

# **Finding jobs and work experience in Biological Science in the UK**

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For more tips on creative job hunting, including how to use LinkedIn and social media sites, check out “The job search guide”. Pick up a copy from the Atrium or view online: <http://bit.ly/jobsearchSPS>

## Who is this guide for?

Students and graduates in the School of Biological Sciences and related disciplines, who want to explore strategies for finding bioscience work experience and graduate jobs in the UK.

## Where are all the bioscience science jobs?

When looking for any job or work experience opportunity, there are two main strategies:

### 1. Look for relevant opportunities that are being advertised

- The pros – you know there is a job to be filled
- The cons – so do lots of other people, so the competition will be high

### 2. Look for relevant employers and see if they have any opportunities

This is sometimes known as “creative job search” and requires you to be pro-active. Identify what you really enjoy and find out who does it.

- The pros – they may have jobs to be filled, but if a job isn't available now, they may keep you on file; this means that when a vacancy does occur, they may contact you before even considering advertising, so there is less competition (and the job may never get advertised if your CV on file fits the bill)
- The cons – they may not be recruiting when you need a job

To give yourself the best chance, use a combination of both these approaches.

## Where to look for bioscience jobs – Manchester exclusives!

### Your Careers Account (Careerslink)

Search for graduate schemes, part time jobs, internships, placements and voluntary opportunities. Use the advanced search options to personalise your search, save searches and activate email notifications.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink)

For bioscience vacancies, filter for “occupational area” (e.g. Scientific Research, Analysis and Support; Environment, Animals and Plants etc) and/or “organisational sector” (e.g. Science and Pharmaceuticals, Health and Social Care etc). Try key word searches for “bio”, “biology”, “life science” etc.

Use CareersLink to find out about employer-led presentations on campus for recruitment. A monthly events calendar is also published on the main Careers website. [www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/events](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/events)

### **Graduate JobSearch**

Over 200 tailored mobile-friendly searches for graduate/entry level jobs, including general and life science opportunities.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/grad-jobsearch](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/grad-jobsearch)

### **Student Experience Internships**

Offer pre-final year undergrads the opportunity to undertake an internship either within the University, or in a charity/not-for-profit organisation. All SEI internships are paid, full-time and last up to 8 weeks.

[www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/internships/studentexperienceinternshipsforpre-finalyears/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/internships/studentexperienceinternshipsforpre-finalyears/)

### **Facebook groups for Manchester Biological Scientists**

- Biological Sciences Careers Group – UoM: get updates on work experience opportunities and graduate jobs for Manchester bioscientists. [www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/facebook/](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/facebook/)
- Employability Biological Sciences, UoM – employability news and events organised from within the School of Biological Sciences [www.facebook.com/groups/employabilitybiosciences](https://www.facebook.com/groups/employabilitybiosciences)

### **Manchester Graduate Talent**

Manchester Graduate Talent (MGT) sources graduate jobs and internships for new University of Manchester graduates, from start-ups to multi-national firms, plus recruiters within the University.

[www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/graduatejobs/mgt/](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/graduatejobs/mgt/)

## Careers fairs and events

Attend the Biological Sciences Careers Fair in February each year to meet employers specifically targeting your School. This is your best chance to meet bioscience friendly employers at Manchester.

The University Careers Service runs the Big Careers Fair in October at Manchester Central and the Graduate Careers Fair in May at the Armitage Centre in Fallowfield. Employers attending fairs often promote 12 month and summer placements alongside roles for new graduates.

[www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/events](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/events)

**NB.** Specialist bioscience and pharmaceutical recruiters don't always attend general careers fairs in great numbers. Your best approach is to go straight to company websites. However, commercial organisations DO attend and recruit bioscientists into technical roles e.g. food, brewing, utilities, personal care and environmental consultancies.

## Work experience for First Year students

Some organisations offer Spring Programmes and taster events exclusively for first year students.

