

## IS IT WORTH PURSUING A DEGREE IN BIOTECHNOLOGY?

**Summary:** Should you get a master's degree in biotechnology? Find out in this article.



**Question:** I am currently in my final year of undergraduate study and am thinking about pursuing a master's degree in biotechnology in Australia or New Zealand. What are the future job prospects in this field?

**Answer:** The field is wide open. Although the economy has affected biotechnology to some degree, the prospects remain promising and should expand. Interest in genomics, a growing older population, and demand for drugs are likely to keep the biotech industry profitable, though not necessarily stable, internationally.

Biotech and pharmaceuticals are closely aligned, but biotech has a focus on development, so it is more heavily research-oriented. Pharma (as insiders refer to the big pharmaceutical companies) firms are usually large hierarchical companies. Though some biotech companies are large, most are smaller and have a more improvisational culture.

With a master's degree, you might work as a clinical research associate, biomedical engineer, in quality assurance or focus on a hot new technology. Medical research and development of pharmaceuticals are concerned with human health, while agricultural research and development (agribiotech) exists to modify and improve crops and animals.

For more details, there are a variety of sources online containing a directory of international links covering the field of biotechnology that lists a variety of journals and associations, including, for example, the Asia-Pacific International Molecular Biology Network.