Frequently Asked Questions about the Integrative Biology Graduate Program

- **What does “Integrative Biology” mean?**
  - [We Be IB youtube video](#)
  - Integrative Biology focuses on integration across biological levels, with the organism as a center point and moving up (populations, communities, ecosystems) and down (physiology, cell, genome).
  - Advantage: option/flexibility to expand into different biological realms
    - Half of our graduate students have faculty from different streams in their advisory committee, illustrating the integrative nature of the department
  - It also acknowledges the history of the department, with the integration of the botany and zoology departments in the early 2000s.

- **What are the minimum requirements?**
  - MSc:
    - BSc.
    - B (75%) minimum average during final 4 semester of undergrad.
      - Alternate admissions: significant record of experience (5 years).
    - Support of faculty member willing to serve as thesis advisor
  - PhD:
    - MSc in related field.
    - A- (80%) minimum average in postgraduate studies.
    - Support of faculty member willing to serve as thesis advisor.
    - PhD direct entry: without MSc for exceptionally promising students.
    - MSc to PhD transfer: after 1 year in MSc.

- **Do I need my own funding to start grad school?**
  - Yes: with a scholarship, it will be a lot easier to convince an advisor to support your application.
  - No: advisors often have their own funding to attract graduate students.
  - So it is important to contact potential advisors.

- **How do I contact potential advisors?**
  - Check the individual profiles on the IB website: [http://www.uoguelph.ca/ib/people/people.shtml](http://www.uoguelph.ca/ib/people/people.shtml)
  - Make a selection based on common interests.
  - Write your email as an application letter
    - A short summary of your past relevant research and work experience.
    - Your research interests and how they match up with the potential advisor’s research program. Be specific here, so you can show that you did your homework.
    - How you can contribute to that research program.
    - Attach an updated C.V. and unofficial transcript.
- Are grades important?
  - yes: high grades - necessary for external scholarships and sometimes convince faculty members to consider your application.
  - no: high grades do not guarantee success in graduate school.

- What is the deadline for applying?
  - open enrollment, throughout the year for Fall-Winter-Summer start.
  - 4 months in advance (but can be quicker if necessary).

- Where do graduates of this program end up?
  - of our MSc graduates: 21% start a PhD, 17% work as research staff in private sector, 15% as research staff in government, 14% as research staff in academia.
  - or our PhD graduates: 44% start a postdoc, 17% work as scientist in government, 5% work in research and teaching jobs.

- Is it better to do my graduate studies at a different university from my undergrad?
  - no: your advisor is more important than the university she is at.
  - no: advisors often prefer working with a good undergrad who volunteered in her lab or did a research project with her because she knows the strengths of the new student and the student potentially already has a lot of relevant background in the field of study.
  - yes: having three or more degrees from the same university can raise a flag at job interviews.

- Is the degree course- or thesis-based?
  - only thesis-based.

- What is the difference between a course- and thesis-based degree?
  - course-based:
    - training for specific job skills.
    - theoretical - practical.
    - more prescribed by the program.
    - surveys of techniques.
  - thesis-based:
    - training for career skills
      - active project management.
      - problem-solving skills.
    - knowledge development via scientific publications.
    - mentor-apprentice relationship.
    - explore an area of interest in great depth.

- Any tips for the application process?
  - read these FAQs.
  - consult the IB/CBS/university graduate website.
  - ask questions.
  - before agreeing on a position, talk or email current and past graduate students in your potential advisor’s lab to get feedback on advising style, work conditions, expectations and support, ...