

FIELD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS CERTIFICATES (FISCs)

**Does your work or voluntary
activity 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 definitive
field skills certificates from the
BSBI, administered by Manchester
Metropolitan University.**



FIELD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS CERTIFICATES

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

What does a FISC entail?

There are usually three parts to a FISC and it takes the best part of a day to take. There are two lab tests 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 to 2 hours.

How long does it take?

The FISC usually starts around 10.30am and finishes by about 5.00pm, but please check precise timings with the FISC centre.

When and where do the FISCs run?

In 2017, there are 7 dates and 3 locations from which to choose:

Leicester: Saturday 24th June ([University of Leicester Botanic Garden](#)).

Maidstone: Thursday 1st June; Thursday 20th July; Thursday 7th September ([Kent Wildlife Trust Headquarters, Maidstone](#)).

Shrewsbury: Wednesday 12th July; Wednesday 26th July; Wednesday 2nd August ([The Gateway, Shrewsbury](#) - Manchester Metropolitan University's Shrewsbury campus).

How much does it cost?

The FISC costs £50-60 to take – this cost varies between centres depending on whether or not lunch and transport to sites by minibus are provided.

What do I need to bring?

Identification books and a hand lens (although in an emergency we may be able to provide a lens and some identification guides).

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 and they are not necessarily all common species.

Will I pass?

You can't fail! The FISC test allows a skill level to be allocated to you. See the [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 Britain and Ireland awards the FISC. Manchester Metropolitan University provides study facilities and marking services for the Shrewsbury and Kent FISCs, and the University of Leicester provides the same for the Leicester FISC.

How do I book?

Book for a FISC in Leicester [here](#).

Book for a FISC in Maidstone [here](#).

Book for a FISC in Shrewsbury [here](#).

Booking forms for all FISC centres can also be downloaded [here](#), and you can email us [here](#) if you have any queries.