

DEPARTMENT *of*
MEDICAL AND MOLECULAR SCIENCES

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN APPLIED MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
AND BIOTECHNOLOGY

Program Policies



Updated Summer 2026

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I. Program History and Description

The MS in AMBB program is a “locked step,” 51-credit blended (i.e., having online, hybrid, and face-to-face instruction) master’s degree for individuals holding a Bachelor of Science in biology, chemistry, or a related major; who do not hold a Bachelor’s degree in Biotechnology or Applied Molecular Biology; and who lack the skill set to pursue a career as a laboratory scientist in the biotechnology, biopharmaceutical, or molecular diagnostic sectors. Through this degree, students will gain specialized, in-depth professional hands-on skills and leadership competencies preparing them to succeed within the increasingly competitive biomedical sciences sector.

In today’s employment market, individuals seeking positions in the laboratory-based professions require a tangible skill set, as employers can no longer “pay to train.” The MS in AMBB allows students to gain defined “bench-focused” technical competency, in addition to training in regulatory and fiscal affairs that impact laboratory management. Following graduation, students can apply their knowledge to meet specific career goals whether it be laboratory practice in biotechnology, molecular diagnostic, or academic research settings.

Benefits of pursuing MS in AMBB include:

- Gaining workforce ready, well-rounded, and marketable technical skills geared for future employment
- Exposure to regulatory, fiscal, and management aspects of laboratory practice
- Rapid and fixed timeframe of degree completion (12 months)
- Internships integrated into the curriculum that offer a leg up in the job market upon graduation
- Preparation to sit for the molecular diagnostics board of certification exam offered through the American Society of Clinical Pathology, MB(ASCP)

Outcomes for the MS-AMBB include the expectation that students will be able to:

- Apply the advanced knowledge and technical skills needed to serve as active contributors and/or leaders in the laboratory science professions
- Critically review, appraise, and synthesize the biomedical sciences literature
- Identify and systematically investigate research questions pertinent to laboratory practice
- Synthesize new concepts, models, and theories through the appropriate application of empirical knowledge and the scientific method to help resolve clinical laboratory and health sciences issues or problems
- Apply current knowledge to evaluate or design more effective ways to deliver clinical laboratory and health-related services
- Use a variety of information technologies to address both theoretical and practical problems, enhance communication, and disseminate knowledge to applicable audiences and interest groups

- Demonstrate proficiency in both oral and written communication, using both scholarly and technical formats
- Work collaboratively with others to advance the scientific bases of knowledge in laboratory science via ongoing scholarship
- Integrate basic principles of ethics and cultural sensitivity within all interpersonal and professional activities

II. Admission

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated minimum requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer appropriate strengths.

The MS in Applied Molecular Biology program is not intended for those who already hold a Bachelor's degree in Applied Molecular Biology and Biotechnology. Such individuals should consider enrolling in the MS in Medical and Molecular Sciences offered through the Department of Medical and Molecular Sciences, which is intended for those who have already completed a BS degree in a Biotechnology laboratory-based discipline.

Questions regarding which MS degree program is appropriate should be directed to the Program Director for the MS in AMBB.

Admission Requirements

Admissions decisions are made by the Department of Medical and Molecular Sciences' Master's Program Committee. Students will be admitted to the program based on enrollment availability and their ability to meet the following minimum recommended entrance requirements:

- Successful completion of a Bachelor's degree, from an accredited academic institution, in a biomedical science-based discipline, including, but not limited to: Biology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Nutrition, or Exercise Science
- Students not having completed a BS in a science-based discipline may be considered for admission provided they have completed the following science and math prerequisite course work:
 - 12 credits Biological Sciences including one semester of Microbiology
 - 8 credits of General Chemistry
 - 4 credits of Organic Chemistry
 - 3 credits of college level math or elementary statistics
- Application is competitive and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 is recommended
- The GRE is not required
- Completion of the TOEFL requirements, which are described in detail below, for international applicants

- Written statement of goals and objectives (the personal statement) that clearly identifies the applicant's research and curriculum interests and explains how admission to the program will facilitate his/her professional object
- Current résumé and two academic or professional letters of recommendation

All students will be expected to be sufficiently conversant in English and knowledgeable in the written word to convey clear, logical, and complex written expressions.

