

Postgraduate Admissions Statement

PhD Synthetic Biology (EPSRC and BBSRC Centre for Doctoral Training)

Programmes Covered

This admissions statement applies to the following programme(s):

Synthetic Biology (PhD) (Centre for Doctoral Training)

Applicants should also refer to the relevant prospectus entry for further programme details.

This admissions statement should be read in association with the [University Admissions Principles and Procedures for Postgraduate Taught Programmes](#).

Faculty

Faculty of Science

Admissions team and contact details

Professor Claire Grierson

Associate Director (Bristol lead)

University of Bristol

Tyndall Avenue

Bristol BS8 1TL

Email: synbio-cdt@bristol.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 0117 394 1316

Website: www.synbio-cdt.ac.uk/

Admissions cycle

This Admissions Statement applies to applications submitted for entry to the programme between 1st October 2017 and 31st September 2018

Application deadline

Details of application deadlines for this programme are displayed on the individual programme page within the [University course finder](#).

Admissions criteria

Academic requirements

To be considered for admission to this programme, applicants are required to hold/achieve a minimum of an upper second-class undergraduate degree (or international equivalent) in physical sciences (eg engineering, physics, chemistry, computer science, mathematics) or life sciences (e.g. biology, biochemistry, microbiology, plant sciences, medical sciences, pharmaceutical sciences).

For information on international equivalent qualifications, please see our [International Office website](#).

English language requirements for non-native English speakers

For applicants whose first language is not English, and whose full undergraduate degree was not taught in an English-speaking country, it is necessary to hold/achieve a minimum score in an approved English language test as specified in Profile A of the [University's English Language Requirements Policy](#).

Applicants do not need to have reached the required level of English language before applying. If necessary,

English language will be included as a condition of offer.

Applicants have the option to undertake one of the University's Pre-sessional English courses. You can find information about the University of Bristol's Pre-Sessional English courses at the [Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies website](#).

Additional requirements

There are no additional requirements for this programme.

Application process

Online application form

Applicants should complete the online application form, uploading all [required documents](#) directly into the application form. Guidance on uploading documents can be found in the [How to Apply FAQs](#). Any paper documents received by post, or electronic documents received by email, will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances.

Applicants should make every effort to choose the correct programme in the application form by reading the prospectus entry and admissions statements fully. Applicants should [contact the relevant Admissions Team](#) if clarification is required.

Documents required

The required documents for this programme are listed below. Applications may not be considered until all required documents have been uploaded to the application form.

Applicants who have already submitted an application can upload additional documents into the 'Post-submission uploads' section of the application form. Information about how to upload documents to an application form can be found in our [How to Apply FAQs](#).

Required documents for this programme are:

- **Two academic references (minimum)** References should be submitted electronically by the referee, using the online reference form. Alternatively, scanned copies of the original reference document(s) can be uploaded by the applicant. At least one referee should be familiar with the applicant's academic work. If you graduated more than two years ago, or if professional experience is relevant to the application, professional references will be accepted in lieu of one academic reference.

References must be written, signed and dated on official letter headed paper from the referee's organisation. They must also include the referee's full contact details, i.e. postal address, telephone number and organisation email address. We cannot accept references where the contact email address is a personal email address. All references must be dated within the last two years.

While there is no set format, references typically address several of the following: academic achievement and potential; motivation; intellectual maturity and independence; relevant experience; potential for benefiting from and contributing to the course; written and spoken communication skills; ways in which an applicant's performance does not reflect their ability, including special circumstances.

- **Degree certificate(s)** from first and subsequent degrees. We require colour scans of original documents and certified translations of documents issued in any language other than English.
- **Academic transcripts** from first and subsequent degrees. We require colour scans of original documents and certified translations of documents issued in any language other than English. Transcripts must list all subjects taken and grades achieved to date, with the grade scale clearly displayed in the transcript. Applicants must clearly state their current average grade in the online application form.

- **Research Statement:** Unnecessary if applying for a specific project where the research project is outlined. However, candidates can upload additional information describing how their previous or current research experience will benefit them in their chosen research field.

If applicants are applying for a non-specific project, they need to state the research area, outline their project ideas and suggest a potential academic supervisor who has similar research interests. Applicants can also use the training statement to highlight the skills they have acquired to date, if relevant.

- **Personal statement:** Personal statements should highlight the motivation for applying for the course, and any relevant experience and/or skills.

