MASTER OF SCIENCE BIOCHEMISTRY SPECIALIZATION IN PATHOLOGY AND EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE

Summary

• Degrees offered: Master of Science (MSc)
• Registration status option: Full-time
• Language of instruction: English
• Primary program: MSc in Biochemistry
• Collaborative specialization: Pathology and Experimental Medicine
• Program option (expected duration of the program):
  • with thesis (6 full-time terms; 24 consecutive months)
• Academic units: Faculty of Medicine (http://med.uottawa.ca/graduate-postdoctoral/), Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology (http://med.uottawa.ca/bmi/), Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (http://www.med.uottawa.ca/pathology/eng/).

Program Description

The programs prepare candidates for a variety of careers in teaching and research both within and outside of academia.

Graduate students are actively involved in laboratory research, course work, and presentation of research seminars. Thus, they acquire autonomy in conducting research and in preparing publications.

The programs create a stimulating and challenging environment which will allow students to achieve excellence in research. Graduates of the programs must demonstrate research skills and credibility as professionals in their area of research.

The Department is a participating unit in the Pathology and Experimental Medicine collaborative program.

Collaborative Program Description

The objective of the Pathology and Experimental Medicine collaborative program is to provide graduate students with the knowledge and skills to examine the basic mechanisms of disease pathology, and to develop new strategies for prevention and treatment. The degree awarded specifies the primary program and indicates “Specialization in Pathology and Experimental Medicine.”

Main Areas of Research

• General biochemistry
• Molecular biology
• Nutrition and metabolism

Other Programs Offered Within the Same Discipline or in a Related Area

• Master of Science Biochemistry (MSc)
• Master of Science Biochemistry Specialization in Human and Molecular Genetics (MSc)
• Master of Science Biochemistry Specialization in Bioinformatics (MSc)
• Doctorate in Philosophy Biochemistry
• Doctorate in Philosophy Biochemistry Specialization in Human and Molecular Genetics (PhD)
• Doctorate in Philosophy Biochemistry Specialization in Pathology and Experimental Medicine (PhD)
• Master of Science Cellular and Molecular Medicine Specialization in Pathology and Experimental Medicine (MSc)
• Master of Science Microbiology and Immunology Specialization in Pathology and Experimental Medicine (MSc)
• Master of Science Neuroscience Specialization in Pathology and Experimental Medicine (MSc)
• Doctorate in Philosophy Cellular and Molecular Medicine Specialization in Pathology and Experimental Medicine (PhD)
• Doctorate in Philosophy Microbiology and Immunology Specialization in Pathology and Experimental Medicine (PhD)
• Doctorate in Philosophy Neuroscience Specialization in Pathology and Experimental Medicine (PhD)

Fees and Funding

• Program fees:

  The estimated amount for university fees (https://www.uottawa.ca/university-fees/) associated with this program are available under the section Finance your studies (http://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/programs-admission/finance-studies/).

  International students enrolled in a French-language program of study may be eligible for a differential tuition fee exemption (https://www.uottawa.ca/university-fees/differential-tuition-fee-exemption/).

  To learn about possibilities for financing your graduate studies, consult the Awards and financial support (https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/awards/) section.

Notes

• Programs are governed by the general regulations (http://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/general-regulations/) in effect for graduate studies.
• In accordance with the University of Ottawa regulation, students have the right to complete their assignments, examinations, research papers, and theses in French or in English.

Program Contact Information
Graduate Studies Office, Faculty of Medicine (https://med.uottawa.ca/graduate-postdoctoral/)
451 Smyth Road, Room RGN 2016
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1N 6N5

Tel.: 613-562-5215
Email: grad.med@uottawa.ca

Twitter | Faculty of Medicine (https://twitter.com/uOttawaMed/)
Youtube | Faculty of Medicine (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCP2nDIrjFEEtyfMi0mle2HA/)
Flickr | Faculty of Medicine (https://www.flickr.com/photos/uottawamed/)

Admission Requirements
For the most accurate and up to date information on application deadlines, language tests and other admission requirements, please visit the specific requirements (https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/programs-admission/apply/specific-requirements/) webpage.

To be eligible, candidates must:
• Have one of the following:
  • A bachelor’s degree with a specialization or a major (or equivalent) in science with a minimum average of 75% (B+).
  • An MD (Doctor of Medicine) degree with a minimum average of 75% (B+).
  • A DVM (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) degree with a minimum average of 75% (B+).