Admission Procedures

Applicants must submit all of the following items directly to the Graduate College (<https://grad-admissions.udel.edu/apply/>) using the online admission process before admission can be considered.

- A nonrefundable application fee must be submitted with the application. Credit card payment is accepted with the online application. MMSC generally does not offer fee waivers.
- Applicants must submit responses to specific questions asked on the application, a résumé, and a statement of professional goals and objectives.
- Applicants must submit at least two letters of recommendation. All letters of recommendation should be submitted directly to the Graduate College.
- One official transcript of all US colleges and universities attended must be sent directly from the institution to the Graduate College. Students who have attended the University of Delaware need not supply a transcript from Delaware. Applicants may use an unofficial transcript for their applications; upon accepting a conditional offer of admission the official transcripts must be provided.
- One official transcript of all non-US based college and university records is required. The transcript must list all classes taken and grades earned. If the transcript does not state that the degree has been awarded, send a degree certificate that states that the degree has been awarded. If the degree has not been awarded or the degree certificate has not been issued, evidence of the awarded degree must be provided prior to the first day of classes in the term of admission.
 - For institutions that issue documents only in English, send the English original.
 - For institutions that issue documents both in English and a foreign language, send both the English language original and the foreign language original.
 - For institutions that issue documents only in a foreign language, send the foreign language original and a certified translation in English. The translation must be certified by an official of the issuing institution, a state- or court-appointed translator, or the Embassy of the issuing country in the United States.

If it is necessary to send non-original documents: a.) The documents must be original "attested copies," officially attested to by the issuing institution or the

Embassy of the using country in the United States, and b.) Certified translations must be originals; no copies will be accepted.

- International student applicants must demonstrate a satisfactory level of proficiency in the English language. The University requires an official paper-based TOEFL score of at least 550, at least 213 on the computer-based TOEFL, or at least 79 on the Internet-based TOEFL for an applicant to be considered for admission. For the IELTS examination, the minimum score required is 6.5. TOEFL scores and IELTS scores more than two years old cannot be validated or considered official. A waiver of the TOEFL exam is only granted when a degree has been earned in a country where English is the primary language.
- International students must be offered admission to the University and provide evidence of adequate financial resources before a student visa will be issued. The University has been authorized under federal law to enroll non-immigrant alien students. International students are required to purchase the University-sponsored insurance plan or its equivalent.
- All first-time international students are required to attend the Orientation Day for new international students, which takes place before classes begin.
- It is a Delaware State Board of Health regulation and a University of Delaware mandate that all graduate students with a birth date after January 1, 1957, be immunized for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). Also, students may be required to provide evidence of PPD (Mantoux) Tuberculosis Screening Test within 6 months prior to beginning classes. Students who are admitted beginning January 2002 are required to show proof of vaccination against meningococcal disease unless granted a waiver. Students should refer to and complete the Student Health Service Immunization Documentation form upon admission.

Admission Application Processing

Applications will be processed as they are submitted. The admission process is completed as follows: First, completed applications consisting of the application form, academic transcripts, letters of recommendations, résumé, and written statement of goals and objectives are reviewed by the Medical and Molecular Sciences' Master's Program Committee.

The Program Committee arrives at an admission decision after reviewing the completed application. Students are notified in writing of the admissions decision within two weeks of the decision. It should be noted, admission to the MS in Applied Molecular Biology and Biotechnology does not confer admission to the PhD in Molecular Biosciences, which is a distinct graduate program offered through the College of Health Sciences.

Application Deadlines

Applications should be submitted by August 1 but will be taken on a rolling basis to allow for admittance in the Fall semester (only). International applicants are highly encouraged to apply early to allow sufficient time for obtaining an appropriate student visa.

III. Academics

Degree Requirements

Category	Credit Hours
Core AMBB Curriculum	27
Additional Required Courses	12
Experiential Learning	12
Total Credits	51

Biotechnology Laboratory Science Core Curriculum

27 credits of subjects specific to the practice of applied molecular biology and biotechnology will be completed by students as part of the curriculum. This is necessary both for the student to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the profession to practice in a biotechnology laboratory setting and to select a Capstone Project.

