

Introduction

Biology: A Diverse Degree

People who become biology majors are as diverse as the wide variety of specialized fields in the biological sciences. And though the number of people entering biology careers each year is growing rapidly, so is the number of new fields being added to the list of options.

With so many possibilities available, new biologists will never feel pigeonholed. They can choose a career path suited to their personality and preferred lifestyle. For indoor types there are positions in labs, offices, hospitals, classrooms, museums, and libraries. Those who prefer the out-of-doors can opt for fieldwork at sea, in a tropical rain forest, a botanical garden, zoo, or aquarium.

Biologists can choose what kinds of systems or groups to focus on as well as the setting in which they work. With a degree in biology you can investigate a particular type or group of organisms, such as animals, bacteria, or plants. Or, you could work with a particular system within an organism, such as cells, tissues, or entire organs.

You could also investigate the interaction between organisms and their environment in a particular area, such as an ocean or a desert. Or you could focus on the chemical, physical, or medical aspects of living things.

Although many biologists are mainly involved in research and development and work in the laboratory or field, you can also find many other sectors of science to work in. There are jobs available in areas such as management, administration, service work, sales, writing, illustrating, and photography.

Biology majors can also use their undergraduate degrees as a stepping-stone to graduate work and then careers in university education, medicine, law, and advanced research. A biology degree offers great flexibility.

The Road Ahead

In Part One of this book, you will learn many valuable tips on the job search, especially how to prepare and present yourself for the ideal job you are seeking.

In Part Two, you will explore a variety of career paths, many that are open to any biology major, some that are more defined, and still others that require further education or training, master's degrees, and often doctorates. Chapter 5 will give you a broad overview of the various paths; the remaining chapters will help you narrow those paths.

Once you've found the path you want to follow, you'll realize how important your biology degree is in reaching your ultimate destination.