

Information for prospective graduate students – December 2020

Thank you for your interest in joining our lab group! This document provides a bit of information on the graduate school application process, and hopefully also gives you some insight into why I can't take everyone who's interested in joining us.

1. I'm interested in the Tseng lab/UBC and would like to know more. What should I do?

a. Read the following sites to get more information about our group, our colleagues, the program, and the university. Please also read the lab expectations document.

<https://www.bugsandplankton.com/>

<https://biodiversity.ubc.ca/>

<https://www.zoology.ubc.ca/>

<https://apps.botany.ubc.ca/>

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/>

For MSc students – you typically need to get your application in by early December the year prior to starting grad school in order to be considered for fellowship funding.

For PhD students – you typically need to get your application in by early January the year of starting grad school in order to be considered for fellowship funding.

I expect Canadian students to apply for NSERC funding.

b. Email me (Prof. Michelle Tseng). In your email you should talk about your research interests and why you are interested in joining our group in particular. Please include an updated CV and an unofficial transcript.

2. How many new students join the lab each year?

It depends. Graduate students in Botany and Zoology are guaranteed a minimum stipend of \$28,000 CDN per year. This annual stipend typically is made up of:

Teaching Assistantship - ~\$12k, Sept-Apr, 12 hr/wk

Fellowships/Scholarships - either from UBC, Botany/Zoology, or NSERC

Research Assistantship - paid out of Dr. Tseng's research grants

If everyone applying to join the lab has secured fellowships, then we can bring on more students per year. The average ecology/evolution operating grant in Canada (to the PI) is \$30-40k. Without any fellowships, you can see that \$16k of the graduate student stipend would need to come from the PI's grants, which is a significant fraction of the annual budget.

3. I've talked with Dr. Tseng and members of the current lab group. Should I go ahead and apply?

Yes! If you feel that you have all the information you need to make a good decision, and you think that you would be happy at UBC/Tseng lab, please do apply. The application procedures are available on the Zoology or Botany websites.

4. Should I apply through Botany or Zoology?

The Botany department is smaller than the Zoology department so there's a tiny bit less competition for fellowships. Both departments are excellent. There are slightly different course & admin requirements between the two departments. E.g. Botany requires MSc students to officially defend their proposal whereas Zoology does not. Our lab and offices are located in the Biodiversity Research Centre. Ecol/evol folks from Botany and Zoology are located here so the colleagues you will interact with will be from both departments.

5. What kind of a supervisor are you?

I'm awesome! Just kidding. Every student is different and I try to give each student what they need to succeed. I meet weekly with my students (including undergrads) and we try to make progress, even a bit is ok, each week. We also talk a lot about what the student might want to do after their degree, and try to get them the skills/tools they need to get where they want to go. Eg. if you're really interested in applying science to policy, I will try to work that into your program. If you know that you want to be a professor, then we try publish as many papers as possible. You can read more about what you can expect from me, and what I expect from my students, in the lab expectations document on the website.