

FIELD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS CERTIFICATES (FISCs)

Does your work or voluntary activities include field botany and plant recording?

Do you want to quantify your plant ID skills?

Do you know where you are on the plant ID skills ladder?

If you want to find out more...

...read about FISCs – the new field skills qualifications from the BSBI and the University of Birmingham’s School of Biosciences.



FIELD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS QUALIFICATIONS

In 2006 the Botanical Society of the British Isles trialled a new system for assessing skill levels for vascular plant identification, and this year, Field Identification Skills Certificates (FISCs) are available for the first time.

What does a FISC entail?

There are two parts to a FISC and it takes the best part of a day to take. There is firstly a lab test where a number of specimens are laid out for identification – the easier ones without books and keys, the more difficult with books and keys. After lunch there is a visit to a site where candidates record everything that they can see for roughly 1½ hours.

How long does it take?

The FISC starts at about 11 am and finishes about 4 pm.

When do the FISCs run?

In 2011, there are two dates from which to choose:

Wednesday 13th July

Wednesday 20th July

How much does it cost?

The FISC costs £50 to take and this includes lunch and transport to sites.

What do I need to bring?

Outdoor clothing appropriate for the weather, identification books and a hand lens (although in an emergency we may be able to provide a lens and a Rose). Lunch is provided and transport to the site is provided by minibus.

What sort of plants will there be to identify?

A wide range from a variety of habitats. The lab test will contain species that can potentially come from anywhere in the UK.

Will I pass?

You can't fail! The FISC test allows a skill level to be allocated to you. See the attached Botanical Skills Pyramid for the Skill Levels. You are awarded a certificate from the BSBI stating your skill level. You may wish to come back in a few years to take the FISC again to see how you have progressed.

Who runs the FISCs?

The Botanical Society of the British Isles awards the FISC, which is run by the University of Birmingham at its Gateway Education Centre in Shrewsbury.

How do I book?

Fill in the booking sheet and return to Linda Marsh, University of Birmingham, The Gateway, Chester Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB.

Email l.marsh@bham.ac.uk if you have any queries.