

Faculty of Science



**Department of Biology &
Biochemistry
Postgraduate Taught
Programmes
Handbook 2020/21**



CONTENTS

About this handbook.....	1
Important links and information.....	2
University information online	2
Department Welcome 2020/21	4
About the Department 2020/21.....	4
Key contacts/staff list.....	6
About Your Programme	7
Programme aims and learning outcomes	7
Programme description: structure of your programme	7
Unit and Programme Catalogues	7
Your learning.....	7
Your Timetable.....	8
Physical study space – 2020/21	8
Option choices	8
Research Ethics	8
Unit and programme changes 2020/21	9
Giving feedback on your programme to the University	9
Assessment.....	10
Submission deadlines.....	10
Late submission of coursework	10
Word counts.....	11
Feedback on assessment	11
Academic Integrity.....	13
If circumstances impact on your assessment attempt	13
Assessment processes	13
Assessment Regulations.....	14
Academic Appeals.....	17
University Regulations for students.....	19
Accessing university email	19
Students' Union membership	19
Data protection	19
Registration status	19
Academic engagement monitoring for Tier 4 students	20
Change in your circumstances	20
Dissatisfaction with a university service or facility (Complaints).....	20

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This is the 2020-21 Handbook for all students on the MSc Molecular Biosciences (Bioinformatics), MSc Molecular Biosciences (Biotechnology), MSc Molecular Biosciences (Medical Biosciences) and MSc Molecular Biosciences (Microbiology) programme(s).

The contents of this Handbook are accurate at the time of publication [November 2020] but information contained within may sometimes be subject to change after this Handbook has been issued.

The Important Links and Information section of this Handbook includes links to information online about both the topics covered in this Handbook and other key topics. It is important that you familiarise yourself with the online information as well as the contents of this Handbook.

In August 2020 we wrote to you to explain how your programme has been adapted in response to COVID-19 safety measures and our 'Bath Blend' approach to learning and teaching for academic year 2020/21.

Information about the structure of your programme (which units you take when, which units are compulsory etc), as well as key unit information (including learning outcomes, synopsis and assessment), for the upcoming academic year can be found online in the Unit and Programme Catalogues (see **Unit and Programme Catalogues** in this Handbook and www.bath.ac.uk/catalogues). You will also receive details about unit content and assessment via the University's online learning environment, Moodle.

You will be informed, normally by your Director of Studies or Unit Convenor, of any further changes that will affect your programme or a unit. See also **As Masters students, you will be** conducting research and it would be useful for you to familiarise yourselves with the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards, to conduct your research. While this is not mandatory for Masters students, we strongly encourage you to look at this guide on research integrity and ethics:
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/topics/research-integrity-and-ethics/>
Unit and programme changes 2020/21 in this Handbook.

You will be informed via announcements if any services offered by the University will need to be changed as a result of changing circumstances during 2020/21.

While this Handbook signposts information about regulations for students, it does not have regulatory status itself, and the Regulations available online (Regulations for Students: <http://go.bath.ac.uk/regulations> and Assessment Regulations: www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/new-framework-for-assessment) are the most up-to-date and take precedence over the contents of this Handbook. It is your responsibility to take the time to familiarise yourself with the Regulations.

If in doubt about what applies to you, or if your circumstances change, please contact your Director of Studies for advice.

IMPORTANT LINKS AND INFORMATION

UNIVERSITY INFORMATION ONLINE

This Handbook is an accompaniment to important information available to all students on the University's website. It is expected that you will familiarise yourself with the online information signposted below.

If you cannot find the information you are looking for in this Handbook or on the web please contact your Director of Studies in the first instance.



