

CELLULAR AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY, MS

Students are not admitted into the Cellular and Molecular Biology (CMB) Program for a terminal master's degree. However, a master's degree is officially offered. For more information, see the Cellular and Molecular Biology Handbook (link in Contact Information).

Graduate study in cellular and molecular biology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is a research-oriented interdisciplinary program leading to the PhD degree. The university has one of the largest and most prestigious biology facilities in the world, well-noted for its cooperation and collaboration across department boundaries. The Cellular and Molecular Biology Program is an important part of that interdepartmental strength, providing students with the opportunity to work with more than 190 faculty members in 40 departments.

A major strength of the program is that it provides the opportunity for groups of investigators to work together on research topics of common interest. Research topic areas, identified as focus groups, are composed of faculty and students studying common research areas. Each group is held together by participation of both students and faculty at regular research presentations and by the participation of faculty on thesis committees of many students in the group. Because of the diverse nature of most research areas and the cross-fertilization among focus groups, many faculty and students participate in the activities of multiple focus groups.

The focus groups are: cancer biology; cell adhesion and cytoskeleton; cellular and molecular metabolism; developmental biology and regenerative medicine; immunology; membrane biology and protein trafficking; molecular and genome biology of microbes; physiology; plant biology; RNA biology; systems biology; transcriptional mechanisms; and virology.

ADMISSIONS

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This master's program is offered for work leading to the PhD. Students may not apply directly for the master's, and should instead see the admissions information for the PhD. (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-school-wide/cellular-molecular-biology-phd/>)

FUNDING

FUNDING GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

[The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School.](#)

Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirementstext>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiestext>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail

Minimum Credit Requirement	30 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	30 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/).
Other Grade Requirements	n/a
Assessments and Examinations	See PhD requirements.

Language Requirements No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

All Cellular and Molecular Biology course requirements must be completed by the end of the student's second year, before completing the preliminary exam and obtaining dissertator status.

Code	Title	Credits
Course Requirements¹		
Students must complete 11 credits from the following categories.		11
<i>Molecular Biology Core</i>		
At minimum, complete one of the following:		
BIOCHEM/ GENETICS/ MD GENET 620	Eukaryotic Molecular Biology	
BIOCHEM/ GENETICS/ MICROBIO 612	Prokaryotic Molecular Biology	
ONCOLOGY/ M M & I/ PL PATH 640	General Virology-Multiplication of Viruses	
<i>Cell Biology Core</i>		
At minimum, complete one of the following:		
BOTANY 860	Plant Cell Biology	
ZOOLOGY/ NEURODPT 765	Developmental Neuroscience	
PATH 750	Cellular and Molecular Biology/ Pathology	
ONCOLOGY 703	Carcinogenesis and Tumor Cell Biology	
GENETICS/ CRB 710	Developmental Genetics	
GENETICS/ BOTANY/M M & I/ PL PATH 655	Biology and Genetics of Fungi	
<i>Ethics Core</i>		
At minimum, complete 1 credit from following:		
BIOCHEM 729	Advanced Topics	
ONCOLOGY 715	Ethics in Science	
COMP BIO/PATH- BIO 812	Research Ethics and Career Development	
<i>Elective Courses</i>		
Students may complete elective courses or additional courses from above to satisfy 11-credit course requirement.		
B M E 510	Introduction to Tissue Engineering	
B M E 520	Stem Cell Bioengineering	
B M E/CBE 783	Design of Biological Molecules	
B M E/CRB 670	Biology of Heart Disease and Regeneration	
B M E 545	Engineering Extracellular Matrices	
B M E 556	Systems Biology: Mammalian Signaling Networks	
B M I/ COMP SCI 576	Introduction to Bioinformatics	

ONCOLOGY 778	Bioinformatics for Biologists
OPHTHALM 750	Ocular Diseases of the Mammalian Vision System
PATH 751	Biology of Aging
PATH 803	Pathogenesis of Major Human Diseases
PATH 807	Immunopathology: The Immune System in Health and Disease
PATH-BIO 675	Special Topics
ZOOLOGY 604	Computer-based Gene and Disease/Disorder Research Lab

Research Requirement

A minimum of 30 credits taken in graduate level courses are required: the 11 above, and the remaining credits can be 990 research credits. 19

Total Credits **30**

¹ EXCEPTION: MD/PhD students are only required to take 3 credits from the Core Curriculum or the Elective Courses list.

