

Protocol 1010 Admissions Process

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Protocol

GSSIMR recruits predoctoral researchers to the PhD. in Biology program who have already demonstrated a high degree of research proficiency. All applicants are required to have obtained a bachelor's degree (B.S. or B.A.) or equivalent from an accredited institution as a prerequisite for admission. Although the majority of entering predoctoral researchers will have a solid background in modern molecular biology and biochemistry, the program also encourages applications from candidates who have a demonstrated interest in disciplines such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, or computer science. In all cases, a record of previous scientific research is the primary criterion for admission as demonstrated through the summary of research submitted with the application, mentors' recommendation letters, and publications, if any. Grade point average (GPA) and test scores (e.g., GRE and TOEFL) are not required for admission to GSSIMR. All application materials must be submitted in English. No application fee is required.

International applicants must complete at least the equivalent of a U.S. four-year degree, including all state and external/internal examinations required for the degree/diploma. Usually this is a minimum of four years of study, beyond grade 12, at the university level, culminating with the award of a first or second degree. Although a degree in another country may have a name similar to a U.S. degree, this does not necessarily indicate the degree can be accepted as equivalent. For example, three-year general degrees (from Canada, India/Pakistan, France, Lebanon, etc.) are not accepted for admission to GSSIMR. International applicants admitted to the program work with Stowers Immigration Services to review and determine visa status on an individual case-by-case basis.

All official academic records must show the dates of enrollment; the subjects or courses taken, together with the units of credit or time allotted to each subject; and, if rank is determined, rank in the total class or group. The records must also include a complete description of the institution's grading scale or other standard of evaluation. Maximum and minimum marks and the steps between them must be indicated.

Unless academic records and diplomas are *routinely* issued in English by the institution, the official records *in their original language* must be submitted with an authorized, complete, and exact English translation. Applicants' academic credentials, if earned outside of the U.S., are reviewed for the purpose of assessing institutional accreditation, as well as the U.S. equivalency of the degree and grades.

Applicants are considered and accepted without regard to race, creed, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, military status, or any other status protected by law.

GSSIMR has two mechanisms for admission to the Ph.D. program. The standard admission process begins in September when the application service is open. Applications for the standard admission process must be received by December 1 (or the subsequent Monday, if December 1 falls on a weekend) for admission in August of the following year. The direct admission process begins on April 15 for admission in August of the same year.

Standard Admission Process

The application process is through a centralized application service for biomedical sciences programs, BioMedCAS. The application process includes a completed application form and the following items for each applicant:

1. Biographical information, educational background, and CV
2. Detailed summary of undergraduate or post-bachelor's degree research project(s)
3. List of publication(s) on which the applicant is an author with a description of their contribution to the paper(s)
4. Description of an interesting unanswered question in the field of study of a SIMR principal investigator. The response must include next step experiments or possible approaches that might best be used to address that problem.
5. Personal candidate statement
6. Description of any additional relevant research experience
7. Three reference letters
8. Official transcript(s) from all post-high school institutions

After further review by the Admissions Committee and a possible virtual interview, the applicants under consideration are invited to visit GSSIMR and SIMR to participate in a thorough interview process. Travel and accommodations for all interviewees is arranged and paid for by GSSIMR.

Each interview consists of the applicant doing the following:

1. Making a brief scientific presentation to the Admissions Committee and faculty members who choose to attend
2. Meeting individually with faculty members
3. Touring the facilities
4. Meeting with predoctoral researchers and alumni

Following the interviews in February and March, the Admissions Committee chooses candidates to whom to extend offers. The deadline for decisions from the candidates is April 15.

Direct Admission Process

GSSIMR faculty can host qualified applicants to join GSSIMR as predoctoral researchers for direct admission to their lab without laboratory rotations. Direct admission predoctoral researchers initiate their academic program at the beginning of either Summer or Fall term, complete the module course sequence, and then join the host lab without participating in

rotations. All other GSSIMR academic requirements, policies, and protocols apply to direct admission predoctoral researchers. Applicants through the direct admission system must have at least 2 months experience in the host lab prior to applying to the program. This is equivalent to a rotation experience.

Direct admission applicants submit a complete application package to the Dean for Academic Affairs via the host PI by the established deadline for review by the Admissions Committee. This includes a completed application with biographical information and the following elements:

1. Cover letter written by the host PI
2. Applicant's CV
3. Two letters of reference from outside the host lab
4. Official transcript(s) from all post-high school institutions
5. Personal Statement
6. Research Project Summary
7. Research Goals Statement

Applicants who apply to the standard admission process can be eligible for the direct admission process with the support of a host PI following the standard admission cycle if an interview or an offer was not extended to the applicant.

The Admissions Committee direct admission review process begins after the receipt of final standard admission acceptances on April 15. Each interview includes the following:

1. A brief scientific presentation to the Admissions Committee and faculty members who choose to attend
2. Meeting individually with faculty members
3. Meeting individually with GSSIMR administration

The maximum total number of positions available for direct admission will be determined by the GSSIMR Dean and communicated to the Admissions Committee, with a maximum total of three per year. Admissions Committee members wishing to host a direct admit predoctoral researcher are recused from the entire review process. Individual labs may host one new direct admit predoctoral researcher per year and a total of no more than two direct admit predoctoral researchers at any given time.