 Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree / Master of Arts (MA) Degree / Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree in the field of Biochemistry and Cell Biology

Program Learning Outcomes for the BA/MA/PhD Accelerated Degree Program in the field of Biochemistry and Cell Biology

Upon completing the Bachelor’s degree requirements for this program, students majoring in Biochemistry and Cell Biology will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of biology with particular emphasis on biochemistry, genetics, and cell biology.
2. Demonstrate the ability to apply the modern scientific method, including designing experiments and/or building mathematical models, and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data using common statistical methods and software programs.
3. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills, including an ability to communicate effectively and work with diverse groups, and the ability to interpret and communicate the results of original research.
4. Locate primary scientific literature and demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking and problem solving skills to evaluate published and proposed research in the biological sciences and to apply these skills.
5. Demonstrate understanding of the practice and culture of science, scientific ethics, and the relationship between science and society.
6. Develop quantitative reasoning via the construction of models and/or the analysis of data.

Students completing the MA degree requirements will be able to:

1. Develop a knowledge of past and current research accomplishments and techniques in biochemistry and cell biology.
2. Demonstrate problem solving and critical thinking skills.
3. Demonstrate the effective written communication skills required for a thesis describing independent research and contributions to publishable research.
4. Demonstrate the effective oral and visual communication skills necessary for articulating scientific findings and significance to diverse audiences.

Requirements for the BA-MA-PhD Accelerated Degree Program in the field of Biochemistry and Cell Biology

BA in Biochemistry and Cell Biology Requirements

All of the requirements for a BA in Biochemistry and Cell Biology are required for the BA-MA-PhD track.

MA in Biochemistry and Cell Biology Requirements

The BA-MA-PhD Track Committee will advise students pursuing the BA-MA completion and will approve their formal course program during their final two years in the BA-MA program. Students who wish to pursue the BA-MA track must select the MA thesis advisor by the end of their second year, when they declare their major, to provide the opportunity to begin a project that will form the basis of the MA thesis.

Course requirements for the MA degree include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIOC 581</td>
<td>GRADUATE SEMINAR IN BIOCHEMISTRY AND CELL BIOLOGY (4 semesters attendance, 1 presentation)</td>
<td>1 credit hour per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or BIOC 582</td>
<td>GRADUATE SEMINAR IN BIOCHEMISTRY AND CELL BIOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOC 583</td>
<td>MOLECULAR INTERACTIONS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOC 587</td>
<td>RESEARCH DESIGN, PROPOSAL WRITING, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOC 588</td>
<td>CELLULAR INTERACTIONS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIV 594</td>
<td>RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOC 800</td>
<td>BIOCHEMISTRY &amp; CELL BIOLOGY GRADUATE RESEARCH</td>
<td>Variable credit hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elective Requirements

Select at least 6 credit hours from BIOC course offerings at the 500 level

Additional Coursework as Approved by Department

Total Credit Hours 1

Minimum of 40

1. Demonstrate the effective oral and visual communication skills necessary for articulating scientific findings and significance to diverse audiences.

4. Develop a comprehensive knowledge of current and past research accomplishments and techniques in biochemistry and cell biology.

2. Demonstrate independent problem solving and critical thinking skills.

3. Demonstrate the effective written communication skills required for a thesis describing independent research and contributions to successful funding proposals and published research.
Footnotes and Additional Information

1 Safety training in Environmental Health and Safety is required before entry into the laboratory, and training in responsible conduct of research (UNIV 594) is taken during the freshmen or sophomore year. The courses listed must be completed or evidence provided of successful completion of courses that covered the same material with a B- grade average (GPA ≥ 2.67). Students in the BA-MA track are required to register for and participate in BIOC 581 or BIOC 582 both semesters during their junior and senior years and to present their research at least once. Students generally enroll in at least 9 credit hours of BIOC 800 during the summer between the sophomore and junior year, BIOC 587 and up to 6 credit hours of BIOC 800 during the summer between the junior and senior years. Students take BIOC 583 and BIOC 588 in their senior year. Registration for at least 9 credit hours of BIOC 800 is required during the summer following the senior year for MA thesis defense.

