



University of  
**BRISTOL**

## Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

### Information:

- This webinar will be recorded
- You may ask questions using the Q&A function at any time
- Do not post information in questions that you do not want read out

*The information provided in this webinar is offered as guidance, and is not part of the formal admissions statement or criteria for any programme. You should ensure you review the admissions statement for the programme prior to your application.*

Enquiries: [fhls-pgrdirector@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:fhls-pgrdirector@bristol.ac.uk)





Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

# PhD Application Workshop

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Dr Oscar Cordero Llana

Dr Beck Richardson

Postgraduate Research Leadership Team

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences



# Workshop structure

- Introduction
  - The University and the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
  - PhD programmes within the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
- What we are looking for
- How to make a competitive application
- Using the online application system
- **Questions and answers**





*Bristol is at the cutting edge of global research*

8

**Top 10 UK University**  
(QS World University  
Rankings 2026)

5

**Top 5 UK University**  
for research  
(REF 2021)

5

One of the 5 most  
targeted by top  
UK recruiters  
(High Fliers  
Research)

25

25 subjects highly  
ranked in the  
world's top 100  
(QS World Subject  
Rankings 2025)

7

Top 10 for UK  
graduate  
employability (QS  
Employability  
Rankings 2022)

5

One of the 5 most  
targeted by top UK  
recruiters  
(Graduate Market  
2024)

