BSc (Hons)
Science and the Media

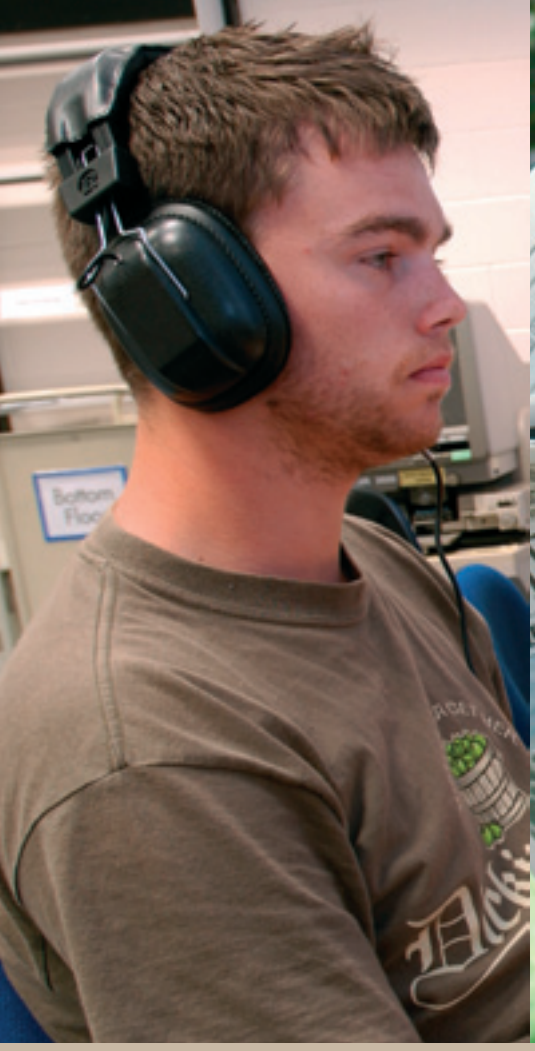
Entry requirements

A level/AS level/Vocational A level: 200 points from a minimum of two 6-unit subjects, including at least one science subject, or a 12-unit science vocational A level. 12/18 unit BTEC and OCR qualifications are also welcomed. Mature students with appropriate experience are encouraged to enquire about entry conditions. For advice, please contact a member of the science admissions team on 01752 233 093.

UCAS code: C1P3

Course summary

How accurate and reliable are the stories we hear every day about scientific developments, environmental issues and ethical concerns in newspapers, radio and television bulletins? Recent examples include subjects as diverse as genetic modification, stem cell cloning, nanotechnology, and climate change. With so many topical issues in the news, there is a great need for graduates who both understand scientific advances and have the skills to communicate them effectively. In this course, you will obtain a firm base as a scientist in a chosen discipline, which can be in Biological Sciences, Environmental Sciences or Earth Sciences. You will combine this with the theory and practice of media, using modules from the Digital Arts degree and new integrated modules using science and media skills such as communicating science in the second year. You will have the opportunity to explore both traditional media and new media forms such as interactive video and web site design. You will develop practical skills in media production and science communication. The first year of the course concentrates on core skills in both the chosen science and the media areas, whilst the tutorial module introduces you to guest speakers who are working in science communication and helps you to see future career prospects. The course also offers an excellent opportunity to learn by experience with an optional module in the second year which offers a work-based learning placement for up to four weeks in a media company or science centre. You may also elect to take an optional industrial placement year, leading to the award of the Certificate of Industrial Experience. The final year builds on the science and media skills acquired in the first two years and incorporates a major personal research module that enables you to carry out your own science communication project. There are also several innovative modules in which ethical scientific issues are debated and discussed.



Year 1

- Production for art and technology
- Critical context - new media
- Skills and concepts in science
- Biodiversity
- Genes, populations and evolution
- Molecular and cellular biology

Other options are available in the Environmental and the Earth sciences pathways

Year 2

- Critical context -digital arts
- Communicating science

Option modules

- Agro-ecosystems
- Work based learning in science and the media
- Ecology
- Botanical illustration and image production
- Animal and plant physiology
- Genetic continuity and diversity
- Environmental and ecological biochemistry
- Microbial life

Other options are available in the Environmental and the Earth sciences pathways

Final Year

- Contemporary issues in biosciences
- Science and media research project
- Media, culture and risk

Option modules

- Emergent media
- New media practice
- Science centre communication
- Scientific discussion: purpose and process
- Aquatic ecology
- Speciation and diversity
- Health and disease: an integrated approach
- Environmental microbiology
- Microbial diseases and biotechnology
- Environmental plant physiology
- Plant exploitation - from ethnobotany to biotechnology
- Applied plant sciences - biology into business
- Biology of marine systems

Other options are available in the Environmental and the Earth sciences pathways

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Special features

The Science and the Media course offers a unique combination of a pure science and the skills to communicate science to the public which are normally only found at MSc level, together with an opportunity in workbased learning to put these skills into practice. We have very strong links with media organisations like the Plymouth Evening Herald and partnerships with local science centres such as the National Marine Aquarium, the Eden Project and Paignton Zoo Environmental Park, and the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol. These links provide work-based learning placements and also form a key part of a new final year module, which investigates the techniques used in such science centres to deliver science to different audiences. The module also incorporates experiential learning through field visits to the centres. A special feature of the second year Biological Sciences pathway is the unique botanical illustration and image production module, in which you will study ways in which botanical images were produced historically and employ a range of different practical techniques such as pen and ink, watercolour, photography and electron microscopy.

Research

The scientific component of teaching in this course is enriched by the varied research carried out by lecturers in the Schools of Biological Sciences and Earth, Ocean and Environmental Science but you will also gain from the research expertise of staff in many different areas. For example, sociologists conduct research into attitudes of journalists and the media reporting of environmental issues such as oil spills and nanotechnology. Media lecturers are members of several research groups, including i-DAT (Institute of Digital Arts & Technology), which is dedicated to exploring innovative applications of digital technology through collaborations between artists, academics and researchers in emergent fields of practice on a regional, national and international basis. Plymouth is also home to STAR (Science Technology Art Research), a unique transdisciplinary group within the School of Computing, which has developed an international research profile. The research environment is further enriched by close interaction with other research areas in the School of Computing, including robotics, artificial life and neuroscience.

After your degree

The Science and the Media course will equip you for a wide variety of careers in areas such as media production and presentation; scientific journalism; public relations; teaching; science education centres; and environmental organisations. It is also possible to follow further postgraduate study (MSc/PhD)in your chosen science pathway.