SUPPORTING YOU

Student Support Services
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/student-services/>

SU Advice and Support Service
www.thesubath.com/advice

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
<https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

Advice for specific groups of students:
International students
www.bath.ac.uk/topics/visas
www.bath.ac.uk/guides/student-immigration-appointments-and-drop-in-sessions
www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/studying-at-bath-as-an-erasmus-exchange-or-visiting-student
www.bath.ac.uk/guides/academic-engagement-monitoring-for-tier-4-students

Care-leavers
[https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-leaving-care/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-leaving-care/)

Estranged students
[https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-estranged-students/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-estranged-students/)

Refugees
[https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-refugees/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-refugees/)

Students with caring responsibilities
[https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-young-adult-carers/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-young-adult-carers/)

Pregnancy and maternity



CORE UNIVERSITY SERVICES / INFORMATION

Dissatisfaction with a University service or facility (Complaints)
www.bath.ac.uk/guides/student-complaints-policy-and-procedure

Health and Safety
www.bath.ac.uk/guides/student-health-and-safety
Be Safe on Campus information (COVID-19)
[https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/be-safe-on-campus-and-in-bath-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/be-safe-on-campus-and-in-bath-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/)

Library and Study Spaces
[https://library.bath.ac.uk/home](http://library.bath.ac.uk/home)
www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/where-you-can-study-on-campus-and-in-the-city

Skills Support and Development
<http://go.bath.ac.uk/my-skills>
www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/get-ahead-with-skills-at-bath

Learning Technologies & IT Support
[https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/digital-data-and-technology/](http://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/digital-data-and-technology/)

Careers Service
www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/careers-service

Data Protection
www.bath.ac.uk/guides/data-protection-guidance

Bullying, harassment and victimisation

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/getting-advice-if-you-are-pregnant-while-studying-or-have-a-young-child/>

Disabilities, long-term illness, and specific learning difficulties

<http://go.bath.ac.uk/disability-service>

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/report-and-support/>

SU Code of Practice and membership

www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/code-of-practice-for-the-students-union-su

SUPPORTING YOUR LEARNING

Your Learning

[www.bath.ac.uk/guides/your-learning
Bath Blend](http://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/your-learning_Bath Blend)

Glossary

Year Dates and Timetables

Regulations for students

<http://go.bath.ac.uk/regulations>

Registration

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/registering-with-the-university

Withdrawing from or suspending your studies

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/suspending-your-studies-or-leaving-the-university

Placements

<http://go.bath.ac.uk/placements-information-for-students>

Personal Tutoring

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/personal-tutoring

Units and Programmes

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/about-units-and-programmes

Catalogues

Option choices

How your programme is reviewed and monitored

Student Representation and Engagement

www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/student-engagement-shape-your-university

Assessment

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/assessment-guidance-for-students

Assessment processes

Understanding your results

External examiners

Supplementary assessment

Academic Integrity

www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/academic-integrity-training-and-test

Assessment Regulations

www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/new-framework-for-assessment

Definitions of assessment terms

Individual Mitigating Circumstances

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/reporting-individual-mitigating-circumstances-to-the-university

Academic Appeals

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/appealing-against-an-academic-decision

DEPARTMENT WELCOME 2020/21

A warm welcome from the Department of Biology & Biochemistry.

I am delighted that you have chosen to pursue your Masters studies with us. As part of this exciting new phase in your academic career, you will be encouraged to become confident, self-reflective, critical thinking scientists. We will support you all the way towards achieving your career ambitions and want you to have an enriching and enjoyable experience. I look forward to meeting you all on the Monday of the Academic Induction week.

Dr. Zoë Burke
Director of Studies, Masters Programmes

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT 2020/21

The primary point of contact for students on taught Masters Courses is the Postgraduate Taught office, which is responsible for overseeing the postgraduate student journey, from admission through to graduation.

Your key contact in the Postgraduate Taught office is Alice Gibbons (see key contacts). The department office is located in 4 South 0.03.

- Moodle or Email: Almost all communications will be done electronically through message boards on Moodle or through email. Please ensure that you check these regularly and also ensure that you clear your Inbox regularly. If full, some important emails may not reach you.
- Pigeon holes: Any post that is directed to you through the department will be put in the Master's pigeon holes in the foyer of the 4 South Building.
- Noticeboards: Important information such as templates of examination scripts or timetable of exams will be put up on noticeboards in 4 South, along with documentation on jobs and career opportunities.
- Computing Resources: Moodle is the University of Bath Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It will be the main means of accessing all study resources including lectures and online reading materials. You will also be expected to submit assignments by electronic uploads, as well as keep abreast of news and information relating to your study programme on Moodle.