[www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/first/experience](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/first/experience)

## Industrial/Professional Experience Degree Programmes

The School of Biological Sciences has a long running and successful placement programme. Combining a placement year with your degree is an excellent way of getting substantial professional experience, and students have been placed in pharmaceutical firms, research institutions and biotechs, in the UK and overseas.

Depending on your exam results, first year students can transfer onto a programme which includes a year in industry. More information is given at the "What to expect from your second year" talk in March and you need to apply by the strict deadline (18 April in 2018). For more information, contact the Placement Office in your School.

## Where to look for bioscience jobs – other sources

The Society of Biology holds annual Life Science Careers Conferences, usually with employers in attendance. Look out for regional events too.

<https://societyofbiology.org/careers-and-cpd/careers>

### General science jobs websites

- New Scientist (<http://jobs.newscientist.com>)
- Nature ([www.nature.com/naturejobs](http://www.nature.com/naturejobs))
- Science (<http://jobs.sciencecareers.org>)
- Research Gate ([www.researchgate.net/jobs](http://www.researchgate.net/jobs) – mainly science jobs)
- Wiley Science Jobs ([www.wileyjobnetwork.com/jobs/science](http://www.wileyjobnetwork.com/jobs/science))

### Specialist science jobs websites

The Prospects website lists vacancy sites for different types of scientific work (in the “Employers and vacancies” section for each type of work).

[www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs\\_scientific\\_services.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_scientific_services.htm)

### Targeted or niche scientific jobs sites

- Royal Society of Biology Jobs (<https://jobs.rsb.org.uk>)
- Environment Jobs ([www.environmentjob.co.uk](http://www.environmentjob.co.uk))

### Job aggregator sites, which pull in vacancies from other sources

- Careerjet ([www.careerjet.co.uk](http://www.careerjet.co.uk)), CV Library ([www.cv-library.co.uk](http://www.cv-library.co.uk))

### Science recruitment agencies

- SRG ([www.srg.co.uk](http://www.srg.co.uk))
- CK Science (<http://ckscience.co.uk/>)
- Network Scientific ([www.networkscientificrecruitment.com](http://www.networkscientificrecruitment.com))
- Lab Support ([www.labsupport.co.uk](http://www.labsupport.co.uk))
- Vector Recruitment ([www.vrl.co.uk](http://www.vrl.co.uk))
- Search ([www.search.co.uk/jobs/energy-engineering-scientific/scientific](http://www.search.co.uk/jobs/energy-engineering-scientific/scientific))

## Graduate Recruitment Directories

Explore online or obtain one of the limited copies in the Atrium. Most have detailed information on specific sectors e.g. Inside Careers for patents work ([www.insidecareers.co.uk](http://www.insidecareers.co.uk)). See also [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk), <http://targetjobs.co.uk>, [www.top100graduateemployers.com](http://www.top100graduateemployers.com), <http://targetjobs.co.uk/uk300>

**NB.** Bioscientists don't only work in labs! When looking at job adverts for large organisations, check out vacancies in departments other than R&D. E.g. supply chain, operations, quality assurance and packaging. For inspiration, the ABPI careers website lists all the different job roles at each stage of the drug development cycle. <http://careers.abpi.org.uk/working-in-the-industry>

The STEP Programme provides paid placement opportunities for penultimate year students in the summer vacation, with a focus on science and technology (STEM). The project-based placements are available UK wide and students are placed within small-medium sized businesses. [www.step.org.uk](http://www.step.org.uk)

## Summer research experience placements

If you are considering a career in research or a PhD, some organisations and learned societies offer bursaries to enable undergraduates to work in a research laboratory during the summer vacation (e.g. the Biochemical Society and Cancer Research UK). The bursaries provide student support for a period of around 6 to 10 weeks, and sometimes a sum for research expenses. Some organisations offer awards to fund course-related projects or fieldwork, typically ecology or wildlife related. Many bursaries are aimed specifically at undergraduate students in their penultimate year of study but others have broader criteria and may also be open to postgraduates.

## Find out more

The SBS intranet contains detailed information about summer research bursaries, both at The University of Manchester and externally.