These courses are predominately laboratory courses. Competency in the various laboratory techniques is necessary to function within the biotechnology/molecular diagnostics laboratory. This requires that the student be able to attend courses at the UD campus.

Additional Required Courses

Students are required to complete 12 credits of graduate level coursework which includes courses in research design, regulatory and fiscal issues in laboratory management, and completion of a capstone project.

The student will complete a rigorous capstone project that 1) constructs a focused investigation of a biotechnology laboratory science problem in real-world setting, 2) applies problem solving methodologies for development and execution of solutions, 3) investigates and applies theory through practical implementation of a project, and 4) evaluates and reports this research project in a clear, professional manner using the guidelines set forth in the course syllabus.

Experiential Learning

Supervised practical internships in biotechnology workplace settings will involve 40 hours/week for 12 weeks for an approximate total of 480 hours.

Curriculum

Course Number	Required Courses	SCH
Fall - Semester 1		
MMSC 603	Research Design	3
MMSC 608	Molecular Prep Techniques	2
MMSC 625	Basic Molecular Techniques	4
MMSC 635	Practical Bioinformatics, Genomics and Proteomics	3
MMSC 690	Clinical and Molecular Cell Biology (online)	3
Total Credits		15
Winter - Semester 2		
MMSC 691	Human Molecular Genetics (online)	3
Total Credits		3
Spring - Semester 3		
MMSC 605	Regulatory and Fiscal Issues in Laboratory Management	3
MMSC 626	Protein Purification and Characterization	3
MMSC 627	Flow Cytometry	2
MMSC 651	Cell and Tissue Culture Techniques	4
MMSC 692	Application of Molecular Diagnostic Techniques	3
MMSC 815 or 868	Contemporary Topics Research I	3
Total Credits		18
Summer - Semester 4		
MMSC 641	Biotech Practicum I	3
MMSC 642	Biotech Practicum II	3
MMSC 643	Biotech Practicum III	3
MMSC 644	Biotech Practicum IV	3
MMSC 815 or 868	Contemporary Topics Research II	3
Total Credits		15
Credits for Degree		51

Residency Requirement

Four semesters of consecutive graduate work are required for the MS degree. This residency requirement, by design will be for the MS degree be fulfilled using a fall, winter, spring, summer semester combination.

Course Substitutions

Courses in the core curriculum may not be substituted. Transfer graduate coursework cannot count towards the degree.

Time Limit for Completing the Degree

The time limit for completion of degree requirements begins with the date of matriculation and is specifically detailed in the student's letter of admission. Students entering the program are given 4 consecutive semesters, in the specific sequence outlined in the curriculum table, to complete the program requirements. An extension of the time limit may be granted for circumstances beyond the student's control. Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the director of the MS in Applied Molecular Biology & Biotechnology Program. The director will forward the request to the Graduate College.

Submission of Required University Forms

To initiate the process for degree conferral, candidates must submit an "Application for Advanced Degree" to the Graduate College. The application deadline is March 15 for Summer candidates. The application must be signed by the program director and department chair. There is an application fee for master's degree candidates that is published by the university. Payment is required when the application is submitted.

Grade Minimums

Per University policy, a grade below a C- will not be counted toward the course requirements for a graduate degree but is calculated in the student's cumulative grade point average.

Definition of Satisfactory Academic Progress

Failure to satisfactorily progress in the program will be based on the University Graduate Policy as noted below: The Graduate College monitors the academic progress of all graduate students and notifies students in writing of all academic deficiencies. The cumulative GPA after each term determines academic standing. The University's Academic Probation Policy is expressed in the following chart –

If a student who is on	Earns a GPA of	The status becomes
Any status	3.0 or above	Clear
Clear	2.99-2.5	Warning
Clear	2.49-2.0	Probation
Warning	Below 3.0	Probation

Probation
Any status

Below 3.0
Below 2.0

Dismissal
Dismissal

Reasons for Dismissal/Termination from the Program

The Graduate College notifies students when they are dismissed from graduate programs without completing a degree. Dismissals usually take place at the end of a term. Students may be dismissed for the following reasons:

- Upon the expiration of the time limit required for students to complete their degree
- Upon the failure to meet the grade point average requirements as stated in the policy on Academic Deficiency and Probation

IV. Practical Internship (Practicum) Experience

Practical internships (practicums) provide a valuable aspect of the Applied Molecular Biology and Biotechnology curriculum. Students intern in a variety of laboratory settings to gain real life experience in locations such as SDIX, Genesis Biotechnology, Ori-MABs, Siemens, Prelude Therapeutics, Glaxo Smith-Kline, Merck, Johnson and Johnson, BioLogic, Wu-Xi Apptech, Centacore, Imugen, Sanofi Pasteur, Bristol-Meyers Squibb, as well as molecular diagnostics, forensics, core facilities, academic labs, and state/government laboratories.

