The Master of Science in Molecular and Cellular Biology (MS in MCB) at the University of Illinois provides a non-thesis, course-based degree program for those students interested in advanced preparation for professional or graduate school or for future careers in industry, government or academia. The goal of the program is to provide students with a strong and broad educational background and problem-solving skill set in molecular and cellular biology at the advanced level without requiring a research thesis component. While the MS in MCB program is suitable as preparation for a PhD program in MCB or related areas, it is uncommon for students to enter the MCB PhD program at the University of Illinois after finishing this degree.

The MS in MCB degree program serves primary two different audiences:

- Those students who wish to obtain a master’s degree during a post-baccalaureate gap year, but prior to admission to professional or graduate school, by deepening and broadening their scientific knowledge base to better prepare for the next degree program.
- Those students who plan to obtain employment in industry, government, or nongovernmental organizations, where additional coursework at the advanced level would enhance their competitiveness, and in particular, where their laboratory skills could be bolstered through advanced laboratory courses without the necessity of conducting a research-based thesis project.

Students will take foundation and advanced courses from an approved list in the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology, choosing from a wide range of course topics, including biochemistry, molecular genetics, cell biology, microbiology, neurobiology, systems and computational biology, and advanced laboratory methods. Students will take advanced lecture, discussion, and seminar courses that hone scientific critical reading, analytical thinking, and communication skills that are highly desirable for advanced degree programs and future employers.

The MS in MCB degree requires a minimum of two full-time semesters, which can be completed within one year, depending on prior education and experience. Some students may choose to take up to two years to complete, if they hold outside employment, but it is intended to be completed within two years. To maintain active status in the program, students must register for a minimum of 12 credit hours in 400- or 500-level MCB courses per semester.

Students entering the MS in MCB program will be expected to have completed a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited 4-year college or university with undergraduate coursework in biology, chemistry, physics, calculus and English composition. Applicants must have completed the last 60 hours of coursework with grades of B (3.0 on a scale of 1 to 4) or better. Deficiencies in these areas will require additional coursework, as necessary, for successful completion of the degree.

Minimum required major and supporting course work: To maintain active status in the program students must register for a minimum of 12 credit hours in 400- or 500-level MCB courses per semester. A course-based master’s degree requires a minimum of two full-time semesters. Consult the List of Approved Courses for the MS in MCB Program at this link (https://mcb.illinois.edu/msmcb/MS_MCB_ApprCrsList.pdf) for the most up-to-date information. For additional details and requirements refer to the MS MCB Program Handbook and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/).
MCB 450 is only available to students who have not already taken MCB 354 or the equivalent.

| Minimum GPA: | 3.0 |