

## Admissions to:

- **Molecular, Cellular, Developmental Biology and Genetics (MCDB&G)**
- **Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biophysics (BMBB)**

## Application Process

---

MCDB&G and BMBB are two distinct graduate programs. However, all students admitted to *either* program begin their first year in a joint program called **Molecular, Cellular and Structural Biology (MCSB)** graduate studies. After completion of year one, students may select either MCDB&G or BMBB, regardless of their initial selection upon application.

Applications must be submitted to the University of Minnesota Graduate School through the Slate online system. Please see the Application Checklist for a complete list of required materials.

Prospective students must apply to either MCDB&G or BMBB, not to MCSB. You will not find MCSB as an application choice. If both programs interest you, **you do not need** to apply to both. Just indicate in your personal statement that you would like both admission committees to review your application.

## Reminders:

- o Upload all materials, including transcripts, to the [online application](#).
- o Do not submit your application until all materials are uploaded.
- o Do submit your application even if your letters of recommendations have not been submitted.
- o Encourage all your referees to submit their letters online.
- o Check your email frequently. If you are missing materials or if there are any problems with your application, we will contact you only by email.
- o If you have a publication, please submit only the abstract.

## Application Timeline:

**December 1:** Application deadline

**By January 15:** Applications reviewed, candidates invited to recruiting visits

**Late January and early February:** Recruiting visits

**By early February:** International applicants interviewed

**By the end of February:** Offers made

If you have a question about the admissions process, please see the frequently asked questions below. If you do not see your question listed below, feel free to contact the MCDB&G or BMBB graduate program.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

---

### ***When is the application deadline?***

December 1

### ***Do you take applications after the deadline?***

Yes, but late applications may not be considered if the available slots have been filled. In addition, late applications may not have a timely review and would not be considered for graduate school fellowships.

### ***How do I apply?***

You must apply to the Graduate School online via the Slate online system. Please visit <https://www.grad.umn.edu/admissions> and select "Apply Now" to begin your application.

### ***Do you accept paper application materials?***

No, you must upload all materials to your online graduate school application, including transcripts. **Do not send paper copies to the Graduate School.**

### ***Do you offer admission for the spring semester?***

No, we admit only for the fall semester.

### ***Can I apply for a M.S. degree?***

No, MCDB&G and BMBB only offer the Ph.D. degree.

### ***Do I need a M.S. degree to apply to the BMBB and MCDB&G programs?***

No, you do not need a M.S. degree to apply to the BMBB or MCDB&G programs.

### ***Does MCDB&G offer a M.S. program?***

No, MCDB&G only offers a PhD program. However, there is a MCDB&G PhD/Genetic Counseling M.S. Joint Program. Students interested in the [joint program](#) must apply to both the M.S. Genetic Counseling Program and the MCDB&G PhD program. The Genetic Counseling M.S. does not include research experience. Students must be accepted into both programs.

### ***Can I apply for more programs at the University other than the BMBB or MCDB&G programs?***

Yes, there is no limit to the number of programs that you apply to at the University of Minnesota. There will be an application fee for each application submitted.

### ***How competitive is the program?***

Per graduate program, we receive around 150 applications and admit approximately 8-12 students. Approximately 2-4 of these students are international per program.

***Do you admit international students?***

Yes, international students will be contacted for a Skype or Zoom interview prior to receiving an offer of admission. Each program interviews approximately 2-6 international students.

***Am I guaranteed funding?***

Yes, funding is guaranteed provided students exhibit satisfactory progress toward their PhD degree. The program pays your annual stipend (\$32,000 - Fall 2022), tuition, student fees and a portion of your healthcare benefits for the first year. Once you join a lab, your advisor will fund you for the remaining time you are in the program.

***Do I pay for any of my healthcare benefits?***

If you opt-in to the University's health care benefits, there is a small portion (less than \$160) that you have to pay per semester towards your benefits.

***Do I need to complete the financial aid forms listed on the Graduate School?***

No, completion of these financial aid forms is not necessary.

***Should I contact individual faculty regarding my admission or to evaluate my credentials?***

No, only the admissions committee can review your application and offer admission. Individual faculty cannot offer comments to the committee regarding your credentials. If you are curious about whether or not you meet the basic standards for admission, please contact the BMBB or MCDB&G graduate program.

***How do students find an adviser?***

Students conduct three 7-week rotations in faculty research laboratories, with the first beginning in September and the last finishing in February. MCSB students then select thesis laboratories and enter either the BMBB or MCDB&G program for their Ph.D. degree, depending upon the laboratory that they join.