2 Students will be responsible for the content of these courses in their MA defense (which also serves as the admission to PhD Candidacy examination).

Progress reviews with the MA thesis committee occur at the end of the junior year and the early spring of the senior year. The MA thesis will be submitted and public oral defense will occur in the summer following graduation at the end of the senior year with completion of the BA requirements. MA candidates continuing to the PhD must maintain a GPA ≥ 3.00, complete a thesis, and make a public oral defense that includes a private examination by their MA thesis committee. Students who complete the MA requirements with a GPA ≥ 2.67 but less than 3.00 must defend their thesis to complete the MA degree, but will not be admitted to the PhD program.

Evaluation of Progress in the PhD Phase of the BA-MA-PhD Program

The Graduate Advisory Committee evaluates each student’s record and recommends any further coursework based on the requirements and on the interests of the student. Thesis advisors may require additional courses. At the end of each semester, the department chair, in consultation with the faculty, reviews student performance in the formal coursework. Students must maintain at least a B grade average (GPA ≥ 3.00), perform satisfactorily in their research efforts, and demonstrate outstanding motivation and potential for research.

Evaluation during the PhD phase of the program includes:

- The MA thesis and its oral defense constitute the admission to candidacy examination
- Ongoing review of research progress by the thesis advisor; satisfactory research progress will be indicated by a grade of "S" in BIOC 800 each semester
- A yearly research progress assessment by the student’s Research Progress Review Committee
- Presentation of research progress at least once a year in seminar format (BIOC 581 or BIOC 582) starting in the first year of PhD study and continuing until submission of the doctoral thesis
- Defense of the PhD thesis research and text in a final public seminar presentation and oral examination attended by the student’s Thesis Committee

Policies for the BA/MA/PhD Accelerated Degree Program in the field of Biochemistry and Cell Biology

Biochemistry and Cell Biology Graduate Program Handbook

The General Announcements (GA) is the official Rice curriculum. As an additional resource for students, Biochemistry and Cell Biology publishes a graduate program handbook, which can be found here: http://gradhandbooks.rice.edu/2017_18/Biochemistry_Cell%20Biology_Graduate_Handbook.pdf.
Admission

Qualified Rice University undergraduates can apply to enroll in the Biochemistry and Cell Biology BA-MA-PhD program track in the spring of their sophomore year. Students who are strong candidates for this program typically join a Rice research lab to start research on a project related to biochemistry or cell biology prior to applying. Upon acceptance, depending on course load, financial aid status, and other variables, program participants may then start taking required graduate course requirements at the same time as their upper-level undergraduate degree course requirements. Students pursuing this track should be aware that there could be financial aid implications, should the conversion of undergraduate coursework to that of graduate level reduce their earned undergraduate credit for any semester below that of full-time undergraduate status (12 hours). Advisors for the program can assist in this determination.

Laboratory research performed in undergraduate and graduate research courses is presented as the MA thesis in the summer following graduation and provides the basis for the PhD thesis work. As a result, the graduate careers of these students will be accelerated by an anticipated 1-2 years, and such students may be able to obtain their PhD degrees approximately 3 years after obtaining their BA-MA degree. If circumstances require, students may stop at the BA or MA level if they meet all the requirements for the respective degrees.

Criteria for selection include academic performance (GPA ≥ 3.50), motivation, previous research experience, and personal qualities. Enrollment is limited, and the Biochemistry and Cell Biology BA-MA-PhD Track Committee will select applicants for admission.

Additional Information

For additional information, please see the BioSciences website: https://biosciences.rice.edu/.

Opportunities for the BA/MA/PhD Accelerated Degree Program in the field of Biochemistry and Cell Biology

Information about Student Resources, Attendance at Scientific Conferences, Internships, Graduate Student Awards, the Graduate Student Association, etc. can by found in the Biochemistry and Cell Biology Graduate Program Handbook:

Additional Information

For additional information, please see BioSciences website: https://biosciences.rice.edu/.