Society of Biology
Degree Accreditation
Programme

DEGREE ACCREDITATION AND RECOGNITION FROM THE SOCIETY OF BIOLOGY

CHOOSE THE RIGHT DEGREE, FIND THE RIGHT JOB

IT'S A GREAT TIME TO BECOME A BIOLOGIST!

Studying biology at university isn't just interesting in its own right – it gives you the valuable skills and knowledge for a wide range of careers, both in and outside of science.

Biology is a very broad subject area with lots of diverse specialisms, leading to even more diverse careers. The work of biologists benefits people all over the world: from finding sustainable fuel options to ways to treat and prevent disease. Researchers are working on innovative projects in more places than you might think.

Choosing the right degree can be tricky; there are a lot of questions to be answered. You might want to know how long the course will last, if you will be able to combine it with another subject, and what sort of career it will prepare you for.

Degree Accreditation and Recognition by the Society of Biology are just two ways to help you decide which degree is right for you.

The Society of Biology

The Society of Biology is the leading professional body for the biological sciences. We represent over 80,000 biologists including students, practising scientists, and interested non-professionals.

We are committed to promoting biology to students and at colleges and universities, to supporting young scientists through higher education, and to providing career guidance at all levels.

Find out how we can help you at **www.societyofbiology.org/membership**

WHAT'S THE BEST DEGREE FOR ME?

If you're thinking of entering a career in research then you might want to consider what practical skills and experience a particular degree course offers. Studying a degree accredited by the Society of Biology is one way to get that experience. It means that you will have the opportunity to conduct your own research project in a working environment for, typically, six months to a year.

In order to fit this in, the research project will most often be either a year in industry or an integrated Masters level project. Both of these types of degree allow you to study one area of interest in more depth and last four years.

Three-year degrees may be accredited as long as they can provide you with enough time working in research.

In all cases, accredited degrees will have been shown to deliver up-to-date knowledge of the subject, and current research and analytical methods. Working with experts from industry and universities across the country we assess degree programmes for all these things, as well as making sure they provide the right learning support and teaching environments.

What if I don't want to do so much research?
This is where Degree Recognition comes in. This is usually for interdisciplinary or combined honours degrees, and degrees which don't require you to spend so much time in the lab. Jump to the section on Recognition to find out more.

Biologists on Twitter
How important are practical skills?

@nicolwatson Practical skills are a huge benefit both in and out of the lab. I can always relate my time in the lab to product ideas, development, and marketing. #biologyaccreditation

@AnneOsterrieder Practical experience is essential for a research career. The earlier you start to acquire practical skills, the better. #biologyaccreditation

GET ON FASTER

Even better, once you graduate with an accredited degree, you'll be able to become a Member of the Society of Biology (MSB) after only one year of practice, rather than the three years it takes other biology graduates.

Membership helps in lots of ways: it shows that you have an advanced level of skill and experience; it'll help you keep up to date with what's going in the biosciences and give you the chance to meet people who can help you push your career forward.

Find out how becoming a member can help
Visit **www.societyofbiology.org/membership**

HOW TO SPOT AN ACCREDITED DEGREE

1 **Visit www.societyofbiology.org/accreditedprogrammes**
We have a complete list of accredited courses on our website. Come and visit if you're not sure.

2 **Look out for our logo**
You'll find the Accreditation logo on university websites, prospectuses and lots of other leaflets and materials related to courses we've accredited.

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REMEMBER

Degree Accreditation is an optional scheme run by the Society of Biology. This means that some UK undergraduate courses aren't accredited even if they meet the criteria. There are many excellent degree programmes delivered by UK universities which are not accredited.

3 **Look out for descriptions**
Sometimes a course might not show our logo but you might see the following statement:

This programme has been accredited by the Society of Biology. Degree accreditation by the Society recognises academic excellence in the biosciences, and highlights degrees that educate the research and development leaders of the future. The accreditation criteria require evidence that graduates from the programme meet defined sets of learning outcomes, including gaining a substantial period of research experience.

4 **Check Key Information Sets**
Key Information Sets (KIS) are a new way to help you compare and choose undergraduate courses. Universities use them to publish survey data about how satisfied students are with their courses as well as detailed course information, graduate employment prospects and tuition fees. They may also include a similar statement about accredited courses.

Visit **http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/find-out-more/key-information-set** or university websites to find out more.

GET THE RIGHT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

The UK bioscience industry is always looking for practical skills in bioscience graduates. That's why the opportunity to do your own supervised research is a vital part of the degrees we accredit.

This will give you a real taste of research and life in the lab or field; you will have the chance to work alongside professional scientists, create your own experiments, and form your own conclusions.

Research experience is a great opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge you learn throughout your studies; it may also help you gain new skills and improve your analytical thinking. This is why it's important you're evaluated in an appropriate environment. So if you're studying ecology or environmental science, for example, your research may be field work rather than laboratory based.

This hands-on experience will allow you to start building your confidence and ability to work effectively as a research scientist.

Biologists on Twitter
Is experience that valuable?

@Science_Grrl Want a career in the lab? Get ahead with your hands! Experience = know what's really involved, confidence & looks great on CV! #biologyaccreditation

@SOP_info An industrial placement can catapult any career! #biologyaccreditation

THERE'S RECOGNITION AS WELL AS ACCREDITATION

If you have decided that you don't want to focus so much on research during your degree, or you want to study biology with another subject, then a recognised degree might be more suitable. Degree Recognition ensures biology courses deliver more than 50% biology in the course content.

Recognised degrees are usually interdisciplinary or combined honours courses. These are great if you want to make sure you are still getting a good grounding in biology while developing your interest and understanding of another subject.

Graduating from a Society of Biology recognised degree means you are eligible for Associate Membership (AMSB) of the Society for Biology when you graduate. And when you get more experience as a biologist, you can apply for full membership (MSB).

If you are unsure of how much biology a particular course delivers, you can email accreditation@societyofbiology.org to see if it's a recognised degree.

REMEMBER

Degree Recognition is an optional scheme run by the Society of Biology. This means that some UK undergraduate courses aren't recognised even if they meet the criteria. As recognition is most often awarded to interdisciplinary degrees, there are many specialist biology courses which deliver more than 50% biology content without being recognised.

GET MORE OUT OF BIOLOGY

SOCIETY OF Biology

Become a student member of the Society

Joining the Society of Biology as a student member is a great way to demonstrate your commitment to biology and improve your CV. You'll also:

— stay up to date with the latest biology news on new research and policy with a subscription to The Biologist and our monthly e-newsletters

— find biology events and network with professional biologists in your area through our branches

— find out about career opportunities on our free online Jobs Board

— get 20% discount on biology textbooks from many great publishers

— become an Associate Member of the Society of Biology (AMSB) when you graduate, and use these distinguished letters after your name.

Sign up today

Visit **www.societyofbiology.org/membership**
Email **membership@societyofbiology.org**

The Degree Accreditation Programme has received co-investment from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills through the Growth and Innovation Fund.

To find out more about The Degree Accreditation Programme visit www.societyofbiology.org/accreditation or contact the Accreditation Team at accreditation@societyofbiology.org

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