Undergraduate admissions statement
This statement should be read in conjunction with the University’s admissions principles and procedures.

Year of admissions cycle: 2016

Courses covered:
C700 BSc Biochemistry
C720 BSc Biochemistry with Medical Biochemistry
C790 BSc Biochemistry with Molecular Biology and Biotechnology

BSc Biochemistry with Study in Industry (entry by transfer from C700, C720 or C790 at the end of year one.)

1. Admissions process

1.1. Admissions team
Applications are assessed by a centralised team in close co-operation with admissions tutor/s.

1.2. Application assessment methods
All applications are considered on an equal basis. Applications are not segregated by the type of educational institution attended.

All applications that are received on time (in accordance with UCAS deadlines) are guaranteed equal consideration.

All applicants are allocated scores based on their academic record and predicted grades, and this forms 100% of our assessment. The weighting given is as follows:

- A-levels (or equivalent)- 80%
- GCSEs (or equivalent) - 20%

Based on the ranking of these scores, applications will then be categorised as:

- Immediate offer
- Hold
- Unsuccessful

Applicants for whom there is evidence in their Personal Statement and/or academic reference that they are also applying for Medicine, Veterinary Science or Dentistry (at Bristol or at another University), but who are predicted to meet our normal entry conditions will be notified that their applications will be held until January, after which a decision will be made as to how many further offers to make.

Applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or age.
1.3. Interview or visit day
Applicants who receive an offer will normally be invited to a visit day, held in the autumn and spring terms. This provides the opportunity to see the city and the University, and to ask questions about the degree courses and other aspects of student life in Bristol. While attendance at a visit day is strongly encouraged, it is not obligatory and plays no role in the selection process; it is also recognised that not all applicants will be able to attend.

1.4. Correspondence with applicants
All correspondence relating to an applicant’s status will be sent by email.

All applications are acknowledged by email on receipt (starting in mid-September), to establish contact and inform the applicant of the process to be followed.

Applicants will then be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful, or to inform them that their application has been assessed and put on ‘Hold’ pending a decision later in the cycle.

We try not to make anyone unsuccessful until we are sure we cannot make them an offer. If you submitted your application by 15 January then the final deadline by which you will receive a decision is 7 May.

2. Criteria for assessing applicants
To assess an application we require:

- A full academic history from age 16 onwards, including any retakes or uncompleted qualifications.
- Predicted grades for any qualifications you are currently taking. Predicted grades can only come from your school or referee. These must include an overall grade (if applicable) AND where a particular subject is specified in the entry requirements, the achieved grades or predicted grades for that subject, and any related or major subjects you are studying.
- If predicted grades are not available, then we will accept a transcript showing the results of your previous year’s courses or examinations.

2.1. Academic entry requirements
Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Bac, 14-19 Diploma, and GCSEs) can be found in the undergraduate course finder.

Other qualifications, including international qualifications, will be considered on their individual merits; further information is available through the International Office.

All applications must be submitted through UCAS or Common Application; we cannot consider any direct applications.

Applications that are received on time are guaranteed equal consideration.

2.2. Additional academic criteria
A levels in General Studies and Critical Thinking are not included in the terms of conditional offers.
Due to overlapping content, we are unable to consider applicants who are studying 3 A-levels (or equivalent) including both Maths and Further Maths.

2.3. Personal statement criteria
In some cases we may need to refer to the personal statement and reference to differentiate between applicants with very similar academic profiles. If this is the case, then the criteria will include the following:

- Interest and commitment to biochemistry or a related science, which may be demonstrated by appropriate work experience or participation in relevant events, etc. We recognise that not all applicants will have equal opportunities in these respects; interest may also be demonstrated by evidence of relevant reading or research beyond the A-level (or equivalent) syllabus and a general interest in science.
- Appropriateness of the chosen course to the applicant's declared interests and aspirations;
- Wider interests including sport, music, community action, contribution to school or wider society, etc.:
- Standard of written English

2.4. Reference criteria
References will be assessed for information on the applicant's motivation, ability to work independently, powers of analysis and expression. If the referee believes the applicant's performance does not reflect their ability, due to educational context and/or special circumstances, the applicant should complete an extenuating circumstances form at bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/. We are unable to consider individual circumstances without this form.

References should ideally be from a school or college, from a personal tutor confirming the academic potential of the applicant to study at degree level. Where this is not possible, a non-academic reference should confirm the relevant experience of the applicant. It should indicate the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

2.5. Interview
Applications from those offering non-standard qualifications are treated on an individual basis; although it is rare, sometimes interviews will be used to help establish the level of academic ability of such applicants. The interview seeks to identify evidence of commitment to the course and to determine the level of relevant scientific knowledge.

Interviews used in the selection process will be conducted by two people who have been trained in fair and effective recruitment techniques and are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

2.6. Mature applicants
Mature applicants who are not applying straight from formal education would be expected to demonstrate recent academic study and examination (i.e. within five years of applying).
We normally require evidence that their level of Chemistry knowledge and academic ability is equivalent to our standard requirements. Where this is not clear from the application, suitable candidates may, therefore, be invited to interview (see 2.5. Interview above).

