

Salish Kootenai College Life Sciences Department Procedure Handbook Academic year 2025-2026

Introduction

Departmental procedure is provided as a guideline for faculty and students participating in the Life Sciences Department. This handbook outlines the requirements leading to graduating with a bachelor's degree in Life Sciences. Students and faculty who do not adhere to departmental procedures may be subject to dismissal from the program.

The sections discussed include: advising, course requirements, prerequisite guidelines, directed study requirements, incomplete requirements, and graduation requirements. The procedure handbook also outlines appropriate behavior for all students and faculty as reflected in the respectful learning environment focus of the Salish Kootenai College.

It is appropriate to read through the entire handbook prior to the academic school year to ensure all faculty and students are aware of the procedures in practice in the Life Sciences Department at the Salish Kootenai College.

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Advising

All faculty members in the Life Sciences Department are qualified to aid students in course advising toward their degree. It is important to note that students are required to be familiar with their graduation course catalog and to know the courses that they should be taking each quarter toward their graduation. Faculty are not responsible for graduation requirements, students must be responsible for their own course schedules. Faculty advisors are available to aid in the course scheduling; however, the responsibility of proper course adherence should be the student's priority.

Course scheduling should be done as soon as registration opens. Students should not wait to register. Students who wait to register may not be admitted into their desired courses. Students are expected to complete their course schedules from the catalog available online skc.smartcatalogiq.com. Faculty will then approve the schedules set by the students. Faculty may change the course schedules as appropriate prior to signing the schedule sheets for registration.

Students who register for courses without faculty approval may be removed from courses through the registration office.

Course schedules may change prior to the beginning of the next quarter dependent on the student passing the prerequisite courses. Students who do not pass their prerequisite courses will not be allowed into the next course and will be dropped from the course through the registration office. This policy is outlined in more detail in the **prerequisite courses section** of this handbook.

Course scheduling must adhere to the catalog requirements. All courses must be taken in their appropriate sequence. Students who do not take courses in sequence may be asked to retake the previous course in the sequence if a year or more has passed prior to the second or third course in the series. For example: General Chemistry, CHEM 150/151, 152/153, 154/155 is a series that must be taken in sequence. If a student does not pass CHEM 150/151, but did take 152/153 out of sequence, the student may be required to retake both CHEM 150/151 and 152/153 prior to entry into the 154/155 course to ensure the entire sequence is taken prior to moving to the next Chemistry sequence, Organic Chemistry CHEM 360/361, 362/363, 364/365. This policy extends to BIOS 233, 235, 237, LFSC 320, 330, 340, LFSC 420, 422, 424, and the graduating year senior courses LFSC 485A, 485B, 495 and LFSC 411, 452, and 454.

Course Requirements

Course requirements are outlined in each course syllabus. Each course syllabus will also reflect Life Sciences Departmental policy as discussed in this section.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory for all courses required for a B.S. in Life Sciences. Although not all courses will have a grade attached to attendance, it is expected that students will attend every class. It is reasonable to expect that external influences may impact attendance, such as transportation to SKC, weather events, medical issues and family issues. However, students are expected to ensure these events do not negatively impact their class attendance. Students are advised to plan their quarter to minimize missing classes. Do not schedule doctor, dentist, therapist, counseling or family events during class times. If one of the aforementioned appointments must be scheduled during a class period, the student is expected to bring a letter of justification from the appropriate party as to why the class must be missed and the student must complete all course activities/assignments/exams/quizzes prior to the scheduled event. If a student must miss a class due to an unexpected emergency or event out of their control, the student must bring proof of the unexpected emergency and complete all course activities/assignments/exams/quizzes within no more than 48 hours from the missed class. Exceptions may be made only if the student or direct family member is in the hospital for more than 48 hours. Absolutely no assignments/course activities may be submitted after the last day of classes in the quarter.

Attendance taking in every undergraduate class is mandatory. Your instructor will keep a record of your attendance in the form of a sign-in sheet, a daily quiz, an in-class participation such as a presentation or another activity that may only be completed during class time. Attendance may not make up more than 10% of a student's final grade.

Student alerts in the LS department are mandatory. If a student misses one week of classes an alert will be filed. Student/academic success will contact students even if the student has communicated the absence with the instructor. This is to aid the student for any needs and to ensure an institutional record of absences from LS classes.