² EXCEPTION: MD/PhD students are not required to take an ethics course because they received this training in their MD courses.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

On a case by case basis, this program refers to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

On a case by case basis, this program refers to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

On a case by case basis, this program refers to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy

Credits Earned as a University Special student at UW-Madison

On a case by case basis, this program refers to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy

PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

The thesis advisor will assist the graduate student throughout the duration of their studies. Upon choosing a thesis advisor, the student should formulate goals and expectations when starting in a permanent lab home. The student and thesis advisor should work together to ensure that mutual goals and expectations are met. The thesis advisor will monitor and guide the student's progress toward their degree, provide the student with advice about how and when to meet the degree requirements of the program, and help the student decide on appropriate coursework during their studies.

After joining a thesis lab, students are required to form a thesis committee. The purpose of the thesis committee is to: guide the student through the process of earning their degree and meeting all Cellular and Molecular Biology program requirements; assist the student in developing as an independent scientist in the student's area of research; provide the student with an array of ideas and opportunities regarding the direction of their research and thesis project; and evaluate the student's research proposal, attend curriculum certification, preliminary exam, annual progress report, and thesis defense.

The thesis committee consists of five faculty members, including the thesis advisor. All committee members must be readers when the student defends their dissertation. Three committee members, including the thesis advisor, must be faculty trainers in the Cellular and Molecular Biology program. Two committee members must be outside the student's direct area of expertise.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credit maximum. Refer to the Graduate School: Maximum Credit Loads and Overload Requests (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1228/>) policy.

TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)

- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employeeabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

Overview

If a student feels unfairly treated or aggrieved by faculty, staff, or another student, the University offers several avenues to resolve the grievance.

Students' concerns about unfair treatment are best handled directly with the person responsible for the objectionable action. If the student is uncomfortable making direct contact with the individual(s) involved, they should contact the advisor or the person in charge of the unit where the action occurred (CMB Program Administration or Chair, Lab Department Administration or Chair, Lab Manager, etc.). Many departments and schools/colleges have established specific procedures for handling such situations; check their web pages for more information. If such procedures exist at the local level, these should be investigated first. For more information, see the Graduate School Academic Policies and Procedures. (<http://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#grievancesandappeals>)

Procedure

Procedures for proper accounting of student grievances within the CMB Program:

- The student is encouraged to speak first with the person toward whom the grievance is directed to see if a situation can be resolved interpersonally at this level.
- Should satisfactory resolution not be achieved, the student should contact the CMB Office and the CMB Program Chair to discuss the grievance. The program will facilitate problem resolution through informal channels and facilitate any complaints or issues of students. The first attempt is to help the student informally address the grievance prior to any formal complaint. Students are also encouraged to talk with their faculty advisor or thesis committee members if appropriate.
- If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student can submit a formal grievance in writing to the CMB Office and CMB Program Chair. The written formal grievance must be submitted within 60 days of the alleged unfair treatment.
- On receipt of a written complaint, a faculty committee will be convened within 10 working days by the CMB Program to manage the grievance. The program faculty committee will obtain a written response from the person toward whom the complaint is directed. This response will be shared with the person filing the grievance.
- Within 10 working days of being convened, the faculty committee will make a decision regarding the grievance. The CMB Program

will report on the committee's decision and any action taken by the committee in writing to both the student and the party toward whom the complaint was directed.

- At this point, if either party (the student or the person toward whom the grievance is directed) is unsatisfied with the decision of the faculty committee, the party may file a written appeal within 10 working days of the committee's decision. The appeal will go to the tenure home School/College of the grieving student's primary advisor.

The Graduate School has procedures for students wishing to further appeal a grievance decision made at the school/college level. These policies are described in the Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures. (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>)

OTHER

Cellular and Molecular Biology students all earn a stipend that is set by the program each year, and tuition is covered. First year rotating students are funded through the Cellular and Molecular Biology program during the first semester. After the first semester, students are typically funded by their thesis advisor. In some cases, students earn individual fellowships or training grant slots and are funded through these mechanisms. Please contact the Cellular and Molecular Biology program for specific questions about stipend level, etc.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Gain a broad understanding of the cellular and molecular principles that underlie biological processes.
2. Develop proficiency in a chosen area of cellular and molecular biology.
3. Learn to think critically and problem solve to address research challenges using a broad range of theories, research methods, and approaches to scientific inquiry.
4. Create research and scholarship that makes a substantive contribution to the field of cellular and molecular biology.
5. Experience collaboration with scientists within the lab, the department, the program, the university, and beyond.
6. Clearly and effectively communicate scientific ideas and research to both scientists and non-scientists in written and oral forms.
7. Exhibit and foster ethical and professional conduct.
8. Gain exposure to potential career paths and develop leadership and professional skills that will prepare them for a successful and rewarding career.
9. Develop and apply skills to foster a climate of inclusion for diverse members of the scientific community.