  Note: International candidates must check the admission equivalencies (https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/international/study-uottawa/admission-equivalencies/) for the diploma they received in their country of origin.

• Demonstrate a good academic performance in previous studies as shown by official transcripts, research reports, abstracts or any other documents demonstrating research skills.

  • Identify at least one professor who is willing to supervise your research and thesis.
  • We recommend that you contact potential thesis supervisors as soon as possible.
  • To register, you need to have been accepted by a thesis supervisor.
  • The supervisor’s name is required at the time of application.
  • The thesis director must be a member of the collaborative program.
  • Be sponsored into the collaborative program by a faculty member, normally the thesis supervisor, who must be a member of the Pathology and Experimental Medicine program.

Language Requirements
Applicants must be able to understand and fluently speak the language of instruction in the program to which they are applying. Proof of linguistic proficiency may be required.

Applicants whose first language is neither French nor English must provide proof of proficiency in the language of instruction.

Note: Candidates are responsible for any fees associated with the language tests.

Notes
• The admission requirements listed above are minimum requirements and do not guarantee admission to the program.
• Admissions are governed by the general regulations (http://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/general-regulations/) in effect for graduate studies.
• Students must indicate in their initial application for admission to the master’s program in Biochemistry that they wish to be accepted into the collaborative program in Pathology and Experimental Medicine. Students must be admitted in one of the primary programs participating in the collaborative program. Students will normally be informed about their acceptance into the collaborative program at the same time as being informed about their admission into the primary program.
• Research activities can be conducted either in English, French or both, depending on the language used by the professor and the members of his or her research group.

Documents Required for Admission
In addition to the documents required (http://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/programs-admission/apply/required-documents/) for graduate and postdoctoral studies, candidates must submit the following documents:
• A resume
• A letter of intent or motivation
  Letter outlining your professional goals and proposed research area.

• Three confidential letters of recommendation, including one from a professor who is willing and available to act as thesis supervisor.

• Transcripts from all universities attended:
  • Official transcripts from all universities attended must be submitted.
  This applies to all courses and programs at any university you attended, including regular programs (completed or not),

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exchanges, letters of permission, online or correspondence courses, courses taken as a special student or visiting student, etc.

- If the transcript and degree certificate are not in English or French, a certified translation (signed and stamped/sealed) must be submitted.

Note: Documents that are not required for admission will not be consulted, conserved or returned to the student. These documents will be destroyed according to our administrative procedures.

Program Requirements
Master’s with Collaborative Specialization

The Department may require students to take additional courses, depending on their backgrounds. Students wishing to take a course in a related discipline must obtain prior approval from the Department.

Students must meet the following requirements for the master’s with collaborative specialization:

Compulsory Courses:
MED 8166 Professionalism and Professional Skills
3 course units from:
BCH 8107 Advanced Topics in Lipid Metabolism and Disease
CMM 5001 The Pathological Basis of Disease
CMM 5105 Introduction to Cancer Biology
CMM 5315 Cellular and Molecular Basis of Cardiovascular Function/Dysfunction
CMM 8105 Advanced Topics in Cancer Biology
NSC 8101 Advanced Topics in Neuropathology
PME 8112 Cell Biology and the Molecular Basis of Pathological Phenotypes

3 optional course units from the list of approved biochemistry (BCH) courses at the 8000 or 9000 level

Seminars:
BCH 5366 MSc Seminar ¹
3 Units

PME 5367 Seminar

Thesis:
THM 7999 Master’s Thesis ² ³

Note(s)

¹ This requirement involves the presentation of a seminar and regular attendance at the departmental seminars until permission to write the thesis is granted.

² The thesis on a topic in pathology and experimental medicine must be based on original research carried out under the supervision of a professor who is a member of the Pathology and Experimental Medicine collaborative program. At least one of the thesis examiners must be a member of the Pathology and Experimental Medicine collaborative program.

³ Students are responsible for ensuring they have met all of the thesis requirements (http://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/theses/).

Minimum Requirements
The passing grade in all courses is C+.

Students who fail 6 units must withdraw from the program.

Fast-Track from Master’s to PhD

Students enrolled in the master’s program in Biochemistry at the University of Ottawa may be eligible to fast-track directly into the doctoral program without writing a master’s thesis. For additional information, please consult the “Admission Requirements” section of the PhD program.

