

Biological Sciences Information Sheet for entry in 2016



What is Biological Sciences?

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. The rapid 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.

Biological Sciences at Oxford

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

Practicals and fieldwork

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. Many students carry out their research projects in the field, either in the UK or abroad. All overseas work requires financial contributions from the student.

A typical weekly timetable

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

- Lectures: around 10 hours a week
- Practicals: around 8 hours a week
- Tutorials: around 1 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 • Quantitative methods (a two-year course, assessed during the second University examinations)	Assessment First University examinations: Three written papers 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

Second University examinations:

Three written papers:

- Evolution
- 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. 2 overseas field courses are also available but numbers able to attend are capped for logistical reasons.

Assessment

Final University examinations:

Four written papers:

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

Two course assignments and project (prepared work counts for 30% of the final degree result)

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

These annual fees are for full-time students who begin this undergraduate course here in 2016.

Fee Status	Tuition fee	College fee	Total annual fees
Home/EU	£9,000	£0	£9,000
Islands (Channel Islands & Isle of Man)	£9,000	£0	£9,000
Overseas	£22,515	£7,135	£29,650

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 (Oriolton 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. You will be asked to pay £200 to cover food and accommodation, and the University covers all other costs for this compulsory trip. Financial support is available for students who may face difficulty in making this contribution.

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

1. Tenerife: a trip in early May to study the systematics, diversity and ecology of the local plant communities.
2. 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 2015 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 £970 and £1,433 per month in 2016-17. 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	£265	£298	£2,384	£2,673
Accommodation (including utilities)	£469	£667	£4,221	£6,002
Personal items	£119	£244	£1,073	£2,187
Social activities	£60	£107	£539	£960

Study costs	£36	£73	£314	£661
Other	£19	£44	£197	£410
Total	£970	£1,433	£8,727	£12,894

18 November 2015