

Frequently Asked Questions for Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics

Program Descriptions

Master of Science: The thesis-based Master of Science program consists of two to three years of research-intensive training combined with discipline-specific coursework to give each student specialized expertise in their desired field of Microbiology. Students graduate ready for a variety of careers in the biomedical sciences.

Ph.D.: The Ph.D. program in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics combines theoretical knowledge with high-impact research within a highly collaborative and interdisciplinary setting that encourages innovation. Students graduate ready for careers as leaders in research, academia, and a variety of biomedical professions.

Link to the Application

To apply to our M.S., or Ph.D. programs in the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics at Oklahoma State University, please submit your application at the website of the [OSU Graduate College](#).

Application Deadline: January 15th

Supplemental Materials for Your Application

1. GRE Scores
2. Complete transcript records from every institution attended prior to this application
3. Three letters of recommendation (no special format required)
4. Personal Statement (no special format required)
5. Information about any publications on which you are a co-author
6. TOEFL scores (for international students only)

Frequently Asked Questions

Program Questions

- Does the department only accept students in the fall?
⇒ Yes
- Is there any interview before the final decision regarding the application status?
⇒ Yes, usually 2-3 faculty members gather to talk to you by Skype or over the phone, which takes about 20-30 minutes. Most discussion is about what your research experiences and interests are. This is a great chance for you to learn about our program, so please prepare your questions.
- How many students are in the department, and what is the graduation rate and average time for graduation?

- ⇒ The department usually has 20-30 graduate students at any given time. On average, it takes 3 and 5 years to complete Master's and Ph.D. program, respectively. The graduation rate varies, but usually, 3-4 students graduate yearly.
- How many graduate students are typically admitted each year?
 - ⇒ The department usually admits 4-7 students each year.
- To earn a Ph.D., how many papers must I publish?
 - ⇒ Standards vary from lab to lab, but in general, publication of at least two first-author publications will be required in order to receive a Ph.D.
- Do graduate students have many opportunities to present their work?
 - ⇒ Yes, our graduate students frequently present their findings at local, national, and international conferences, depending on the availability of travel funding. In addition, we require students to present their research in departmental symposiums.
- Are the Core facilities at OSU available to the graduate students?
 - ⇒ There are core facilities available within the department as well as in other departments at OSU.
- What is expected of first-year graduate students?
 - ⇒ First semester:
 - I. Students are expected to TA (most likely BIOL 1114 or MICR 2132) and attend all training sessions for the TA positions.
 - II. All students have a set curriculum designed for a broad introduction to all research disciplines in the department.
 - III. Meet with professors and identify a supervisor and lab
 - ⇒ Second semester:
 - I. Courses chosen in consultation with the supervisor
 - II. Begin lab work
 - III. TA/RA, depending on the supervisor
 - IV. Choose committee members
- What constitutes a student being in "good standing with the department"?
 - ⇒ Either A's or B's in all coursework and making progress in their research projects.
- When are the qualifying exams (Ph.D students)?
 - ⇒ These exams typically take place at the end of the third year.

Application Process

- Can I apply if my BS degree is not in microbiology?
 - ⇒ Our preference is for applicants with a degree in biology or other life science degrees, however, we will consider applicants with other relevant degrees. An applicant without a degree in life sciences should at least have taken several biology courses and stand out in other respects in order to have the best chance of acceptance, and the applicant should address this issue in their Personal Statement.
- What is the fee for submitting an application, and can this fee be waived?
 - ⇒ You will need to pay the fee (as of January 2016: \$50 for domestic students and \$75 for international students) to the OSU Graduate College in order for your application to be processed and forwarded to our department. The fee cannot be waived.
- What GRE/TOEFL scores and GPA are required?
 - ⇒ GRE
 - While there is no minimum GRE score requirement, competitive GRE scores are typically in the top 50th and 80th percentiles for verbal and quantitative sections of the GRE. Weaker GRE scores can be made up for by strengths in other areas of the application.

⇒ TOEFL

- There is no minimum TOEFL score. A score above 20 for the speaking portion of the TOEFL is advantageous. A score above 25 in the speaking portion of the TOEFL automatically qualifies international students for TA positions.

⇒ GPA

- Competitive GPAs tend to be at or above 3.5 out of 4. Note: It is not a problem if your transcript does not use this grading format. Weaker GPAs can be made up by strengths in other areas of the application.
- Would an MCAT, GMAT, or DAT score be acceptable instead of a GRE?
 - ⇒ The Department requires a GRE score; the MCAT, GMAT, and DAT can be submitted with the application, but are not substituted for the required GRE score.
- Where should I send my recommendation letters and GRE scores?
 - ⇒ Both the GRE scores and letters of recommendation should be sent to the OSU Graduate College. Letters need to be in sealed envelopes, but require no additional formatting.
- What are your GRE codes?
 - ⇒ The GRE code for Oklahoma State University is 6546.
- If I am flying in, how far is it from the closest airport to Stillwater?
 - ⇒ Both the Oklahoma City and Tulsa airports are about an hour's drive from Stillwater. Driving arrangements would need to be arranged by the student if flying in.
 - ⇒ Stillwater Airport does receive some flights, so it is possible to take flights that land in Stillwater.