This includes a list of all the learned society schemes we know about (and for biological sciences, there are a lot!), plus information about summer research experience opportunities organised by your School and Faculty.

<https://app.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/education/studentssupport/bursaries.aspx>

## General advice about applying for studentships:

- For some you'll need to find yourself a potential supervisor for the summer (usually someone who is a member of the society offering the funding). Start by talking to your personal advisor or to a member of academic staff whose research you find of interest. Remember: researchers working in popular areas may be inundated with requests, so get in early! Consider some less obvious areas of research as this might improve your chances – you could also approach research staff at other universities too. Potential researchers may work in the School of Medical or Health Sciences too, not just Biological Sciences.

**Tip:** Use lists of PhD projects (at Manchester and elsewhere) to identify academic research staff you could potentially approach to host you for a summer studentship (or other work experience).

- Remember that academic researchers are busy people. Be politely persistent: don't give up if your first email is ignored, but don't be a pest either. They'll favour students who they believe are capable of undertaking a PhD project in the future, who would be useful to have around the laboratory, who are easy to manage and who won't need constant supervision.
- Be aware that staff in the Faculty may have access to your academic results. In the absence of any other information about your capabilities, these could affect any decision they make.

**NB:** Some learned societies have a list on their website of those who received an award in the past - some name the student but some also name the supervisor. **Although academic staff may have supervised summer students in the past, they are under no obligation to do so.**

## **Creative job search: finding your own job / work experience**

Not every job or work experience opportunity is advertised. You may be able to persuade someone to take you on by making a “speculative” application (i.e. making a formal, usually written approach to an organisation to persuade them to offer you some experience).

**NB.** If you want to work in the environmental sector or in conservation, making speculative approaches for entry level roles is not unusual.

**Be proactive.** Make direct contact with organisations that interest you. Check their websites for information about vacancies and schemes. Apply speculatively to those who do not mention work experience or current job opportunities on their website “just in case”. Send a targeted CV and a covering letter focused on why you are interested in **them** and why they should be interested in **you**.

- Include your practical experience on your CV: employers may be wary if they think you’ll need a lot of training first. E.g. technical lab skills (like western blotting, PCR, ELISA), data handling etc.

Address your letter/email to a named technical or lab manager rather than to “personnel” or “human resources”. Such managers are more likely to know if there is project work pending that could lend itself to a summer placement.

- Use LinkedIn to find Manchester Alumni or other people who work for your target company with a relevant job title.

[www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/networking/linkedin](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/networking/linkedin)

**Be flexible.** Not every organisation can offer 10 week paid placements. You could also work shadow (where you observe someone doing their job), volunteer, work part-time or on a project. Rather than spend the whole summer with one employer, you could arrange several shorter periods of work experience with different employers.

- Scan related job adverts to identify companies you could approach speculatively for work experience. The ad may include a department or contact name, so you know where to direct your enquiry. Look for news articles about companies in the business sections: winning a new contract could mean they are in a position to recruit.
- Attend events like “Meet the Professionals” organised by the Alumni Division and your School, to pick the brains of SBS graduates and to make useful contacts.

**Work experience bursary:** The Careers Service offers bursaries to Manchester students to enable them to undertake work experience. These are usually advertised in semester two each year.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/findjobs/bursaries](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/findjobs/bursaries)

### **An important message about unpaid work experience**

Your Careers Service does not endorse working unpaid despite the great number of unpaid internships out there, many are in fact illegal and should be paid. On our website are some suggestions so that you can consider some of the issues, understand your rights better, and know where to draw the line if you do decide to take any unpaid experience.

