**Frequently Asked Questions – BIOLOGY 299**

**1. What is BIOLOGY 299 - Research Opportunity Program?**

BIOL 299 was created to give students, who are relatively early in their academic careers (recommended credits completed: \*30 to \*60), a chance to participate in biological research “outside the classroom” in a laboratory or field setting. The course is “low stakes” and flexible. No letter grade is assigned. It is worth only \*1.5 credits, thus the minimum number of hours required per week for successful completion of a BIOL 299 project, 3 – 4 hours per week, is about half of the minimum investment expected for most courses in Biological Sciences. The first step required to register in BIOL 299 is to find a project supervisor (see point 2 below).

Generally, students who are further along in their academic careers (>\*60 credits completed, third-year students) , especially those who have completed courses in Biological Sciences beyond the Core Courses (BIOL 107, 108, 207, 208), should consider enrolling in BIOL 398 if they want a one-term research experience.

**2. How do I find a research position that will allow me to register in BIOL 299?**

You must find a project supervisor who is a faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences. If you need some suggestions, visit the “FIND A SUPERVISOR” page on the Department of Biological Sciences website:

<http://www.biology.ualberta.ca/programs/graduate/find_a_supervisor/>

There you will find a listing of a wide range of biological disciplines and the names of faculty members who work in those areas. Contact faculty who are working on topics that interest you and ask if they are willing to supervise a BIOL 299 student and what possible projects might entail.

Once you have found a supervisor, he/she will work with you to develop a project, complete a registration form (available on the course website), and submit the form electronically or as a hard copy to the course coordinator (listed on the course website and as the instructor for BIOL 299 on Bear Tracks). When the coordinator approves the project by signing the registration form, take the form to CW-312 BioSci Bldg (Student Services) and staff there will grant permission for registration in BIOL 299 for one term.

**3. Can I have a supervisor who is not a faculty member in Biological Sciences?**

No. All Biology 299 projects must be sponsored by a faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences who will act as the sole academic supervisor. As a BIOL 299 student you may interact and work with graduate students and post-doctoral fellows who are members of a professor’s lab group, but these researchers cannot serve as official project supervisors nor can professors from other departments or faculties.

**4. Does Biology 299 count for degree credit?**

Typically, a single term of Biology 299 (1.5 units of course weight) counts extra to a student’s degree. If taken twice (for a total of 3.0 units of course weight) BIOL 299 can be used as a Biological Sciences course in a wide variety of programs on campus. Check with your advisor how BIOL 299 would fit in your program before registering. Remember, it is an ungraded course and students are awarded either Credit or No Credit.

**5. Can BIOL 299 be taken more than once?**

Yes, it can be taken twice. A student may wish to arrange two different projects, in two different terms. It is also possible to continue working in a single professor’s lab on the same project for an additional term, subject to the recommendation of the sponsoring professor. This would necessitate registering again for the second Biology 299 (i.e., it is not automatic).

BIOL 299 can be taken in the Fall, Winter, Spring or Summer term.

**6. What is expected of students who enroll in Biology 299?**

Students should expect to work 3-4 hours a week on their project during the Fall or Winter term. If students are involved with a project during the Spring or Summer term, they should expect to work 6-8 hours a week for 6 weeks because of the condensed schedule. As is the case with most research, there may be some weeks that require more hours while others will require less. Students may be asked to do background reading for their projects in addition to the actual research time in a lab. They may also be asked to attend lab meetings or seminars on campus. The student and faculty member will draft a schedule and/or contract specifying the goals, expected activities and final products of each project.

**7. How will I measure my progress in Biology 299 during the term?**

Students should meet with the faculty member sponsoring the project regularly (e.g., weekly). As well, the faculty member will provide the student with a written assessment of progress and performance to date (~2 pages in length) and discuss this assessment with the student before the deadline for dropping courses.

**8. How will I be assessed in BIOL 299?**

Before the last day of classes, faculty members sponsoring BIOL 299 students are required to submit a BIOL 299 Final Assessment Form to the course coordinator. This form consists of a series of standardized questions evaluating various aspects of student performance on a scale from 1 to 5, as well as space for additional written comments by the supervisor. The supervisor will make a recommendation to the course coordinator of the assignment of credit (or no credit) on this form.

Any conflicts between a student and a supervisor regarding expectations, performance, assessment, etc. in BIOL 299 will be mediated by the course coordinator.

**9. Can successful completion of BIOL 299 be used toward the Research Certificate in Science (Biological Sciences)?**

No. BIOL 299 cannot be used toward fulfillment of project-course requirements associated with the Research Certificate in Biological Sciences. Students interested in obtaining this certificate should explore enrolling in BIOL 298 (Understanding Biological Research) which is a graded, 3 credit course.