The BISI program is an interdepartmental, interdisciplinary training program leading to a Ph.D. in Biological Sciences. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at: bisi@umd.edu
Overview of the Graduate Program

The Biological Sciences Graduate Program (BISI) is an interdepartmental umbrella graduate program that was established in 2009 and includes four areas of concentration:
- Behavior, Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics (BEES)
- Computational Biology, Bioinformatics, and Genomics (CBBG)
- Molecular and Cellular Biology (MOCB)
- Physiological Systems (PSYS)

The program is housed in the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences (CMNS) and serves the Department of Biology (BIOL), Department of Cell Biology & Molecular Genetics (CBMG), and the Department of Entomology (ENTM).

Admissions Guidelines & Criteria

During review of your application, we strive to look at the entire application to assess how well your academic background, research experiences, and interests fit with the opportunities provided by our program.

The holistic admissions process for BISI is designed to determine whether the program is a good fit for your background, education, and research interests. In general, successful applicants have:

- Earned a Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university with at least a 3.0 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale)
- At least one year of research experience
- TOEFL scores of 100 or greater (international applicants only)
- Strong letters of recommendation from people that can speak of their academic and research strengths
- GRE scores in the 70th percentile or higher and analytical scores of at least 4.0

These characteristics describe many successful BISI applicants, however they are not fixed metrics.

Applying to BISI

The Application Deadline is December 3rd. Below is an overview of the application process:

- Complete the online Graduate Application
- 2 Statements of Purpose
- CV/Resume
- 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Test Scores (UMD Code: 5814)
- GRE Scores
- TOEFL/IELTS scores*
- Non-refundable application fee ($75) for each program to which an applicant applies
- Identification of Research Area & Concentration Areas
- Identification of 3-5 UMD faculty whose research is of interest to you and may become your potential advisors
- Presentations and Publications (BISI does not require that you upload publications, simply listing a citation is adequate.)
Funding

Financial Support: Full support for all students accepted into the BISI program is available for up to 5 years (as long as the student maintains satisfactory progress in the program) through a combination of teaching/research assistantships and fellowships. Support includes tuition remission for up to 10 credits, access to health benefits, and a competitive stipend.

BISI students are assigned to Teaching or Research Graduate Assistantships based on availability and funding needs. Students may also apply for other Graduate Assistantships on campus, but are not expected to find their own position.

During the admissions process all applicants are automatically considered for the Flagship and Dean’s fellowships awarded by the Graduate School and the BISI program. These are extremely competitive awards and are not available to all admitted students.

Visit the Office of Student Financial Aid’s website for information on other sources of funding and the Graduate School’s Financial Literacy website for guidance on managing your finances.

Faculty of Interest

Once a student is accepted to the BISI program they begin the process of identifying an advisor and joining their research lab. Each concentration area has a specific process for choosing your advisor.

Applicants are expected to reach out to faculty with whom they wish to work during the application process and to indicate which individuals they have spoken to or are interested in on their application.

If you are accepted, the options for research and advising are not limited to the faculty you identify on the application; however, this information helps the admissions committee evaluate how your interests fit with research areas recruiting new students.

Information for International Applicants

The University of Maryland is dedicated to maintaining a vibrant international graduate student community. The office of International Students and Scholars Services (ISSS) is a valuable resource of information and assistance for prospective and current international students. International applicants are encouraged to explore the services they offer and contact them with related questions.

Admitted international students must provide any additional documentation requested by ISSS in order to apply for the appropriate visa approvals for study at the University of Maryland. Please see the Graduate Admissions Process for International applicants for more information.

The Biological Sciences Graduate Program does not participate in the provisional program for applicants in need of intensive English education. For information on the language proficiency requirement visit the Graduate School Language Proficiency website.
Off Campus Connections

The University of Maryland has strong connections with many local institutions and some students take advantage of these connections to do rotations with them or to join an off-campus research lab. If a student chooses to join an off-campus lab they will choose an on-campus advisor to work with them and their off-campus PI will be considered their co-advisor.

In the BEES concentration area students have worked with researchers at the Smithsonian Institutes including the National Zoo, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, and the National Museum of Natural History. Students can also take advantage of our connections with SESYNC and UMCES.

Students from CBBG, MOCB, and PSYS have worked with researchers at the National Institutes of Health, we currently have connections to National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes (NINDS), National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Students have also worked with researchers at the FDA and USDA.