[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/findjobs/paytax/unpaid](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/findjobs/paytax/unpaid)

## **Useful resources for your creative job search**

### **Membership organisations for Biotech and Biosciences**

- Bionow - bioscience, biomedical and life-sciences, drug discovery and development in the North. [www.bionow.co.uk](http://www.bionow.co.uk)
- United Life Sciences links to other organisations like Bionow across the UK and beyond. <http://unitedlifesciences.org>

## Trade associations (most have member directories and news)

- Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry [www.abpi.org.uk](http://www.abpi.org.uk)
- British In Vitro Diagnostics Association [www.bivda.co.uk](http://www.bivda.co.uk)
- Association of British Healthcare Industries (medical technology) [www.abhi.org.uk](http://www.abhi.org.uk)
- UK BioIndustry Association (biotechnology) <https://www.bioindustry.org>
- UK Science Parks Association has links to science parks across the UK e.g. Manchester Science Park. [www.ukspa.org.uk](http://www.ukspa.org.uk)

## Research centres, institutes and public sector

- Government research centres and institutes are normally funded (at least in part) by one of the UK Research Councils. Check each Research Council for lists of its funded institutes. [www.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk)
- AIRTO is a membership organisation for a number of commercial and government funded research organisations and institutes. [www.airto.co.uk/our-members.html](http://www.airto.co.uk/our-members.html)
- UKAS lists accredited organisations for medical laboratory services in the UK (both NHS and private) from Andrology to Virology [http://www.ukas.com/browse-accredited-organisations/?org\\_type=7](http://www.ukas.com/browse-accredited-organisations/?org_type=7)
- The NHS Supply Chain site details preferred suppliers for services including diagnostic services. Use to find suppliers of equipment, test kits and outsourced services. [www.supplychain.nhs.uk](http://www.supplychain.nhs.uk)

## Other resources

- Contract Research Organisations (CROs) and Contract Manufacturing Organisations. <https://www.pharmiweb.com/companies>

## Using social media

- [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) - Search by keyword for jobs, groups and companies. (E.g. search for a company on LinkedIn and it will show you similar companies other people looked at – a good way to find smaller companies in niche areas. Look at profiles of people doing

the jobs that interest you to see where else they have worked. Follow companies that interest you to receive news updates).

- For more information on networking and using social media for careers, see [www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/networking](http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/networking).

## **Caring experience for prospective medical students**

If you intend to apply for medicine, you probably know that admissions tutors look for practical evidence of a commitment to caring. Candidates must be able to actively demonstrate concern for the welfare of others and their understanding that patient care is the first duty of a doctor. E.g. homecare support work, nursing homes and hospices, bank healthcare assistant in hospitals. Jobs like this are sometimes posted on CareersLink or with job agencies. [www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink)

You could also volunteer as a Community First Responder with the Ambulance Service. A medical background or first aid training is not needed as full training is given.

- North West Ambulance Service (but you can do this across the UK too) [www.nwas.nhs.uk/getting-involved/become-a-volunteer](http://www.nwas.nhs.uk/getting-involved/become-a-volunteer)
- St John Ambulance [www.sja.org.uk/sja/volunteer/first-aid/community-first-responder.aspx](http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/volunteer/first-aid/community-first-responder.aspx)

For more information on Graduate Entry to Medicine, including advice on work experience, download the starting point sheet from:

[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints)

## **Volunteering and unpaid work experience**

If you are interested in environmental careers or science communication, it can be tricky to find paid work experience. However, there are more opportunities in these areas if you able to volunteer.

- [www.manchester.ac.uk/volunteers](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/volunteers) will help you explore your options, and you can browse volunteering opportunities on the Volunteer Hub. [www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careerslink)
- If you are interested in healthcare, voluntary work is a good way to get experience working with people with different issues, such as medical conditions or simply old age. For example, working in audiology usually requires dealing with very young children and also the elderly.
- There are a number of overseas work experience schemes, particularly around conservation, that are advertised to students. These schemes incur a fee, from a couple of hundred pounds a week to several thousand in total. This is usually to cover the cost of food and accommodation and in some cases travel. Research these opportunities carefully before you commit your time and your money. [www.volunteers.manchester.ac.uk/volunteer-community-engagement/advice-and-help-to-volunteer/](http://www.volunteers.manchester.ac.uk/volunteer-community-engagement/advice-and-help-to-volunteer/)
- You may find our Starting Point Sheets on “International & Overseas Development Work” and “Environmental Work” helpful too. [www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/startingpoints)

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