2.7. International applicants
International applicants will be subject to the criteria as detailed here: bristol.ac.uk/international/countries

We also consider applications through the Common Application system, and the same criteria and assessment used for UCAS applicants are applied.

While we do accept foundation programmes please be aware that they are designed for applicants who have not been able to take the correct level of qualification in their home country. Therefore, we do not consider applicants who are taking a foundation programme and have previously completed A-levels or equivalent qualifications that do not meet our entry grade requirements, except in exceptional circumstances.

2.8. English Language requirements for non-native speakers
All applicants are required to demonstrate that they have sufficient ability to understand and express themselves in both spoken and written English in order to benefit fully from their degree course.

English Language requirements for each course can be found in the undergraduate course finder and are explained at bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

2.9. Contextual information
We take a holistic approach to assessing all applications, ensuring that an applicant’s educational and social contexts are taken into consideration, where supported by clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic performance. This may include time spent in Local Authority care, information about which can be provided in the application.

As part of our commitment to the UK national agenda on widening participation, we consider the educational context in which grades have been achieved, particularly if there is evidence that an applicant’s current school or college performs below a defined threshold.

Applicants may be eligible for a contextual offer if they are currently applying from ( or in the 15/16 academic year were in full-time education in) a school ranked in the bottom 40 per cent in any of the following categories for the: average score per A-level entry; average score per A-level entrant; percentage of students applying to higher education. If an applicant meets one of these criteria, we will raise their predicted/achieved grades by one grade during the scoring process; ie an AAB applicant will be awarded the same academic score as an AAA applicant. Applicants still need to satisfy specific subject requirements. Contextual offers are usually one grade lower than the standard offer.

To be eligible for a contextual offer, applicants currently attending school must apply from a school in the list below:
Applicants not currently attending school must have been in full-time education in one of the following schools in the academic year 15/16:

Please note that we use the "applying from" school code or the education history listed on the UCAS form to determine an applicant's eligibility for a contextual offer. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure these are correct.

The University reviews its definition of educational disadvantage each year and each case is considered on an individual basis.

We also consider evidence of clear motivation to study. This may include participation in higher education outreach activities, attendance at a University summer school or a targeted Access Scheme (such as Access to Bristol or Realising Opportunities where applicants receive special consideration and, in some cases, guaranteed and/or lower offers; please see the University’s admissions principles and procedures for more information). We do not take the following into consideration when making admissions decisions: the school type attended by an applicant (e.g. independent school, comprehensive school, academy) or an applicant’s parents’ experience of higher education.

3. Offers

3.1 Typical Offers
Typical offers for A-levels and other UK qualifications can be found in the entry data in the undergraduate course finder. Offers to applicants with non-standard qualifications will be made equivalent to the published A-level offer.

We may make lower offers based on whether an applicant is deemed to have experienced educational disadvantage, as defined in section 7.5 of the University's admissions principles and procedures.

3.2 Aspirational Offers
We recognise that some applicants may achieve higher than their predicted grades, and so we may also consider applicants who are predicted to achieve one grade below the entry requirements (as long as this is in a non-specified subject). Any offer made would be at the standard level.

3.3 Alternative Offers
If you are not qualified or have an unsuitable academic background for the course to which you originally applied, we may offer you the opportunity to be considered for an alternative course in a related subject area. In such cases applicants will receive an email notification providing a list of the alternative options.
4. Other

4.1. Deferred applications
Applications for deferred entry (i.e. 2017 entry) are treated in the same way as for those seeking direct entry.

4.2. Resits
The School of Biochemistry will consider applicants who resit their qualifications.

4.3. Transfers
Students at the University of Bristol may transfer between the different biochemistry courses, provided that they have taken the correct units.

Transfer at the end of year one to other degrees outside biochemistry may be possible but will depend on the units taken by the student and on availability of places. Transfer onto the Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary Science degrees at the end of year one is not possible.

Applicants from other Universities or institutions seeking entry into year two of any of the biochemistry degrees at Bristol should contact the admissions team for further information.

4.4. Extenuating Circumstances
If your education has been significantly disrupted through health or personal problems, disability or specific difficulties with schooling you will need to submit an extenuating circumstances form (available at bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/) to Undergraduate Admissions.

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

4.5. Policies
All applications are considered in line with our Admissions policies and procedures.

We are committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent admissions procedures for all our applicants. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when applicants believe that they have cause for complaint. At this point applicants should follow our Applicant feedback and complaints procedures.

Should an applicant believe that University admissions principles and procedures have been inconsistently or incorrectly applied, these complaints procedures provide a mechanism for objective review.

4.6. Additional information
The University can only guarantee places if the exact terms of the offer are met, however offer holders would not automatically be unsuccessful if the terms of the offer are narrowly missed.
If offer holders do not meet the terms of their offer when exam results are released they may be considered as a 'near miss candidate'. All near miss candidates are reviewed in August after publication of A-level results. International offer holders may be reconsidered earlier depending when their exam results are released.

4.7. Contacts for enquiries
Any enquiries should be addressed to our Enquiries team: choosebristol-ug@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 394 1641.