



Society of Biology
Degree Accreditation
Programme

**SUPPORTING THE
ADVANCEMENT OF
SKILLS AND EDUCATION
IN THE BIOSCIENCES**



**FIND OUT
ABOUT
OUR
DEGREE
ACCREDITATION
PROGRAMME**

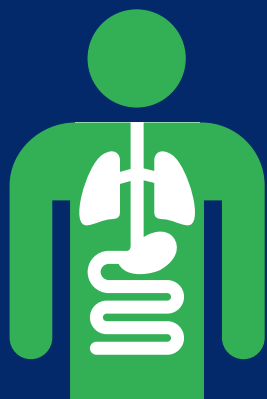




THE SOCIETY OF BIOLOGY DEGREE ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME

The Society is committed to maintaining high standards of both industrial and academic research and innovation in the life sciences. The Degree Accreditation Programme highlights academic excellence in the biosciences, acknowledging degrees that have the potential to educate the research and development leaders and innovators of the future.

The Accreditation Programme has been developed to address the skills gaps between academic study and employment in bioscience research; provision of a substantial period of practical experience is therefore central to degree accreditation. It will ensure a pipeline of highly skilled life science graduates into research and development roles in areas of national importance.



THE AIMS AND PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION

Degree accreditation will provide employers with assurance of the standards of practical research experience provided by a degree programme, as well as coverage of the key areas of expertise required for employment or academic research in specialist areas of the life sciences.

Key reasons for moving towards the Degree Accreditation Programme in the life sciences have been highlighted through extensive discussion and consultation with the UK bioscience community.

- There is a lack of a generalised accredited route in the biosciences, aside from highly specific medical and health-related degrees. Accreditation by the Society of Biology will mean that life science graduates are well prepared to enter research-based careers.
- The need for employers to identify graduates with a known profile of skills, knowledge, and experience.
- The need to drive up, and sustain, the standards of our undergraduate provision to match our global reputation in research and development.

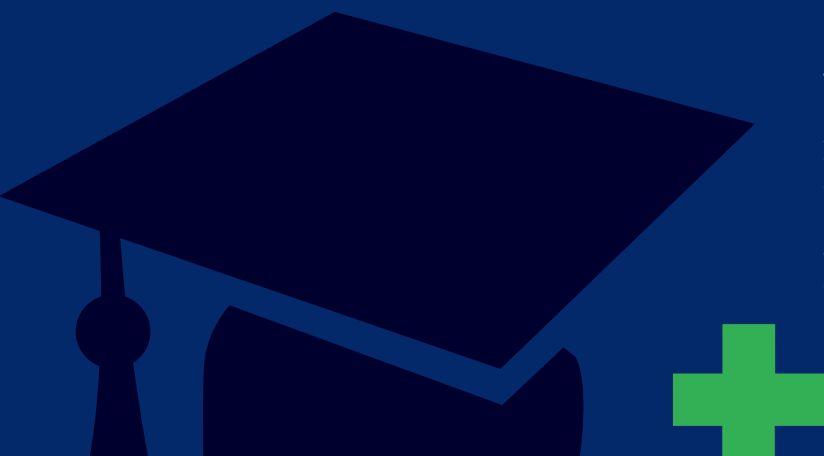
Accreditation of degree programmes by the Society of Biology aims to:

- Recognise academic excellence.
- Drive up the standards of learning and teaching in the biosciences.
- Ensure the pipeline of graduates supports national excellence in academic and industrial research and innovation.
- Maintain and improve the UK's position as a premier location to develop the life scientists of the future.

The accreditation criteria require evidence that graduates from accredited programmes meet defined learning outcomes, including gaining substantial research experience. Accreditation is not about wide recognition of threshold standards, nor does it seek to make judgements on the wide range of excellent degrees delivered by UK higher education institutions.

Accreditation will establish a profile of skills, knowledge, and practice that can be easily identified in graduates. Additionally, it will enable the sharing of good practice across the sector, ensuring the continued excellence of life sciences education in the UK.

The accreditation process seeks to identify the degree programmes that deliver the skills and experience graduates need to begin a successful career in bioscience research and development.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES

Accredited programmes will provide opportunities for enrolled students to develop their expertise, knowledge and skill in their subject area, as identified by the intended learning outcomes. The learning outcomes have been defined in collaboration between the Society of Biology, relevant Learned Societies, and other partners.