Research
Research Fields & Facilities

Located in the heart of Canada’s capital, a few steps away from Parliament Hill, the University of Ottawa is among Canada’s top 10 research universities.

uOttawa focuses research strengths and efforts in four Strategic Areas of Development in Research (SADRs):

- Canada and the World
- Health
- e-Society
- Molecular and Environmental Sciences

With cutting-edge research, our graduate students, researchers and educators strongly influence national and international priorities.

Research at the Faculty of Medicine

“The Faculty of Medicine has a long history of conducting both basic and clinical research of the highest quality. Many of our high profile research projects are conducted in partnership with affiliated-teaching hospitals and research institutes. These partnerships lead to biomedical discoveries that have a significant impact on health care. In the process they educate the next generation of Canadian scientists. Our research activity also attracts significant investment, which stimulates the Ottawa economy.”

- Dr. Bernard Jasmin, Vice-Dean, Research

Facilities, Research Centres and Institutes at the Faculty of Medicine

- Centre for Neural Dynamics (http://www.neurodynamic.uottawa.ca/)
- University of Ottawa Centre for Neuromuscular Disease (http://med.uottawa.ca/neuromuscular/)
- Centre for Research in Biopharmaceuticals and Biotechnology (http://www.med.uottawa.ca/crbb/eng/)
- Canadian Partnership for Stroke Recovery (http://www.canadianstroke.ca/en/)
- Kidney Research Centre (http://www.ohri.ca/centres/KRC/default.asp)
- University of Ottawa Skills and Simulation Centre (http://uossc.ca/)
- Medical Devices Innovation Institute
- Ottawa Institute of Systems Biology (http://med.uottawa.ca/oisb/)

Courses

BCH 5101 Analysis of Omics Data (3 units)
Theoretical and practical aspects of various methods currently used to analyze the plethora of omics data. Methods: sequence alignment and database searches; sequence analysis and bioinformatics of gene regulation; DNA microarray and sequencing technologies to identify transcription factor binding sites; analysis of proteomics data; statistical analysis of preprocessed gene expression and protein/metabolite abundance data; epidemiology applications. Critical reading of the literature and strategies for making informed choices of methods for the analysis of students’ own data.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 5366 MSc Seminar (3 units)
Attendance and participation in the annual BMI Student Symposium and BMI Poster Day, attendance at BMI seminars relevant to Biochemistry. Students must present at least one poster and one oral presentation during the course of their program. Graded S (Satisfactory) / NS (Not Satisfactory).
Course Component: Seminar

BCH 5501 Analyse des données omiques (3 crédits)
Volet : Cours magistral

BCH 8101 Physical and Chemical Methods in Biochemistry (3 units)
Current applications of physical and chemical methods to the study of macromolecule structure-function relationships.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8102 Selected Topics in Protein Structure and Function (3 units)
An advanced study of recent literature dealing with structure-function relationships in selected proteins.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8103 Advanced Topics in Gene Expression and Protein Synthesis (3 units)
An advanced study of the recent literature dealing with the chemistry, metabolism and function of nucleic acids, the biosynthesis of proteins, biochemical and genetic control mechanisms, genetic engineering and the control of gene expression. Offered every second year in alternation with BCH 8105.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8104 Advanced Topics in Cell Regulation (3 units)
An advanced study of recent literature dealing with signal transduction processes and the regulation of metabolism, cell proliferation and differentiation.
Course Component: Lecture
Offered in alternate years.

