

MICROBIOLOGY, BA (L&S)

Admissions to the Microbiology BA/BS (L&S) have been suspended as of fall 2023 and will be discontinued as of fall 2027. If you have any questions, please contact the department.

Students interested in Microbiology can contact the Microbiology major advisors (biochemmicrobio-advisor@wisc.edu) to discuss the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Microbiology major (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/bacteriology/microbiology-bs/>). For other questions, please contact CALS Academic Affairs (academicaffairs@cals.wisc.edu).

Microbiology, the study of microorganisms, helps us understand our world and solve major problems. Microorganisms, or microbes, were the first life forms on Earth and influence our lives and our planet in innumerable ways. The field of microbiology is constantly expanding as we learn more about the role of microbes in infectious disease, environmental remediation, bioenergy, food safety, antibiotic resistance, biotechnology, and much more. Communities of microbes (or "microbiomes") are critically important in human health, global warming, agricultural yield, criminal justice, economic development, and other issues of national concern.

The Microbiology major, offered by the Department of Bacteriology, is a rigorous path of study, providing a curriculum packed with deep knowledge on broad aspects of microbiology and emphasizing modern laboratory skills. The core courses focus on the diversity, genetics, biochemistry, and physiology of microorganisms. A variety of elective courses provide the opportunity to study environmental microbiology, food microbiology, microbial pathogenesis, immunology, virology, microbiomes, and microbial biotechnology, as well as advanced topics in microbial genetics and physiology. In the instructional laboratory courses, students learn beginning through advanced laboratory techniques – gaining the type of hands-on experiences with modern equipment that employers and graduate schools seek. Additionally, students can conduct mentored and independent research projects in faculty laboratories.

The bachelor's degree provides a strong background in the biological sciences for students planning to enter medical, dental, veterinary, or other professional schools, as well as those planning graduate studies in any branch of microbiology or other biological sciences such as biochemistry, pathology, and molecular or cell biology.

Students who end their training with a bachelor's degree are well-prepared for a variety of career opportunities, including laboratory positions in pharmaceutical firms, biotechnology firms, university laboratories, and government laboratories. They also work as specialists in industrial quality testing and control and as regulatory workers in government agencies and public health laboratories. Exposure to the scientific process as well as training in microbiology allows microbiology graduates to enter fields as diverse as business, technical service, sales, and technical writing.