We use cookies to ensure that we deliver the best user experience of our website. If you would like to, you can change your cookie settings at any time.
Continue

Biological Sciences with Professional Placement MSci (Hons)

Biologists enjoy a wide range of career opportunities in industry and academia. Being able to combine a fully-fledged BSc Biology with a placement year will enhance your employability, and provide excellent additional training and networking opportunities. Students of the placement course have access to the same set of modules as the 3-year BSc students, including practical training and lab-based project work.

2014 National Student Survey "95% of our students said that our staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching"

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham has been awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

UCAS code: C102

Duration: 4 years

Places Available: 250 (Total number of places for all undergraduate courses in the school)

Applications in 2013: 1819

Typical Offer: AAA (**More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details (?OpenSection=EntryRequirements)**)

Start date: September

Contact

Admissions Tutor: Dr Klaus Fütterer
Telephone enquiries: +44 (0)121 414 6162
Email: **biosciences-admissions@bham.ac.uk (mailto:biosciences-admissions@bham.ac.uk)**
Web: **www.birmingham.ac.uk/biosciences (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/biosciences)**

School of Biosciences (/schools/biosciences/index.aspx)

Details

Study biological sciences at Birmingham and you'll learn about animals, plants and microorganisms - their genetic make-up, their cellular structure and how they interact in our natural environment. This degree gives you a solid base in the subject with the opportunity to specialise in areas such as genetics or zoology.

The professional placement is intercalated between the second and final year, and allows you to apply your skills at an early stage in industry, non-governmental or public sector organisations. In today's competitive jobs market having work experience will look excellent on your CV. The experience of working as a professional bioscientist during the course of your degree will also help you to define your career objectives.

Why study this course

We have a large and internationally recognised School of Biosciences offering expertise that is the foundation of our research-led teaching.

You will encounter a broad range of topics on our courses, ranging from studies on the three-dimensional structure of individual molecules through to the study of whole ecosystems. We pride ourselves in our ?enquiry-based learning? strategy that will equip you with the skills to achieve full potential in your future career.

We increasingly incorporate new areas of science relating to biology, such as bioinformatics, and the School has major high-technology facilities for research in genomics, structural biology and optical imaging.

Specialist field courses for those involved in the study of animals, plants and ecological aspects are also available.

2013 National Student Survey "94% of students said that overall they were satisfied with the quality of our Biology courses."

In today's competitive jobs market having work experience will look excellent on your CV. The experience of working as a professional bioscientist during the course of your degree will also help you to defne your career objectives.

Modules

For a detailed description of modules **download Biological Sciences Module Descriptions (PDF 459kb) (/Documents/college-les/biosciences/BiologicalSciencesModuleDescriptions(PDF128KB).pdf)** .

First Year

The first year modules are designed to give you a broad and balanced view of modern biology. They will develop from what you have learned at school but you will soon be learning new material. You will take 20 credits of language in your first year taught by our Center for Modern Languages.

Language

Introduction to Evolution and Animal Biology **Watch video (/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-evolution.aspx)**

Biochemistry

Skills for Biosciences

Cell Biology and Physiology

Choose two from:

Microbiology and Infectious Disease **Watch video** **(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio153-microbiology-infectious-disease.aspx)**
Plant Sciences and Environmental Biology **Watch video** **(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-plant.aspx)**
Genetics I

Second Year

At this stage you begin to tailor the degree towards your own particular interests. In addition, you will prepare your placement applications, aided by a range of support mechanisms. We have a large database of organisations that accept placement students, and are frequently approached by companies or organisations offering placement opportunities in the UK and elsewhere in Europe.