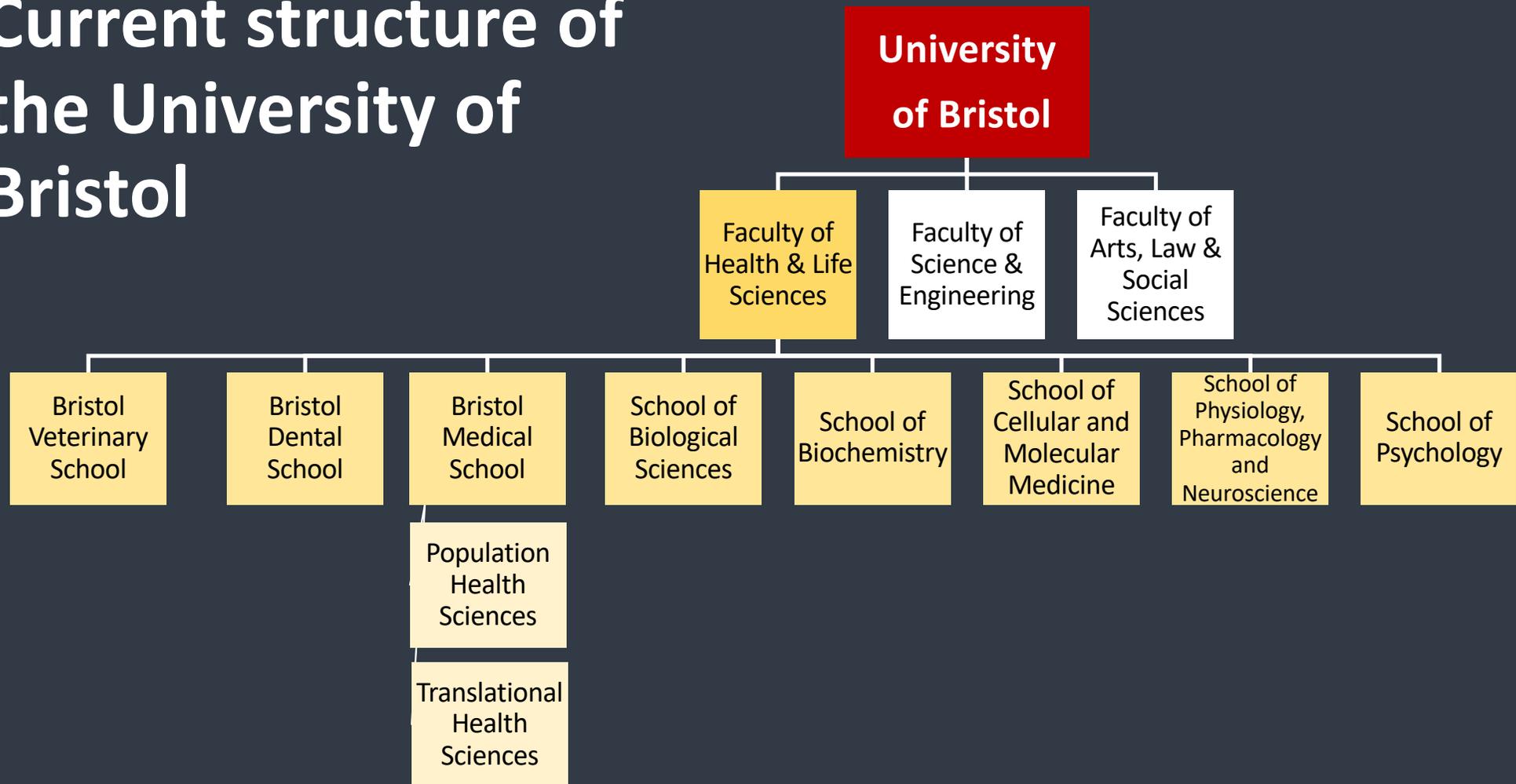
13

13 Nobel Prize  
Winners linked to the  
University - including  
our Chancellor, Sir  
Paul Nurse

£

University of  
Bristol alumni are  
among the highest  
paid graduates in  
the UK

# Current structure of the University of Bristol





Overview



Explore Bristol



Accommodation



Campuses



Buildings



# UoB 3D VIRTUAL TOUR



SCAN ME



Clifton Campus



Share



Visit Us

# PhD programmes

- University of Bristol PGR Scholarships  
4-year PhD programme, UKRI-level stipend, fees, £2k/y research costs
- South West Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership (BBSRC)  
4-year PhD programme, UKRI-level stipend, fees, research costs
- GW4+ Doctoral Training Partnership (NERC)  
3.5-year PhD programme, UKRI-level stipend, fees, research costs
- GW4 Biomed Doctoral Training Partnership (MRC)  
3.5-year PhD programme, UKRI-level stipend, fees, research costs
- GW4-CAT Clinical Academic Training Programme (Wellcome)  
3-year PhD programme for clinicians, clinical salary, fees, research costs
- Integrative Cardiovascular Science (BHF)  
4-year PhD programme, UKRI-level stipend, fees, research costs
- Other programmes, as advertised
- Self-funded PhD studentships

# Commitment to address the under-representation of PGR students from ethnic minority backgrounds

The screenshot displays the University of Bristol website for the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. The page is titled "Postgraduate research" and features a navigation menu on the left with options like "Undergraduate", "Postgraduate research", and "Funded projects". The main content area is divided into "Postgraduate funding opportunities" and "Scholarships". Under "Scholarships", there is a section for "Postgraduate Research Scholarships" with a list of links: "Bristol Postgraduate Research Scholarships and scholarships for applicants of Black heritage" and "China Scholarship Council-University of Bristol PhD Scholarship". A yellow arrow points from this list to the "Scholarships, awards and bursaries" section, which contains a search box for available opportunities. Below this, there are two images: one of a student in a lab coat working with a pipette, labeled "Funded PhD projects", and another of a student in a lab coat working with test tubes, labeled "Doctoral Training Centres".

University of BRISTOL  
Faculty of Health and Life Sciences  
Current students | Current staff | Alumni  
Search

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

Undergraduate

Intercalated degrees

International Foundation Programme

Postgraduate taught

**Postgraduate research**

↳ Funded projects

↳ Bristol Postgraduate Research Scholarships

↳ Doctoral Training Centres

Visiting students

Continuing professional development

## Postgraduate research

### Postgraduate funding opportunities

#### Scholarships

##### Postgraduate Research Scholarships

- [Bristol Postgraduate Research Scholarships and scholarships for applicants of Black heritage](#)
- [China Scholarship Council-University of Bristol PhD Scholarship](#)

##### Scholarships, awards and bursaries

Search available scholarships, awards and bursaries.

#### Other funding opportunities



Funded PhD projects



Doctoral Training Centres

<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/life-sciences/study/postgraduate/funding/>

# Widening participation



*Bristol is proud to be a university at the heart of the community:*

"Our mission is to diversify the student body at the University of Bristol by empowering and supporting prospective students from underrepresented backgrounds to access university."

