

A bad biology grade sticks around

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Don't let low grades haunt your students. A new study in the *Journal of Animal Science* shows that performance in foundational biology courses is a strong predictor of performance in high-level animal science courses.

In a study of 1,516 students over 7 years, researchers from Kansas State University found that students who did well in [biology](#) also performed well in a rigorous genetics course. This result was not surprising, but the researchers were struck by the importance of timing. [Undergraduate students](#) did best when they waited at least a year to take the genetics course.

"Genetics is a very hard class," said Dr. Jennifer Minick Bormann, co-author of the study and associate professor in the Department of Animal Sciences and Industry at Kansas State University. "That is not a good place for a brand-new freshman."

At Kansas State University, biology is a pre-requisite for genetics. Many students try to fulfill that pre-requisite by earning college credits for biology courses during high school. The data show that students who take biology at Kansas State do better in genetics than students that bring that course in from other sources.

Minick Bormann said this study could help advisors and their students plan more realistic class schedules. By taking genetics as sophomores and juniors, students can perform well and prepare themselves for advanced courses in subjects like animal breeding.

"We need to sit down as advisors and talk about it," said Minick Bormann. "I would expect our students to be similar to students at other large land grant universities."

The researchers also found that students did not forget what they learned in biology, even if they waited several years to take genetics. That is good news for animal [science students](#) and advisors.

More information: The study was titled "Factors affecting student performance in an undergraduate genetics course."

Provided by American Society of Animal Science

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