

Category Landing Page

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Admissions and Recruitment

The Department of Molecular and Cell Biology offers only a Ph.D program and admits students to the Fall semester only. The Department does not offer a Master's degree. Applications are available for submission online starting September 8 at noon. Application deadline is midnight Pacific Standard Time December 1st. Students should complete their applications as early as possible and be sure to hit the submit button before the deadline. You will need to ensure that letters of recommendation, GRE scores, and any other supporting documents reach the department no later than one week beyond the deadline. Applications will be reviewed as they are completed so a delay in receiving your supporting documents will delay the review of your file.

The Department of Molecular and Cell Biology is particularly interested in providing educational opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds and from ethnic groups currently underrepresented in the biological sciences.

For more information and to submit an application go to: http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/grad_app.shtml.

Application Deadlines & Information

Graduate Application for Admission & Fellowship

December 1, 2009

TOEFL and GRE Scores

December 1, 2009

Institution Code

4833

GRE Department Code

0206

TOEFL Department Code

74

Strong undergraduate preparation for this program would include at least one year each of calculus, physics, and general biology, two to three semesters of chemistry (general, organic and physical chemistry), and additional advanced coursework in such areas as biochemistry, biophysics, cell biology, genetics, microbiology, molecular biology, immunology and/or neurobiology.

Letters of recommendation should be from persons who have supervised your research or academic work and who can evaluate your intellectual ability, creativity, leadership potential and promise for productive scholarship. If lab supervision was provided by a postdoc or graduate student the letter should carry the signature of the faculty member in charge of the research project. Letters should be submitted on-line.

Admission is based on an evaluation by a departmental committee comprised of faculty and senior graduate students. Review begins as soon as an applicant's file is complete. The Admissions Committee weighs many factors including the applicant's undergraduate scholastic record, prior performance in laboratory research, letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, and GRE scores.

Admission is based not only on the on-line application but also upon faculty interviews. The Admissions Committee invites selected applicants to the campus to participate in recruitment interviews on February 7 - 9 or February 28 to March 2, 2010. Faculty evaluations of interviews are used by the Admissions Committee to make final admission recommendations to the Graduate Division. Offers of admission are made from late February through mid March.

All other applicants will be notified by early March.

2009 Entering Class Profile

Total Matriculated
56

Men
39%

Women
61%

Diversity Students
18%

International Students
7%

California Residents
25%

Average Age
24 (range: 22-29)

A GRE Subject Test is strongly recommended and may include Biochemistry & Cell Biology, General Biology, Chemistry, or Physics. Applicants whose native language is not English, and who have not received a degree from an English language institution, are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) receiving a minimum score of 570 for the paper test, 233 for the Computer Based Test (CBT) or 68 on the Internet based test (IBT). If, at the time of application, you have already completed at least one year of full-time academic course work with grades of B or better at a U.S. university, you are not required to take the TOEFL. Further information on this requirement can be found with the graduate application.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the admission application deadline for the Ph.D. program?

Our application deadline is December 1 preceding the August for which you are seeking admission. We admit for the fall semester only

Do you accept applications after the December 1 deadline?

No, applications and all supporting documents (transcripts and letters of recommendation) must be received by the December 1st deadline.

Where should transcripts be sent?
Graduate Affairs Office

University of California at Berkeley

Department of Molecular and Cell Biology

299 Life Sciences Addition #3200

Berkeley, CA 94720-3200

What are the test(s) required to apply to your program?

We require the General GRE (Subject GRE is optional) of all applicants and the TOEFL or IELTS for all International Students. For more information on English language testing requirements and possible exceptions please go to: http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/admis_require.shtml#4_2

When is the latest I could take the exam(s)?

You should plan to take the test so that scores are reported to the University of California at Berkeley no later than December 1st. Check with the testing agency for score report dates.

What codes should I used to report scores to UC Berkeley?

The UC Berkeley institution code for GRE and TOEFL is 4833. Dept code to be used for the GRE is 0206 and the department code to use for the TOEFL is 74.

Have you received my GRE and/or TOEFL scores?

Scores are sent directly to the university and matched to your on-line application before being downloaded to the department. If you did not use the correct code you may contact the department to confirm the receipt of the scores. However, if properly coded, you do not need to follow up with the department. If, by some chance, we do not receive your scores, we will contact you no later than the end of January.

If you list UC Berkeley as a school to receive your scores, they will be automatically uploaded to our system. We do not keep paper scores on hand.

How do I calculate my upper division/major GPA?

The calculation for upper division work is based on all courses after the first two years of full time coursework. Your scientific or major GPA is based upon all coursework taken for your major including both upper and lower division courses. There are some on-line GPA calculators you can find with a Google search.

What is the difference between the Statement of Purpose and the Personal Statement?