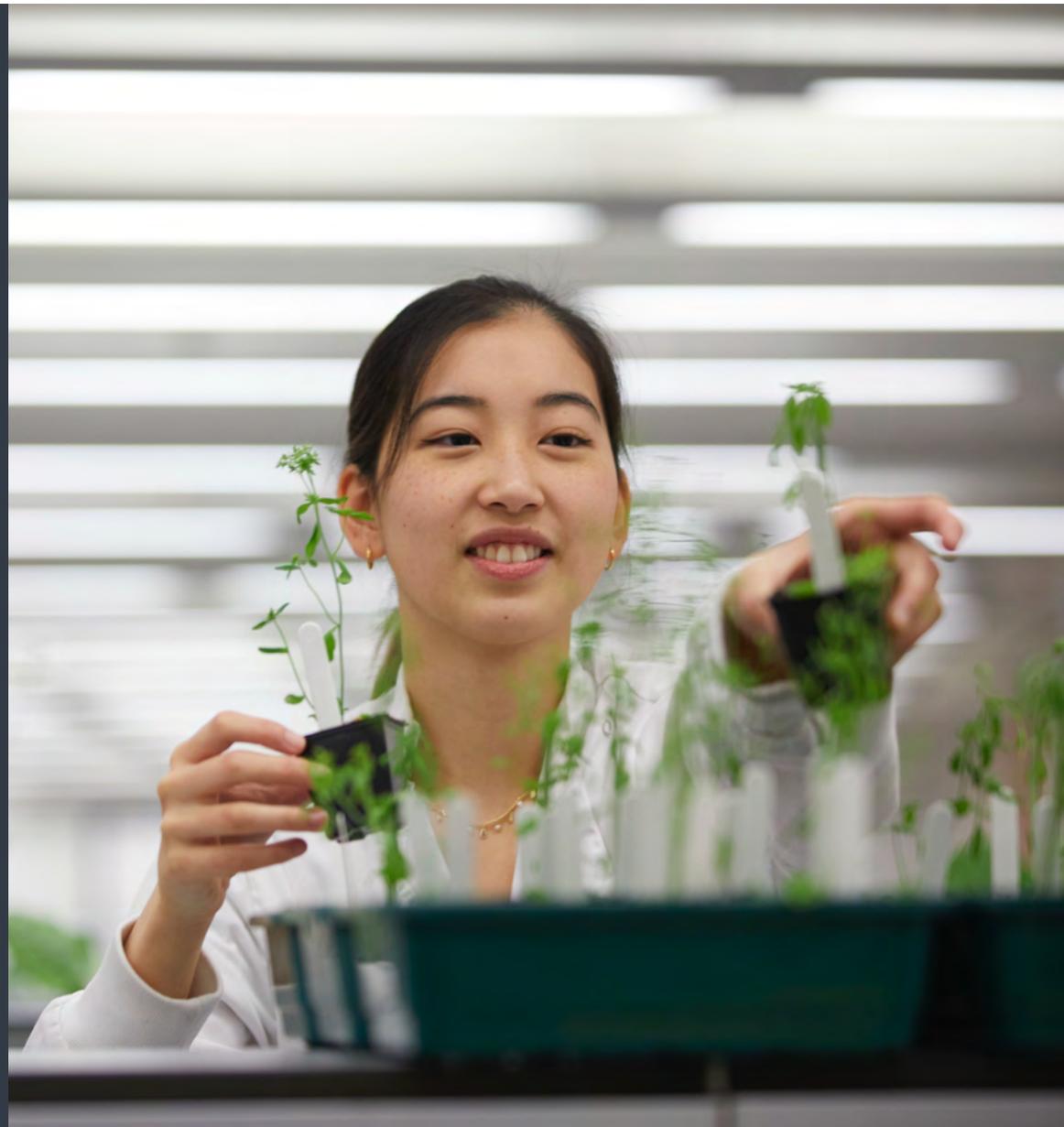
**We encourage applications from anyone with a passion for research in health and/or life sciences**



University of  
BRISTOL

Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

Which PhD  
should I apply for?



**Faculty of Health  
and Life Sciences  
PhD Opportunities**



**SCAN ME**

**Find a PhD at the  
University of Bristol**



**SCAN ME**

# Approach supervisors (or programme directors)

- Reach out to potential supervisors expressing your interest in the project
  - Why are you interested in **this project**?
  - Why do you want to work with **this supervisor/research group**?
- Your chance to ask them questions about the PhD
  - What kind of work will the project entail?
  - What do they expect from students in their research group?
- Is this the right supervisor/project for you?
  - Find out what the research culture like in their group
  - Try and speak to past and present students





University of  
**BRISTOL**

Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

What are we looking for  
in a PhD candidate?