BCH 8105 Advanced Topics in Molecular Biology of Human Diseases (3 units)
Topics will be selected and representative of current developments in the field. The course consists of a repeated series of a 3 hour lecture by an expert in the field one week, followed by student presentations, discussions and critique of assigned papers on that topic the following week. Topics on selected diseases will focus on various aspects of cancer, apoptosis, disease gene identification and gene therapy. In the past these topics have included the molecular aspects of various cancers, spinal muscular atrophy, tissue regeneration, the discovery of disease genes, infectious disease (HIV) and gene therapy. Students will write a grant proposal and participate in mock grant review panels. Depending on enrolment, the course may be limited to HMG students only.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8106 Mitochondrial Medicine: Theory and Approaches (3 units)
An advanced study of the recent literature dealing with metabolism, nutrition and metabolic control theory, with emphasis on both whole body and cell metabolism in metabolic and nutritional disorders such as obesity and non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM).
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8107 Advanced Topics in Lipid Metabolism and Disease (3 units)
An advanced study of the recent literature dealing with the role of lipids in both normal physiology and pathophysiology, with a focus on the mechanisms underlying the regulation of both lipid signaling and lipid metabolism in disease processes.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8108 Advanced Methods of Macro-Molecular Structure Determination (3 units)
A detailed examination of modern methods used to determine the structures of proteins, nucleic acids, and carbohydrates. May include X-ray crystallography, electron diffraction, nuclear magnetic resonance, and other spectroscopic methods.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8109 Advanced Topics in Cell Death (3 units)
Molecular mechanisms of cell death. Particular attention to be paid to role of aberrant cell death in human disease. Offered in the Fall of odd numbered years.
Course Component: Lecture
BCH 8110 Advanced Topics in Systems Biology (3 units)
Recent advances in genomics, proteomics, bioinformatics, and
neuroinformatics including functional and chemical genomics, RNA
analyses, microarrays, mass spectrometry, and neural imaging. Course
requirements include student presentations and writing a mock research
proposal based on Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
guidelines. Limited enrollment. Offered in alternate years with BCH 8101
Physical and Chemical Methods in Biochemistry.
Course Component: Lecture
Permission of the Department is required.

BCH 8111 Chromosome and Chromatin Biology (3 units)
Higher order chromosome structure and chromatin remodeling and their
impact on regulation of gene expression, DNA replication, repair and
recombination, and chromosome segregation. Histone modifications and
nucleosome positioning and their influence on higher order chromosome
structure. Importance of chromosome and chromatin in the context of
the cell cycle, development, and disease. Critical reading of the literature
on chromosome and chromatin biology.
Course Component: Seminar

BCH 8114 Advanced Topics in the Cell Cycle (3 units)
Mechanisms of cell cycle regulation. Model systems critical to
deciphering the cell cycle in eukaryotes: budding and fission yeast,
Xenopus laevis egg extracts, Aspergillus nidulans, Drosophila
melanogaster, sea urchin and mouse oocytes and cultured vertebrate
cells. Overview of the prokaryotic cell cycle.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8116 Model Organisms and Systems Biology (3 units)
Utilization of model organisms in the development and advancement of
the systems biology field. Particular attention will be paid to the use of
organisms such as Saccharomyces cerevisiae as a model platform for
cell cycle progression/cancer. Other models may also be included. The
basics of the technology will be discussed along with the application of
technology to complex biological questions, in particular relating to the
cell cycle. Course offered in alternate years.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8117 Advanced Topics Relating to the Cell Cytoskeleton and
Membranes (3 units)
Advanced study of recent literature dealing with the mammalian cellular
cytoskeleton and membrane with an emphasis on the regulation of cell
motility, adhesion and cell division.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8120 ADVANCED TOPICS IN IMMUNOMETABOLISM (3 units)
An advanced study of the recent literature dealing with the field of
immunometabolism, with a focus on both immunometabolic pathways
and the specialized techniques that allow for understanding chronic
inflammatory/metabolic diseases, such as cancer, type 2 diabetes,
obesity, atherosclerosis, neurodegeneration, etc.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8134 Structure and Expression of Eukaryotic and Prokaryotic
Genomes (3 units)
Sequencing of eukaryote and prokaryote genomes with emphasis on
recent technologies, sequence alignments and databases and assembly
of genomes from massively parallel sequencing data. Focus on mapping
studies, including linkage disequilibrium-based genome-wide association
study (GWAS), to characterize functional variants associated with
complex traits. Analysis and structure of microbial metagenomes from
environmental and human habitats, including structure-function analysis
of microbial communities, microbiota-human disease correlations, and
molecular phylogeny. Genome expression, including measures of RNA
transcripts and proteins and statistical analysis of data. Combination of
various -omics data to understand gene-environment interactions.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8165 Special Topics in Biochemistry (3 units)
A survey of recent advances in selected areas of biochemistry.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8166 Special Topics in Biochemistry II (3 units)
A survey of recent advances in selected areas of biochemistry.
Course Component: Lecture

BCH 8213S Seminars (2 crédits / 2 units)
Compulsory for second-year graduate students.
Volet / Course Component: Cours magistral / Lecture

BCH 8214S Seminars (2 crédits / 2 units)
Compulsory for third-year graduate students.
Volet / Course Component: Cours magistral / Lecture

BCH 8310 Current Topics in RNA Molecular Biology (3 units)
Properties, mechanisms associated with regulation and the functions
of RNAs and Ribonucleoprotein (RNPs) as well as RNA organisms.
Current knowledge on RNA expression (synthesis, processing, transport
and localization), the structure-function relationship and molecular
mechanisms associated with RNAs and RNA genomes, RNA in evolution
and in the origin of life, and RNA as therapeutic agents.
Course Component: Lecture
Courses CMM 8310, BCH 8310 cannot be combined for units.

