

Undergraduate Admissions Statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the University's Admissions Principles and Procedures: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/after-you-apply/policies/2019/>

Year of Admissions cycle:
2019

Courses covered

BSc Biology (C100)
MSci Biology (C103)
BSc Zoology (C300)
MSci Zoology (C303)
BSc Plant Sciences (C201)
MSci Plant Sciences (C203)

1. Course-specific information

1.1 Admissions process

Applicants are scored and ranked on their academic record, according to their achieved or predicted results, with the following weightings:

GCSE 20% | A-level 80%

1.2 Academic criteria

Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Bac, GCSEs) can be found in the undergraduate course finder:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/search/>

Other qualifications, including international qualifications, are considered on an individual basis.

1.3 Personal statement criteria

We may refer to the personal statement and reference to differentiate between applicants with similar academic profiles. In these cases, we use the following criteria:

- Interest and commitment to biology, zoology or botany
- Standard of written English and attitude to studies
- Wider interests, including sport, music and community action

1.4 Interviews

For these courses, applicants are not routinely interviewed. In most cases, admissions decisions are made on the basis of application information alone.

In exceptional circumstances where an interview is deemed necessary, applicants are interviewed by at least two people, at least one of whom has been trained in fair and effective recruitment techniques. Interviews are conducted in accordance with the University's equality and diversity policy.

The criteria for assessing interview performance may include, for example: demonstrated interest in, suitability for, and commitment to the subject; evidence of clear thinking and understanding, and of problem-solving and analytical skills; standard of spoken English; suitability of the Bristol course in relation to the applicant's declared interests and aspirations; non-academic achievement and/or experience, or extra-curricular interests, that indicate the likely contribution an applicant will make to the life of the University; positions of responsibility held; other relevant skills.

1.5 Mature applicants

Applicants must provide evidence of study and examinations within the past five years.

We welcome mature applicants, and assess such applications holistically, taking into account factors such as relevant work experience and personal circumstances that may have interrupted or prevented previous degree-level study.

Further information can be found on our web pages: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/mature/>

1.6 Aspirational offers

We recognise that some applicants may achieve higher grades than predicted, so we may also consider applicants who are predicted to achieve grades slightly below those specified in the entry requirements (usually in a non-specified subject). Any offer made is at the standard level.

1.7 Alternative offers

Applicants who are not qualified or have an unsuitable academic background for the course to which they originally applied are generally not considered for an alternative course.

However, those applying for MSci Biology or MSci Zoology who do not meet the specified entry requirements may be considered for BSc Biology or BSc Zoology.

1.8 Deferred applications

Deferred applications (ie. applying in 2018/19 for 2020 entry) are accepted, and are treated in the same way as non-deferred applications.

1.9 Resits

The department will consider applicants who resit their qualifications.

1.10 Transfers

Suitable applicants from other degree programmes within the University may request to transfer to our courses.

We expect transferring students to begin their studies in the first year of their new course, but suitably qualified applicants who have completed the first year of an appropriate degree programme at another institution may seek entry to year two. Such applications must be submitted in the usual way through UCAS, indicating the year of entry as year two, and outlining clearly in the personal statement the reasons for requesting the transfer.

Transfers into year three may be considered in some circumstances.

All transfers are at the department's discretion and depend on spaces being available.

Please refer to our web page for further information on transfers:
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/apply/transfers/>

2. General information

2.1 Admissions team

Applications are assessed by a centralised team in close co-operation with the School Recruitment and Admissions Officer(s).

2.2 Admissions process

Because we receive such a high number of applications, and to ensure that all those applying on time are treated fairly, we may hold some applications until May before making a decision.

We assess applicants on the basis of their application only; we do not take into account any additional information received from an applicant or institution, unless we have requested it.

Applications received before the 15 January deadline set by UCAS are guaranteed equal consideration.

We do not discriminate against applicants on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

To assess an application, we require the following information:

- a full academic history from age 16 onwards, including details of any retakes or uncompleted qualifications;
- predicted grades for any qualifications the applicant is currently taking. These must be provided by the applicant's school or referee, and must include an overall grade (if applicable), *and*, where a particular subject is specified in the entry requirements, the achieved or predicted grades for that subject, and any related or major subjects being studied;
- in cases where predicted grades are not available, a transcript showing the results of a previous year's courses or examinations.

2.3 Correspondence with applicants

All correspondence relating to an applicant's status is sent by email.

We monitor the number of offers we make and may hold some applications until later in the cycle.

We email applicants to tell them whether 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.

For applications submitted by 15 January, the final deadline by which applicants receive a decision is 2 May. Most decisions are made before this date.

2.4 Reference criteria

References should be provided by a personal tutor from the applicant's school or college. Where this is not possible, a non-academic reference should confirm the applicant's relevant experience and indicate their potential for degree-level study.

The reference is considered alongside the personal statement, taking into account the following:

- predictions of examination results (including, if necessary, an explanation of any non-standard qualifications);
- an overall assessment of the applicant, in particular the suitability and academic potential of the applicant to study at degree level;
- discussion of earlier exam results, especially those influenced by personal or medical circumstances (and therefore a poor guide to ability);
- discussion of the applicant's intellectual curiosity, interests and suitability for the subject.

Referees who believe the applicant's performance does not reflect their ability, because of educational context and/or special circumstances, should advise the applicant to complete an extenuating circumstances form (see section 2.8 Extenuating Circumstances).

2.5 International applicants

International applicants are subject to the criteria detailed on our international web page: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries/>

We also consider applications through the Common Application system, using the same assessment criteria as for UCAS applicants.

2.6 English language requirements

All applicants must demonstrate 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 on our English language web page: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/language-requirements/>

2.7 Contextual information

As part of our commitment to the UK national agenda on widening participation, we consider the context in which grades have been achieved and make contextual offers. Contextual offers are usually two grades lower than the typical offer. Applicants may receive a contextual offer for the following reasons: attendance at an aspiring state school or college; residence in an area with low progression to higher education; completion of a University of Bristol outreach programme; time spent in care.

Full details of the contextual offer scheme can be found online: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/entry-requirements-qualifications/contextual-offers/> and within the University's Admissions Principles and Procedures for Undergraduate Courses.

2.8 Extenuating circumstances

Applicants whose education has been significantly disrupted through ill health, personal problems, disability or specific difficulties with schooling may submit an extenuating circumstances form: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/after-you-apply/your-application/extenuating-circumstances/>

The information provided in the form is treated confidentially, and helps us to assess academic performance fairly in light of individual circumstances.

2.9 Policies

All applications are considered in line with our Admissions Principles and Procedures for undergraduate courses: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/after-you-apply/policies/2019/>

We are committed to implementing high-quality, fair and transparent admissions procedures for all our applicants. However, applicants who believe they have cause for complaint should consult our applicant appeals, complaints and feedback policy.

This policy provides a mechanism for objective review in cases where an applicant believes that the University's Admissions Principles and Procedures have been inconsistently or incorrectly applied.

2.10 Additional information

The University only guarantees places to applicants who meet the exact terms of their offer; however, applicants who narrowly miss the terms of their offer may still be considered as 'near-miss' candidates.

All applications from such candidates are reviewed in August after publication of A-level results. Applications from international near-miss candidates may be reconsidered earlier, depending on when their exam results are released.

2.11 Contacts for enquiries

If you have any questions, please contact our Enquiries team: choosebristol-ug@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 394 1649.