Office Hours:

Office hours are NOT time to catch up on a missed lecture. If a student is absent, they may not use office hours for a make-up lecture time. Office hours are to supplement class time. Office hours are not a time to take a quiz, exam or complete an assignment. The instructor is not obligated to use office time to proctor exams, quizzes or repeat lectures.

Exams/Quizzes:

Exams/quizzes for courses must be taken on the day they are given and at the same time as the entire class unless there is an unexpected emergency. For midterm and final exams, unexpected emergencies must be medical in nature and must directly impact the student or an immediate family member (sibling, father, mother, spouse or child). Midterm and final exams that are missed due to a medical unexpected emergency must be taken within 48 hours of the originally scheduled exam. Proof must be provided to the instructor of the unexpected emergency. If a student experiences more than one missed exam in a quarter due to a medical unexpected emergency, the student may be asked to withdraw from the course. The student may then return to retake the class when life events permit. Absolutely no exams or quizzes may be taken after the last day of classes in the quarter. Unexpected events such as weather, car trouble or childcare issues that prevent a student from taking the exam at the scheduled time, do not qualify for the 48-hour

extended time period. The student must take the exam on the same day that it is given unless campus is closed due to a weather event. Students may be permitted to take the exam later in the day. Please note, this does not extend to all courses. Some courses may not allow for exams to be taken later in the day. Please check each course syllabus. Please inform the instructor immediately if an unexpected emergency has occurred and make every effort to arrive on campus for the scheduled exam. Plan ahead. Students should keep a detailed academic calendar of test dates. Students should put into place backup plans for test dates such as a backup babysitter and/or a backup ride to campus. Non-medical emergencies do not qualify for the 48-hour extended time therefore students are encouraged to have a backup plan for each test date.

All exams must be proctored by LS faculty or staff. No exams are allowed in the math lab.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments are not appropriate for college level education. Many of the courses for the Life Sciences Department do not accept late assignments. Some of the courses may make minimal exceptions. All Life Sciences students are expected to submit all assignments on time. Departmental policy dictates that no late assignments will be accepted unless specifically permitted in the course syllabus. Students that habitually submit late work will be subject to a departmental performance review. The performance review will examine the suitability for the student for the rigorous Life Sciences program and subsequent recommendations for graduate programs. Absolutely no assignments will be accepted after the last day of classes in the quarter.

Respectful Communication:

SKC and the Life Sciences Department promote a respectful and safe learning and working environment for all faculty and students. Respectful dialog is expected between all students and faculty. This policy extends to all forms of communication including: e-mail, phone conversations, in person conversations, in-class discussions, text messages, and all written assignments. Inappropriate or dis-respectful communication in any form will not be tolerated by SKC or the Life Sciences Department. In the case that a student or faculty member engages in dis-respectful communication, a report will be submitted to the Salish Kootenai College Human Resources Department. A contract will be completed with Human Resources oversight. The contract will stipulate that all communication must be of a respectful nature and any further infractions may result in a written official reprimand in the student or faculty member's permanent file, suspension for the quarter, and in extreme circumstances, termination of the student or faculty member from SKC. Please note, respectful communication extends outside of official academic hours.

Course Sequences:

Course sequences are important for academic integrity, to meet all prerequisites, and to ensure student success in progressively difficult courses. Course sequences must be met. Students may not take a successive course without passing with at least a C, the prior course. Students must pass both the lecture portion and the lab portion of a course before moving onto the next course. Students may not "make up" labs from a previous course in a successive sequence. Labs must be taken in conjunction with their lecture portion of the course. Instructors may not give permission for students to "course jump" or to "make up" portions of a previous course in the following quarter. Courses may only be taken in their offered quarter. Students out of sequence in a series course will be withdrawn from the series and must retake the entire series in sequence. This policy goes into effect for the academic year of 2019-2020. Any students already out of sequence in a series will have one year to take the appropriate classes to complete the series without having to repeat the entire sequence. After the 2019-2020 academic year, all Life Sciences students will be required to adhere to the course sequences policy as outlined above.

Grade Requirements:

All courses in the Life Sciences Degree program must have at least a C in all required courses for graduation as outlined in the SKC course catalog. Students have three attempts at upper division (300-400 level) Life Sciences departmental courses to pass with a C or better. Withdraws (W) do not count as one of the three attempts. If a student cannot pass a course after three attempts, the student will leave the program with an associate in General Sciences degree and not be eligible for the Bachelors of Life Sciences degree.