Tuition, Fees, and Funding

- Do I have to pay tuition and fees?
 - ⇒ The OSU Tuition Waiver is available to graduate students who are provided with a Research Assistantship (RA) or Teaching Assistantship (TA) and who are in good standing with the department and university. The department has had a long history of providing RA's and TA's to its graduate students.
 - ⇒ Fees will NOT be waived for any student and will be assessed by credit hour per semester. More information about Fees and Tuition can be found on the [Bursar's website](#).
- What are the funding opportunities for new/incoming graduate students that are offered by the department?
 - ⇒ All students accepted into our graduate programs can be supported by either an RA or TA. Students retain this support from the department as long as they maintain adequate progress in their graduate studies and are in good standing with the department and university. Current stipend is \$1,706/month.
- In addition to GTA and GRA positions, are there other sources of funding or graduate fellowships available?
 - ⇒ Yes, there are multiple competitive graduate student fellowships available for outstanding students offered through the OSU Graduate College.
 - ⇒ Students are encouraged to apply for these fellowships from a variety of funding agencies (NSF, NIH, AHA, CFF, etc.).

Healthcare

- Does the department or the university provide health insurance for graduate students?
 - ⇒ Yes, OSU health insurance is available to graduate students who are provided with a Research Assistantship (RA) or Teaching Assistantship (TA) and who are in good standing with the

department and university. The department has had a long history of providing RA's and TA's to its graduate students. For more information about the health insurance plans for students, please visit the [University Health Services website](#).

- Does the university have a clinic for the students on campus?
⇒ Yes, the university does have a full health clinic for our students, complete with an adjoining pharmacy available for prescriptions given from the clinic.
- Do I need any immunizations or provide my immunization records?
⇒ Yes, all policies on immunizations can be found at the [University Health Services website](#).

International Students

- Are international students required to provide information for the financial statement/sponsors' information (for international students)?
⇒ There is no need to arrange this information for your application. However, it is required for the graduate college and related to obtaining a visa from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service after being admitted. For more details, please visit the [International Student Services website](#).
- What if my English needs improvement?
⇒ You can take English classes at OSU, but if your English is below the TOEFL requirements, you will not be eligible for TA.

Advising

- Do I need to identify an advisor before being accepted into the M.S. or Ph.D. programs?
⇒ No, this is not required. Almost all students accepted into our program identify their research mentor during the first semester in our graduate program. However, it is highly encouraged that a student look into various resources to have an idea of a mentor that they would want to join.
⇒ For more information about our faculty, visit [our website](#).
- Is it possible to have more than one mentor?
⇒ In general, there is only one mentor for each student. However, there are many examples of collaborative research projects between labs with significant input from two or more faculty members. Students also receive input from other faculty members who serve on the student's graduate committee.
- Can I change supervisors if I need to?
⇒ Depending on the situation, a student can change supervisors, but it is up to the student to find a new supervisor and lab.

Questions About Live in Stillwater and OSU

- What is the cost of living in Stillwater, Oklahoma?
⇒ Overall, the cost of living in Stillwater is about 14% lower than the U.S. average. Visit the City of Stillwater [Chamber of Commerce's website](#) for more information about general life in Stillwater.
- Where can I live while getting my degree?
⇒ Students in our program live in housing both on and off OSU's main campus. There are numerous apartment complexes in Stillwater that are in very close proximity to the main campus.
- Is it necessary to have a car in Stillwater? Is there a transit system?

- ⇒ It is much easier to get around Stillwater with a car, but it is not necessary. The OSU Bus system also serves the transport needs of Stillwater. With your OSU ID, all students can use the bus to get around Stillwater for free. These bus routes go to a majority of the apartment complexes located in Stillwater.
- Is there a gym on campus for use by the students?
 - ⇒ Yes. As an OSU student, you have free access to OSU's gym on the main campus. The only requirement for entry is your OSU ID.
- Are there lots of places to eat on campus?
 - ⇒ Yes, OSU offers many places to eat on campus as well as some campus convenience stores so students can buy ingredients to make their own food.
- How would I get to know other graduate students?
 - ⇒ There is a departmental MMGGSA organization that hosts numerous events and has monthly meetings. Our graduate students have a lounge equipped with furniture and a refrigerator for graduate student comfort.
- Can I get contact current graduate students?
 - ⇒ Yes, contact the secretary 307 Life Sciences East for a list of graduate student contact information. The secretary's information can be found on [our website](#).

Useful Links for Potential Graduate Students

- [The City of Stillwater](#)
- [OSU Graduate College](#)
- [Travel Oklahoma](#)
- [State Parks](#)
- [Okstate Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Graduate Student Association Facebook Page](#)
- [Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Home Page](#)

For Additional Questions

Contact [Dr. Wouter Hoff](#)