

## Getting Started in the Cell & Molecular Biology Graduate Program

### CMB Contacts

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### Timeline

- A typical timeline of coursework and milestones can be found here:  
[https://cmb.natsci.msu.edu/sites/\\_cmb/assets/File/APPENDIX\\_A\\_YEAR-BY-YEAR.pdf](https://cmb.natsci.msu.edu/sites/_cmb/assets/File/APPENDIX_A_YEAR-BY-YEAR.pdf)

### Guidance Committee

- 5 members total, including:
  - Your research advisor
  - 3 additional CMB faculty
  - 1 additional faculty who may be outside CMB
- Committees must be approved by the CMB Director
- The CMB Director will appoint one of the 3 additional CMB faculty as the CMB Representative

### Guidance Committee meetings

- Required at least once yearly.
- First committee meeting is held by end of Fall semester, Year 2
- Notify Alaina when Committee Meeting dates are scheduled
- Complete the Annual Progress Report and return to Alaina:  
[https://cmb.natsci.msu.edu/sites/\\_cmb/assets/File/Annual%20Progress%20Report%20PhD%202020.pdf](https://cmb.natsci.msu.edu/sites/_cmb/assets/File/Annual%20Progress%20Report%20PhD%202020.pdf)

### Core Courses

- BMB 801, Intro to Molecular Biology (Fall, Year 1)
- MMG 833, MMG 835, *or* BMB 856 (Prokaryotic, Eukaryotic, or Plant Genetics)
  - MMG835 will not be offered in Spring '23. Therefore, elective substitutions for MMG835 may be discussed with the Director for approval. MMG835 will be offered in Spring '24.
- 2 Elective courses (3 credits)
- 2 semesters of CMB 892, CMB Research Forum
  - Wednesdays at noon, 1425 BPS
  - Must present one seminar (20 or 45 minutes) every 2 years, whether or not enrolled
  - Attendance is required
- 3 seminar courses, 1 or 2 credits. Two of these must be based on evaluation of the literature

### Teaching Requirement

- Discuss options with the CMB director
- TA orientation required: <https://grad.msu.edu/GTAP/NGTAI>
- International TA orientation required: <https://grad.msu.edu/GTAP/IGTAO>
- SPEAK required test for all international TA's): <https://elc.msu.edu/tests/msu-speaking-test/>
- Additional semesters of TA appointments are usually available, depending on students' interests and needs.

### Gradplan

- GradPlan is MSU's web-interactive system for students to create and store their degree plan, including coursework and milestones. The system is used to ensure that all degree requirements are met.
- You will first submit your committee for approval. Once the committee is approved, you will submit your courses into GradPlan
- Chain of GradPlan approval: Student → CMB director → Committee members → CNS Dean's Office → Graduate School
- Students should fill out GradPlan immediately after the first committee meeting.
- A tutorial on how to complete GradPlan can be found here:  
<https://sis.msu.edu/assets/documents/graduate/GR-GradPlanOverview-Student.pdf>
- *The completed GradPlan is absolutely required for University documentation of the comprehensive exam, dissertation defense, dissertation acceptance, and to confer the Ph.D. degree.*

### Comprehensive Exams

- Complete by end of Fall semester, year 3.
- Notify the CMB Program Coordinator (Alaina Burghardt) when Exam date is scheduled.
- Chaired by the CMB Representative; research Advisory is absent from Exam.
- The Comprehensive Exam *must* be approved in Grad Plan after it is passed.

### Enrollment & Appointments

#### Before Comprehensive Exam:

- In addition to the core courses listed above, all students must have between 24 - 36 credits of CMB999 (Research). This is a university requirement. Students should enroll in sufficient 999 credits each semester to meet this goal.
- Graduate Assistants (1/2-time appointments)
  - Fall and Spring semesters
  - Minimum 3 credits, maximum 9 credits (including courses and CMB 999)
  - Includes stipend, benefits, and tuition
- Student Hourly
  - Summer semester
  - No enrollment required
  - Stipend only. If enrolled in Spring, health insurance is valid through August.
  - Students submit bi-weekly time sheets
  - If using this option, the student must register for Fall semester.

#### After Comprehensive Exam

- Graduate Assistants (1/2-time appointments)
  - Fall and Spring semesters
  - Minimum of 1 credit, maximum of 9 (including courses and CMB 999)
  - Includes stipend, tuition, and benefits
- Non-Fringe Assistantship
  - Summer semester
  - Minimum 1 credit. Neither student nor mentor pays tuition.
  - If the student held a prior Spring appointment, health insurance is extended through August 31.

#### Fellowships

- Number of credits required depends on the fellowship
- Students must sign up for Health Insurance. Make sure the fellowship includes funds for health insurance.

### Important Dates

Please see this link for the Academic Calendar: <https://reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Calendar/academic.aspx>