Biology

Foundational Courses and Placement

The majority of students interested in the biological sciences begin with the foundational sequence of biology courses, consisting of four half-term modules:

- BIOL 101, Biochemistry and Biophysics
- BIOL 102, Principles of Cell Biology
- BIOL 103, Genetics and Development
- BIOL 104, Principles of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Students with an exceptionally strong background in the experimental and conceptual underpinnings of the biological sciences may be exempt from one or more of the biology modules after demonstrating proficiency on a placement exam.

To be eligible to take the biology placement exams, students must be an incoming first-year student and have received a score of 5 on the AP Biology exam, or a score of 7 on the IB biology higher-level exam, or a score of A on the GCE biology A-level exam, or a score of a 720 on both the SAT II Chemistry and SAT II Molecular Biology Tests, or the equivalent on other national standardized exams.

Each module in the foundational biology sequence has its own placement exam. Students may take all four placement exams or any subset of their choice. Students who take the exams will receive notification of their placement on Canvas prior to the beginning of fall term.

The four half-term modules are designed to give all students, from those with little background, to those with some experience, a thorough introduction to modern experimental biology. These modules provide a robust overview of advances in each subfield, as well as train students in critical thinking skills, including interpreting scientific data, developing analytical skills, and understanding of experimental approaches. In addition, students gain experience in designing and writing an original scientific research paper. These skill sets go well beyond what is covered in most high school AP courses. Students with little background in the biological sciences receive additional support through a series of supplemental enrichment sessions.

The goal of these modules is to prepare all students with an interest in the biological sciences for a wide array of upper-level courses from the four bioscience tracks (E&EB, MB&B, MCDB, and NSCI) offered at Yale. Furthermore, through exposure to the range of biological questions and experimental approaches in each subfield, students are afforded the opportunity to make an informed decision regarding their major of choice.

For more information about BIOL 101–104, see under Majors in the Biological Sciences and Biomedical Engineering in the YCPS.

Access to the Placement Examinations

The biology placement exams will be available online from July 1 to August 15. During this time period, log into Canvas with your NetID and password. Once you have logged into Canvas:

1. Click on the site called 2018 Placement Results (BIOL, CHEM, ECON, MATH, PHYS).
2. After entering this site, you will be brought to a page listing five disciplines. Click on Biology.
3. After clicking on Biology, you will be brought to a page with further instructions on how to navigate Canvas to access the biology placement exams. Please read these instructions carefully.

Contact the BIOL 101–104 course coordinators and instructors, Samantha Lin (samantha.lin@yale.edu) or Julie Park (julie.park@yale.edu) with any questions about the foundational biology sequence or the biology placement exams.