

About our Graduate Programs

Our graduate programs are designed to enhance student preparation, engagement, and research training. Students experience the excitement of discovery in fundamental and applied research, and the satisfaction of teaching in the classroom.

Plant Biology

With an increasing awareness of environmental problems, global changes, and emerging food needs, plants are a focal point for new research initiatives and educational training programs.



The challenges of understanding the biology of plants, their development, and responses to the environment will continue to fuel the expansion of plant research well into the future.

The plant biology program focuses on contemporary basic plant research, design of biotechnologies, and plant-microbe interactions by utilizing molecular, cellular, genetic, genomics, biochemical, physiological, developmental, evolutionary, and structural biology approaches.

The Graduate Group in Microbiology (GGM)

GGM provides access to diverse disciplines through an integrated program of study. The discipline of microbiology at Berkeley encompasses biochemistry, physiology, molecular biology, genetics, cell biology, developmental biology, pathogenesis, ecology, and evolution.

Microbiology students develop an understanding of microbial biology from single molecules to cells to complex ecosystems and which spans the spectrum of beneficial and pathogenic model systems.



Commitment to Diversity

We are proud to be part of a greater campus community that is a national leader for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Plant and Microbial Biology is committed to educate and train a diverse generation of scientists to be the future leaders, researchers, educators and professionals in the fields of plant biology and microbiology.

We encourage women and students from historically underrepresented and/or disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue graduate degrees. We also work on fostering a welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment that is invested in student success.

Requirements

Core Classes - Students take a two-semester core course comprised of six modules, which cover topics in either plant biology or microbiology.

Rotations - Students rotate through three research laboratories in the first academic year. The rotations give students the opportunity to explore areas of interest for their doctoral research.

Seminars - Students enroll in two graduate-level seminar courses with emphasis on student presentations and faculty discussions.



Teaching Experience - Students serve as a graduate student instructor (GSI) for two semesters.

Qualifying Exam - This exam assesses a student's broad knowledge of plant biology or microbiology and in-depth knowledge in their research area.

Dissertation - After passing the qualifying exam, students select a three or four member committee to serve as the dissertation committee.

Finishing Talk - Students present their dissertation project at a departmental seminar.

Application for Admission

The department conducts one admission review per year for fall entry. Applications for admission are accepted online from September through early December. Deadlines are posted at pmb.berkeley.edu. We admit students seeking a doctorate degree. Application requirements include:

- Completed online Graduate Application
- Academic records of all college-level work
- Statement of Purpose
- Personal History Statement
- Three letters of recommendation
- Resume



- Official General Record Exam (GRE) scores
- Official TOEFL test scores (for international students)
- The department recommends, but does not require, the GRE Subject test in biology (B24) or biochemistry, cell and molecular biology (B22)

Applicants selected for an on-campus interview attend our interview weekend at UC Berkeley in late January.

Funding is provided to admitted students!

Full descriptions of our faculty, research activities, and graduate program can be found at pmb.berkeley.edu

For more information contact
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