

## Biological Sciences (Plant Biology) BSc (Hons)



Modern plant science aims to understand both how plants grow and develop and how plants interact with each other, and with animals, microorganisms and their environment. Thus, plant biology encompasses research areas as diverse as cell and molecular biology, genetics, ecology and physiology. Ecology is central to developing sustainable conservation strategies. Sophisticated molecular techniques now allow us to modify plants to improve their performance. Plants provide sources of food and fuel, can act as 'green factories' producing products such as new drugs and plastics and can help to clean up polluted environments.

You'll benefit from some of the country's best facilities and technology, being taught by experts in the field renowned the world over for their cutting-edge research. Rapid advances such as genome sequencing and stem cell biology are having a profound effect on society, the economy and the environment making this an exciting and pioneering area to work and study in.

94% of our graduates are in employment or further study 6 months after graduation and we rank 3rd for graduate employability in the Russell Group Universities. Our graduates work in diverse careers such as medicine, conservation, agriculture and more.

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

This programme has been accredited by the Society of Biology. Accredited degree programmes contain a solid academic foundation in biological knowledge and key skills, and prepare graduates to address the needs of employers.



**[Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was 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)**  
(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>)

### Course fact file

UCAS code: C100

Duration: 3 years

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

Applications in 2013: 1819

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

Start date: September

### Related courses

**[Biological Sciences degree courses - Study biology at the School of Biosciences \(/schools/biosciences/courses/undergraduate/biological-sciences.aspx\)](/schools/biosciences/courses/undergraduate/biological-sciences.aspx)**

### Contact

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**[School of Biosciences \(/schools/biosciences/index.aspx\)](/schools/biosciences/index.aspx)**

### Details

This degree course is structured to give you a comprehensive introduction to Plant Biology in the context of the broader Biological Sciences programme. The modular structure gives you the opportunity to follow your interests and curiosity as the course unfolds.

### 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.”

The way in which plants interact with each other, animals, microorganisms and the environment is the science of ecology, central to developing sustainable conservation strategies. Sophisticated molecular techniques now allow us to modify plants to improve their performance and to, act as ‘green factories’ to produce products as diverse as new drugs, plastics and helping to clean up polluted environments.

## Modules

For a detailed description of modules [download Biological Sciences Module Descriptions \(PDF 459KB\) \(/Documents/colleges/biosciences/BiologicalSciencesModuleDescriptions\(PDF128KB\).pdf\)](#).

### First Year

In Plant Sciences and Environmental Biology you will study the molecular, physiological and structural processes that underlie the growth and development of plants and show how such information can be applied directly to benefit humans. Along with all of the other students on the Biological Sciences programmes you will take other modules (listed below) designed to introduce you to all aspects of this broad subject discipline.

#### Key First Year Module:

**Plant Sciences and Environmental Biology** [▶ Watch video](#)

[\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-plant.aspx\)](#)

Biochemistry

**Microbiology and Infectious Disease** [▶ Watch video](#)

[\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio153-microbiology-infectious-disease.aspx\)](#)

Cell Biology and Physiology

**Introduction to Evolution and Animal Biology** [▶ Watch video](#)

[\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-evolution.aspx\)](#)

Genetics I

Skills for Biosciences

### Second Year

You will take Plant Sciences: from Cells to the Environment in your second year. You choose 4 other optional modules from the list below. Many students will choose Ecology and one of the plant-based field courses Field Course: Alpine and Glacial Ecology in Norway, Field Ecology in Birmingham.

#### Key second year module:

**Plant Sciences: from Cells to the Environment** [▶ Watch video](#)

[\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio237-plant-science-cells-environment.aspx\)](#)

#### Other Second Year optional modules

Ecology

Cell and Developmental Biology

Microbes and Man

Genetics II

Human Evolution, Adaptation and Behaviour

Animal Sensory Systems, Neurobiology and Behaviour

**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

### Final Year

The final year allows choice from a range of specialised topics in plant biology which are informed and inspired by the research being carried out in the school.

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 plant science research groups, providing the fascinating opportunity to experience research first-hand and to contribute to current research projects. Alternatively, for your research project, you can carry out a critical review of literature in an area that you are interested in.

#### Choose a research project and:

**Plant Science in the 21st Century** [▶ Watch video](#)

[\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio398-plant-science-21st-century.aspx\)](#)

#### Other Final Year optional modules

Eukaryotic Gene Expression

Conservation Biology

Adaptation to changing environments

Bacterial Gene Regulation


Genetics III: Genetic Variation in Humans and other Eukaryotes

Advanced topics in Animal Behaviour

Whole-Organism Biology

**[Living in Groups: Collective Behaviour in Animals](#)**  **Watch video**

[\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio397-living-in-groups.aspx\)](#)

**[Cellular Neurobiology](#)**  **Watch video** [\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio379-cellular-neurobiology.aspx\)](#)

Structures of Destruction

Cancer Biology


Human Evolution

Human Reproductive Biology and Development

**[Molecular and Cellular Immunology](#)**  **Watch video**

[\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio388-molecular-cellular-immunology.aspx\)](#)

Applied and Environmental Microbiology

**[Molecular Basis of Bacterial Infection](#)**  **Watch video**

[\(/undergraduate/courses/biosciences/module-bio305-molecular-basis-bacterial-infection.aspx\)](#)

## Fees and funding

**Standard fees** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/fees/standard>) apply

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–AAB

**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:

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

#### International students:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 35-36 points excluding bonus points from TOK and Extended Essay. 6, 6, 5 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) (<http://www.ucas.com/>)

Learn more about **applying** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply>)

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

## Related links

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

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

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

- 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 technology 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.



**[Take a virtual tour of one of our teaching labs](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/biosciences/lab.aspx)**  
(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/biosciences/lab.aspx>)

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 taking, 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.

## 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.

### 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.

### Professional accreditation

This programme has been accredited by the Society of Biology following an independent and rigorous assessment. Accredited degree programmes contain a solid academic foundation in biological knowledge and key skills, and prepare graduates to address the needs of employers. The accreditation criteria require evidence that graduates from accredited programmes meet defined sets of learning outcomes, including subject knowledge, technical ability and transferable skills.



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



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