CELLULAR AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY, M.S.

Graduate study in cellular and molecular biology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is a research-oriented interdisciplinary program leading to the Ph.D. degree. Students are not admitted to the master’s degree program. 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 (CMB) 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; plant biology; RNA; systems biology; transcriptional mechanisms; and virology. For a complete listing of each faculty member associated with each focus group and the corresponding research, see the CMB website (http://www.cmb.wisc.edu).

The CMB program encourages each student to develop an independent and creative approach to science. These skills can be gained through the program requirements, which include course work and research in the student’s specific area of interest. All CMB students are required to obtain 10 credits in the CMB core curriculum, which consists of both cellular and molecular biology course work, in addition to a 1-credit ethics requirement. Students also take courses and seminars, and participate in journal clubs related to their specific areas of expertise. Research experience is an integral part of the program while completing these requirements. The combination of coursework and research experience allows students to obtain a solid foundation in cellular and molecular biology that is also tailored to the professional objectives of each student. Specific core curriculum requirements can be found at the CMB website (http://www.cmb.wisc.edu).

ADMISSIONS

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

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and processes related to funding.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/policiesand requirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

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<tr>
<th>Mode of Instruction</th>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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Mode of Instruction Definitions

* Evening/Weekend: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.
* Online: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.
* Hybrid: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.
* Accelerated: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credit</th>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Residence</td>
<td>16</td>
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Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement: Half of degree coursework (15 credits out of 30 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/).

Overall Graduate GPA Requirement: 3.00 GPA required.

Other Grade Requirements: The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

Assessments and Examinations: Contact the program for information on required assessments and examinations.

Language Requirements: Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

Eleven credits of coursework, not including 990 research credits, are required to complete the CMB course requirements. One course must be taken from the "core" list of molecular biology courses and one course must be taken from the "core" list of cell biology courses. The remaining credits can come from either the "core" or "elective" list of classes to bring the total number of credits to ten. In addition, 1 credit must be fulfilled through the required ethics course. All CMB 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 Requirements** | | |
**Molecular Biology Core** | | 3
Choose one of the following:
- BIOCHEM/GENETICS/MD GENET 620: Eukaryotic Molecular Biology
- BIOCHEM/GENETICS/MICROBIO 612: Prokaryotic Molecular Biology
- MICROBIO/ONCOLOGY/PL PATH 640: General Virology-Multiplication of Viruses

**Cell Biology Core** | | 3
Choose one of the following:
- BOTANY 860: Plant Cell Biology
- ZOOLOGY/ANATOMY/NTP 765: Developmental Neuroscience
- PATH 750: Cellular and Molecular Biology/Pathology
- ONCOLOGY 703: Carcinogenesis and Tumor Cell Biology

**Ethics Core** | | 1
- ONCOLOGY 715: Ethics in Science

**Elective Courses**
- BIOCHEM 601: Protein and Enzyme Structure and Function
- BIOCHEM/BOTANY 621: Plant Biochemistry
- BIOCHEM/PHMCOL-M/ZOOLOGY 630: Cellular Signal Transduction Mechanisms
- B M E/CBE 510: Introduction to Tissue Engineering
- B M E 545: Engineering Extracellular Matrices
- B M E 556: Systems Biology: Mammalian Signaling Networks
- B M I 826: Special Topics in Biostatistics and Biomedical Informatics
- B M I/STAT 877: Statistical Methods for Molecular Biology
- BOTANY/BIOCHEM/GENETICS 840: Regulatory Mechanisms in Plant Development
- CRB 610: Fundamentals of Mammalian Embryology
- CRB 640: Fundamentals of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology
- CRB 650: Molecular and Cellular Organogenesis
- CRB/MEDICINE 701: Cell Signaling and Human Disease
- CBE/B M E 520: Stem Cell Bioengineering
- CBE/B M E 783: Design of Biological Molecules
- CHEM/BIOCHEM 665: Biophysical Chemistry
- GENETICS 631: Plant Genetics
- GENETICS/BOTANY/M M & I/MICROBIO/PL PATH 655: Biology and Genetics of Fungi
- GENETICS 885: Advanced Genomic and Proteomic Analysis
- GENETICS/MD GENET 677: Advanced Topics in Genetics
- GENETICS/HORT 550: Molecular Approaches for Potential Crop Improvement
- M M & I 555: Vaccines: Practical Issues for a Global Society
- M M & I/MICROBIO 740: Mechanisms of Microbial Pathogenesis
- M M & I/PATH-BIO 750: Host-Parasite Relationships in Vertebrate Viral Disease
- GENETICS/MICROBIO 607: Advanced Microbial Genetics
- MICROBIO 625: Advanced Microbial Physiology
- MICROBIO/BMOLCHEM 668: Microbiology at Atomic Resolution

Remaining credits can come from either the core or elective list of classes to bring the total number of credits to eleven.
Policies

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

The Graduate Program Handbook (http://www.cmb.wisc.edu/handbook) is the repository for all of the program’s policies and requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Work from Other Institutions

Does not appear on UW–Madison transcript or count toward graduate GPA. The minimum residence requirement can be satisfied only with courses taken as a graduate student at UW–Madison, with the exception being graduate-level work taken as a CIC traveling scholar. These requests evaluated on case-by-case basis.

UW–Madison Undergraduate

The program may decide to accept up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above of required or elective courses from undergraduate work completed at UW–Madison toward fulfillment of minimum degree requirements. This is not allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. Work will not appear on the graduate career portion of UW–Madison transcript or count toward GPA. Minimum residence credit requirement can be satisfied only with courses taken as a graduate student at UW–Madison. All requests evaluated on case-by-case basis.

UW–Madison University Special

The program may accept up to 15 University Special student credits as fulfillment of the minimum graduate residence, or graduate degree requirements on occasion. This work would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. All requests evaluated on case-by-case basis.

PROBATION

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

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 CMB program requirements; assist the student in developing as an independent scientist in their 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 CMB program. Two committee members must be outside the student’s direct area of expertise.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Master's degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements;
that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit
requirements.

OTHER

CMB 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 CMB 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 CMB program for specific questions about stipend level, etc.

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

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.

PEOPLE

Faculty Chairs: David Wassarman (program chair), Kate O’Connor-
Giles (admissions chair), Reid Alisch (recruiting chair), Curtis Brandt
(advising and orientation chair), Donna Peters (curriculum chair), Caroline
Alexander (awards chair), Tim Gomez (training grant liaison)

Focus Group Chairs: Caroline Alexander (Cancer Biology), Jill Wildonger
(Cell Adhesion and Cytoskeleton), David Pagliarini (Cellular and Molecular
Metabolism), Anne Griep (Developmental Biology and Regenerative
Medicine), Jyoti Watters (Immunology), Guy Groblewski (Membrane
Biology and Protein Trafficking), Robert Landick (Molecular and Genome
Biology of Microbes), Sebastian Bednarek (Plant Biology), David
Brow (RNA), Megan McClean (Systems Biology), Melissa Harrison
(Transcriptional Mechanisms), Paul Ahlquist (Virology).

For a list of all participating faculty, see the program website (http://
www.cmb.wisc.edu).