# Desirable attributes in a PhD candidate



# CURIOSITY & CRITICAL THINKING INITIATIVE & INNOVATION

## How do I demonstrate these?

- UG and/or PG research projects
- Internships
- Summer projects
- Voluntary projects \*\*
- Participation in challenges/competitions \*\*
- Knowledge of the scientific literature in your chosen field
- Development of your own ideas for the project
- Corresponding/meeting with potential supervisors

**\*\* *These experiences may be from outside academia***



# ENTHUSIASM FOR HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCES RESEARCH

## How do I demonstrate these?

- A relevant bachelors and/or masters degree \*
- Understanding of the major knowledge gaps and challenges in your chosen field
- Knowledge of the scientific literature in your chosen field
- Internships, projects or other experience
- Development of your own ideas for the project
- Corresponding/meeting with potential supervisors

**\* BUT we value interdisciplinarity**



# DETERMINATION & COMMITMENT

## How do I demonstrate these?

- Excellent academic achievement within your degree \*
- Prizes \*\* and scholarships
- Seeing a significant project through to completion \*\*
- Leadership and teamwork \*\*
- Resolving challenging situations, overcoming adversity \*\*



*\* We are much more interested in how you achieved in your chosen degree programme than which university you attended.*

*\*\* These experiences may be from outside academia*

# A COLLABORATIVE & OPEN APPROACH GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## How do I demonstrate these?

- A track record of group work on projects (of any kind) \*\*
- Science communication \*\*
- Public and/or participant engagement experience \*\*
- Experience writing/publishing \*\*
- Experience giving oral presentations \*\*
- Experience teaching/training others \*\*
- Evidence of leadership and resolving challenging situations \*\*
- Corresponding/meeting with potential supervisors

**\*\* *These experiences may be from outside academia***





University of  
BRISTOL

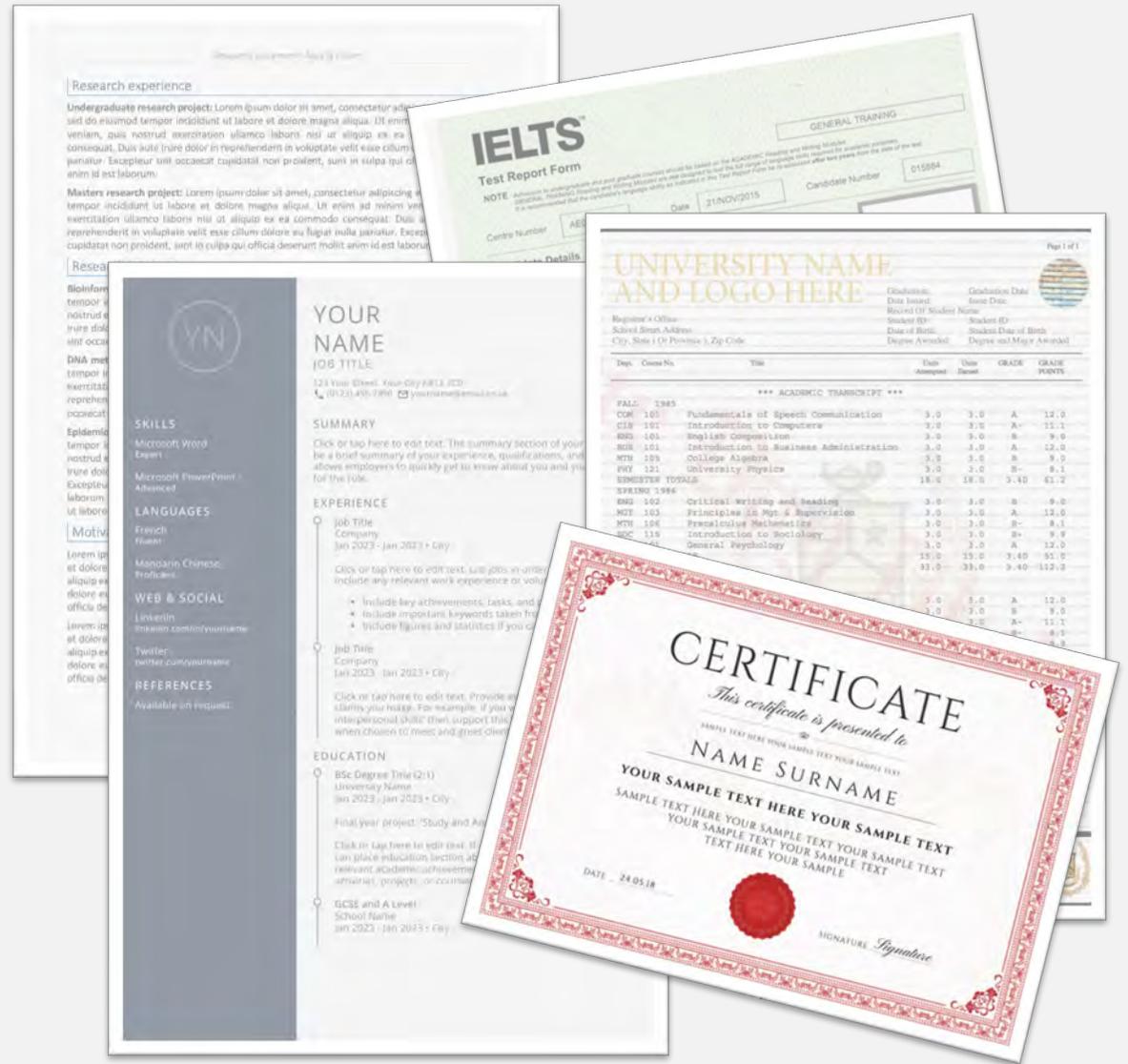
Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

