

University of Missouri St. Louis
Biochemistry and Biotechnology Program
Graduate Admissions Frequently Asked Questions
Last updated 1/25/18

Thank you for your interest in our program – we are happy to answer any questions you might have about our program or the admission process. Many of our common questions are addressed here. If you have other questions, please feel free to email bcbtinfo@umsl.edu for more information!

Q: How do I get information about the UM St. Louis BCBT program?

A: You can learn more about the program by visiting <http://www.umsl.edu/~biotech/> or more about the graduate school at <http://www.umsl.edu/gradschool/>

Q: What are the deadlines for admission?

A: If you are an international student, your application must be complete before May 1 for fall admission or Oct 1 for spring admission. For domestic students, deadlines are July 1 for fall and Dec 1 for spring.

Q: Can I apply to your program by just sending you my CV, transcript, and/or test scores in an email?

A: Unfortunately, not. We consider many factors in our admissions decisions, including your undergraduate coursework and grades, work experience, and letters of recommendation. You must apply formally online to the university to be considered.

Q: Where can I get application forms?

A: You must apply online at <http://www.umsl.edu/admission/apply/index.html>.

Q: Are there assistantships available for students in the BCBT MS program?

A: There are no funds to provide assistantships in this program. Students are self supporting. Some senior students are able to find part-time positions as teaching assistants or working in research labs.

Q: Can the \$50 application fee be waived?

A: No. Only paid applications will be considered.

Q: Are GRE scores required?

A. GRE General scores are required for international students who are applying to the MS program. University will require official copies to be sent to them before you can be admitted. Students who have graduated from a US institution are not required to send GRE scores, although they will be considered if you have completed the exam.

Q: What is the institutional code for reporting scores?

A: Institutional code is 6889, and the Dept code 0202 for Biochemistry.

Q: I have old GRE scores. Are they still acceptable?

A: ETS will not send GRE scores to the University that are more than 5 years old.

Q: Do I have to take the TOEFL/TWE/IELTS?

A: All international students are required to take one of these tests, and there are University standards for admission. Exceptions can be found at:

<http://www.umsl.edu/~intelstu/prospective/TOEFL.html>

In general, the requirement may be waived for applicants who:

- Are Citizens or Permanent Residents (green card holders) of the United States.
- Are Citizens of a Recognized Native English-Speaking Country.
(<http://www.umsl.edu/~intelstu/prospective/TOEFL.html#Countries>)
- Are Nonresident Aliens in the US on a Work Visa (H-1B or L1).
- Completed Secondary Education in the US or a Recognized Native English-Speaking Country
- Earned a Bachelor's Degree from an Institution in the US or a Recognized Native English-Speaking Country.
- Have Completed 30 (thirty) or More non-ESL Credit Hours in an Officially Accredited Institution in the US or a Recognized Native English-Speaking Country.

Q: What is the minimum acceptable TOEFL/TWE/IELTS score?

A: See: <http://www.umsl.edu/~intelstu/prospectivestudents/grad.html>

80 iBT score for TOEFL (550 old paper-based). IELTS would need to be at least 6.0, but the standard could be higher depending on the applicant pool. Individual unit scores are considered as well as the overall score.

Q: What is the minimum acceptable GPA?

A: Since graduate students must maintain a 3.0 as a graduate student to stay in the program and graduate, we are looking for 3.0 (B average) or better in undergraduate coursework. Depending on the documented success/failure of students where you come from, this cutoff could be higher.

Q: I am interested in an MS degree but have a low GPA. What are my options?

A: If you are missing a few courses and/or need to improve your GPA, apply as a nondegree seeking student. You can take up to nine hours, in which you will need to get Bs or better in your courses in order to move into the MS program. If you need to take more than nine hours, apply as a nondegree seeking undergraduate. If you are not sure, contact the Program Director for advice (bcbtinfo@umsl.edu).

Q: What are the minimum acceptable GRE scores?

A: There is some variability from country to country, but generally we look for percentiles that are in excess of 15% for verbal and quantitative.

Q: I can't afford to pay for graduate school. How do I apply for financial aid?

A: There is no formal means of providing support for BCBT MS students. For other forms of support, the graduate school website has links for this purpose.

<http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/prospective/financial.html>

Q: I am a married international student and would like my spouse to join me in the US.

A: The University can issue a dependant I-20 for a spouse. A copy of the marriage certificate will be needed, and the student will need to show \$4,000 in additional financial support before an I-20 can be issued for the spouse. The University is not required to supply the additional financial support needed for dependents.

Q: I have a day job; can I pursue an MS degree at night?

A: YES. The entire degree program is offered at night. We define evening classes starting at 4pm. Most of our MS students have day jobs and are able to obtain their degree in this fashion. Some of our classes rotate between day and evening, so be sure to talk with your advisor about your schedule.

Q. Can I receive financial aid if I am nondegree seeking?

A: I know of no financial aid for non-degree seeking students.

Q: Where I should submit my additional documents, such as letters of recommendation?

A: See address below.

Q: Do you need CV and Personal Statement?

A: A personal statement is very helpful. You may send a CV in addition to your application if you wish.

Q: What are the required undergrad science courses needed to get into the MS BCBT program?

A: You need a BA/BS in biology or chemistry or closely related area. We require two semesters of general chemistry, two semesters of organic chemistry, and one semester each of biochemistry, cell biology, and genetics. We strongly recommend that undergraduate molecular biology also be completed prior to starting the program. If you don't have this background, it is possible to be admitted as a nondegree seeking student to pick up missing courses and/or demonstrate you can maintain the appropriate GPA.

Q: Do you admit graduate students to start in January?

A: We admit BCBT MS students for both fall and spring.

Q: Do you admit graduate students to start in summer?

A: We advise not starting your program in the summer, since there are typically no BCBT lecture courses offered at that time. Research and/or seminars are summer options for those who have already finished at least one regular semester in the program.

Q: Can this program be completed in two semesters?

A: No. Due to scheduling to accommodate evening students, it will take at least three regular semesters to complete the program.

Q: Can letters of recommendation be sent electronically? Are the recommendation forms required?

A: Yes, they can. Instructions for uploading letters will be given following submission of your application

Q: What is the minimum number of letters of recommendation required for application?

A: Two.

Q: I would like to know whether WES (World Education Services) credential evaluation is required for International students.

A: It's optional for our program. Please be advised that if you have it done, your application will be processed more quickly. If it's done on campus, there can be significant delay. You choose: money vs. time.

Q: Where can I find out about tuition and fees?

A: These change often. Try: <http://www.umsl.edu/cashiers/tuition-fees/index.html>

Q: What if I have a question that is not listed here?

A: Send your question to bcbtinfo@umsl.edu.

Useful websites:

UMSL Graduate School: <http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/>

Applications: <http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/graduate/prospective/apply-online.html>

International Student Services: <http://www.umsl.edu/~intelstu/>

ELS program: http://www.els.edu/en/ELSCenters/Detail?locid=STL#els_general_tab