Second Year optional modules

Animal Sensory Systems, Neurobiology and Behaviour
Ecology
Cell and Developmental Biology
Microbes and Man
Human Evolution, Adaptation and Behaviour
Genetics II
Plant Sciences: from Cells to the Environment **Watch video** **(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio237-plant-science-cells-environment.aspx)**
Field Course: Alpine and Glacial Ecology in Norway **Watch video** **(/students/courses/undergraduate/biosciences/module-alpine-glacial-ecology.aspx)**
Field Course: Urban Ecology in Birmingham
Field Course: Adaptations to Aquatic Environments

Core modules taken by all second year students:

Science Communication
Molecular Biology and its applications
Language

Third year (Professional Placement year)

You will spend your third year working in industry, a research laboratory or in the field. The placement year is academically assessed by a report and a seminar presentation at the conclusion of the year.

Final Year

The final year is made up of a combination of taught modules and independent study. It is here that the link between the teaching and the research in the school is particularly important. The final year modules are informed and inspired by the research being carried out in the school.

The final year allows choice from a range of specialised topics. Central to the final year is the research project, which makes up one third of the credits earned in the final year. If you choose a practical project this allows you to join one of our many research groups, providing the fascinating opportunity to experience research first hand and to contribute to current research projects.

Photo - Metztlimoon

Project work is not limited to the laboratory; some students will do more ecology- based projects involving field work. Current field courses in the final year lead you to a research site in Florida, or, alternatively, to **Trentham Estate (http://www.trentham.co.uk/)** where you will study behavioural ecology and sociobiology of free-roaming Barbary macaques. Alternatively, for your research project, you can carry out a critical review of literature in an area that you are interested in.

Topics available to Biological Sciences students include:

- Bioterrorism - should we be afraid, very afraid?
- Age-dependent fertility in human females, what's the problem.
- Animal dormancy: What purpose does it serve and how is it controlled?

Fees and funding

Standard fees (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/fees/standard) apply - a standard fee for year in industry is set for 2012/13 new entrants at £2,500.
Learn more about **fees and funding (/undergraduate/fees/loans.aspx)**

Scholarships
Learn more about our **scholarships and awards (/undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx)**

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: AAA

Required subjects and grades: Biology/Human Biology A level and one other from Chemistry, Computer Science, Environmental Studies, Geography, Geology, ICT, Maths, Physics, Psychology or Sports Studies/PE. Five GCSEs at grade C (minimum) in Double Award/Integrated Science, English and Mathematics.

General Studies: We do not accept General Studies, Critical Thinking, Citizenship Studies, Applied Science, Communication and Culture, Critical Studies, Global Perspectives, Science in Society and World Development.

Additional information:

The typical offer for the Professional Placement course is higher than that for the corresponding three year BSc degree course. However, all candidates who firmly accept the offer as their first choice will be automatically offered a place on the corresponding three year course should they fail the higher, but meet the standard offer.

BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (Applied Science) is accepted only in combination with a science subject at GCE A2 level at grade A. Other qualifications are considered – learn more about **entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements)** .

International students:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 36 points excluding bonus points from TOK and Extended Essay. 6, 6, 6 at HL to include Biology and one other science at HL. 5 points in each of SL English and Maths if not offered at GCSE or equivalent.

Standard English language requirements apply
Learn more about **international entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements/international)**

Depending on your chosen course of study, you may also be interested in the Birmingham Foundation Academy, a specially structured programme for international students whose qualifications are not accepted for direct entry to UK universities. Further details can be found on the **foundation academy web pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx)** .

How to apply

Apply through UCAS at **www.ucas.com (http://www.ucas.com/)**
Learn more about **applying (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply)**

NB You should apply through UCAS for the preferred four-year option at the outset. Students will retain the flexibility of changing their registration to one of our three-year degree courses during the second year.

Key Information Set (KIS)

Key Information Sets (KIS) are comparable sets of information about full- or part-time undergraduate courses and are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students.

All KIS information has been published on the Unistats website and can also be accessed via the small advert, or 'widget', below. On the **Unistats website (http://unistats.direct.gov.uk)** you are able to compare all the KIS data for each course with data for other courses.