What to include in  
your application?



# What to include in your application?

1. CV
2. Personal statement
3. Degree certificates
4. Degree transcripts
5. English qualification\*\*
6. Referees (X2)





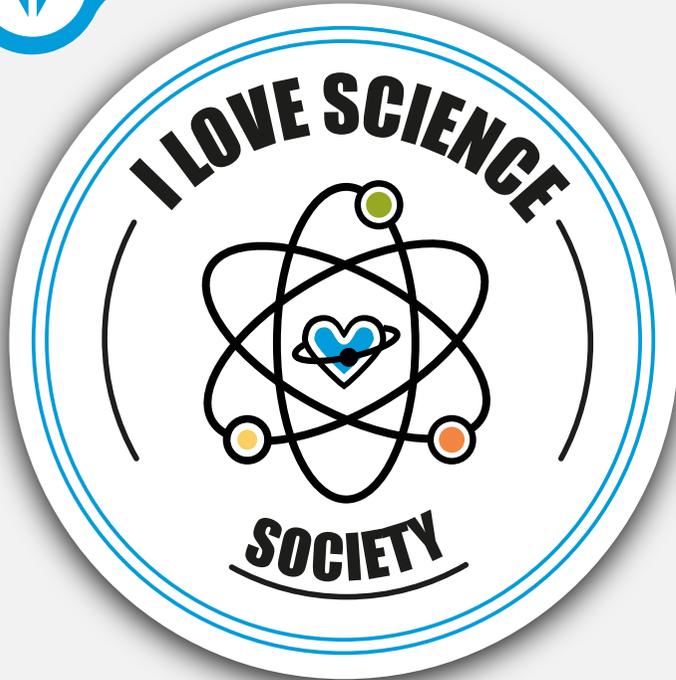
# CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

- **Qualifications** – 2:1/1<sup>st</sup> ; A master's is often preferred – check individual programme
- **Relevant knowledge** and experience: such as taught units, projects, relevant work or research experience, internships...
- **Publications** (if any): papers, reviews, conference posters and talks
- **Academic prizes** (if any)
- **Positions of responsibility** (if any)
- **Volunteering or Community engagement** (if any)
- Other employment and skills

KEEP IT  
REAL



# PERSONAL STATEMENT



## why this project?

Why this research area? If you have identified a specific supervisor, contact them – speak on the phone or ask to visit.



## Why YOU?

Expand on relevant knowledge and experience and other skills. Explain any specific circumstances such as career breaks.



## Why Bristol?

Is it the city? The University? The research centre? The Bristol Doctoral College? The Suspension Bridge?