Research Areas of the Department

Bath is one of the leading research-intensive Biosciences departments in the UK. It is renowned for its broad range of world-leading and internationally excellent research on animals, plants and microorganisms that fall into the four theme areas below. The outstanding quality of the research is reflected in the level of external funding from the UK Research Councils, medical charities, European Union and Industry as well as publications in the top international journals (Nature, Science, PNAS and PLoS Biology).

Research themes

- Cell and developmental biology
- Evolution and biodiversity
- Infection and immunity

- Medical and industrial biotechnology

Research Centres

The department works closely with other departments and faculties within the university (particularly with the Departments of Mathematical Sciences, Pharmacy and Pharmacology and Chemical Engineering) to provide 8 inter-departmental Centres:

1. The Milner Centre for Evolution (a cross-faculty research centre bridging biology, health and education)
2. Centre for Sustainable Technologies (cross faculty with Chemistry and Chemical Engineering)
3. Centre for Regenerative Medicine (with the Chemical Engineering and Pharmacy & Pharmacology)
4. Centre for Mathematical Biology (with the Department of Mathematical Sciences)
5. Centre for Networks and Collective Behaviour (with the Department of Mathematical Sciences)
6. Centre for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology (cross faculty with Science & Engineering)
7. Centre for Biosensors, Bioelectronics and Biodevices (cross faculty with Science and Engineering)
8. Centre for Therapeutic Innovation (cross-faculty with Science and Engineering)

The combination of first-class physical facilities, a stimulating intellectual environment and a structured graduate training programme makes the Department an outstanding centre for postgraduate studies.

The Milner Centre

The Milner Centre for Evolution was funded by a £5 million donation from University of Bath alumnus Dr Jonathan Milner. The centre is the **first** of its kind in the UK and only the **second in the world** to focus on evolutionary research.

It will concentrate on three related strands:

- Fundamental research into how life evolved, from investigating the evolution of genes to studying fossil records;
- Applied research into the evolution of microbes, including genetic tracking of MRSA infections, and applying this knowledge to improve medical treatments;
- Communication of evolution research to the public, including improving the teaching of evolution in schools at primary and secondary level, running free open access online courses (MOOCs) and using evolution to improve public health messaging.



KEY CONTACTS/STAFF LIST

Name	Role	Tel. ext.	Room	Email prefix (@bath.ac.uk)
Prof. David Tosh	Head of Department	6532	4S 0.01	bssdt
Dr. Zoë Burke	Director of Studies	3715	4S 0.48	bsszdb
Dr. Maisem Laabei	Personal Tutor	3178	4S 1.09	ml418
Mrs Alice Gibbons	Programme Administrator		4S 0.03	facscipgtadmin

Please contact

- Dr. Burke if you have any questions related to your academic progression or the programme
- Dr. Laabei if you have any personal issues or require pastoral support
- Mrs Alice Gibbons if you have any questions related to access to courses, feedback etc

Programme Tutors

Academics who look after the subject-specific intellectual development of the students on a specific programme and coordinate appropriate coursework.

Programmes	Programme Leader	Contact
Bioinformatics Pathway	Prof Sam Sheppard	sks70@bath.ac.uk
Biotechnology Pathway	Dr Volkan Cevik	vc357@bath.ac.uk
Medical Biosciences Pathway	Dr Paul Whitley	bssprw@bath.ac.uk
Microbiology Pathway	Dr Daniel Henk	dah44@bath.ac.uk

Lecturers and Unit Convenors

There are many different people with overlapping responsibilities for your teaching programme. Your most immediate point of contact is with the individual lecturer responsible for a teaching activity. Units sometimes involve several lecturers and in this case one is designated as the unit convenor, responsible for the whole series. If only one lecturer is involved, he/she is also convenor of that unit. If you have difficulties with a particular teaching activity, this is the person you should consult. If there are many similar problems, he/she may organise additional support (e.g. through Moodle or via direct contact). If you do not hear back from your unit convenor or lecturer for more than 2 weeks, please contact your Director of Studies.

