



University of
BRISTOL

Undergraduate study

Biological Sciences



Key highlights



Leading department

Bristol's School of Biological Sciences is one of the top ten in the country (QS World University Rankings by Subject, 2020).



Discover your passion

Our courses are flexible and interdisciplinary, starting with a broad first year and allowing you to specialise or extend your degree to four years.



Student satisfaction

93 per cent of BSc Biology students found their course intellectually stimulating (NSS, 2020).



Industry links

You'll benefit from our links with conservation, biotech, agro-farming, Bristol Zoo and the BBC Natural History Unit.

bristol.ac.uk/ug-study

Why study biological sciences at Bristol?

Whether managing natural resources, conserving species, restoring ecosystems or ensuring global food security, biology and biologists will be vital for our planet in the 21st century.

We cover all aspects of biological life, from animals, plants and microbes to genes and cells, populations and ecosystems. Our biology, zoology and plant sciences degrees have a common first year and diverge from year two onwards, where zoologists and plant scientists focus on their more specialised areas. It is straightforward to switch between the three pathways.

Our four-year MSci degrees are ideal for students with ambitions to continue in biological research or who want extra experience and a competitive edge when applying for jobs.

We provide an excellent training framework that includes lectures, practicals, fieldwork and small-group tutorials, all delivered by active researchers.

Recent graduates have progressed to higher degrees or directly to employment in biological research, government agencies, conservation and wildlife management, the biotech industry, agro-industry, pharmaceuticals, zoos, museums, environmental consultancy, teaching, higher education, science media, and careers unrelated to science.

Find out more

Entry requirements, course structure and units
bristol.ac.uk/ug2021-biology

What you will study

In your first year you will study biology units introducing the diversity of life and life processes; learn generic principles, skills and techniques; and choose an optional unit.

In year two your choice of units expands. Alongside mandatory biology units, giving a background in evolutionary theory, molecular methods, computational biology, statistics and professional skills, you'll choose optional units ranging from the molecular to the ecological, from pure to applied, and from broad-based to taxon-specific.

The general course structure for zoology and plant sciences is the same as biology, but you will focus on animal- or plant-based study, respectively.

In the third year you can specialise in topics that interest you, with our lecture units reflecting the expertise of our research staff. You will also carry out a substantial practical research project and a critical literature review.

MSci students will learn advanced practical skills in the third year, in preparation for a major research project of your choosing in the final year. You'll also receive training to develop your research skills.

Sample units may include:

- Agricultural Biotechnology
- Staying Alive: The Behaviour, Psychology and Ecology of Predator-Prey Interactions
- Social Evolution: Genes to Societies
- The Biology of Colour
- Science and Success: Writing, Speaking and Communicating Science.

'Each experiment is well planned and has direct application to our course and interests... from the dissection of a fish and its stomach contents to investigating the diet of a barn owl.'

Isaac (MSci Biology)



You'll learn from our expert community of academics, whose research is organised around four main themes: evolutionary biology; animal behaviour and sensory biology; plant and agricultural sciences; and ecology and environmental change.



BioSoc is open to all students interested in the living world, and they organise a family scheme, social events, and intramural sports teams.



The University's Botanical Garden is an excellent resource for exploring plant evolution, including succulents, orchids and waterlilies in our glasshouses; our unique sacred lotus collection; prehistoric plants; and rare and threatened natives.



You'll study in our Life Sciences Building, home to state-of-the-art labs as well as break-out spaces, seminar rooms and social areas designed to enhance communication and idea sharing between students and researchers. Take a virtual tour at bristol.ac.uk/biology/life-sciences-building.

Courses

BSc / MSci Biology

BSc / MSci Plant Sciences

BSc / MSci Zoology

Connect with the School of Biological Sciences

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This leaflet contains information for students planning to start university in autumn 2021. We have made every effort to ensure all details are correct at the time of going to press (May 2020). However, since this information is subject to change, you are advised to check the University's website, bristol.ac.uk/ug-study for the latest updates. Any sample units listed are indicative and offerings may change due to developments in the relevant academic field. Unit availability varies depending on staffing, student choice and timetabling constraints.



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