

Which Biological Sciences program is right for me? *

We are excited to meet you as a prospective student considering a Biological Sciences (BioSci) program! It is important to consider a number of factors such as your interests, strengths and future aspirations when choosing your program of study in BioSci. Below are a few criteria we would like you to carefully evaluate. Pre-program and program supervisors in BioSci and academic advisors in the Academic Advising and Career Centre (AA&CC) can guide you through this important decision; providing us with your reflections on the factors listed below is an important preparatory step that will help us mentor you more effectively.

The BioSci website (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/biosci/programs>), the AA&CC career tipsheets (<https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/node/77>) and the UTSC Course Calendar (<https://utsc.calendar.utoronto.ca/list-of-programs/B>) contain a wealth of information that you should consult as you reflect on these questions.

- **What are you interested in?**

Studying subjects that are interesting to you means you will enjoy your time at university more, you will be more focused in your learning, and will likely achieve higher grades.

- o Which modules of BIOA01/BIOA02 spoke to you?
- o Which 3rd and 4th year courses look interesting to you?
- o Are you interested in being a field biologist or a lab-based biologist?
- o Are you interested in co-op work terms as part of your program?
- o Are you interested enough to study a subject at a more intensive level? Have you considered all of our Specialist programs?
- o Are you interested in a major program from a different discipline (e.g. Health Studies, Psychology, Environmental Science, French)? If so, have you considered doing a double major?

- **Where do your strengths lie?**

This means looking at where your skills lie. For instance, do you enjoy writing, doing research, are you a problem solver? Are you good with numbers, creative expression, or intricate details?

Assessing your strengths and understanding those required by different programs may give you some ideas as to which programs are best for you.

- o Do you learn best from discussing concepts and theories in a classroom setting or through hands-on or applied experiences?
- o Are you able to stay on top of the workload requirements of this program?
- o Is math/quantitative reasoning part of your intellectual tool kit?

- **What career opportunities become available to me if I complete with this program?**

All BioSci programs prepare graduates for a number of career opportunities. The answer lies not so much with the program, but with each person. What skills, interests, strength and personal attributes do you possess that will help you succeed in a specific career? Many careers do not require a specific BioSci program but rather require that you have developed specific skills during your undergraduate

degree. All BioSci programs are designed to promote development of transferable skills such as critical thinking, scientific communication (written, oral and active listening) and teamwork, to name a few. Hence, you have considerable flexibility in terms of program choice. We recommend that you build relevant experience through research positions, volunteer work, work-study or internships during your time at UTSC, as this experience and network will be essential for your future applications for further study (graduate, professional schools) and employment after graduation.

You do not need to have a career path in mind before you choose your program! It is common to change your mind about your program or career choice and we encourage you to explore new career possibilities as you navigate through a program of study that appeals to your interests. If you would like to discuss your career options, contact AA&CC and book an appointment with a Career Counsellor (information here on how to schedule appointments: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/career-employment-appointments>). In addition, you can seek advice from your program supervisor.

- o If you know that you are likely to apply to a specific professional/graduate program, are there specific courses that you know you need to complete during your degree at UTSC? Some of our programs may have these courses built into them.
- o Do you think this program will help you achieve your future education/employment goals? AA&CC has some really useful career tipsheets by program that you should consult: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/node/77>
- o Will you have the opportunity to consider a specific graduate/professional program or other further degree once you complete this program as an undergraduate?
 - Note that some professional schools (e.g. Medicine, Pharmacy) do not require you to complete specific undergraduate program; however, completing a degree will allow access to other career options if you do not enter your first choice of professional program or change your mind about your future career.
- o Will a specific program enhance your ability to get into graduate school?

· **Why do I want to enrol in a specific program?**

Examine why you are making this choice; look at the above factors, and ensure that your program is interesting to you, that you can succeed at it and that it offers courses and career options that are right for you.

- o What do I hope to gain (e.g. communication skills, research knowledge) upon completing this program?
- o Do I meet the academic requirements (e.g. pre-requisite courses) for admission into this program?

Making the right choice

Once you have reflected on the questions in this document, we recommend that you come in to meet with our Pre-program supervisor/Undergraduate Advisor Jennifer Campbell (jacampbell@utsc.utoronto.ca, SW421D in the BioSci admin office) or make an appointment with specific program supervisors (contact information for program supervisors can be found by clicking on specific programs in this link: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/biosci/programs>), or academic advisors at AA&CC (information here on how to schedule appointments or drop-in: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/node/39>). During these meetings, we can discuss your reflections and work together to determine which one of our programs is likely to be the best fit for your strengths and interests, and will best prepare you for your future educational and career goals.

*Adapted with permission from these original AA&CC sources:

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