Programs of Graduate Study in the Basic Biological Sciences

The Division of the Biological Sciences offers a variety of graduate programs leading to the Ph.D. degree. Joint programs also may be devised with departments, such as chemistry and psychology, in other divisions of the university. Graduate programs are offered under the aegis of divisional departments as well as interdepartmental committees composed of faculty members with a common interest in a broad but definable area of advanced study. Recent years have seen a trend in graduate study in the biological sciences away from strict separations of disciplines and toward interdisciplinary approaches to research. Toward a similar goal in the Division of the Biological Sciences, several degree granting units have joined together in clusters, with a common admissions process and a core basic curriculum. The cluster arrangement offers students greater flexibility in their choice of graduate program, while enhancing interdisciplinary research opportunities. The fundamentals of graduate education in the division are not altered by these provisions. Students complete their degree in individual graduate programs.

The goal of the programs, whether offered by clusters or individual departments or committees, is the creation and dissemination of fundamental knowledge of life processes and the education and training of outstanding young scholars in these disciplines. To this end, the Division of the Biological Sciences has assembled a dedicated and talented faculty, strong in research and teaching, and has developed laboratory and other facilities of the first rank that allow the faculty and graduate students to pursue their goals at the highest level of excellence.

The clusters in the division that offer programs of study leading to the Ph.D. degree are:

Biomedical Sciences: Cancer, Immunology, Microbiology, Molecular Metabolism and Nutrition, and Pathology

- The Committee on Cancer Biology
- The Committee on Immunology
- The Committee on Molecular Metabolism and Nutrition
- The Committee on Microbiology
- The Department of Pathology
  - (Graduate Program in Molecular Pathogenesis and Molecular Medicine)

Darwinian Sciences: Ecological, Integrative, and Evolutionary Biology

- The Department of Ecology and Evolution
- The Committee on Evolutionary Biology
- The Department of Organismal Biology and Anatomy
  - (Graduate Program in Integrative Biology)
Molecular Biosciences: Biochemistry, Genetics, and Cell and Developmental Biology

- The Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
  - (Graduate Program in Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics)
- The Committee on Development, Regeneration, and Stem Cell Biology
- The Department of Human Genetics
- The Committee on Genetics, Genomics, and Systems Biology
- The Department of Molecular Genetics and Cell Biology
  - (Graduate Program in Cell and Molecular Biology)

Neuroscience: Computational Neuroscience, Neurobiology and Integrative Neuroscience

- The Committee on Computational Neuroscience
- Program in Integrative Neuroscience (Psychology)
- The Committee on Neurobiology

These degree granting units have not entered into a cluster arrangement and provide separate admission. They are:

- The Department of Public Health Sciences (M.S. and Ph.D.)
- Interdisciplinary Scientist Training Program (Janelia Farm)
- The Committee on Medical Physics
- Graduate Program in Biophysical Sciences (Joint with the Division of Physical Sciences)

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

The following requirements and procedures apply to those students wishing to follow a course of study leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the division. Students may apply to a single cluster and as many as four individual units, indicating their choices in order of preference. According to their own schedules, the units applied to will communicate directly with the student as needed. Final decision letters are issued by the BSD Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs (OGPA). If admitted to more than one program, applicants will have the option of accepting the program of their choice.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Information about graduate programs and application materials is available at http://gradprograms.bsd.uchicago.edu/.

DEADLINES

Applications are due December 1st. Late applications will be reviewed only at the discretion of the Dean for Graduate Affairs. Incomplete applications will be evaluated on the basis of materials received at the time of the regular review process. Interviews are often required and students will be invited to attend formal recruitment weekends. Beginning about March 1, admissions decisions are released
to applicants. Responses by applicants to offers of admission are due to OGPA by April 15.

CREDENTIALS

An applicant who holds an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution is considered for admission on the basis of:

1. An excellent undergraduate record
2. The Graduate Record Examination
3. A demonstrated interest in a research career
4. Three letters of recommendation addressing the scientific abilities and potential for graduate studies of the applicant
5. Proof of English proficiency for foreign students whose native language is not English; either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

Certain programs require additional credentials. These additional requirements may be ascertained by contacting the individual program.

FUNDING

The typical BSD graduate student working toward the Ph.D. degree is fully funded (regular tuition and fees and prevailing competitive stipend). Funds for this support are derived from numerous sources, including federal or private training grants, institutional funds, endowed funds, research grants and individual awards to students. During a student’s course of study, support mechanisms may vary. Funds for international students are limited to institutional sources. Funding is guaranteed for five years, subject to maintaining satisfactory progress.