

The Department of *Biology* offers a combined BScH/MSc (*Biology*) program. This program is an opportunity for students in the 4th year of their Honour's program (*Biology*) to take up to 2 courses in *Biology* at the graduate level that would then allow these students to enter the graduate program with advanced standing. Research begun in the 4th year thesis project could be carried forward as a foundation for the graduate thesis, which would create an opportunity for exceptional students to complete the graduate degree within 4 terms.

Admission to the combined program is a two-step process.

Step 1:

Students can apply for admission to the combined program (permission to take graduate level courses) in parallel with the process for admittance to the Honour's year thesis research project (Biol-537), and any time up to and including Dec. 15 of the fall term provided they are enrolled in Biol-537. All applications will be reviewed by undergraduate and graduate administrators.

Once accepted into the combined program, in Year 4 of the BSc (Honour's) program students will be permitted to take up to two 3.0 credit graduate level courses for a total of 3 or 6 credits towards the 12 credits required for the MSc degree. It is the student's responsibility to gain admission to these graduate courses following acceptance into the program. These courses will be counted as electives or science options towards completion of the degree requirements in the BSc (Hons) program. Only 1 of these courses may be a combined undergraduate/graduate (400/800) level course. The second (and all subsequent) graduate courses must be graduate only (800 and/or 900 level).

Step 2:

For admission to the MSc program in *Biology with advanced standing*, students will be expected to complete the standard SGS application process, have an overall A⁻ (A minus) average in the previous 2 years of their undergraduate program, and have demonstrated significant research productivity in the 4th year thesis project. In order for the student to be granted advanced standing in the M.Sc. degree program, they must have received a final grade of at least B⁻ (B minus) in the graduate course(s) taken during the 4th year and meet all other requirements for admission to the MSc program in *Biology*.

Applications:

Students should apply in writing via email to Dr. Kenton Ko, Chair of Undergraduate Studies in *Biology* (kok@queensu.ca) with a copy to Rachel Batson, Undergraduate Program Assistant (ug.biology@queensu.ca) and at that time should provide a copy of their transcript, a brief description (1 Paragraph) of their research project, the name of their Project Supervisor, and identify the graduate level courses they hope to enroll in during their 4th year.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the advantage of doing a combined BScH/MSc? The program will typically reduce the time to MSc completion by up to 2 academic terms. An MSc degree in *Biology* is expected to take 6 terms (2 calendar years) and requires 12 course credits at the graduate level and a research thesis. Honour's Thesis students who enter the combined program take graduate courses as well as conduct research and thus enter the MSc program (if accepted) with advanced standing. Moreover, 4th year students benefit from the educational experience of graduate courses that focus on the most recent developments in a

given field as well as the higher level of discussion and debate that is expected in these courses. In addition, students enrolled in the program will likely be more competitive for external scholarships and awards. Enrolling in the combined BSch/MSc program does not guarantee that you will be completed early: the standard requirements of an MSc program must still be adhered to such as a thesis that is at an acceptable standard as judged by your examination committee. Are there disadvantages to doing a combined BSch/MSc? The workload during your Honour's year maybe heavier than normal if you are taking one or two graduate courses. You may also decide that a standard MSc experience is more suited to your career or research goals (e.g. your research project requires the full two years).

What if I decide not to enter the MSc program, can I still finish just my BSch? Yes, of course, but you should make this decision in the winter term of your Honour's Thesis program before officially entering the MSc program (i.e. don't register in March for a May/Sept MSc start).

Can I do both a BSch and an "accelerated" MSc in Biology but not do any graduate courses as a 4th year student? Yes, but such an approach is really no different than simply completing your undergrad degree, subsequently enrolling in an MSc, and aiming to complete it in a shorter-than-usual timeframe. It doesn't require any special permissions and your MSc work can still elaborate upon your Biol537 project but it would mean taking 4 grad courses and completing all your research in a shortened timeframe, a formidable though not impossible task.

Could I change labs or projects after I finish my Biol537 and enter the combined MSc? Yes, in principle, and any grad courses you have taken as electives and approved as described above would count toward your MSc. However, if your MSc research is unrelated to your Biol537 project then it is unlikely your supervisory committee will permit parts of the 537 thesis to contribute to your MSc thesis. Thus, the likelihood of completing your MSc in less than two years will be reduced.