

Welcome, MCDB Students!



Please open/bookmark our website for a copy of these slides, if helpful:

mcdb.ucla.edu/new-student-orientation/



New Student Orientation 2026

Maggie Schmall & Anjelica Zamora
Undergraduate Advisors
UCLA Molecular, Cell & Developmental Biology

MCDB Undergraduate Advisors



Maggie Schmall & Anjelica Zamora

Email: undergradmcd@lifesci.ucla.edu

Website: [MCDB Advising Webpage](#)

Offices: 128 & 126 Hershey Hall



MCDB Major Requirements

MCDB Major Requirements



- FIVE UPPER-DIVISION CORE COURSES
- LABORATORY REQUIREMENT
- 20 UNITS OF APPROVED UPPER-DIVISION ELECTIVES
- Check out our website for [MCDB Major Requirements](#)

MCDB Major Requirements



Upper-Division Core Requirements

★ CHEM 153A – Biochemistry: Introduction to Structure, Enzymes, and Metabolism

★ LIFESCI 107 – Genetics

★ MCDB 165A – Biology of Cells

MCDB 138 – Developmental Biology

MCDB 144 – Molecular Biology of Cellular Processes

MCDB Major Requirements



Laboratory Requirement (Choose One)

1. MCDB 104AL – Research Immersion Lab in Developmental Biology

2. MCDB 114AL – Research Immersion Lab in Plant Molecular Biology and Biotechnology

3. MCDB 187AL – Research Immersion Lab in Genomic Biology

4. MCDB 196B – Research Apprenticeship II or
MCDB 198B, 198C, or 198D – Honors Research in MCDB

- Must be taken concurrently with MCDB 180B – Scientific Analysis and Communication II (2 units) to fulfill Lab Requirement
- MCDB 180A – Scientific Analysis and Communication I (2 units) is prerequisite for MCDB 180B

5. MCDB 198C – Honors Research in MCDB

- Students completing the Biomedical Research Minor may satisfy the Lab Requirement with MCDB 198C without taking MCDB 180A-B

MCDB Lab Requirement – Takeaway



- Students in the MCDB major gain hands-on research experience by either taking a lab class or by participating in MCDB-approved independent research in a faculty member's lab.

MCDB Major Requirements



20 Units of Approved Upper Division Electives

Category 1	5 units from Category 1
Category 2	5 units from Category 1 or 2
Category 3	10 units of Category 1, 2, or 3

60 Units of Upper-Division Coursework



- MCDB consists of a minimum of 48 upper-division units
- Therefore, you must take additional upper-division courses outside of the MCDB major
 - Any course numbered 100-199 = Upper Division
 - Minor



Undergraduate Research

Getting Involved in Research



- Biomedical Research Minor
 - Introductory course required to apply
 - BMD RES 5HA ★, M6H ★, or 10H
- Undergraduate Research Center
- Consult with your MCDB advisor for more information!

Biomedical Research Minor

What is Biomedical Research Minor?

Interdepartmental minor that is designed to involve students in laboratory research early in their college career.

Minor Highlights

- Training as a research scientist
- Informed lab placement
- Undergraduate research community
- Integration of social sciences and humanities
- Courses in biomedical research skills & concepts, ethics, journal club & data presentation seminars (~33 - 34 total units)
- Complete a thesis and research presentation
- 80% of alumni continue on to pursue graduate school

Applying to the Minor

Students from **any major** can join the Minor

- Minimum 3.0 GPA
- Take 1 [Introductory course](#) (*BMD RES 5HA & M6H available in Fall*)
- Application open every week 4 and close week 7 of Fall, Winter, Spring
- Last eligible to apply Winter quarter of the third year

Next Steps/Career Paths:

- Medical or Pharmacy school (or other health professional school)
- Graduate school
- Laboratory research
- Academia





Pre-Health Planning

What is “Pre-Health?”



- “Pre-Health” is an umbrella term, referring to the pathways that prepare students for careers in healthcare professions (i.e. medicine, nursing, optometry, pharmacy, dental, physical therapy, veterinary fields, etc.).
- UCLA has several [Pre-Health services](#) and [Pre-Health resources](#) for students.
- Pre-Health students MUST consult individual professional schools in addition to UCLA general guidance as professional schools can theoretically change their individual admission requirements at any time.

Key Pre-Health Course Requirements



- 1 year of college-level **English/Writing** (AP does not always apply)
- 1 year of college-level **Math** (AP does not always apply)
- 1 year of **Biology with Lab**
- 1 year of **General Chemistry + Lab**
- 1 year of **Organic Chemistry + Lab**
- **Biochemistry** (CHEM 153A at UCLA)
- 1 year of **Physics + Lab**

Additional Requirements by Field



- Students should review [Additional Requirements by Field](#)
- Example: [Recommended for Medical School](#)
 - Intro Psychology - MCAT preparation
 - Intro Sociology - MCAT preparation
 - Spanish is recommended for competitiveness, especially if practicing in California.

Pre-Health Advising



- Contact MCDB undergraduate advisors and/or UCLA College Advisors for Pre-Health course planning.
- Contact [Pre-Health career advisors](#) in drop-in advising or scheduled appointments.
- UCLA has various [Pre-Health services](#) including [online resources](#) and [workshops/events](#).
- Students MUST consult individual professional schools to verify their specific/unique requirements.

Summer Pre-Health Orientation



- Join the UCLA Career Center to learn about services and resources that can support your pre-health journey.
- There will be two summer sessions—attend whichever one works best for you to learn more!
 - July Session: Friday, July 31 | 10–11 AM (PT) | Zoom
 - [Register for the July 31 session](#)
 - September Session: Thursday, September 3 | 12–1 PM (PT) | Zoom
 - [Register for the Sept 3 session](#)



A Few Reminders

Tips for New Students



- The Quarter System
- Course Load
- Prerequisites and Sequence of Courses
- When to Seek Advice
- College vs. Departmental Advisors
- Professors' Office Hours
- Current Contact Information

Join the MCDB Undergraduate Listserv



- Send an email to MCDBIO-L+subscribe@lists.ucla.edu
- You will receive an email from the group. Select “Join this Group.”
- You will then be directed to the Google Groups website.
- Click “Ask to Join Group” near the top of the page.
- You will receive an email confirmation once your request has been approved.

Additional Questions?



Send us an email!

undergradmcd@lifesci.ucla.edu



Thank you!