The Life Sciences degree program is designed to place students into graduate level programs for Ph.D. research or M.D. degree programs. Funding for the Life Sciences program is dependent on matriculation into graduate school programs and cannot sustain a program with an end bachelor of science degree. While not all students may matriculate into graduate programs, the academic rigor of the program must be upheld at a graduate level entry standard.

Electronics:

Cell phones must be stored at all times during class lecture, activities, and lab. Students are expected to plan ahead and have an alternate Emergency contact in place for class times. This means that if a student has children, they must have an alternate emergency contact for teachers, babysitters and daycare providers to contact when a student is in class. If a student is a caregiver, they must have an alternative emergency contact in place for class times. If there is absolutely no other contact during a class time and the student must have a phone available, they must inform the instructor prior to each class. However, if the phone becomes a distraction and the student repeatedly leaves class to attend phone calls, the student will be asked to store the phone or withdraw from the course until such time as they may devote their full attention to class.

Laptops may be open and accessible for students to use during class-time. However, if a student is on any social media, or working on anything not related to the current class they are in, the laptop must be stored and the student will be required to take all future notes by hand on notepaper.

Taking pictures of power-point slides may be permitted only if the student has documented sight issues that are filed with the SKC disability coordinator, Linda Pete. If taking pictures of power point lectures becomes disruptive to the lecture, the student will be asked to discontinue the practice and an alternative will be discussed.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Reasonable accommodations are provided for eligible students with identified disabilities. The College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students may contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Linda Pete, at 275-4968 linda_pete@skc.edu. Students with documented disabilities must present the instructor of each class on the first day that class is taken. If the student fails to inform the instructor of documented disabilities on the first day of class, the instructor is not obligated to accommodate the student for the course. Additionally, if the accommodations will result in the loss of class integrity or rigor, the instructor is not obligated to accommodate the student. Reasonable accommodations may be met by the instructor as long as class integrity and rigor is maintained. Reasonable accommodations for exams and quizzes must fall in line with departmental procedure. Students may not be allowed to take quizzes late and must take exams at the time offered. Extra time is not allowed for attendance-based quizzes. Extra time may be allowed for exams; however, the student must inform the instructor on the first day of class so that scheduling for a proctor may be completed. Students are not allowed to take exams in alternative locations unless they have written permission from the instructor and the Life Sciences Department head. Documentation must be provided for the reasonable accommodation from the disabilities coordinator.

Students are expected to complete the form (below) that will be attached to all Life Science course syllabuses if they require reasonable accommodations in addition to sharing the card provided by the SKC disabilities coordinator with their class instructor on the first day of class.

All accommodations must be organized 48 class day hours prior to the quiz/exam and must be taken at the same time as the regular class time scheduled. They may be taken in a quiet room or have longer time (1 and a half times). All accommodations require a LS proctor. No closed notes/book/computer exams or quizzes are allowed in the math lab.

*forms are found in the appendix of this document.

Prerequisite Courses

All prerequisite courses must be taken prior to entry into each course in the Life Sciences degree program. Advisors will check prerequisites in order to advise properly, however it is the student's responsibility to verify that all prerequisite courses have been taken prior to entry into a course. If it is found that a prerequisite course is missing, the instructor has the option to withdraw the student from the course. There are rare occasions in which an instructor may allow the student to continue the course without all the prerequisite courses met or to concurrently take the course and the prerequisite course. However, this exception does not apply to all 300 and 400 level LFSC courses. In the case that a student is enrolled in an LFSC 300 or 400 level course without meeting all of the prerequisite courses, they will be dropped or withdrawn from the course at the earliest date possible. Students are encouraged to consult the catalog to ensure they have met all prerequisite courses in order to maintain their course schedules.

Directed Study

Directed study is an option for students who must take two courses that overlap due to scheduling conflicts. A directed study form must be filled out by the student and the instructors and approved by the Life Sciences Department Head prior to quarter course enrollment. Directed study only applies if the overlap is minimal (not to exceed 20 min). If the overlapping courses exceed 20 min, then the Directed study form will not be approved and the student will be required to take their courses at a different time. All Directed Study courses must be completed within the quarter and all assignments and tests must be completed by the last day of classes. A Directed Study is not an extended period of time to take a course. It is only to be used for accommodation of scheduling conflicts between course overlaps of 20 minutes or less. There are no exceptions to this policy and it is at the instructor discretion to refuse to accommodate a 20 min overlap in scheduling for their course.