The development of Key Information Sets (KIS) formed part of HEFCE's work to enhance the information that is available about higher education. They give you access to reliable and comparable information in order to help you make informed decisions about what and where to study.

The KIS contains information which prospective students have identified as useful, such as student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, tuition fees and student finance, accommodation and professional accreditation.

Related links

Biological Sciences MSci (Hons) (/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/biological-sciences-msci.aspx)

Undergraduate courses - School of Biosciences - Study here for your Bsc degree (/schools/biosciences/courses/undergraduate/index.aspx)

Biological Sciences Module Descriptions (PDF 128Kb) (/Documents/college-les/biosciences/BiologicalSciencesModuleDescriptions(PDF128KB).pdf)

Learning and teaching

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic research elite and will learn from world-leading experts. From the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent thinker, however you will have plenty of contact with the staff who teach you.

Take a virtual tour of one of our teaching labs (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/bioscience lab.aspx)

- **Lectures** - Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning. As well as traditional whiteboard and pen, our lecture theatres are equipped with the latest techology including movies and animations, molecular graphics and ?ask the audience? style electronic voting systems. Student interaction using various social media is encouraged before, during and after lectures.
- **Practical classes** - Laboratory-based practical work is an integral part of our degree. A typical practical session will last 3 hours delivering important transferable skills, experience of practical work is essential if you wish to move into a research career and is valued by a wide range of employers. You will be able to engage with academic and post graduate researchers who will help you during these practical sessions.
- **Field courses** - Biological Sciences students have the opportunity to develop their field skills on a wide range of field courses in different environments. See the Course Modules tab for details.
- **Tutorials** - A personal tutorial system is an essential feature of our degree programme and your tutors will help you in three important areas: supporting your academic progress, developing transferable skills and helping with any welfare issues. From the outset, you will be assigned your own Personal Tutor who will get to know you as you progress through your studies, providing academic and welfare advice, encouraging you and offering assistance in any areas you may feel you need extra support to make the most of your potential and your time here at Birmingham.

To begin with you may find university level education challenging, but we will support you to enable you to make this transition. You will have access to a comprehensive support system in the School, including personal tutors and welfare tutors, who can help with both academic and welfare issues throughout your course. You will have a formal transition review during your first year to check on your progress and identify areas where you may need some additional support, and the School's academic small group tutorial system will provide you with skills based support throughout the course.

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. Get the latest Flash Player Get the latest version of QuickTime

Clinical anatomist, author and broadcaster Alice Roberts is the University's Professor of Public Engagement in Science. You can watch Alice's lecture Origins of us: Human Anatomy and Evolution above.

Alice carries out a range of academic duties which include teaching second year Biosciences students.

Our **Academic Skills Centre (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/libraryservices/asc/index.aspx)** also offers you support with your learning. The centre is a place where you can develop your mathematical, academic writing and general academic skills. It is the centre's aim to help you to become a more effective and independent learner through the use of a range of high-quality and appropriate learning support services. These range from one-to-one support with mathematics and statistics based problems from experienced mathematicians, to workshops on a range of topics including note talking, reading, writing and presentation skills.

Assessment methods

Studying at degree-level is likely to be very different from your previous experience of learning and teaching. You will be assessed in a variety of ways and each module is assessed independently. All modules contain some components of continuous assessment, that is, assessment taking place during the teaching terms. Continuous assessment generally accounts for over one-third of the mark for a given module, while two thirds are contributed by the end-of-year examination in the summer term. A subset of modules is assessed through course work, without an end-of-year examination.

At the beginning of each module, you'll be given information on how and when you'll be assessed for that particular programme of study. You'll receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done. You'll be given feedback on any exams that you take; if you should fail an exam we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is made available to enable you to learn for the future.

