

## Admission Process FAQ

Here are the most commonly asked questions about MCSB! If you do not see your question here, please feel free to contact us at: [mcsb@umn.edu](mailto:mcsb@umn.edu), 612-625-5179 or 612-624-7470.

### ***When is your application deadline?***

Deadline is December 15

### ***Do you take applications after the deadline?***

Yes, but your application may not have a timely review and would not be considered for graduate school fellowships.

### ***Do you admit for Spring semester?***

No, we admit only for Fall semester due to the course structure.

### ***Can I apply for a MS degree?***

No, we only offer admission to the PhD program.

### ***Do I need financial aid?***

No, students admitted to our program receive an annual stipend that covers living expenses. Currently, this is \$24,500 per year. We also pay your tuition and provide you with health care benefits. The completion of financial aid forms is not necessary, even though the Graduate School Bulletin lists these forms as being available. The forms are not necessary to obtain support while participating in the MCSB Graduate Studies program.

### ***What makes a particular application stand out?***

Research Experience! Please have people who know about your research experience submit letters of recommendation for you. You can also describe your research in detail in your personal statement.

### ***What is the average GPA score that you will need in order to be admitted?***

Most students have an average GPA of 3.5 to 3.6.

### ***What classes do I need to take to be eligible for admission?***

Recommended academic preparation includes one year each of calculus, organic chemistry, and physics. You will also need a background in basic biology, including biochemistry and genetics.

### ***Do you require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)?***

Yes. The minimum scores are verbal-550, quantitative-600, and analytical writing-3.5. The Subject (Advanced) Test (in biology, chemistry, or biochemistry, cell and molecular biology) of the GRE is not required but highly recommended. GRE scores must be 5 years old or less.

***My GRE scores are below your minimum scores, should I still apply?***

Our minimum scores are a suggested score that you should have before you apply. If your scores are below these scores, it is highly recommended that you should retake this exam. You may apply with lower scores, but your application will not be as competitive compared with other applications.

***Is the TOEFL exam required for international students?***

International students must take the TOEFL or IELTS exam. TOEFL scores of 625 (paper), 263 (computer), or 106-108 (internet, with writing subsection 25 and reading subsection 25 or higher) or IELTS score of 7.0 or higher are considered. These are recommended scores, not an absolute minimum. TOEFL scores must be under two years old.

***What is your institutional code for the GRE and TOEFL exams?***

The University of Minnesota code is 6874.

***What are the GRE/TOEFL Department Codes?***

MCDBG applicant GRE codes are 0203, or 0206, or 0210, or 0299.

BMBB applicant GRE codes are 0202

TOEFL the departmental code is 74 or 34.

***How many letters of recommendation do I need?***

You will need 3 letters of recommendation from persons familiar with your academic and research capabilities. You must enter their names and contact information into the Graduate School's online application system. We encourage all of your references to submit their letters online, however, the MCSB program will accept letters in hard copy. They can fax (612-626-6140) or email [mcsb@umn.edu](mailto:mcsb@umn.edu) their letters to us.

***Do we admit international students?***

Yes, we do a phone interview with approximately 10 international students. Our incoming classes have an average of 6 international students.

***How do I apply?***

You can find out about our application process at [www.mcsb.umn.edu](http://www.mcsb.umn.edu). Applying is a **two step** process; you must apply online to the graduate school and you must submit materials directly to the MCSB program.

***Do I have to pay the Graduate School application fee?***

Yes, the graduate school does not offer a fee waiver for any reason. The application fee is \$75 for domestic students and \$95 for international students.

***How do I know if my application is being considered for admission?***

We review applications in January and invite our top candidates to visit us at our expense either Jan 28-Feb 1, Feb 4- 8, or Feb 11- 15. Phone interviews are conducted for the top international applicants sometime in February.

### ***Helpful Hints***

- Follow the **two-step** admission process.
- Submit a complete application. Upload as many materials as you can to the ApplyYourself website and encourage all of your references to submit their letters on line.
- Check your e-mail frequently. If you are missing materials or if there are any problems with your application, we will only contact you by e-mail.
- Do not send unsolicited e-mail inquiries to department faculty asking for an evaluation of your credentials. This does not give you an advantage in the admissions process, and our faculty are unable to comment on your chances for admission. If you are curious about whether or not you meet the basic standards for admission, please contact the MCSB office.
- Submit only the abstract of publications. The whole publication will not be reviewed.