Incompletes

The Life Sciences Department Policy does not allow Incompletes for courses. There are no exceptions to this policy.

AI

AI is a tool to use in the LS department. It is not allowed for closed notes/closed book quizzes and exams. It is not allowed if a rubric expressly states that AI is not allowed. Students should use AI as a tool and not used to complete assignments/homework/written documents. AI is not allowed on exams. If an instructor suspects AI use on papers that are meant to be from the student alone, the papers may be required to be hand-written in-class.

Cheating

Mandatory reporting is required for LS faculty of all suspected cheating. Reports are filed with the instructor, Academic success (in the Early Alert system), Department Chair, Dean of Sciences and a copy provided to the student. Students may fill out a response within two academic class days to be added to the file. The LS department will follow SKC policy for repeat cheating incidences.

*forms found in the appendix of this document.

Research Internships

Research internships are paid internships in which students conduct novel research under the mentorship of Life Sciences faculty members and paid from scientific research grants. Students are expected to attend all lab meetings with the faculty member, to have a concrete schedule in which they will work in the lab, to be in direct communication with the faculty mentor at all times, keep a detailed laboratory notebook, ensure the faculty mentor has copies of all raw data and all forms of data including graphs/plots/pictures/sample names/sample locations/computer file names and exact locations, ensure students colleagues on the same project have copies of all forms of data, and notify faculty members immediately if the student will be absent from the lab for any length of time.

Research internships are not academic in nature and do not fall under academic advising, course scheduling, or any academic oversight and cannot be used for credit or course work.

Students must be physically present to conduct research internship work. Literature review and/or data analysis may be paid time, but must be conducted in the laboratory or in the Life Sciences student computer lab. Faculty members must approve such activities ahead of time for pay and must have documented proof of activities such as copies of papers found and/or copies of data analyzed.

All research interns are expected to present at least once per year in either poster or oral format. Students who fail to present within a 12-month period of the research internship will be terminated from the position.

Administrative oversight of research internships is provided by Salish Kootenai College Human Resources and Grants departments.

Students must be full time (12 credit minimum) to be eligible for academic year internships.

Trainee Selection and Appointment Procedures

GPA requirements: Student recruitment will be specific for LS students with a minimum GPA of 3.2 or higher. During the course of their research, the student overall GPA must not drop below 3.0, as that is a minimum standard for students to enter into graduate programs. Any student who does have a quarter GPA below 3.0 will be reported by the department for suspension from research and will be required to meet tutorial requirements set forth by the department.

Interview process:

Students who apply for a Life Sciences Research internship and who meet the GPA requirements will be selected for the interview process. They will bring to the interview their current CV and will meet with all the faculty who are accepting new students in a panel format.

Project proposal:

Students that have the required GPA and have been selected from the interview process will be assigned to a faculty mentor in the Life Sciences Department. They will be required to participate in the development of the project through literature review, identification of methodology, and project purpose discussion. The student will be required to write a background including a discussion of the importance of the research, and methods section within the first 3 months of beginning their work with their faculty mentor. A bibliography will also be required. Students will use these materials to prepare a project proposal for review by the entire Life Sciences faculty panel. Students who do not complete this step will not be invited to continue in a paid Life Sciences Research Internship position. Students who complete a full year of a Life Sciences Research internship will be eligible to apply for external summer internships at our tier one partner institutions.

*Forms may be found in the appendix

Research internship termination

Student who are accepted into Life Sciences Research internships are required by departmental procedure and by federal procedure to follow all rules set forth by the department and by the grant agency. Students who fail to meet any procedure will be terminated from the position immediately. In the case of student failure to meet federal procedure for the grant, the grant management may be notified of the student indiscretion and all proper documentation will be forwarded to the federal grant manager. The seriousness of the procedure failure may prevent a student from future employment in a scientific career. Some example procedures are listed below with the attached significance. For complete awareness of all federal procedures, students are expected to review the grant procedures under which they are paid.

