrative Assistant may be contacted for further direction if faculty advisor is not available.
- **Permission code:** registration for specific courses may require permission code which will be available from the departmental AA upon approval by the faculty advisor and the course instructor.
- **Student credit hour load:**
The normal load of work allowed ranges from 15-18 credit hours/semester. Less than 12 credits are considered less than a full load. A full-time student with a cumulative GPA of ≥ 3.0 can take up to 21 credits upon approval by the Department Chair, Dean and Provost.
- **Minimum grade requirements for passing GER, English 101 and 102, and major area courses:**
“D” is considered a passing grade for all GER courses except ENGL 101 & 102 and MATH 131 (GER category-IV) where “C” is a passing grade.
Science majors (biology & chemistry) who are taking BIOL 106 and CHEM 101 in GER category-V must receive a minimum of “C” to pass these courses. A minimum of “C” is required to pass all core, electives, and supporting courses.
- **Permission to enroll in courses outside CSU:** A student who wishes to take courses at other institutions for the purpose of receiving transfer credits must obtain approval by the Department Chair to take courses at another institution. The student must ensure that the course description matches the one offered at CSU. The form “Permission to Enroll at Another Institution” must be completed with appropriate signatures and submitted to the department Chair. All science courses taken at other institutions must be face-to-face format; hybrid format may be permitted only upon its approval. Online/virtual courses are not permitted.

Department of Natural Sciences: Policies & Procedures

- **Course substitution:** Some biology and chemistry GER courses for non-science majors may be substituted with equivalent courses when a student changes the major to biology or chemistry. CHEM 103, Chemistry for Health Sciences, will be considered equivalent to CHEM 101 General Chemistry-I. Students transferring from other Institutions must get their transfer credits pertaining to their major evaluated by the department Chair.
- **Incomplete “I” grade policy:** In the event of extenuating situations, including medical reasons, which prevents a student from attending class after having completed 40% of the coursework, a student can request an “I” grade after discussion with the course instructor and department Chair. The “I” grade request form must be submitted by the student with the required signatures, along with documents supporting specific reasons such as doctor’s certificate, before the final grades are entered on Eagle Links. The student must ensure completion of the remaining coursework with passing of the required exams/labs in the semester immediately following the “I” grade semester. “I” grade will convert to “FTC” grade if the above is not followed, and this will eventually convert to an “F” in the transcript.
- **Change of grade:** An instructor may change a grade already submitted to the Office of Records and Registration only after approval by the department head and the appropriate dean. A grade change, along with a written justification, must be submitted no later than four weeks into the semester after the semester in which the grade was originally submitted. Once students’ degrees have been awarded, grades cannot be changed.
- **Class attendance policy:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. The Institutional Undergraduate Class Attendance Policy (IUCAP) allows students to have a specified number of unexcused absences: students are allowed unexcused absences up to 2 times the number of lecture hours/week for a course. A student exceeding the allowed number of unexcused absences may receive a grade of AW or FX based on unsatisfactory class attendance; this grade is irreversible. The course Instructor determines whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

Student absences to participate in official university activities: Students who are absent from classes due to official University activities shall be deemed to be excused from those classes. Students are responsible for making up the missed work. Students shall not be excused from more classes than the University attendance policy allows for unexcused absences (see above).

FX policy: Students exceeding the limit of the allowed absences will receive an FX grade, which is equivalent to an “F”.

- **Limit to retaking of courses:** maximum 3 times; students will be required to meet their faculty advisor to discuss options

Department of Natural Sciences reserves the right to modify this document as and when necessary.

Department of Natural Sciences: Policies & Procedures

- **Department Honor List:** Criteria for inclusion in the Department of Natural Sciences Honor list are as follows: Cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher; full-time biology and/or chemistry major, no grades of “D”, “F”, or “CS” or “I”.
- **Withdrawal from a course:** A student may withdraw from a course during the first 10 weeks of any given semester. Exact dates governing withdrawal from a course appear in the University academic calendar.
- **Grade appeal:** A student may appeal a grade if he/she believes that the grade that has been given is not reflective of their Course work. The Grade Review Form may be submitted to the Professor by the prescribed date on the Academic Calendar. The Grade Review Form is located on the Registrar’s webpage. For more details, please refer to <https://catalog.coppin.edu/index.php?catoid=13>
- **Regulations regarding academic standing:** As per the University policy governing academic probation, suspension and dismissal, the minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) to maintain satisfactory progress is 2.0. A student who falls below the level required for good academic standing is subject to the following actions: Academic Alert, Probation, Suspension and Dismissal. Details are available in Coppin State University catalog.

III. Graduation procedures:

- **Graduation requirements:**
Students will apply for graduation using the graduation application form if they have registered for all required courses of the program. The form must be signed by the student, academic advisor, and the department Chair before submitting the form for Dean’s signature.
Deadlines for submitting this form are as follows:
Summer graduation: First week of May
Fall graduation: First week of October
Spring graduation: First week of February
- **Capstone courses-Seminar I and II, and Thesis:** Students majoring in the sciences (Biology & Chemistry) must successfully complete Seminar I and II, the capstone courses, during their senior year, which require conducting hands-on research mentored by faculty over Fall and Spring of their senior year. Students must submit a written thesis of their research and present their research in the department. Approval of their written thesis and successful presentation are requirements for students to pass Seminar I and II and for graduation.
Minimum requirement to register for Seminar I is 90 credits.

Department of Natural Sciences: Policies & Procedures

- **Participation in commencement:**

The University holds a commencement ceremony in the spring. Students who complete their graduation requirements in the summer, fall, winter and spring will participate in the spring ceremony.

For details, refer to:

<https://catalog.coppin.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=532#requirements-for-graduation>