

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Basic
Applied
Quality Control
Administration
Grant Writing

Industry and laboratories:
Pharmaceutical
Healthcare
Agriculture production
Food processing and safety
Environmental
Private research institutions
Public health departments
State and federal government:
National Science Foundation
National Institutes of Health
Food and Drug Administration
Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Agriculture
Armed Services
Department of Homeland Security
State and local government laboratories/agencies
Colleges and universities

Learn to set up, operate, maintain laboratory instruments and equipment, and monitor experiments.
Select courses with laboratory components.
Seek research experience with professors.
Gain related experience through part-time jobs, internships, or volunteering.
Complete a certificate training program, usually one year, to learn specialized laboratory techniques.
Take a course in grant writing.
A Bachelor's degree in biology qualifies one for laboratory technician or research assistant positions.
Earn master's degree for better positions, advancement opportunities, more responsibility and higher pay.
Obtain Ph.D. to direct research projects and lead research teams.
Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong faculty recommendations to gain admittance into graduate school.

ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY

Some Areas of Specialization

Botany and Plant sciences
Ecology and Wildlife
Marine and Aquatic
Systematic (Taxonomy)
Zoology
Entomology
Genetics
Microbiology
Bacteria, algae, fungi, molds, yeasts, viruses, protozoa

Colleges and universities, especially colleges of agriculture and veterinary medicine
Veterinary hospitals
State and federal government:
Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Health
Independent laboratories:
Food production
Textiles
Chemical
Pharmaceutical
Forestry products

Seek related experience through coursework, part-time jobs, internships or volunteering.
Conduct research or assist in research including the collection of information and samples of water, soil, plants, animals, etc.
Join student chapters of professional organizations related to your area of interest.
Obtain a Ph.D. for teaching and advanced research and management positions.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY CONTINUED

Zoos and aquariums
Fish hatcheries
Wildlife preserves and parks
Conservation agencies
Botanical gardens and arboretums
Museums
Agricultural experiment stations
Inspection agencies and control boards
National and international environmental organizations
Private recreation organizations

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Some Areas of Specialization:

Biophysics
Biochemistry
Cellular and Molecular Biology
Cytology
Genetics
Immunology
Pathology
Pharmacology
Physiology
Virology

Colleges and universities
Professional schools including colleges of pharmacy, dentistry, medicine, veterinary medicine, and agriculture
Federal laboratories and regulatory agencies:
National Institutes of Health
Food and Drug Administration
State and local public health departments
Clinics and hospitals
Private research foundations
Independent laboratories
Pharmaceutical companies

Gain laboratory experience through coursework and/or research projects with professors.
Learn to set up, operate, maintain laboratory instruments and equipment, and monitor experiments.
Seek internships, part-time employment and volunteer opportunities in the biomedical field.
Join student chapters of professional organizations related to your area of interest.
Take courses in area(s) of specialization and/or consider an advanced degree.
Obtain a Ph.D. for teaching and advanced research and management positions.

HEALTHCARE

Medicine
Dentistry
Optometry
Podiatry
Pharmacy
Veterinary Medicine
Allied Health
Occupational Therapy
Physical Therapy
Medical Technology
Nuclear Medicine

Hospitals
Medical centers and clinics
Nursing homes
Private practice
Armed services
Government agencies

Plan on attending medical school or other related graduate program.
Maintain an outstanding grade point average, particularly in the sciences.
Secure strong faculty recommendations.
Meet with a pre-health advisor periodically.
Join related student organizations, and demonstrate leadership abilities.
Seek experiences in hospital or healthcare settings through volunteering, shadowing, part-time positions, or internships.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

HEALTHCARE CONTINUED

Develop a back up plan in case medical/graduate school admission is denied.
Consider alternative but related careers such as physician assistants.
Research all of the various fields within medicine to determine career goals.

BIOINFORMATICS

Algorithm and Statistics Development
Data Analysis and Interpretation
Information Management
 Organization and Retrieval

Colleges and universities
Private research foundations
Independent laboratories:
 Organic and agricultural chemicals
 Drug and pharmaceutical
 Medical device and equipment
 Research, testing, medical
Federal laboratories and regulatory agencies:
 National Institutes of Health
 Food and Drug Administration
 Environmental Protection Agency
 Department of Agriculture
National Biological Information Infrastructure

Develop multiple areas of specialization through coursework, minors, double-majors in molecular biology, mathematics, statistics, computer science, or machine learning.
Develop strong programming and database management skills; fluency in several programming languages is helpful.
Learn biological software systems.
Complete an internship in area of interest.
Seek master's degree for increased advancement opportunities.

