

## Postgraduate Admissions Statement

# PhD Biological Sciences

### Programmes Covered

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

MSc by research, PhD Biological Sciences

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 Research Programmes](#).

### Faculty

Faculty of Life Sciences

### Admissions team and contact details

Postgraduate Administrator

School of Biological Sciences

Life Sciences Building

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Bristol BS8 1TQ

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Telephone: +44 (0)117 394 1295

Website: [www.bristol.ac.uk/life-sciences/study/postgraduate](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/life-sciences/study/postgraduate)

### Admissions cycle

This Admissions Statement applies to applications submitted for entry to the programme between 1st October 2018 and 30th September 2019.

### 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

Applicants must hold/achieve a minimum of an upper second-class honours degree (or equivalent) in biological sciences or related discipline.

For information on international equivalent qualifications, please refer to 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 E 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](#).

## 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 [guidance for online applications](#). 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 [guidance for online applications](#).

#### 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.

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. At least one referee should be familiar with the applicant's academic work.

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. A [reference template](#) is available to show the required format.

References supplied with a personal contact email address will not be accepted unless under exceptional circumstances, which must be explained within the reference. All references must be dated within the last two years.

- **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.
- **Personal statement.** The personal statement should highlight your motivation for applying for the programme, and any relevant experience and/or skills. You should explain why you think the

programme is suitable for you, why you feel qualified to do it, and how it will help you achieve their future goals. Strong candidates will be able to demonstrate detailed knowledge of their proposed research area along with well-founded, realistic expectations of what might be achieved during their studies.

- **English language certificates** are required from applicants for whom English is not the native language and whose full undergraduate degree was not taught in an English-speaking country (please see the English Language Requirements for a list of English-speaking countries).
- **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.

#### **Optional documents**

- **Research statements and research training statements.** Applicants are welcome to provide details of their research intentions and any training requirements to support their postgraduate studies.

#### **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 applicants are considered on an equal basis in line with the [University's Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

Once a complete application has been submitted with all required supporting documents, it is considered by the admissions team using the following criteria:

- Academic achievement
- Academic references
- Personal statement
- English Language proficiency
- Availability of appropriate supervision

Where an applicant has undertaken a transnational education partnership programme or top-up degree, meeting the minimum academic entry criteria will not automatically mean an applicant will receive an offer. For these applicants, admissions decisions will consider the academic history of the applicant alongside relevance of degree, and, if required, degree content, and performance in key modules.

Each applicant is considered both holistically on their own merit and in competition with the rest of the applicant cohort during the academic cycle.

##### **Interviews**

Candidates may be invited to attend an interview.

Interviews are used to assess whether the applicant has the necessary skills and capabilities to pursue their chosen programme, and whether the programme is appropriate to their interests and aspirations.

Interviewees based overseas are normally interviewed by telephone or Skype.

Interviews are conducted by a minimum of 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 Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

## 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. Please [contact the admissions team](#) if you would like 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 require a visa to study in the UK must first gain clearance through the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS). Please visit the [ATAS page](#) on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for further information.

### 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 must upload a copy of their sponsorship letter in the 'Post-submission uploads' section of the online application, and must also complete and upload the [sponsorship authorisation form](#).