Internships are completed in summer session after all other coursework is completed.

During the clinical practicum period, students should plan for the possibility of added expense for 1) transportation and uniforms and 2) living off-campus at the clinical site for at least a three-week rotation if the commuting distance is excessive.

The MS in AMBB Program guarantees all students who begin the program that sufficient affiliate sites will be available for clinical practicums so as not to impact negatively on expected graduation dates. By utilizing multiple affiliates, unexpected situations at affiliate sites should not make an impact on student practicum placements.

However, a remote possibility remains that a situation out of the control of the Program could occur. If a major unforeseen event at an affiliate should prevent a student from being placed in a practicum, alternative arrangements can be made for the student to complete their internships in research laboratories within the department.

The student should report to his/her clinical practicums eight hours a day, five days a week per rotation period. Exact times will be arranged by the individual laboratory supervisor. If time is missed for an excused absence, it will be made up at the convenience and discretion of the affiliate instructor (i.e., during the flex days at the end of the rotation period or another suitable time as determined by the affiliate instructor). In general, absence from practicums due to illness, death of a family member, a personal emergency, or observance of a religious holiday will constitute cause for an excused absence. Authority for excusing such absences rests with the clinical instructor who may request appropriate documentation. Examples of unexcused absences include but are not limited to scheduling routine medical and dental appointments, scheduling excessive personal appointments, expanding holiday breaks beyond their allotted time, or scheduling other travels for personal reasons. **Any time missed that cannot be**

made up during the summer session may result in completion of the rotation period at a later date with postponement of graduation.

To facilitate the student having time to handle personal needs during the clinical practicums, flex days are built into the fifth week of each practicum period when the University calendar allows. Such personal needs may include but are not limited to routine medical and dental appointments, employment-related interviews and orientation, and interviews for post-degree education. In the event such scheduling is out of the student's control and cannot be accomplished in the flex days, the student must provide the contact name of the individual mandating such scheduling to the University instructor and to the affiliate instructor. The student must receive permission from the affiliate instructor to be absent from the rotation period, and the missed time must be completed during the flex days of that rotation period.

All missed time from the clinical rotations that was not previously arranged requires the notification (via email) of the affiliate Clinical Coordinator AND the University Instructor before the start of the scheduled work day. All absences must be documented on the Clinical Practicum Attendance Record. Students should be prepared to show documented evidence of illness or serious emergency upon request.

V. Learning Outcomes

Four Learning Outcomes have been identified for the program. Upon completion of the program, all students will:

- Employ research methods to assess a problem in the field of medical science in an ethical manner. Course Assessed: MMSC 603 *Research Design*
- Communicate research findings in an effective manner. Course Assessed: MMSC 815 *Contemporary Topics Research*
- Demonstrate the ability to quantitatively analyze data using several different statistical procedures. Courses Assessed: MMSC 603 *Research Design* and MMSC 815 *Contemporary Topics Research*
- Evaluate and assess regulatory and fiscal situations encountered in laboratory settings and make best-practice, evidence-based recommendations. Course Assessed: MMSC 605 *Regulatory and Fiscal Issue in Laboratory Practice*

Field Experience Supervisor Surveys

Upon completion of the field experience(s), the field experience supervisor will complete a rubric designed to assess the affective skills demonstrated by the student.

VI. Financial Aid

Tuition remission and/or stipends are not offered. Graduate students in this program are eligible to apply for financial aid as applicable.

