

Postgraduate Admissions Statement for PhD Biological Sciences, MSc by Research Biological Sciences



This Admissions Statement applies to applications submitted for entry to the programme between 13 September 2025 and 11 September 2026.

It should be read in association with the [University Admissions Principles and Procedures](#) for Postgraduate programmes, the relevant [prospectus entry](#) and general [application guidance](#).

Admissions criteria

Academic and English language requirements

The academic and English language requirements for this programme are displayed on the [Postgraduate Prospectus](#)

For information on international equivalent qualifications, please refer to our [International Office website](#).

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.

Application process

Online application form

Applicants should complete the online application form, uploading all required documents directly. Further information is available on our [guidance for online applications page](#)

Applications will not be considered until **all** required documents have been uploaded.

Required and optional documents

It is compulsory to indicate the names of one or two supervisors whose research interests you. We recommend that you contact these supervisors by email in advance of making your application. You can find details of the School's research themes on our [research page](#). Details of the theme leads and/or members of staff that could serve as supervisors (listed as 'group members') are available on our five theme pages; [Animal Behaviour and sensory biology in a changing world](#); [Ecology: Reversing the biodiversity crisis](#); [Evolution: Understanding the origins of life](#); [Plant Sciences and agriculture: Transforming sustainable food production](#); and [Education: Innovative approaches for biological sciences research](#).

References: Required

We require two academic references. References should comply with our standard requirements outlined on [our guidance pages](#).

Degree certificate(s) and academic transcripts: Required

From first and subsequent degrees. Degree certificates and transcripts should comply with our standard requirements outlined on [our guidance pages](#).

Personal statement: Required

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 your 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/other evidence: Required

Evidence of meeting the English language profile as stated on the [Postgraduate Prospectus](#) and specified by the [University English Language Requirements Policy](#)

Curriculum Vitae (CV): Required

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.

Research Statement: Optional

Completed after consultation with the proposed supervisor.

The primary requirement for the research statement is to define and situate your research within an academic/disciplinary context. You should remember that people in the academic community are the primary audience/readership for postgraduate research. This means that you will need to identify:

- The research questions or problems that you intend to address;
- The research context for your project/programme of work;
- The methods you think you will use to pursue the key questions.

Please note: In some cases a research statement is not required, in which case you may need to upload a Word document with the header “No research statement required” for the application to be submitted correctly.

Research Training Statement: Optional

Applicants are welcome to provide details of any relevant qualifications or training required to assist with their application.

Funding: Required

Applicants should indicate on their application if they are applying for a funded studentship/scholarship, will be self-funded, or if they have secured funding elsewhere. Offer letters for programmes do not represent any intention to fund. The offer of admission is separate to any offer of funding.

Selection process

Assessment of applications

All applicants are considered in line with the University’s [Admissions Principles and Procedures Policy](#) Once a complete application has been submitted with all required supporting documents, it is considered by at least two members of staff using the following criteria:

- Academic achievement
- English Language proficiency (where applicable)
- Academic references
- Personal statement
- Availability of appropriate supervision

Interviews

Interviews may form part of the selection process.

The purpose of the interview is to assess whether the applicant has the necessary skills and capabilities to pursue the chosen postgraduate programme, and whether the programme is appropriate to the applicant's interests and aspirations.

If required, interviewees based overseas will normally be interviewed by telephone or via online meeting platform.

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 or pay a deposit, 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 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, applicants will receive a conditional offer outlining the requirements that must be met.

Deferrals

Deferred entry is available for this programme, subject to agreement by the relevant Admissions Team. Please contact fls-pgenquiries@bristol.ac.uk to make a formal request.

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 will be treated confidentially and will help us to assess your academic performance fairly considering your circumstances.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

Applicants who will require a visa to study in the UK will also be required to gain clearance through the [Academic Technology Approval Scheme](#) (ATAS). The Academic Technology Approval Scheme is a clearance process which affects overseas applicants (outside the EEA and Switzerland) for certain postgraduate science, technology, medical and engineering studies in the UK. Applicants to affected programmes are required to obtain an ATAS certificate before applying for a visa.

Visa

International students coming to the UK to study full-time may need to apply for a student visa. Guidance is available on the [University website](#).

Fees and Deposits

Fees

Annual tuition fees are available on the relevant [prospectus entry](#) for this programme. Bench fees may apply and will vary according to the individual project.

Applicants should indicate on their application if they are applying for a funded studentship/scholarship, will be self-funded, or if they have secured funding elsewhere.

Offer letters for programmes do not represent any intention to fund. The offer of admission is separate to any offer of funding.

Deposits

Deposits are not required for this programme.

Sponsored Students

Sponsored students will need to upload a copy of their sponsorship letter to the online application.