Do

VS

Don't

- ✓ Provide evidence & examples
- ✓ Be concise & clear
- ✓ Write a specific application for the programme or project
- ✓ Refer to correspondence and meetings with supervisors, name people and groups...
- ✓ Relate your experience and knowledge to the project
- ✓ Indicate your ambitions and interests

- ✗ List skills without evidence
- ✗ Exceed page limits, append dissertations or include unnecessary content
- ✗ Submit a “generic” application
- ✗ Propose projects without a named supervisor
- ✗ Use flattery in place of genuine understanding/engagement
- ✗ Provide misleading or incorrect information

# Evidencing leadership and teamworking

**Do**

**VS**

**Don't**

- ✓ “During my time as chair of my university Biology Society, I led a new outreach initiative to encourage local school pupils to consider a career in biological research.”
- ✓ “Working with two classmates we entered the national ‘Clean Tech Competition’ competition, winning a runner up prize for our prototype of a solar-powered water purification system.”

- ✗ “I have excellent leadership skills.”
- ✗ “I work well as part of a team.”

# Evidencing communication skills

**Do**

**VS**

**Don't**

- ✓ “I enjoyed the challenge of presenting my ideas to classmates during my degree, including presenting my final year dissertation to an audience of 30 fellow students and tutors.”
- ✓ “I wrote three blog posts for my university biochemistry society and won a faculty prize for science communication.”

- ✗ “I have excellent oral communication skills.”
- ✗ “I have excellent writing skills.”

# Evidencing technical experience & skills

**Do**

**VS**

**Don't**

- ✓ “During my masters project I analysed RNA-seq data from zebrafish to identify up-regulated genes...”
- ✓ “I developed experience using Python by participating in the Kaggle competition “HuBMAP + HPA”, which aimed to identify and segment functional tissue units...”

- ✗ “I have experience with SDS-PAGE, ELISA, PCR and RNA-seq.”
- ✗ “I am familiar with R, STATA, Python, C++ and Linux.”

# Evidencing enthusiasm for the project

**Do**

**VS**

**Don't**

- ✓ “I spoke with Prof XXX and was really interested by their work on...”
- ✓ “The YYY group has published some really exciting research on...”
- ✓ “I am particularly keen to work within the ZZZ centre, and have spoken with two potential supervisors...”

- ✗ “ ” (i.e. nothing specific in the application!)
- ✗ “I want to come to Bristol because it is a world-leading research organisation.”
- ✗ “I am keen to work with the esteemed professors in your excellent institution”
- ✗ “I am interested in population health science”



## Making your application **stand out**

- ✓ Write new text, don't copy and paste!
- ✓ Think about what you have that is **unique**
- ✓ Write a **personal** application
- ✓ Get someone to **proof-read** your application
- ✓ Think about **presentation!**
  - Formatting (clear fonts – min 11pt - careful use of colours/design elements)
  - Structure (headings, sub-headings, bullets, tables, images)
  - Coherence and flow

### Research experience

**Undergraduate research project:** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.



**Masters research project:** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

### Research interests

**Bioinformatics:** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.



**DNA methylation:** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.



**Epidemiology:** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.



### Motivation to join the XXX group in Bristol

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# In summary...

Do!

- ✓ Provide evidence of your skills
- ✓ Draw on your wider experience
- ✓ Convince us you want to do your PhD **with us**
- ✓ Show us what is unique about you
- ✓ Demonstrate your passion for the subject

**Show the same care in preparing your application that you will in your research!**



University of  
BRISTOL

Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

# How to submit your application



Start your application here



<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/apply/start-application/>



Find a programme

**How to apply**

↳ When to apply

↳ **Start your application**

↳ Submit supporting documents

After you apply

Why choose Bristol?

International students

About postgraduate study

Visits and open days

Accommodation

Fees and funding

Widening participation and access

# Start your application

Search for your programme and select it from the dropdown list to see the available start dates. Select apply for your chosen start date to begin your application.

## Find a programme

Q



**Biological Sciences (Visiting) (PGR)**

**Biological Sciences (Occasional) (PGR)**

**Biological Sciences (Occasional) (PGT)**

**Biological Sciences (MSc by Research)**

**Biological Sciences (PhD) (3yr) (Distance Learning)**

**Biological Sciences (PhD) (4yr) (Distance Learning)**

**Biological Sciences (Macquarie) (PhD)**

**Biological Sciences (MSc by Research) (Distance Learning)**

**Biological Sciences (PhD)**

**Postgraduate study** 

- Taught programmes
- Research programmes
- About postgraduate study
- Find a programme
- Why choose Bristol?

