

Biological Sciences Information Sheet for entry in 2018

Biological Sciences is an exciting and rapidly developing subject area. The study of living things has undergone tremendous expansion in recent years, and topics such as cell biology, neuroscience, evolutionary biology and ecology are advancing rapidly. This expansion has been accompanied by a blurring of the distinctions between disciplines: a biologist with an interest in tropical plants may well use many of the tools and techniques that are indispensable to a molecular geneticist.



The degree of Biological Sciences is taught jointly by the departments of Plant Sciences and Zoology. Additional resources include: Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Botanic Garden, Herbarium, Arboretum and Wytham Woods.

Practical laboratory work is an integral part of teaching and there is a compulsory one-week field trip for all first-year students to Pembrokeshire to study ecology (for which a contribution of £200 is required from every student). Fieldwork is a crucial part of some courses; for example, there are field days associated with a number of the second year practical courses and in the third year students may be able to attend an optional overseas field course. Most students carry out their research projects in the lab or the field, either in the UK or abroad. All overseas work requires financial contributions from the student. See below for current costs.

Practicals and fieldwork

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A typical weekly timetable

Almost all teaching takes place in the departments of Plant Sciences and Zoology and can be broken down into the following categories:

- Lectures: around ten hours a week
- Practicals: around eight hours a week
- Tutorials: one hour a week, plus preparation time
- Research projects: variable hours in second and third year.

1st year

Courses

Four courses are taken:

- Cells and genes
- Organisms
- Ecology and evolution
- Quantitative methods (a two-year course, assessed during the second University examinations)

Assessment

First University examinations: Three written papers:

- Organisms
- Cells and genes
- Ecology and evolution

Satisfactory practical record

2nd year

Courses

Eight courses are offered. Students are encouraged to attend lectures in all themes.

Compulsory:

- Evolution
- Quantitative methods

Themes:

- Adaptations to the environment
- Animal behaviour
- Cell and developmental biology
- Disease
- Ecology
- Plants and people

Assessment

Final University examinations, Part I:

Three written papers:

- Evolution paper
- Essay paper covering the six themes
- Quantitative methods paper

Satisfactory practical record

3rd year

Courses

Around 20 options covering the full breadth of active research in the departments. Students are expected to take 6–8 of these specialist options, which are chosen freely. Two overseas field courses are also available but numbers able to attend are capped for logistical reasons.

A full list of current options is available on the [Biological Sciences website](#).

Assessment

Final University examinations, Part II:

Four written papers:

- A general paper
- A data interpretation paper
- A short essay-based paper
- A long essay-based paper

Two course assignments and research project (prepared work counts for 30% of overall assessment)

The University will seek to deliver each course in accordance with the descriptions set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after registration. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions.

Fees

Oxford University is committed to recruiting the best and brightest students from all backgrounds. We offer a generous package of financial support to Home/EU students from lower-income households. (UK nationals living in the UK are usually Home students.)

These annual fees are for full-time students who begin this undergraduate course here in 2018.

Fee Status	Tuition fee	College fee	Total annual fees
Home/EU	£9,250	£0	£9,250
Islands (Channel Islands & Isle of Man)	£9,250	£0	£9,250
Overseas	£23,885	£7,570	£31,455

Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions.

Additional Fees and Charges Information for Biological Sciences

First year students are required to undertake a one-week residential field course to West Wales (Orielson Field Studies Centre near Pembroke) in the summer term. You will study living organisms in a range of environments, both terrestrial and marine, and you'll be assessed on your practical work. This assessment forms part of your first year examinations. The University covers all costs for this compulsory trip, including food and accommodation.

There are also two optional overseas fieldtrips in the third year of the course:

- Tenerife: a trip in early May to study the systematics, diversity and ecology of the local plant communities.
- Borneo: a trip in late September, at the end of the long vacation between the second and third years, to study tropical rainforest ecology, both animals and plants.

As a guide, costs for these optional courses in 2017 were £600 for Tenerife, plus whatever students spent on lunches and evening meals during the week, and £900 for Borneo, plus the return flights to Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. Further details on fieldtrips can be found on the Biological Sciences website.

Living Costs

Your living costs will vary significantly dependent on your lifestyle. These are estimated to be between £1,014 and £1,556 per month in 2018-19. Undergraduate courses usually consist of three terms of eight weeks each, but as a guide you may wish to budget over a nine-month period to ensure you also have sufficient funds during the holidays to meet essential costs.

Living costs breakdown

	Per month		Total for 9 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£258	£361	£2,318	£3,245
Accommodation (including utilities)	£536	£677	£4,824	£6,093
Personal items	£118	£263	£1,066	£2,364
Social activities	£41	£123	£369	£1,105
Study costs	£39	£85	£348	£765
Other	£22	£47	£202	£419
Total	£1,014	£1,556	£9,127	£13,991

When planning your finances for future years of study at Oxford beyond 2018-19, you should allow for an estimated increase in living expenses of 3% each year.

10 November 2017