More information about assessment methods and feedback is given below:

- **Feedback** - You will be able to track your development by making use of a wide range of types of feedback, such as: written feedback on your assessments, class feedback and questions sessions and discussions with your tutor.
- **Examinations** ? The formal end-of-year examinations (in May/June of each year) are complemented by course work in the form of essays or reports, data handling or interpretation exercises, poster presentations, seminar presentations, group work and lab reports.
- **Projects and dissertations** ? You will choose the topic of your project from a wide range of titles. We offer a range of projects including practical work in the laboratory, field work, computer based projects, or literature reviews to give you the chance to demonstrate the full range of academic and transferable skills.

Employability

Top career prospects for our Biosciences Graduates - Only Cambridge can offer better!

Graduates of the University of Birmingham are highly regarded among employers in the UK, and a Biological Sciences degree from Birmingham is an excellent qualification for securing your future career in a diverse range of industries and employment sectors. Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, our Careers Network can help you achieve your goal.

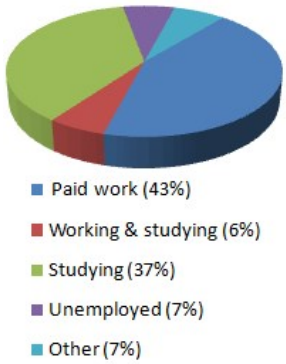
2013 National Student Survey 96% of students say "as a result of my course, I believe I have improved my career prospects."

Advances in the biosciences are having a profound impact on our daily lives in areas from human health to conservation. Biotechnology, biological pharmaceuticals, and personalised medicine are key growth areas in the health sector. Environmental remediation, climate change and related themes pose multi-faceted challenges for the coming decades. Expert knowledge in biology and the life sciences will be in high demand for the foreseeable future, with bright prospects for exciting and rewarding careers in research, teaching, industry, the NHS and the public sector.

A substantial part of our graduates choose to take a further degree, a Masters or PhD. For many career paths, a further degree is an essential stepping-stone, including (but not limited to) careers in research. Our graduates are highly sought after by universities around the world, many stay in Birmingham and join one of our prestigious research groups. Did you know that PhDs are fully funded and that postgraduate students receive a tax free stipend equivalent to a salary?

In order to help you build an attractive CV, bursaries from the University can help fund a summer internship in a research laboratory or in a company. Also, you can apply for one of the highly prestigious (and competitive) **Alumni Leadership Mentoring (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/mentoring/almp.aspx)** or **Global Challenge (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/opportunities/globalchallenge/index.aspx)** programmes of the University, which provide unique opportunities to see top notch organisation from an insider perspective. Furthermore, the Personal Skills Award (PSA) scheme gives formal recognition to skills you acquired outside the course, for instance when volunteering for a charity or taking on responsibility within the Guild of Students. Last but not least, our 4-year course options (MSci, Professional Placement, Year Abroad) are key to giving you an edge in a competitive job market.

First destinations of University of Birmingham Biosciences graduates six months after graduation



Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education report (DHLE) 2011/12

Helping you find the right career

The University and the School of Biosciences provide a range of services to support you in finding a career you might enjoy and to build a CV that stands out from the crowd. During term time, professional career advisers hold weekly drop-in sessions, discussing with you how to prepare a CV and cover letters, the graduate application process and how to explore possible career paths. An annual Biosciences Careers Fair brings employers from the life sciences sector to our School for networking and discussions, while in the Biosciences Insight series, professionals highlight the diverse employment opportunities in the life sciences in weekly sessions throughout the term.

Our unique careers guidance service is tailored to your academic subject area. Our team source exclusive **work experience opportunities (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/work-experience.aspx)** to help you stand out amongst the competition, with **mentoring (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/mentoring/index.aspx)** , **global internships (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/index.aspx)** and placements available to you. Once you have a career in your sights, one-to-one support with CV?s and job applications will help give you the edge. In addition, our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award (PSA) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/psa.aspx)** recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.

96% Students agreed staff are good at explaining things

BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences with Professional Placem..
Full time
Sandwich year

To see more details and compare with other courses

Visit UNISTATS

Official data collected by HEFCE

© University of Birmingham 2014