We seek PhD students who are creative scientists with a passion for research.

Our department is a diverse group of labs studying a wide range of topics in biology. A successful PhD can take on different forms. It generally includes joining a lab (following half a year of rotations and coursework) and working with your research mentor ~4-5 years to perform enough experiments to complete and publish a research project. A typical day in the life of a PhD student is planning and carrying out research in the lab along with other training activities such as giving various presentations on their work, studying the scientific literature, and attending seminars and conferences.

Upon completion, there are a wide variety of options including continuing in academic science, industry science, science writing, policy, etc. Like many fields, a Biology PhD requires dedication and hard work, but it is a uniquely creative and discovery-centered career, usually with a somewhat flexible schedule. PhD students also receive a salary during their entire training period.

Each year, the CMOB division of the Biology Department assesses applications submitted through the Biosciences program. Although Biosciences may require additional application materials, below lists specific information that is assessed by CMOB faculty and students on the admission committee.

**Academic criteria**

- You will enter your GPA, but we recognize that research shows a lack of correlation between high GPA and success in graduate school. If your GPA is not competitive, feel free to explain any contributing obstacles/factors in your Personal Statement.
- We do **not** accept GRE scores.

**Personal Statement**—suggested content, not all is required

- What motivates you to pursue a research career?
- If you have prior research experience, what biological questions have you asked/answered and/or what hypotheses have you tested (during wet or dry lab work, tool development, etc. mention “The big picture”)? Discuss this rather than just providing a list of techniques used. **Describe all experiences.**
- What have you learned that excites or motivates you about research?
- Did you encounter or overcome any struggles during your research experience?
- Have you experienced any “life lessons” that prepare you for a research career?
- What type of research do you see yourself doing in our department?
- Discuss any publication of your work—completed or planned.

**Additional tips**

- Show statement to colleagues and ask for comments.
Letters of Reference

• Who to ask: Professors with whom you performed your research, TA’d, or taught a course you took. Your supervisor at a company.
• It’s good to choose at least one person who can comment specifically on your potential for obtaining a PhD, your passion for a science research career, or your research performance.
• Important: Talk with your reference about your desire to apply for a PhD program. Ask whether they would recommend that path, and if yes, whether they could write a strong letter of support.

Significant Research Project

• This is a succinct summary of your most extensive research experience. It will be an experience you have written in your Personal Statement, again describing the biological questions you have asked/answered and hypotheses you have tested in your research (instead of just a list of techniques that you learned).
• Think elevator pitch
• The purpose is that summarizing your research helps admissions committee’s members who are reading many applications have efficient access to you most research experience.

Contributing Factors to Stanford Community

• Discuss any unique circumstances about yourself that will enrich Stanford’s educational environment
• Can describe any outreach efforts aimed at increasing equal representation in STEM

Describe an Interesting Biology or Biomedical Problem

• Discuss a biological phenomenon that could be addressed through research. It could be related to your current work or one that you find fascinating and would like to pursue.