

## **Timeline for Prospective Graduate Students Applying to the Integrative Biology Department, University of Colorado Denver**

Are you interested in applying to the University of Colorado Denver's Integrative Biology graduate program? If so, this document was created by CU Denver Biology Graduate Students to welcome you and to give you advice about joining our graduate program and starting your journey to conducting your original research! Below is a timeline that we made to provide you with guidance on what you need to complete and when so that you can:

- Assess whether our program is a good fit for you.
- Have your materials ready.
- Feel prepared to apply and join us in the CU Denver Integrative Biology Department.

We hope that this document illuminates some of the less obvious culture and expectations in academia and helps make biology graduate research more accessible and obtainable for amazing researchers like you.



University of Colorado **Denver**



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## Timeline for Prospective Integrative Biology Graduate Students

Timeline	Action Items	Important Links		Tips, hints, and tricks
Prep aring to Appl ying	<b>Step 1:</b> Read the overview of the Department of Integrative Biology Graduate Program	<a href="#">Graduate School Requirements</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important to know that we use “<b>direct to lab admittance</b>”, which means you get accepted to work with a <b>particular advisor or principal investigator (PI)</b>. This is different from “rotation programs” that have students rotate among advisors for a while. To be accepted into our program, you need to identify and communicate with a research advisor(s) before you apply, who will guide your training and support your application.</li> </ul>
	<b>Step 2:</b> Read about research faculty and their areas of expertise.	<a href="#">Graduate Program Faculty</a>  <a href="#">Adjoint Faculty</a>  <a href="#">Associate Teaching Faculty</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our program is unique in that we have research faculty who are at <b>Denver Botanic Gardens and Denver Museum of Nature and Science in addition to faculty from Departments of Biology, Chemistry, and Psychology at CU Denver</b>. This means our graduate students can pursue their Masters or Doctoral degree with a variety of researchers from different backgrounds.</li> <li>You can find out more about prospective advisors' research via their personal website which usually includes their publications and more details on their research.</li> <li>You might find that you are interested in more than one faculty member's research; this is okay! We recommend that you contact the faculty member for each lab you are interested in. Our faculty collaborate with one another often. Most students are advised by one researcher, but some are co-advised by two researchers with overlapping interests, so that is something to consider and talk with your potential advisor about.</li> </ul>
	<b>Step 3:</b> Build your CV and obtain your unofficial transcripts	<a href="#">CV Resources</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For your application, you will want to put together a CV which is far more detailed than a resume. We want to know about:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degrees or credentials you earned at your previous academic institutions.</li> <li>Any research experience you have.</li> <li>Any presentations (posters or talks) you have given at conferences.</li> <li>Any awards you have received or want to apply for</li> <li>Teaching or outreach experiences.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Professional work experience (doesn't have to be academic, could also be volunteering)</li> <li>• <b>Don't be afraid to apply if you don't have all of these experiences.</b> Our goal at CU Denver is to help you gain skills. We are looking to help you build your CV, and are not simply looking for students who have already had a lot of opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Reaching out to Prospective Advisors</b>	<b>Step 4:</b> Reach out to relevant research faculty in the program via email	<a href="#">Guidance on Initial #1: So you want to email a PI   Lunatic Laboratories</a>  <a href="#">Guidance on Initial Contact Blog #2: Applying to Graduate School</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We've included two articles on contacting a potential advisor. Look at their recommendations for drafting an email.</li> <li>• If you have it ready, send your CV in the email to the potential advisor. You might also want to include your unofficial transcripts to give the potential advisor a better picture of your academic background.</li> <li>• When reaching out to your potential advisor, ask if they are accepting students, and if so let them know you would like to set up a Zoom meeting or an in-person meeting if you are local.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o If you don't hear back after two weeks, don't be afraid to email one more time. Faculty advisors get busy, they might be out of town, doing lab or fieldwork, and no one minds being contacted again.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Step 5:</b> Meet with potential advisors.  Before your meeting, provide your CV and unofficial transcript to the potential advisor. If you have contact information for references or letters of reference, you can include those too.	<a href="#">Pre-Application Meeting Questions</a>		Suggested conversation points to talk about with your potential advisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some scientific topics that are of interest to you?</li> <li>• Differences between an MS and PhD program?</li> <li>• Your career interests. What do you hope to get out of graduate school?</li> <li>• Your past experiences in science.</li> <li>• Anticipated semester for starting graduate program.</li> <li>• What are potential projects in the lab?</li> <li>• Potential sources of funding for tuition and healthcare.</li> <li>• What will the workload/ laboratory expectations be?</li> <li>• Your interest in a Graduate Teaching Assistant position.</li> <li>• Ask for a list of other lab members and students who might be involved with the lab so you can contact them</li> </ul>

	<b>Step 6:</b> Reach out to graduate students in the department	<a href="#">Current PhD Students</a>  <a href="#">Current MS Students</a>  <a href="#">Part B: After Meeting with a Potential PhD Advisor- Guide on meeting with potential Advisor</a>	<p>Graduate school is a big commitment and it's important to find out more about the research labs you are interested in joining so that you can make sure the lab will be a good fit for you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We recommend contacting other members of the prospective lab and within the CU Denver Department. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ See link resource for some suggested questions to ask them. Starting questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is your PI's communication/mentoring style?</li> <li>■ Is the PI approachable?</li> <li>■ Do you have regular meetings with your PI?</li> <li>■ How does your PI provide feedback?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Timeline	Action Items	Important Links	Tips, hints, and tricks
Completing the Application	<b>Step 1:</b> Read over the application requirements	<a href="#">Graduate School of Biology Application</a>	<p>When you apply, you will have to create a login with CU Denver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay close attention to minimum and preferred requirements.</li> </ul>
	<b>Step 2:</b> Reach out to your 3-5 academic/professional references (to see if they'll consider writing letters of recommendation)	<b>Asking for a letter of recommendation:</b> <a href="#">CU Denver Health Professionals has a great resource that applies to anyone</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send your potential references an email asking them if they will write you the letter. Once they say yes, go into the CU Denver application and put their information into the system.</li> <li>• Whoever writes your letters of recommendation will receive a link from the University to submit the letter of recommendation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Hint: Most recommendation writers will require that you waive your right to read their letter</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We suggest you ask 3-5 individuals so that you have a backup in case one of your references cannot write a letter for you.</li> </ul>
	<b>Step 3:</b> Confirm with your prospective faculty advisor(s)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty who agree to host you in their lab must write a letter confirming their support. They will know what this is and how to submit it.</li> </ul>

	for a Letter of Support		
	<b>Step 4:</b> Request official transcripts from previous higher educational schools		<b>Higher education credits include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AP scores</li> <li>• Dual/concurrent enrollment</li> <li>• Community College</li> <li>• Associates</li> <li>• Undergraduate</li> <li>• Masters</li> </ul>
	<b>Step 5:</b> Look for funding sources that can help with the cost of attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check for WRGP eligibility if you're an out-of-state student <a href="#">Western Regional Graduate Program</a></li> <li>• Complete the <a href="#">FAFSA</a> if you are interested in Federal Aid.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate school is a big commitment both time-wise and financially. You'll want to look for additional funding sources and understand the cost of attendance at CU Denver.</li> </ul>

**January 1**

**Application submission deadline**