Accredited programmes are likely to be those that

- **Enhance leadership and reward innovation**

Accreditation highlights degree programmes which develop problem-solving skills and analytical thinking within students, and encourage critical awareness of current developments within the subject.

- **Develop independent research skills of graduates**

A period of practice, in which students will carry out their own supervised research, will allow them to apply the theoretical knowledge and skills gained during their studies.

- **Deliver excellence**

Accredited programmes will be highly regarded within higher education and the research and development communities, and be delivered by subject experts.



Inclusion of a substantial period of research experience outside the normal learning environment in a professional working structure is essential to accreditation, and should be considered normal practice for accredited degree programmes.

The objective of the period of practice is for students to experience science in a working context; it is an opportunity for them to develop their skills in experimental design and analysis.

The period will be an evaluated working experience in an appropriate environment, and typically last six months to a year. Due to the length of the period of practice it is expected that most accredited degrees will either include a year in industry or an integrated Masters year. It is important to note, however, that three year degree courses are not excluded from accreditation providing they adequately meet the accreditation criteria.

It is expected that students will gain scientific and interpersonal skills which complement the learning experience from the sponsoring higher education institution (HEI). Periods of practice will therefore contribute to the overall objective of identification and training of talented students interested in careers as research scientists.



ACCREDITATION ASSESSMENT

Assessment for accreditation is a peer-reviewed process and requires the involvement of experts from industry and academia with subject-specific knowledge.

Representation from both industry and academia is critical to accreditation assessment. The practical value of skills learnt during the degree programme will be judged, and must be appropriate to research in both an academic and industrial setting.

The process for accreditation is usually achieved through three stages, and will normally take a period of six to twelve months. The Accreditation Assessment Panel will consider the evidence submitted in the application, visit the institution, and then make a recommendation to the Society of Biology Council as to whether or not the institution's programme(s) should be awarded accreditation.

Assessment is made based on the learning outcomes achieved by the students. Upon completion of the degree they should be able to demonstrate specific knowledge, understanding, and skills as defined by the Society in collaboration with other relevant Learned Societies and partners. This means that current students' and recent graduates' feedback on the course is a significant factor during assessment; the process is not a tick-box exercise and will draw on the academic judgement and experience of the assessment panel.

Following a successful assessment, accreditation will be awarded for a period of five years. After this period, institutions will be invited to submit their programmes for re-accreditation.

THE ACCREDITATION ASSESSMENT PANEL

The Accreditation Assessment Panel will include a chair and three panel members; between them they will have experience of chairing, an understanding of the scientific content of degree programmes, and subject-specific expertise.

All panel members will provide valuable insight into the practical value of the skills taught by each degree programme, panellists from industry will give clearer context to the significance of the learning outcomes from the point of view of the employer. All panel members will be well-informed of the current practices, methodologies and advancements in their area of expertise.

The Society provides full training for assessors, as well as an honorarium and reimbursement for their expenses.

BECOMING AN ASSESSOR

In order to ensure that future graduates able to meet the demands of working in the bioscience industry, we need your expertise to help assess the eligibility of degree programmes.

To find out more about becoming an assessor and to apply visit www.societyofbiology.org/aap or email us at accreditation@societyofbiology.org



THE SOCIETY OF BIOLOGY

The Society represents a diverse membership of over 80,000 – including students; practising scientists; professionals from industry, academia and education; and interested non-professionals.

The Society of Biology's vision is to: represent all who are committed to biology in academia, industry, education and research; facilitate the promotion and translation of advances in biological science for national and international benefit, and engage and encourage public interest in the life sciences.



BECOMING A MEMBER

The Society has two main types of members: individual and organisational.

Becoming a member of the Society demonstrates commitment to the biosciences and signifies professionalism, high standards of competence, and strong ethical values. Member organisations benefit from collaboration and representation in bioscience policy, education, and outreach to the public.

By becoming a member you will benefit from:

- Professional recognition and career development support through our Continuing Professional Development programme and our professional registers.
- Updates on key areas such as new research, policy, and other developments across the life sciences with a subscription to our magazine *The Biologist* and monthly e-newsletters.
- Professional networking opportunities, Society events, and involvement in Government consultations and informing policy development.
- Exclusive discounts on many books, courses, and journal subscriptions.

Go to www.societyofbiology.org/membership or contact membership@societyofbiology.org to learn more about becoming a member.





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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