**How to apply**

- ↳ When to apply
- ↳ **Start your application**
- ↳ Submit supporting documents
- ↳ Extenuating circumstances
- ↳ Guaranteed offers

**After you apply**

- International students
- Visits and open days

# Start your application

Search for your programme and select it from the dropdown list to see the available start dates. Select apply for your chosen start date to begin your application.

**Find a programme**

## Biological Sciences (PhD)

Select a start date:

**Start date**  
January 2026

**Apply**

**Start date**  
September 2026



**Apply**

**Start date**  
January 2027

**Apply**

## Complete your application form

You are applying for **Translational Health Sciences (PhD)** to start in **September 2026**. Please sign in using your username and your password below.

### Returning applicant

Username\*

Password\*

[Reset your applicant password](#)

[Sign in](#)

If you have not yet created an applicant account with the University of Bristol, please select **New Applicant**. (Note: Please do not create a new account to make another application for the same programme with the same start date.)

### New applicant

[New applicant](#)



## Your Application

Checklist	
<a href="#">Personal Details</a>	
<a href="#">Contact Details</a>	
<a href="#">Other Information</a>	
<a href="#">Qualifications</a>	
<a href="#">Experience</a>	
<a href="#">Personal Statement</a>	
<a href="#">Research Statement</a>	
<a href="#">Passport and Visa</a>	
<a href="#">Referees</a>	
<a href="#">Funding</a>	
<a href="#">Submission</a>	
Preview	

## Checklist

This form is divided into sections or pages; you must visit every page and you must answer any mandatory questions (indicated by "\*\*\*"). Click any section heading to go directly there or click the button below.

-  [Personal Details](#)
-  [Contact Details](#)
-  [Other Information](#)
-  [Qualifications](#)
-  [Experience](#)
-  [Personal Statement](#)
-  [Research Proposal](#)
-  [Passport and Visa](#)
-  [Referees](#)
-  [Funding](#)
-  [Submission](#)

Start Application



### Icon Guide

Please complete as many fields as possible to assist with processing your application

You must visit every page and answer all mandatory questions

 This page has not been started

 Outstanding information required for mandatory fields

 All mandatory information has been provided

## Your Application

Checklist 

[Personal Details](#) 

[Contact Details](#) 

[Other information](#) 

[Qualifications](#) 

[Experience](#) 

[Personal Statement](#) 

[Research Statement](#) 

[Passport and Visa](#) 

[Referees](#) 

[Funding](#) 

[Submission](#) 

[Preview](#) 

## Other Information

\* Denotes a mandatory field

### Additional Documents

Please upload required documents as outlined in your admissions statement

Please upload 1 document

Select File 

How would like to study this programme?

Please select  

Save & return later

Save

Save and continue

You can upload any other documents under "other information"

## Your Application

Checklist 

[Personal Details](#) 

[Contact Details](#) 

[Other Information](#) 

[Qualifications](#) 

[Experience](#) 

[Personal Statement](#) 

[Research Statement](#) 

[Passport and Visa](#) 

[Referees](#) 

**[Funding](#)** 

[Submission](#) 

[Preview](#) 

## Funding

\* Denotes a mandatory field

Please indicate how you intend to pay the fees for your proposed programme of study at

The information gathered on the application form around funding is used for reporting to the wider university including the student funding office.

Please ensure the application process instructions are followed for the chosen scholarship.

### Main Source of Funding

What is your likely source of funding? \*

- Please select one of the following funding sources
- Arts and Humanities Research Council
- BioTechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
- CSC - Innovation Talent Scheme
- CSC - UoB joint PhD scholarship
- CSC - Visiting students
- Commonwealth Shared Scholarship
- Economic and Social Research Council
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
- Government scholarship
- Innovate UK
- Medical Research Council
- Natural Environment Research Council
- NHS Funding Agency
- Research England
- Scholarship
- Science and Technology Facilities Council
- Studentship
- University of Bristol scholarship**
- Your employer
- Yourself/family
- Other

Percentage from this source \*

Is this funding already secured? \*

[Add Funding Source](#)

### Other Funding

I would like to be considered for other funding

Please be aware that ticking this box does not guarantee you will receive other funding.

