Biochemistry, PhD

for the Doctor of Philosophy in Biochemistry

Graduate Degree Programs in Biochemistry
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The Department of Biochemistry offers a graduate program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree. For an application and departmental materials that provide greater detail on programs, offerings, admission, degree requirements, and financial aid, visit our website at www.mcb.illinois.edu/graduate/gradprospect.html. The Department of Biochemistry is a part of the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB), which also includes the Departments of Cell and Developmental Biology, Microbiology and Molecular and Integrative Physiology as well as Programs in Biophysics and Neuroscience. The Department is part of an umbrella program in MCB that encompasses over 70 different research laboratories. Students admitted into any of these departmental graduate programs can select faculty thesis advisors from these active research laboratories in the School. Close ties are also maintained with the School of Integrative Biology, the School of Chemical Sciences, the College of Medicine, and the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Admission
Applicants interested in the Biochemistry, PhD program will need to apply directly to the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) PhD program, https://mcb.illinois.edu/graduate/gradprospect/. The MCB PhD program is an umbrella program that requires admitted students to spend their first semester rotating among three different labs to explore their interests before joining one of our four departments.

MCB Admission requirements include a bachelor’s degree in biological or physical sciences, a grade point average of a 3.0 or higher (A = 4.0), prior research experience and three letters of recommendation from individuals who can attest to the applicant’s academic and research background. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is not required. Applicants interested in pursuing a PhD in Biochemistry should have a strong background in chemistry, biology, physics, and calculus. In addition to these requirements, non-native English-speaking applicants must attain a minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) overall score of 96, with at least a score of 22 on the speaking section. MCB does not accept the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to show English proficiency. Graduate College requirements also apply.

Graduate Teaching Experience
Experience in teaching is considered a vital part of the graduate program and is required as part of the academic work of all Ph.D. candidates in this program.

Centers, Programs, and Institutes
Biochemistry faculty are appointed and active in several cross-campus academic and research units, including the Center for Biophysics & Computational Biology, the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, the Institute for Genomic Biology, as well as the interdepartmental graduate programs in Biophysics & Computational Biology, and Neuroscience.

Faculty Research Interests
Faculty research in the Department of Biochemistry covers a broad spectrum of the most dynamic areas of current research in biological chemistry and molecular biology; physical approaches to the structure and function of macromolecules and membranes; nucleic acid biochemistry and enzymology, enzyme mechanisms and evolution; membrane biochemistry and bioenergetics; protein-lipid interactions; protein-nucleic acid interactions and molecular recognition; molecular biological approaches to gene organization and expression; immunology; microbial physiology, and signal transduction.

Facilities and Resources
Campus resources for science research are state-of-the-art and available to all faculty research programs. Notably among these is the Roy J. Carver Biotechnology Center, which comprises the W.M. Keck Center for Comparative and Functional Genomics (Custom Library Services, High-Throughput Sequencing and Genotyping, DNA Core Sequencing, Fragment Analysis, Oligonucleotide Synthesis, Functional Genomics and Bioinformatics), Proteomics Services (Protein Science Facility, Immunological Resource Center and Flow Cytometry Facility), a Metabolomics Center and a Transgenic Mouse Facility. It also provides career counseling through the Career Services Office. Many other cross-campus facilities are important for the faculty research programs in Biochemistry, including the Fred Seitz Materials Research Laboratory, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), the high-field VOICE NMR Laboratory, Mass Spectrometry Center, Microanalysis Laboratory, Cell Media Facility, and many electronics, machine and glass shop service facilities.

Financial Aid
Financial aid for Ph.D. graduate students in biochemistry is available in the form of fellowships, teaching and research assistantships, and tuition and partial fee waivers. In addition, interdepartmental training grants from the National Institutes of Health support multidisciplinary training programs. Qualified candidates are considered for financial support upon application.