The candidate should explain why they think the course they have applied for is suitable for them, why they feel well qualified to do it, and how it will help them to achieve their future goals. Strong candidates will be able to demonstrate detailed knowledge of their proposed research area and well-founded, realistic expectations of what might be achieved during their studies.

- **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** CVs might include details of other relevant work experience and qualifications to support an application. Please do not include any school (pre-university) certificates, unless otherwise specified above.
- **Evidence of English language** is required from all students [whose native language is not English](#), in accordance with the [English requirement](#) for the programme. A colour scan of the original document or certificate is required.

Correspondence with applicants

Applicants will normally receive communication via email to the email address used to set up the application form account. Applicants should ensure the profile email address is kept up-to-date.

Selection process

Assessment of applications

All applications are considered in accordance with the [University's policy on equality and diversity](#). The University of Bristol upholds the principles of equality and diversity, respect and dignity. Candidates are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion or belief, disability, health or age.

Once a complete application has been submitted with all required supporting documents, it is considered by the SynBio CDT admissions committee that may involve several members of staff from multiple institutions, including Bristol. Decisions are made on the basis of all the available information, including the written application, references and the performance at interview. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate sufficient biological and mathematical aptitude and knowledge to be able to complete the course successfully.

Interviews

Interviews are an important part of the admissions process. You may be invited to attend an interview in Bristol or, if you are overseas, via Skype. You will be interviewed by academic staff from both the University of Bristol and the University of Oxford.

There is no set format for interviews, but they typically cover one or more of the following: the applicant's academic background, including training and experience of particular relevance to the programme or project; the applicant's potential to develop mathematical and computation skills, and biological knowledge relevant to the programme; the applicant's motivation for applying, including specific research interests within the discipline and career aspirations; potential research projects; an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions.

The purpose of the interview is to assess whether the applicant currently has the necessary skills and

capabilities to pursue the chosen postgraduate programme, and whether the programme is appropriate to the applicant's interests and aspirations.

If required, interviewees based overseas will normally be interviewed by telephone or Skype.

All interviews are conducted by two members of staff, at least one of whom is trained in fair and effective recruitment techniques. All interviews are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

Non-standard applications

We welcome applications from those with non-standard qualifications who can demonstrate knowledge, experience and skills developed in the workplace, or elsewhere, relevant to the programme of study. Please use your personal statement to provide further details.

Non-standard applications will be considered by the Admissions Tutor(s) for the programme on a case by case basis.

Decisions

Notification of decisions

Applicants will be notified by email when a decision has been made and decision letters will be available to view and print by logging into the application. If there is a deadline by which applicants must accept an offer of admission, this will be stated in the offer letter.

Offers

Offers will typically be made in line with the academic requirements set out above.

Offers made may be conditional or unconditional. An unconditional offer will be made to successful applicants who have already met the conditions and provided evidence that conditions have been met. Where academic or language requirements have not yet been fulfilled, successful applicants will receive a conditional offer outlining the requirements that must be met.

If an applicant is not selected to receive an offer for the course to which they have originally applied, we may offer the opportunity to be considered for an alternative programme in a related subject area. In such cases applicants will receive an email notification providing any alternative course options and asking whether they wish to be considered for these. It may be necessary for applicants to submit additional documentation in order for the application to be fully considered for an alternative programme. Details of the documentation required can be found in the [admissions statement](#) for the relevant programme.

Deferrals

Deferred entry is available for this programme, subject to agreement by the relevant Admissions Team. Please contact the admissions team by emailing synbio-cdt@bristol.ac.uk if you would like to request to defer your start date.

Additional information

Extenuating Circumstances

If your education has been significantly disrupted through health or personal problems, disability or specific difficulties within your studies you can submit an [extenuating circumstances](#) form as part of your application.

The information provided on the form will be treated confidentially, and will help us to fairly assess your academic performance in light of your circumstances.

ATAS

Applicants who will require a visa to study in the UK will also be required to gain clearance through the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS). Please see the ATAS page on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for further information.

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme is a clearance process which affects overseas applicants (outside the EEA and Switzerland) for certain postgraduate science, technology, medical and engineering studies in the UK. Applicants to affected programmes are required to obtain an ATAS certificate before applying for a visa.

Deposits

There is no deposit required for this programme.

Visa

International students coming to the UK to study full-time must apply for a student visa. [Tier 4 student visa guidance notes](#) are available on the University website.

Sponsored Students

Sponsored students are not required to pay the deposit but will need to upload a copy of their sponsorship letter using the 'Post Submission Uploads' section of the online application. Sponsored students will also need to complete and upload the [sponsorship authorisation form](#).