VII. Departmental Operations

Current Faculty Affiliated with the Program

Esther Biswas-Fiss, MS, PhD, Professor & Chair
Specialty: Molecular Diagnostics & Biotechnology

Mona Batish, PhD, Associate Professor
Specialty: Applied Molecular Biology

Subhasis Biswas, PhD, Professor
Specialty: Applied Molecular Biology

Jessica Bless, PhD
Specialty: Applied Molecular Biology

Arit Ghosh, PhD, Senior Scientist and Director of the UD Flow Cytometry Core Facility

Vijay Parashar, PhD, Associate Professor
Specialty: Applied Molecular Biology

Mark Parcels, PhD, Professor
Specialty: Molecular Virology

Nicole Pekarek, PhD, Assistant Professor
Specialty: Immunohematology

Bruce Sachais, MD/PhD, Director Blood Bank of Delmarva and the NY Blood Center

Graduate Coordinator

The MLS department chair will appoint a graduate coordinator for the Applied Molecular Biology & Biotechnology Master's Program from among the department faculty. The term of service for the graduate coordinator is three years, with no limit on the number of consecutive terms that may be served. The graduate coordinator serves as the program representative and point person and is responsible for the following:

- Corresponding with prospective students
- Maintaining program records
- Holding elections for members of the Program Committee
- Chairing Program Committee meetings
- Admitting students to the program following approval of the Program Committee
- Chairing meetings of the Medical and Molecular Sciences faculty as necessary for review/revision of program policies and curriculum
- Final approval of degree granting

Program Committee

The Medical Sciences Graduate Program Committee will consist of an affiliated faculty member from the department, serving in staggered, three-year terms. The graduate program coordinator will serve as chair of the Program Committee. Responsibilities of the Program Committee shall include:

- Admission of students into the program
- Approval of changes to the graduate curriculum
- Oversight of student progress in the program, including dismissal of students who fail to make satisfactory progress

MS in AMBB Students

Student Organization. Students in the program will be encouraged to periodically meet as a group so that the student representative can pass on any pertinent information from program meetings and so the group can discuss any issues or concerns they might have. Concerns can be brought to the attention of the program faculty by the elected student representative.

Laboratory Safety and Research Regulations and Standards of Student Conduct.

Graduate students performing laboratory research are subject to all University regulations regarding safety, human subjects, animal use, and hazardous and radioactive material use and disposal. These guidelines may be found in the University of Delaware Policies and Procedures Manual. Additional information can be obtained from the UD Research Office:

<http://www.udel.edu/research/> All training and regulatory authorizations must be updated at the time of proposal submission.

Travel. Students will be encouraged to attend regional scientific meetings and symposia.

Funding will be sought from available University/College/departamental funds should a student attend a conference for the purpose of presenting a peer-reviewed poster or to play a leadership role in the conference.

VIII. STUDENT SIGNATURE

It is the student’s responsibility to read and understand the policies in this document.

I have read and understand the requirement to complete a criminal background check and urine drug screening before their senior biotech practicums. My signature attests that I authorize the Medical and Molecular Sciences Department to release the results of the criminal background check and urine drug screening to the affiliate institutions where I will be participating in clinical practicums.

I have read and understand the essential functions required of students. I know that it is my responsibility to notify the program director if I cannot fulfill the requirements outlined in the essential functions. My signature attests that I understand the needs of the essential functions, and I certify that I am able to fulfill them.

My signature attests that I have read and understand all of the policies related in this document for progressing in and completing the Applied Molecular Biology and Biotechnology program.

_____	_____	_____	_____
WITNESS to Student’s Signature	Date	Student’s Signature	Date
(Student Peer or MMSC staff can be a witness)			

Please Print Student’s Name

IX. STUDENT AGREEMENT

As a student of the University of Delaware, I understand that I may be asked to perform tasks that might pose a risk of exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens causing such diseases as AIDS and Hepatitis, which can lead to serious illness or death. Accidental exposure to human blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) must be reported immediately. I understand that I will be directed to obtain a risk evaluation, conducted by a clinician familiar with post-exposure evaluation and treatment, which is recommended by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and if deemed necessary, initiation of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). The CDC specifically recommends that PEP be initiated within two hours of HIV exposure to prevent disease transmission. **I understand that I am personally responsible for the cost of the post-exposure medical management and treatment and that the University of Delaware is in no way responsible for these expenses.**

_____	_____	_____	_____
WITNESS to Student's Signature	Date	Student's Signature	Date
(Student Peer or MMSC staff can be a witness)			

Please Print Student's Name