- Time commitment to project – Dept. and Fed. procedure – serious
- Research integrity (including data handling, loss of data, plagiarism) – Dept. and Fed. procedure – serious
- GPA requirement – Dept. and some grant procedures – moderate to serious, dependent on grant funding
- Project presentation – Dept. and some grant procedures – moderate to serious, dependent on grant funding
- Faculty mentor communication – Dept. procedure – serious
- Academic status (including full time/part time, course withdraws/failure) – Dept. procedure and some grant procedures – serious
- Written project proposal – Dept. procedure and some grant procedures (URISE) – moderate
- Publication – Dept. procedure and grant procedures -- moderate

Graduation Requirements:

In order for a student to graduate with a Bachelor's of Science (B.S.) from the Life Sciences Department, all courses listed in the catalog year under which the student is assigned must be passed with a minimum grade of a C. It is important to note that students who graduate with a GPA lower than a 3.0 may not be accepted into graduate school and are therefore ineligible for Life Sciences faculty aid in graduate school applications and fellowships.

Students must graduate with a B.S. Life Sciences within six years from the start of the program and/or three years from the award of their associates of science (A.S.) in General Sciences.

Students who do not meet the six-year rule and do not meet the exception, may be required to change programs, leave the program with an A.S. degree, or be required to retake courses starting over from the sophomore level of the program.

Appendix

[accommodation form for LS]

Reasonable accommodation form for Life Sciences Form

Student Name (please print) _____

Class title and course code _____

Please check the appropriate boxes below:

Class accommodation required:

Extra exam time _____

Visual aid due to vision impairment _____

Hearing aid due to hearing impairment _____

Health considerations for laboratory that may require extra safety precautions (including pregnancy, impaired immunity, asthma, epilepsy) _____

Other _____

If Other is checked, please provide accommodation details in the space provided below.

Please return this document to the instructor prior to the completion of the first day of classes. If the instructor requires more information from the Disability Coordinator, a meeting will be set up as soon as possible. Students who fail to fill out the above form and show the accommodations card from the Disability coordinator to the instructor on the first day of classes will not be eligible for reasonable accommodations in the class.

****All information provided on the above form is confidential and may not be shared beyond the Disability Coordinator, Life Sciences Instructor, Life Sciences Department head and the student named on the form. This form is not to be duplicated for use by anyone outside of the Life Sciences Department faculty. All forms must be filed and kept in a confidential manner inaccessible to anyone outside of Life Sciences Department faculty. This form may not be scanned and e-mailed in any digital form. All forms must be confidentially shredded at the completion of the student's academic career at SKC.**

LS incident form

Date: _____

Person filing form (first and last name and job title):

Student suspected of cheating (first and last name) **note this section may be redacted by the LS department chair and student name may be redacted from evidence for privacy until cheating is confirmed** _____

Course name, number and quarter offered _____

Please select the item of the suspected cheating incident:

Lab Report

Close notes/book Quiz

Close notes/book Exam

Written document/paper

Homework

Presentation

Other Assignment

Please describe why cheating is suspected on the selected item(s) above (can attach as needed):

Please briefly list or describe the evidence that is attached to this document:

Has a suspected cheating form been filed for this student before for any class taught by LS faculty?

Yes

No

Recommended actions by instructor: _____

Recommended actions by Dept. Chair _____

Recommended actions by Dean of Sciences _____

[student reply for suspected cheating form]

Student response

Date: _____

Student first and last name: _____

Course name and number: _____

Quarter: _____

Instructor name: _____

Please circle one of the following:

The response is for an:

Lab Report

Close notes/book Quiz

Close notes/book Exam

Written document/paper

Homework

Presentation

Other Assignment (if other please fill in the blank) _____

Please explain why the suspected cheating incident form is not a cheating event

Please attach any evidence to refute the suspicion of cheating for review by the institutional investigator(s).

[student internship form]

Research Internship Application Form

Name _____

Major _____

Year to start internship: Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior ___ Graduate _____

Current GPA _____

Current year in program: Freshman ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior ___ Graduate level _____

Current credits _____

Research interest (may select more than one): Cell biology ___ Protein biochemistry ___ Protein structure ___ Cancer biochemistry ___ Microbiology ___ Disease models ___ Environmental toxicology ___ Other _____

Preference for research mentor: None ___ Dr. Rush ___ Dr. Comstock ___ Dr. Herrera ___ Ms. Winkelman _____ Mr. Roessler _____

Please write a personal statement regarding your interest in conducting research in the Life Sciences Department and how novel research experience will enhance your career path and opportunities. You may type and attach the document to this application.