***What makes a particular application stand out?***

**Research Experience!** The most successful applicants have significant and productive research experience. They are able to effectively describe the rationale and biological context for their research, as well as what was accomplished. Exceptional research experience (Master's Degrees, many years of experience, publications, etc.) may offset minor deficiencies in GPA. Applicants that have not worked in a laboratory in the past year or two should consider updating their research skills by volunteering in a laboratory or finding a paid laboratory position.

***What is required for a Personal Statement?***

The best personal statements show enthusiasm for science. It clearly and concisely describes your research experiences and career goals. State whether you performed an independent research project where you were extensively involved in planning and developing experimental approaches. Emphasize what your project was and what your intellectual contribution to the project was. Evidence of scientific achievements such as publications, leadership roles, awards, acceptance into internships will help make a strong statement. Convey to the committee that you are seriously considering the University of

Minnesota based on your indication of specific labs who are doing work you would be interested in doing. If there is a lapse in time for your education or employment, explain why. At the end of Personal Statement, list any research publications on which you are an author.

***Is there a page limit for Personal Statement?***

Your Personal Statement should be no longer than two single-spaced pages. Your list of research publications is excluded from this two-page limit.

***Are the Diversity Statement and Writing Sample documents required?***

Neither are required, however we encourage you to submit a diversity statement. You do not need to submit a writing sample document.

***What do I upload in the Description of Research section?***

You can either leave it blank or upload your personal statement.

***Should I upload a CV?***

Yes, a CV or resume is required.

***What is the average GPA score needed for admittance?***

Competitive applications will have a GPA of 3.3 or better (on a 4.0 scale). If your GPA falls below 3.3, additional graduate level courses can be taken to demonstrate academic ability.

***What classes do I need to take to be eligible for admission?***

Recommended (but not required) academic preparation includes a strong background in basic biology, including biochemistry and genetics. Excellent grades in the sciences and evidence of improvement over time will help your application.

***Can I be admitted into a program without being officially graduated from my undergraduate university?***

Yes, many students are admitted into the programs who are in their final semester of their undergraduate degree.

***Do you require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)?***

No. The GRE general and subject scores are NOT required to apply to the program. Note that the University's Graduate School application system still includes a spot for GRE scores; however, you are not required to enter them. Our application review committee will NOT view these scores, even if you do submit them.

***Is the TOEFL or IELTS exam required for international students?***

Yes. Scores must be less than two years old. Your self-reported scores are acceptable, but official scores will be required if you are accepted and decide to join our program. If you attended an English speaking University full time (at least 16 semester credits of 24 quarter credits) during the past two or more years while living in an English speaking country, and the coursework does not include ESL courses, the TOEFL or IELTS score is waived. If you are an international student, please see the [English Language Proficiency](#) page from the Graduate School.

***Do I need to provide official transcripts?***

No. [Unofficial transcripts](#) should be uploaded to the application. [Official transcripts](#) are **only required when you are admitted into the program**. If you are an international student, check out the [international student resources](#) page for more information.

***How many letters of recommendation do I need?***

Three letters are required. Letters of recommendation from persons familiar with your academic and research capabilities are strongly encouraged. It is important to have a strong letter of support from your direct research supervisor. Names and complete contact information for the three referees must be entered online.

***How should my letter writers submit their recommendations?***

Referees will be sent instructions from the Slate application system via email. Referees are strongly encouraged to follow these instructions and directly upload their letters to your online application. If they are unable to upload letters online please contact the BMBB or MCDB&G graduate program.

***What do I do if I forgot to upload something and I already submitted my application?***

Contact the BMBB or MCDB&G graduate program. It is very important that you **do not mail** any paper documents to the Graduate School Admissions Office.

***Do I have to pay the Graduate School application fee?***

Yes, the graduate school does **not** offer a fee waiver. The application fee is \$75 for domestic students and \$95 for international students.

***How do I know if my application is being considered for admission?***

We review applications starting in December and invite our top candidates to visit campus at our expense in January and February. Skype or Zoom interviews are conducted for the top international applicants sometime in February.

---

If you did not see your question listed above, feel free to contact:

Karen Evans  
BMBB Graduate Program  
[evansk@umn.edu](mailto:evansk@umn.edu)  
612-625-5179

Katie Roos  
MCDB&G Graduate Program  
[kroos@umn.edu](mailto:kroos@umn.edu)  
612-624-7470