

Physiology of Aquaculture Species (I002880)

Course size (nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)

Credits 8.0

Study time 200 h

Course offerings in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1)

English

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Navarro, Isabel

BARCELO1 lecturer-in-charge

Blasco, Josefina

BARCELO1 co-lecturer

Capilla, Encarnación

BARCELO1 co-lecturer

García de la Serrana, Daniel

BARCELO1 co-lecturer

García-Meilán, Irene

BARCELO1 co-lecturer

Gutiérrez Frutos, Joaquim

BARCELO1 co-lecturer

Ibarz, Antoni

BARCELO1 co-lecturer

Martin-Pérez, Miguel

BARCELO1 co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

[International Master of Science in Health Management in Aquaculture](#)

crdts

8

offering

A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Fish nutrition, energetics, metabolism, digestibility, dietary requirements, fish oil and fishmeal replacement, food intake control, aquaculture invertebrate reproduction, fish reproduction, hypothalamus- pituitary- gonad axis, spawning induction, sex control, environmental regulation, gamete quality, fish growth, larval development, endocrine regulation of growth, muscle growth and myogenesis, hyperplasic and hypertrophic growth, skeletal malformations, flesh organoleptic traits.

Position of the course

This course aims at introducing into the physiology of fish and invertebrate species relevant for aquaculture, assessing the fundamentals of nutrition, reproduction, and growth, and how can be applied to a sustainable aquaculture development.

Contents

1. Fish nutrition and health

- Food and nutrition. Metabolic rate. Energy balance and its components.
- Gastrointestinal tract: anatomy and physiology. Digestion and assimilation. Antinutritional factors.
- Effects of nutrition on fish health.
- Protein metabolism: synthesis and degradation. Dietary protein quality, digestibility and requirements.
- Carbohydrate metabolism: uptake, metabolism, and dietary protein-saving effect.
- Lipid metabolism: transport and deposition. Antioxidants and oxidative stress.
- Endocrine regulation of metabolism and control of food intake.
- Manufacture of compound feed in fish farming: bases of the formulation.

2. Reproduction of aquatic invertebrates and fish

- Reproductive strategies. Gametogenesis: oogenesis and spermatogenesis.

- Reproduction in invertebrate species relevant for aquaculture.
- Endocrine regulation of fish reproduction: hypothalamic, pituitary and gonadal hormones.
- Hormonal manipulation of reproduction: spawning induction, sex control and sterility induction.
- Gamete quality: techniques to determine the quality and cryopreservation processes.
- Reproduction in fish, control by environmental factors and effects on health.

3. Fish growth and skeletal malformations

- Stages of growth in fish. Embryonic and larval development: hatching and organogenesis. Larval growth.
- Endocrine regulation of somatic growth: Growth hormone and factors, thyroid hormones, and other hormones.
- Fish muscle and skeletal characteristics; development and growth. Hyperplastic and hypertrophic growth.
- Skeletal malformations.
- Musculoskeletal interactions for proper growth and environmental effects.
- Fish flesh quality. Main techniques, reference parameters and quality markers.

Initial competences

General biology, general physiology, zoology

Final competences

- 1 Choose the appropriate nutritional and feeding parameters and optimal diets to maintain fish health and to obtain a high quality product in a sustainable way
- 2 Identify the reproductive strategies in fish and aquaculture invertebrates, and know the role of the environment on reproduction and its endocrine regulation, to assess an effective manipulation of the reproductive cycles in those species
- 3 Know how to apply the physiological bases of the development and growth of fish to obtain an optimal growth and good quality of the flesh, maintaining animal welfare

Conditions for credit contract

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar, Lecture, Practical, Independent work

Study material

None

References

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- Devlin, R.H., Sakhrani, D., Tymchuk, W.E., Rise, M.L., and Goh, B. (2009). Domestication and growth hormone transgenesis cause similar changes in gene expression in coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*). *PNAS* 106: 3047–3052.
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serrana, D.,
[Estevez, A.](#)

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-Grosell, M., Farrell, A.P., Brauer, C.J. (2011). The multifunctional gut of fish. *Fish Physiology* 30: 1-448

-González-Kotter, P., Oliva, M.E., Tanguy, A., Moraga, D. (2020). A review of the potential genes implicated in follicular atresia in teleost fish. *Mar Genomics* 50: 100704.

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-Shadwinck, R.E. and Lauder, G.V. *Fish Physiology, XXIII. Fish Biomechanics*. Academic Press, 2006

-Turchini, G.M. Ng, W.-K., Tocher, D.(editors). (2011). *Fish oil replacement and alternative lipid sources in aquaculture feeds*, CRC Press.

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-Zohar, Y., Muñoz-Cueto, J.A., Elizur, A., Kah, O. (2010). Neuroendocrinology of reproduction in teleost fish. *Gen Comp Endocrinol*. 165:438-55.

Course content-related study coaching

Teacher available for student counselling

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment, Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Written assessment with open-ended questions, Written assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment, Written assessment, Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Written assessment with multiple-choice questions, Participation, Written assessment with open-ended questions, Written assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Calculation of the examination mark

Exam 30%; Case report and portfolio 20%; Oral presentation 50%

Students who eschew period aligned and/or non-period aligned evaluations for this course unit may be failed by the examiner.