

MBIOS PSM: What Is A PSM degree?

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NORAH MCCABE: I'm Norah McCabe. I'm a faculty member in the School of Molecular Biosciences here at WSU. And I direct the Professional Science Master's Program in Molecular Biosciences.

SPEAKER: What is a PSM degree?

NORAH MCCABE: We really do feel that PSM degrees are our probably the best kept secret, certainly, at WSU and maybe even nationally. So Professional Science Master's degrees are alternative Master's of Science degrees that were started in this country in the late 1990s.

And so what to do is they combine graduate science courses with graduate courses in non-science fields. So, for example, in business and communication, management and ethics. And there's also a required component of an internship where students will go right into the work place of their choice.

And usually, they pick a place that ultimately they would like to have a career in. And they get hands-on experience. And that internship then forms the basis of their final examination.

SPEAKER: Who should apply?

NORAH MCCABE: We do have a admissions committee. And what we're looking for in our applicants is one, a real knowledge and need for a different training in a master's program.

And so often, we have the students who absolutely do like science and ultimately have a undergraduate degree in a science discipline and really want to continue with science. But they do not want to a traditional Master's of Science.

And so those students, traditionally, when they wanted to obtain a master's, the only master's that they find that was available to them, particularly, if they wanted to do an online master's, not only that master's was invariably an MBA, a Master's of Business Administration.

And we find that many of our students who were trained in science did not want to do an MBA. And so the Professional Science Master's, which combines both the science and aspects of the MBA, really satisfies their requirement or need for students who would like to pursue a master's degree.

SPEAKER: What background do I need to have to be successful?

NORAH MCCABE: There are lots of different backgrounds. So we have students who have just graduated from college with their Bachelor's in Science.

We have students who graduated several years ago with their Bachelor's in Science discipline and have now work experience and have decided that they require further training, either for transition within their current workplace or for promotion within their current workplace. Or they want to go into more of the professional aspects of their position, so really, many and varied.

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