You are receiving this letter because you either contacted Integrated Life Sciences (ILS) about applying to graduate study in the Life Sciences at the UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA (UGA) or were referred to ILS by a UGA faculty member. ILS is an entry point for 14 PhD graduate programs and strives to attract the best and brightest graduate students possible. We are honored that you are considering our programs.

Here are some facts about graduate study at UGA. First, the total graduate population is over 7000; there are over 600 graduate students in the Life Sciences; ILS aims to admit 50-60 new graduate students per year (~25% international). Second, our students enjoy heavily subsidized tuition ($25 per semester) and health care. Third, ILS graduate students enjoy innovative curriculum and sample various lab environments and research projects prior to starting thesis research. ILS students are guaranteed stipend support for 5 years, initially provided as a research assistantship with no teaching obligation in the first semester. Subsequent stipend support is either through a Research or Teaching Assistantship.

ILS evaluates multiple criteria when deciding whom to admit into our programs, and we receive many excellent applications. The average international ILS student has good GRE scores (>80% GRE Quantitative; >60% GRE Verbal), significant laboratory research experience, and excellent TOEFL scores (≥100 Total; ≥23 Speak Test). Exceptional excellence in one area has the potential to offset deficiencies in other areas.

Applications are due December 1st for matriculation in the following Fall semester. For application instructions, see http://ils.uga.edu/admissions/how-to-apply. We strongly urge you to submit your application before the deadline to insure timely receipt of your application. Applications from students that are exceptionally qualified may be evaluated after the above deadline, but late applications are generally considered with the following year’s applicant pool. Applications are processed in early January, and qualified candidates undergo a Skype (preferred) or telephone interview. Admission offers are extended soon after.

A complete application typically includes official transcript(s), GRE General Test and TOEFL scores, letters of recommendation, and a web-based Background & Interest form, which must all be received before any action can be taken on an application. The Background & Interest form (http://ils.uga.edu/admissions/how-to-apply) has a section for a Personal Statement and requests that you list the names of departments, interdisciplinary groups and faculty that are of interest to you. The ETS code for reporting GRE and TOEFL scores is 5813; there is no departmental/program code, but you can select “Biological Sciences”/“Other Biological Sciences” if you wish. The TOEFL requirement is country-specific and waived if you hold a degree from or attended at least one-year of study at a US institution. Country-specific requirements (http://www.uga.edu/gradschool/admissions/int_country.html) are imposed on certain applications, so carefully review this information before applying. The GRE Personal Potential Index and a Certification of Finances are not required at the time of application.

Several web sites provide information about our incredibly vibrant academic community. UGA maintains a website about our institution and city (http://www.uga.edu). The UGA Graduate School website (http://www.grad.uga.edu) is the portal for submitting your electronic application and has detailed information about applying. There is much information on these sites, and I think you will enjoy reading about our graduate programs, institution, and community that was ranked the top US city for 20-30 year olds in a recent survey (http://realestate.yahoo.com/news/best-cities-for-millennials-to-live-in.html).

Thank you for your interest in Integrated Life Sciences (ILS) at UGA. We are proud of our graduate programs and its students and firmly believe that the UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA represents an excellent education and training opportunity. We look forward to receiving your application.

Best regards,

Walter K. Schmidt, PhD, ILS Graduate Coordinator