Finding work experience for Biologists

General

In Bioscience, the experience you might want to gain might well be dependent on pathway and interest. Some opportunities will be open to all bio scientists, some more specifically related to a particular discipline.

Not all opportunities are advertised and you may be able to negotiate time with a company who would not normally ask for a placement or intern student but who may be willing to look at employing you for a specified time and as a result of a well thought out and constructed speculative approach.

Some placements will be advertised to you via your department and the placements office/portal others may need to be self-researched.

Many science graduates are attracted to the wider opportunities offered to graduates of any subject and you may want therefore to research shorter summer internships offered and some of the most useful sources are given at the end of this document. These might e.g. be finance, IT, marketing or commercial services. Explore!

Sanger Institute – offers short and one year placements
Astra Zeneca – sandwich and summer placements
Glaxo Smith Kline
DSTL internships (Defence)
BBSRC – research experience placements
Nuffield undergraduate bursaries in science
Pfizer
Merck, Sharpe and Dohme placements

Biomedical and Human Biosciences

British Pharmacological Society Vacation Studentships
Wellcome Trust Biomedical Science Vacation Scheme
British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy vacation scholarships
British Society for Cell Biology summer studentships
British Society for Neuroendocrinology student laboratory experience grants
Physiological Society, vacation studentships
Pathological Society undergraduate bursary
Society for General Microbiology vacation studentships
Society for Reproduction and Fertility vacation studentships
Society for Endocrinology summer studentships
Wildlife Conservation, Plants and Environmental, Animal Science

British Lichen Society Summer Vacation Scholarships
Kew
Botanical Society of the British Isles – Plant study grants
John Innes Centre undergraduate summer bursaries – plant science
British Mycological Society, undergraduate bursaries
British Society of Animal Science Summer Placement Scheme and bursaries
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare student scholarship
Animal Health Trust – some studentships and residencies

Born Free Foundation - volunteering

NERC Centre for Population Biology – occasional opportunities

Some zoos offer placements or internships e.g. Blackpool and Chester and see also ZSL
Association of zoos and aquariums – US site advertising residencies and internships
British show jumping association – sponsorships and scholarships
Internships are sometimes advertised in Environment Job, Environment Post and Animal Jobs. See also some of the links on the gaining relevant work experience pages on your subject page and check out also organisations for specific species e.g. Reptiles and Amphibian society PETA National Seal Sanctuary (Gweek)

Local opportunities for volunteering may include Devon Wildlife Trust, NMA etc

Marine and Coastal

British Phycological Society research projects
Marine Biological Association student bursaries
Many wildlife trusts are coastal so see list above for these and other options and see also opportunities with organisations like the National Trust

Exercise and Nutrition

It is rare to see advertised internships so some creative exploration and negotiation will be required but the BASES web site does offer some internships and it might also be worth looking at the UK Sport site
Alternative sources of placement and work experience information

Prospects
Target Jobs {Work Experience & internships}
Milk round
Go Wales
BBC work experience scheme
Windsor Fellowships {for undergraduates from ethnic minorities for the first long vacation of their course}
Grad South West
Graduate Jobs
Work Experience UK
Internships UK
Top Internships
Talent Ladder
Disability toolkits – information for students with disabilities looking for work placements
Placements UK
Step Org – good for project management skills and small business awareness.
E4S
Local government experience
IPA Advertising schemes
Fledgelings
Year in Industry

Summer internships also:

Summer jobs 4 students
Travelfree
Just jobs for students
Summer Internships
Bunac
Coolworks
Camp America
Camp Counsellors, USA

Exchanges e.g.

Mountbatten internships
IAESTE

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What if I can’t get or don’t want to do a placement or longer period of work experience? How else can I get some relevant knowledge?

- Think of trying to arrange a visit – you might be able to ask a few questions of someone in a role you are interested in (information interviewing). Please ask for advice on how to conduct this in a professional way if you are unsure. Poor approaches can be detrimental.
- You might be able to arrange a day or two of work shadowing or to tie in some project work to an occupational interest area
- Proactive work within a professional network e.g. becoming a student member of a professional body and attending seminars, events etc. Look out for the speakers programme in your department
- Perhaps see if you can link some project work to an employer

Mandy Burns revised August 2011

Sincere apologies if I have missed a useful source of information here. It does not pretend to be a definitive guide, just a pointer to possible opportunities. I would be happy to amend and add information.