

# Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

**Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)**, part of UK Research and Innovation, is a non-departmental public body (NDPB), and is the largest UK public funder of non-medical bioscience. It predominantly funds scientific research institutes and university research departments in the UK.

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## Purpose

Receiving its funding through the science budget of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), BBSRC's mission is to "promote and support, by any means, high-quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training relating to the understanding and exploitation of biological systems".<sup>[1]</sup>

## Structure

BBSRC's head office is at Polaris House <sup>[2]</sup> in Swindon - the same building as the other councils of UK Research and Innovation, AHRC EPSRC, ESRC, Innovate UK, MRC, NERC, Research England and STFC, as well as the UKSA. Funded by Government, BBSRC invested over £498 million in bioscience in 2017–18. BBSRC also manages the joint Research Councils' Office in Brussels – the UK Research Office (UKRO).

## History

BBSRC was created in 1994, merging the former Agricultural and Food Research Council (AFRC) and taking over the biological science activities of the former Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC).<sup>[3]</sup>

### Chairs

- Sir Alistair Grant (1994-1998)<sup>[4]</sup>
- Dr Peter Doyle CBE (1998-2003)
- Dr Peter Ringrose (2003-2009)
- Prof Sir Tom Blundell FRS (2009–2015)
- Prof Sir Gordon Duff (2015–present)<sup>[3]</sup>

### Chief Executives

- Prof (now Sir) Tom Blundell FRS (1994 -1996)
- Prof Ray Baker CBE (1996-2002)
- Prof (now Dame) Julia Goodfellow CBE (2002-2007)
- Prof Douglas Kell CBE (2008–2013)
- Dr Jackie Hunter CBE (from 21 October 2013)
- Prof Melanie Welham FRSB (2016-2018)<sup>[3]</sup>

### Executive Chairs

- Prof Melanie Welham FRSB (2018–present)<sup>[5]</sup>


## Governance and management

BBSRC is managed by the BBSRC Council consisting of a Chair (from 2015, Professor Sir Gordon Duff), an Executive Chair (Professor Melanie Welham) and from ten to eighteen representatives from UK universities, government and industry. The Council approves policies, strategy, budgets and major funding.

A Research Panel provides expert advice which BBSRC Council draws upon in making decisions. The purpose of the Research Panel is to advise on:

- the development and implementation of the Council's strategic plans
- the competitiveness, relevance, economic impact, and societal considerations of the science and innovation activities funded by BBSRC
- opportunities for partnership with national and international organisations

## Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
<b>Abbreviation</b>	BBSRC
<b>Formation</b>	1994 (from merger of 2 other organisations)
<b>Type</b>	Non-Departmental Public Body
<b>Purpose</b>	Funding of UK biological and biotechnological science research
<b>Headquarters</b>	Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1UH
<b>Region served</b>	United Kingdom
<b>Chair</b>	Sir Gordon Duff
<b>Executive Chair</b>	Melanie Welham
<b>Main organ</b>	BBSRC Council
<b>Parent organization</b>	UK Research and Innovation
<b>Affiliations</b>	AHRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC, Innovate UK, Research England, UKSA
<b>Budget</b>	c. £498M
<b>Website</b>	bbsrc.ukri.org (http://bbsrc.ukri.org)

## Boards, panels and committees

In addition to the Council and the Research Panel, BBSRC has a series of other internal bodies for specific purposes.

- Appointments Board
- Remuneration Board
- Strategy Advisory Panels - eight Panels advise and report to the BBSRC Executive Chair
- Research Committees - five Committees award research grants in specific science areas

## Institutes of BBSRC

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The Council strategically funds eight research institutes in the UK, and a number of centres (BBSRC: Institutes and centres (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/organisation/institutes>)).

They have strong links with business, industry and the wider community, and support policy development.

The institutes' research underpins key sectors of the UK economy such as agriculture, bioenergy, biotechnology, food and drink and pharmaceuticals. In addition, the institutes maintain unique research facilities of national importance.

- Babraham Institute (BI) (Cambridge)
- Earlham Institute (EI) (formerly The Genome Analysis Centre) (Norwich)
- The Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) part of Aberystwyth University, (Aberystwyth)
- John Innes Centre (JIC) (Norwich)
- The Pirbright Institute (Pirbright), formerly the Institute for Animal Health (IAH)
- Quadram Institute (Norwich)
- The Roslin Institute (RI), part of the University of Edinburgh, (East Lothian)
- Rothamsted Research (Harpenden and North Wyke)

Other research institutes have merged with each other or with local universities. Previous BBSRC (or AFRC) sponsored institutes include:

- Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER - Aberystwyth), merged with the University of Aberystwyth 2008
- The Roslin Institute (RI - Edinburgh), merged with the University of Edinburgh 2008
- Letcombe Laboratory
- Long Ashton Research Station (LARS - Bristol)
- the Plant Breeding Institute (PBI - Cambridge)
- the Weed Research Organisation (WRO - Oxford)
- Silsoe Research Institute (SRI - Bedfordshire) was closed in 2006.

## References

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1. BBSRC mission <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/organisation/mission.aspx>
2. [http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?q=polaris+house+swindon&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-GB:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=Polaris+House,+N+Star+Ave,+Swindon+SN2+1UJ&gl=uk&ei=A92UTbvEdG5hAfc9en8CA&sa=X&oi=geocode\\_result&ct=title&resnum=18](http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?q=polaris+house+swindon&oe=utf-8&rls=org.mozilla:en-GB:official&client=firefox-a&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=Polaris+House,+N+Star+Ave,+Swindon+SN2+1UJ&gl=uk&ei=A92UTbvEdG5hAfc9en8CA&sa=X&oi=geocode_result&ct=title&resnum=18)
3. "Our mission and history" (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/about/mission/>). BBSRC. Retrieved 31 March 2016.
4. Tom Blundell (2014). *Annual Report and Accounts 2013-2014* (<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/documents/1314-bbsrc-annual-report-accounts-pdf/>). Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. p. 2.
5. "26 March 2018 - Professor Melanie Welham selected for the role of Executive Chair of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council - BBSRC" (<https://bbsrc.ukri.org/news/people-skills-training/2018/180326-pr-melanie-welham-selected-executive-chair-bbsrc/>). *bbsrc.ukri.org*. Retrieved 3 December 2018.

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