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.

Applications must be submitted to the University of Minnesota Graduate School through the ApplyYourself 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. After completion of year one, students may select either MCDB&G or BMBB, regardless of their initial selection upon application.

Reminders:

- Upload all materials, including transcripts, to the online application.
- Do not submit your application until all materials are uploaded.
- Encourage all your referees to submit their letters online.
- 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.
- Submit only your publication abstract(s). Whole publication(s) will not be reviewed.

Application Timeline:

- **December 1**: Application deadline
- **By December 31**: Applications reviewed, candidates invited to recruiting visits
- **Last week in January, first two weekends in February**: Recruiting visits
- **By January 31**: International applicants interviewed
- **By February 28 or 29**: Offers made

If you have a question about the admissions process, please read through the most frequently asked question on the following pages. If you do not see your question listed below, feel free to contact us at mcsb@umn.edu or 612-624-7470.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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.

Do you admit for Spring semester?
No, we admit only for Fall semester.

Can I apply for a M.S. degree?
No, MCDB&G and BMBB only offer the Ph.D. degree.

Why is there a checkbox for M.S. beside the MCDB&G graduate program in the online application system?
Students interested in a Genetic Counseling M.S. must apply via MCDB&G by selecting the M.S. checkbox. The Genetic Counseling M.S. does not include research experience.

How competitive is the program?
We receive around 250 applications for both graduate programs and each graduate program admits approximately 10-15 students. Approximately 3-4 of these students are international.

Do I need to find my own financial aid?
No, all students admitted to our program receive an annual stipend that covers living expenses. Currently, this is $28,500 per year. We also pay your tuition, student fees and provide you with health care benefits.

Do I need to complete the financial aid forms listed on the Graduate School Bulletin?
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 MCSB office.
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, in Personal Statement #1. Exceptional research experience (Master’s Degrees, many years of experience, publications, etc.) may offset minor deficiencies in GPA or GRE scores.

What is required for Personal Statement #1?

Personal Statement #1 should outline your research interests and career goals. Describe your work and research experience, personal background pertinent to your application, leadership roles, and qualities that would contribute to the diversity of the program. List faculty you are interested in. If there is a time lapse in your education or employment, explain why. At the end of Personal Statement #1, list any research publications on which you are an author.

Is there a page limit for Personal Statement #1?

Personal Statement #1 should be no longer than two single-spaced pages. Your list of research publications is excluded from this two-page limit.

What is Personal Statement #2, and am I required to submit it?

Personal Statement #2 is an opportunity for you to provide a second statement on the topic of diversity. The graduate school application system automatically asks for this second statement; however it is not required for admittance. You may complete Personal Statement #2 if you would like to include an additional diversity statement.

What is the average GPA score needed for admittance?

Competitive applications will have GPAs 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, plus one year each of calculus, organic chemistry, and physics.

Do you require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)?

Yes. Competitive applicants typically have percentile ranks on all 3 sections (Verbal, Quantitative and Analytical) at the 70th percentile or higher. GRE scores are valid for 5 years. If you took the exam more than 5 years ago, you will need to retake the exam.

My GRE scores are below your minimum scores, should I still apply?

A competitive application will have scores near the average scores listed above. If your scores are significantly below the program average, it is highly recommended that you retake this exam.
**Do I need the GRE Subject Test?**
The Subject (Advanced) Test (in biology, chemistry, or biochemistry, cell and molecular biology) of the GRE is not required but highly recommended.

**Is the TOEFL exam required for international students?**
International students must take the TOEFL or IELTS exam. TOEFL scores of 263 (computer), or 106-108 (internet, with writing subsection 25 and reading subsection 25 or higher) or IELTS score of 7.0 or higher are recommended. TOEFL scores must be under two years old. **If you have been in the United States for two years or more, the TOEFL score is not required.**

**What is your institutional code for the GRE and TOEFL exams?**
The University of Minnesota code is 6874.

**What are the GRE/TOEFL Department Codes?**
MCDBG applicant: GRE codes are 0203 or 0206 or 0210 or 0299.
BMBB applicant: GRE codes are 0202
TOEFL: The departmental code is 74 or 34.

**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. 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 ApplyYourself application system via email. Referees are strongly encouraged to follow these instructions and directly upload their letters to your online application. If letter writers are unable to upload letters online please email letters to the MCSB program at mscb@umn.edu.

**Do you admit international students?**
Yes, international students will be contacted for a phone interview prior to receiving an offer of admission. Each program interviews approximately 4-6 international students.

**How do I apply?**
You must apply to the Graduate School online via the ApplyYourself online system. Please visit [https://www.grad.umn.edu/admissions](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 any paper copies to the Graduate School.**
Do I need to provide official transcripts?
Official transcripts are not required at the time of application. If admitted, you will need to provide an official transcript.

What do I do if I forgot to upload something and I already submitted my application?
E-mail mcsb@umn.edu for help. 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 for any reason. 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 us at our expense the last weekend in January and the first two weekends in February. Phone interviews are conducted for the top international applicants sometime in February.

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.

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