

1. What are the compulsory modules/classes I will be taking in first year?

The compulsory courses for the majority of the Biological Sciences degrees are - [BI1009 Frontiers in Biological Sciences](#), [BI1012 Diversity of Life 1](#), [BI1511 Ecology and Environmental Sciences](#), [BI1512 Diversity of Life 2](#), and [SM1501 The Cell](#).

In addition to this the compulsory courses for the following programmes include:

Marine Biology - [SX1015 Oceans and Society](#)

Animal Behaviour - [PS1009 Introduction to Psychology I: Concepts and Theory](#), and [PS1509 Introduction to Psychology II: Concepts and Theory](#)

Behavioural Biology - Students on this programme are not required to take BI1012 or BI1511. Instead they take [CM1020 Chemistry for the Life Sciences 1](#), [PS1009 Introduction to Psychology I: Concepts and Theory](#), and [PS1509 Introduction to Psychology II: Concepts and Theory](#)

Environmental Science - Students on this programme are not required to take BI1512 instead they take [GL1005 The Earth through Geological Time](#), [GG1510 Global Worlds, Local Challenges](#), and [GL1505 Earth's Materials](#)

Conservation Biology - [BI15F1 Plants and Their Habitats in Northern Scotland Field Course](#)

Ecology - [BI15F1 Plants and Their Habitats in Northern Scotland Field Course](#)

Plant and Soil Science - [BI15F1 Plants and Their Habitats in Northern Scotland Field Course](#)

2. Can I take optional modules/classes? How many? Are there any restrictions to what I can take?

Yes, all of the School of Biological Sciences (SBS) programmes allow for students to take at least one optional course in their first year. Restrictions on this would be timetabling constraints with your compulsory courses.

3. What will my timetable in first year look like? How much contact time will I have with lecturers?

A typical first year science course has 4.5 hours of contact per week, split across three 1 hour lectures and one 3 hour practical every other week. If you take four science courses, that is equivalent to 18 hours of contact per week.

Typically, each practical requires preparation time (1-2 hours) and has an associated assignment (1-3 hours). Each lecture includes some recommended reading (variable) and requires some review as preparation for the final course exam. Non-science courses tend to have fewer contact hours but require more independent work.

4. What are the typical first year class sizes like?

The typical first year class size in SBS is around 180 for lectures and 90 for labs. In the labs students work in pairs or in trios and are supported by staff in a ratio of about 12 students per member of staff.

5. Are there work placements available and are they built into the degree?

There are no work placements built into the degree but students in their fourth year will have the opportunity to take a course, [BI4027: Professional Development in the Workplace](#), in which students engage with external work-related activities in placements, part-time work or personal development project that they secure typically over the summer months. This course will give students an opportunity to assess their Aberdeen Graduate Attribute development and enable them to identify and evidence a range of skills and qualities that employers look for in graduates, including communication, team working, problem-solving, reflection and professionalism.

6. Will there be field trips in my classes?

Yes there are field trips in SBS courses along with residential field courses. In the second year many of the degree programmes have a compulsory week long residential field course with a choice of, [BI25F1 Freshwater and Terrestrial Ecology](#), [BI25F2 Coastal Biodiversity](#), [BI25F3 Parasitology](#), BI25F5 Marine and Fish Population, BI25F6 Field Biology (non-residential), and [ZO25F1 Littoral and Sublittoral Marine Biology](#).

7. Will there be any group work/group projects?

Yes there will be group work and group projects throughout all 4 years. Many practicals in the first and second year are carried out in groups with individual write ups. In level three and four some courses will have group projects and presentations.

8. How are my modules/classes assessed? Exam, essays, in-class work?

Courses in the first year are mainly assessed through practical course assessments and end of course exams.

9. Is there an opportunity to study languages alongside my degree?

Yes, some students opt to take language courses as their optional set of courses in level 1 and 2.

10. Should I be preparing for first year by reading anything specific? Do you have any suggestions?

We encourage students to read in advance but this is not compulsory. We have a reading list that we can provide upon request.

11. Are there any societies which would be good to join?

Yes there are a number of societies that are related to Biological Sciences, these include, Conservation Society, Dead Botanists Society, Marine Society, Wildlife Documentary Society, Woodland Society, and Zoology and Biological Sciences Society. The societies are a great way to meet new people with similar interests!

12. Can I study abroad with this degree? Where can I go?

Yes, there are opportunities to study abroad for part of your degree, both in Europe and further afield.

13. How much time will I spend in labs each week?

Typically in level 1, depending on your subject choice, you will spend around 6 to 9 hours in labs each week.