The Statement of Purpose is a detailed summary your research experience and overall scientific preparation for a research PhD. Include your overall research interests and goals and why UC Berkeley and our department would be a good intellectual fit.

The Personal Statement should describe how your personal background shaped your interests and decision to pursue a graduate degree. Include any familial, educational, cultural, economic or social experiences that have affected your decisions to pursue a career in scientific research. Describe your leadership skills, interests and how you might contribute to social or cultural diversity in the biological sciences.

How many letters of recommendation should I submit?

Three on-line letters of recommendation are required. It is recommended that you stay within this requirement.

My recommender cannot submit their letter on-line, what do I need to do?

If your recommender is not able to submit their letter on-line through the campus admissions program, they may send a copy directly to our department. To expedite the review of your application they can either email or fax the letter to us and follow with a hardcopy in the mail (same address as transcripts above). Email letters may be sent to us at mcbgao@berkeley.edu and the subject line should contain the applicant name and "LOR". Faxes may be sent to (510) 643-1307.

Am I required to contact the faculty prior to applying?

You are not required to contact the faculty but you might find it worthwhile to do so particularly regarding specific research questions.

Do I have to provide a list of faculty in whose research I'm interested? Why?

Yes, we ask that you provide the names of between 6-8 faculty (of ~ 90 total faculty) with whom you are interested in conducting research or performing rotations. In choosing faculty whose research interests match your own we are able to accomplish several tasks. First, your choices aid the Admissions Chair in directing your application to the appropriate sub-committee for review; and, second, it assists the staff in arranging for appropriate faculty interviews and student hosting should you be selected for an interview visit.

How can I check on the status of my application?

Due to the high volume of inquiries we receive, we may not be able to respond to each request individually. However, if your application is missing any supporting documents, you will be notified. Please wait one week beyond the application date before making inquiries to allow time for processing of all documents for all applicants.

When will I hear whether or not I'm invited for an interview visit?

Applicants invited for an interview visit will be contacted by the mid January.

When are the recruitment visit dates?

The recruitment dates are: February 6-9, and February 27-March 2, 2010.

If I'm invited for an interview visit, when will I hear the final admission decision?

All admission decisions are finalized by mid March following the recruitment visits.

If this information did not answer your question please feel free to contact us at 510-642-5252.

More Information on the MCB Graduate Program may be requested from:

MCB Graduate Affairs Office

University of California

Department of Molecular and Cell Biology

299 Life Sciences Addition #3200

University of California

Berkeley, CA 94720-3200

Tel. (510) 642-5252

E-mail: mcbgao@berkeley.edu

[[Return to Graduate Program Home](#)]

[Financial Support](#)

We provide five and a half years of financial support to all students (including international students) maintaining satisfactory academic progress. With the approval of the dissertation committee, this support can be extended for an additional semester (the end of the sixth year). The Department provides a competitive stipend and coverage of all fees and non-resident tuition. Graduate student fees cover the cost of comprehensive health and dental insurance throughout the doctoral program. Support for the graduate program is provided by training grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), federal, state, and private funds as well as university and extramural fellowships. Students may also be appointed as Graduate Student Researchers (GSR) and Graduate Student Instructors (GSI).

The MCB Department administers four NIH training grants (T32) in the following research areas: Molecular Basis of Cell Function (Kathleen Collins, Program Director; NIGMS GM007232); Genetics Postgraduate Training Program (Gian Garriga and Henk Roelink, Program Co-Directors; NIGMS GM007127); Genomics (Daniel Rokhsar and Jasper Rine, Program Co-Directors; NHGRI HG00047); and, Immunology and Tumor Biology (David Raulet, Program Director; NCI CA009279).

California Residency. U.S. citizens who are not residents of California are expected to take the steps necessary to gain residency during their first year. Some examples of what is required to obtain residency in California include: Registering to vote and voting in California elections; filing California state income taxes; registering your car in and obtaining a driver's license from the State of California; designating California as your permanent address and establishing and maintaining active bank accounts in California and closing all out-of-state accounts. Nonresident tuition for the period during which students are establishing California residency (first year) is also covered by the department. Residency is handled by the Office of the Registrar and further information can be obtained at their website:

<http://registrar.berkeley.edu/Residency/legalinfo.html>.

Fellowships. All prospective students are urged to apply for any extramural predoctoral fellowships for which they may be eligible, including National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, Department of Defense and, private and corporate fellowships. Applicants are nominated for University Fellowships by the Admissions Committee and MCB Department; if you wish to be considered for University Fellowships please be sure to complete form C of the application.

International Applicants. Since the additional cost of an international student is considerably higher admission offers are limited. Applicants who are not United States citizens, immigrants, or permanent residents should carefully read the information in the University application materials. This information can also be found on-line at http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/admis_require.shtml#4_2.

[Return to Graduate Program Home]