**Under Funding, please select University of Bristol scholarship if you are applying to this call**

This Field is required

Please enter a number between 1 and 100

This Field is required

ending in the normal way.

[Save and continue](#)

Your Application	
Checklist	✓
<a href="#">Personal Details</a>	☆
<a href="#">Contact Details</a>	☆
<a href="#">Other Information</a>	✓
<a href="#">Qualifications</a>	☆
<a href="#">Experience</a>	☆
<a href="#">Personal Statement</a>	☆
<b><a href="#">Research statement</a></b>	☆
<a href="#">Passport and Visa</a>	☆
<a href="#">Referees</a>	☆
<a href="#">Funding</a>	☆
<a href="#">Submission</a>	☆
<a href="#">Preview</a>	🔍

### Research Statement

\* Denotes a mandatory field

#### Research Statement

**Proposed research**

You should normally have already contacted the academic supervisor to discuss your research proposal and project title. Find contact details and research interests in the [programme prospectus](#).

Proposed supervisor 1

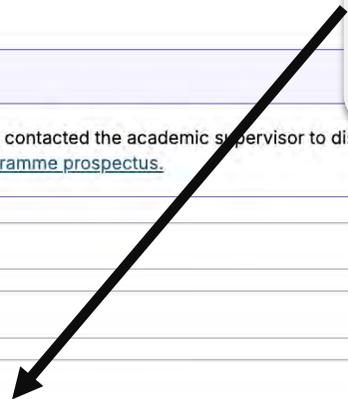
Proposed supervisor 2

Proposed project title (max 150 chars)

Write a research statement that identifies the research question or problem, context and methods. Check specific requirements for the programme in the [admissions statement](#). Don't include your name or title in the file name or statement as your application may be considered anonymously.

Upload your research statement \*  Research statement upload is required

**IMPORTANT:** Copy and paste the **full project title** from the project ad.



**IMPORTANT:** do not write your own research statement. Just copy and paste the project description from the project ad into a word document and upload this here.

## Your Application

Checklist 

Personal Details 

Contact Details 

Other Information 

Qualifications 

Experience 

Personal Statement 

Research Statement 

Passport and Visa 

**Referees** 

Funding 

Submission 

Preview 

## Referees

\*Denotes a mandatory field

Please feel free to upload your references if your referee has given you a copy, or select 'No' and provide details of your referee and we will contact them directly on submission of your application.

### Referee 1

Do you have a reference to upload? \*  

Type of reference \*

Referee title \*

Forename \*

Surname \*

Position \*

Institution/Company \*

Email address \*

Country \*

### Referee 2

Do you have a second referee?

**Unless you are directly uploading your references, please enter the contact details of your referees here**

# Don't forget to:

- **Submit your application through the online system**
- **Make sure that you have submitted all documents before the deadline. Incomplete or unsubmitted applications will not be considered for this call.**
- **In your personal statement, mention which scholarship call you are applying to and your chosen project(s)**
- **If are submitting more than one application to Bristol, our application system will not let you select the same start date “September 2026” for both applications. If this is your case, simply select any other start date from the options. Our admissions team will then assign both applications to the September 2026 start.**
- **If you have any queries please contact:**

[fls-pgenquiries@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:fls-pgenquiries@bristol.ac.uk) or [fohs-pgadmissions@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:fohs-pgadmissions@bristol.ac.uk)

[bristol.ac.uk](http://bristol.ac.uk)

# How to find more information

Postgraduate study: [bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate](https://bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate)

Postgraduate applications: [bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/apply](https://bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/apply)

Bristol Doctoral College: [bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/](https://bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/)

University of Bristol Research: [bristol.ac.uk/research/](https://bristol.ac.uk/research/)

Fees, funding & scholarships: [bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/fees-and-funding](https://bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/fees-and-funding)

Any questions: [choosebristol-pg@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:choosebristol-pg@bristol.ac.uk)

[bristol.ac.uk](https://bristol.ac.uk)

A photograph of a person standing in a cave of ice formations. The cave walls and ceiling are covered in intricate, layered ice structures, creating a dramatic and ethereal atmosphere. The person is silhouetted against the bright light coming from an opening at the end of the cave. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and whites, with a dark foreground where the person stands.

Any questions?



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