BCH 8366 PhD Seminar (3 units)
Attendance and participation in the annual BMI Student Symposium and
BMI Poster Day, attendance at BMI seminars relevant to Biochemistry.
Students will present a poster in their first and every alternate year,
and an oral presentation the second and every alternate year until they
have permission to write their thesis. Graded S (Satisfactory) / NS (Not
satisfactory).
Course Component: Seminar

BCH 8511 Biologie des chromosomes et de la chromatine (3 crédits)
Organisation de la structure des chromosomes et le remodelage de
la chromatine ainsi que l'impact de ceux-ci sur la régulation de l'expression
génique, la réplication, la réparation et la recombinaison de l'ADN ainsi
que sur la ségrégation des chromosomes. Les modifications histoniques
et le positionnement des nucléosomes ainsi que leur influence sur la
structure organisée des chromosomes. Importance des chromosomes et
de la chromatine dans le contexte du cycle cellulaire, du développement
des maladies. Lecture critique de la littérature portant sur la biologie
des chromosomes et de la chromatine.
Volet : Cours magistral
BCH 8534 Structure et expression des génomes procaryotes et eucaryotes (3 crédits)
Le séquençage des génomes eucaryotes et procaryotes, avec un accent particulier sur les technologies récentes, l’alignement des séquences et les bases de données, et l’assemblage des génomes à partir de données générées par séquençage haut débit. Les études de cartographie comparée incluant les études d’associations pangénomiques basées sur le déséquilibre de liaison pour caractériser les variantes fonctionnelles associées aux traits complexes. L’analyse et la structure de métagénomès microbiens issus d’habitats humains et environnementaux incluant l’analyse structure-fonction des communautés microbiennes, les corrélations entre les maladies humaines et le microbiome ainsi que la phylogénie moléculaire. L’expression génétique incluant les mesures de transcriptomes et de protéomes ainsi que l’analyse statistique des données. La combinaison des différentes -données omiques pour comprendre les interactions gène-environnement.

Volet : Cours magistral

BCH 9998 Examen de synthèse (doctorat) / Comprehensive-Examination (PhD)
À l’intention des étudiants inscrits au programme de Ph.D. L’inscription à ce cours est limitée à trois sessions consécutives. / For students enrolled in the doctoral program. Enrollment in this course is limited to three consecutive academic sessions.

Volet / Course Component: Recherche / Research

PME 5367 Seminar
Presentation of one poster during the Research Day organized by the Pathology and Experimental Medicine collaborative program. Active participation in the annual Pathology Research Day of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. Poster evaluated by Pathology and Experimental Medicine program faculty members. Graded S (Satisfactory) / NS (Not satisfactory).

Course Component: Seminar

PME 8367 Seminar
Presentation of one poster during the Research Day organized by the Pathology and Experimental Medicine collaborative program. Active participation in the annual Pathology Research Day of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. Poster evaluated by Pathology and Experimental Medicine program faculty members. Graded S (Satisfactory) / NS (Not satisfactory).

Course Component: Seminar

PME 8112 Cell Biology and the Molecular Basis of Pathological Phenotypes (3 units)
Molecular principles of cell biology, with a focus on the mechanisms of disease. Disorders in cell biological processes that underlie many pathological phenotypes, such as intracellular transport, mitochondrial dynamics, cell biology of the nucleus and the regulation of the cytoskeleton. Emphasis on emerging experimental techniques, including functional assay design, fluorescence microscopy (multi-photon, confocal, assays like Fluorescence Resonance Energy Transfer (FRET), Fluorescence Lifetime Imaging Microscopy (FLIM), Fluorescence Recovery After Photobleaching (FRAP), photoactivation and uncaging) and electron microscopy. Participants will have hands-on experience and will work to apply these techniques to their own research problems by rotation through participating laboratories. The experiments performed by the students during the course will be assembled into a manuscript-style paper for submission at the end of the term to be graded by the course co-ordinator. Enrolment is limited to 10 students and preference will be given to students whose projects are related directly to these concepts and techniques.

Course Component: Lecture