EDUCATION

Teaching
 Elementary
 Secondary
 Post-Secondary
Non-classroom Education

Universities and colleges
Medical and other professional schools
Public and private schools, K-12
Museums
Zoos
Nature centers and parks

Gain experience working with students through tutoring, part-time employment, or volunteering.
Learn to work well with all types of people.
Develop excellent interpersonal and public speaking skills.
Certification is required for K-12 school teachers and varies by state.
Master's degrees may be sufficient for teaching at community or two-year institutions.
Ph.D. is needed for teaching opportunities at colleges and universities.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

COMMUNICATION

Technical Writing
Editing
Illustrating
Photography

Publishing companies including scientific magazines, professional journals, periodicals, textbooks, and online publishers
Newspapers
Educational and scientific software companies
Zoological and environmental societies
Medical, dental and veterinary colleges
Research centers
Federal government agencies
Related nonprofit organizations
Museums

Acquire thorough knowledge of photographic procedures and technology.
Take specific courses in biological, medical, and ophthalmic photography; courses in illustration and printing are also helpful.
Develop strong writing skills and command of the English language.
Take advanced courses in technical writing or journalism classes or consider a minor in either.
Join professional associations like the National Association of Science Writers.
Seek related volunteer or paid experiences with student/local publications to increase marketability.
Obtain an advanced degree in scientific journalism.

LEGISLATION/LAW

Lobbying
Regulatory Affairs
Science Policy
Patent Law
Environmental Law

Federal and state government
Law firms
Large corporations

Develop excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
Maintain current knowledge of industry-specific laws and policies.
Acquire internships in federal or state government.
Take courses in history, political science and/or legal studies.
Acquire a Ph.D. for advanced positions.
Earn a J.D. degree to practice law.

BUSINESS/INDUSTRY

Technical and Pharmaceutical Sales
Management
Consulting
Marketing

Manufacturing companies including:
Pharmaceuticals
Animal pharmaceuticals
Laboratory equipment
Medical supplies and prostheses
Marketing firms
Consulting firms

Develop excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
Demonstrate a high energy level.
Take courses in anatomy, pharmacology, and chemistry.
Obtain sales experience and/or a business minor.
Join related student associations and hold leadership positions.
Consider an MBA or Professional Science Master's for advanced management and consulting opportunities.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- A Bachelor's degree will qualify one for work as a laboratory assistant, technician, technologist, or research assistant in education, industry, government, museums, parks, and gardens.
- An undergraduate degree can also be used for nontechnical work in writing, illustration, sales, photography, and legislation.
- Master's degrees allow for more opportunities in research and administration. Some community colleges will hire Master's level teachers.
- Doctoral degrees are necessary for advanced research and administrative positions, university teaching, and independent research.
- An advanced degree provides the opportunity to specialize in fields of interest.
- The biological sciences are good preparation for a career in healthcare such as medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science, but professional degrees and licenses are also necessary to practice in these fields.
- Learn laboratory procedures and become familiar with equipment.
- Obtain summer, part-time, volunteer, co-op, or internship experience to test the fields of interest and gain valuable experience. Take independent research classes if possible.
- Participate in summer research institutes. Submit research to local poster competitions or research symposiums.
- Develop strong analytical, computer, mathematics, and communications skills.
- Join professional associations and community organizations to stay abreast of current issues in the field and to develop networking contacts.
- Read scientific journals related to your area of interest.
- Maintain a high grade point average to improve chances of graduate and professional school admission.
- Become familiar with the specific entrance exam for graduate or professional schools in your area of interest.
- Secure strong relationships and personal recommendations from professors and/or employers.
- Consider completing a post doctoral experience after graduate school.
- Learn federal, state, and local government job application process. The federal government is the largest employer of biologists.
- Gain experience with grant writing and fundraising techniques. Often research must be funded in this manner.