ABOUT YOUR PROGRAMME 2020/21

The main aim of the MSc programme is as a 'first-step in graduate specialisation' by providing professional-level training that will develop highly skilled bioscientists with strong theoretical, research and transferable skills necessary to work at the forefront of modern biosciences. MSc programmes are designed to give the student an advanced knowledge of the subject and also provide an insight into a range of research activities, techniques and skills. The programmes are designed to produce graduates suitable for entry into employment or further study through PhD programmes.

PROGRAMME AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course the student will:

- have an in-depth knowledge and understanding in the specialist subject (PGDip)
- apply their knowledge to current research (PGDip & MSc)
- demonstrate a critical awareness of the research related to their specialist area informed by scholarship, including a critical awareness of current developments in the subject (PGDip & MSc)
- evaluate the exploitation and management of biosciences relevant to their research (PGDip & MSc)

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION: STRUCTURE OF YOUR PROGRAMME

The structure for your programme year for 2020/21 can be found in the 2020/21 Unit and Programme Catalogues (see below). This is where you find important information on which units you are taking in which semester and if any units are 'designated essential units' (DEUs) that you must pass.

The content of the Programme Catalogues is correct at the time of publication. Programmes and units may be subject to reasonable change (see also As Masters students, you will be conducting research and it would be useful for you to familiarise yourselves with the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards, to conduct your research. While this is not mandatory for Masters students, we strongly encourage you to look at this guide on research integrity and ethics: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/topics/research-integrity-and-ethics/> Unit and programme changes 2020/21 in this Handbook).

UNIT AND PROGRAMME CATALOGUES

This is where you will find details about all years of your programme as well as details about individual units for the current academic year.

The Catalogues also provide links to the relevant areas of the University's assessment regulations, showing how these are applied to this programme of study.

For the online Catalogues, please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook. See also the section in this Handbook on **Assessment**.

YOUR LEARNING

For 2020/21, the University has developed a blended learning approach called 'The Bath Blend' which combines in-person activities on campus, live interactive learning, and structured independent study.

The Bath Blend approach to programme delivery has been developed to be flexible in the face of possible changes in law, including measures on social distancing, which may occur through the course of this academic year.

Information on IT support and key software for this academic year is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

YOUR TIMETABLE

Using MyTimetable, you can access your personal timetable and download it into an electronic calendar.

Your In-Person Teaching (IPT) day and Live Online Interactive Learning (LOIL) sessions will show in your timetable. Links to LOIL sessions can also be accessed through the relevant unit page on the University's online learning environment, Moodle.

When you start your units, you will be able to access associated online material at a time that suits your schedule.

MyTimetable updates regularly, so should there be a change to your timetable, it will be reflected in MyTimetable.

You will be contacted directly via email with any changes to your timetable.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

PHYSICAL STUDY SPACE – 2020/21

As in previous years, you will be able to book study space on campus and in the city for individual or group study. Information on how to book, and the COVID-19 requirements, is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

OPTION CHOICES

If your programme has option choice then information about how and when to choose your option units can be found online (please refer to **Important Links and Information**). If applicable, you will receive an email notification at the relevant point in the year when online unit selection is available and if you need to discuss option choices, please contact your Director of Studies.

RESEARCH ETHICS

As Masters students, you will be conducting research and it would be useful for you to familiarise yourselves with the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards, to conduct your research. While this is not mandatory for

Masters students, we strongly encourage you to look at this guide on research integrity and ethics: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/topics/research-integrity-and-ethics/>

UNIT AND PROGRAMME CHANGES 2020/21

All programme and unit changes are managed through formal University processes. This is to ensure that changes are academically appropriate, properly supported and are done in a way that safeguards the interests of students.

In addition to the Bath Blend approach to delivery of your programme in 2020/21, which has already been put in place, it is possible that further changes to your programme may be required. These are more likely to be part of continual development aimed at enhancing your learning experience and maintaining high academic standards and quality. Such changes could be, for example, to update content to reflect latest developments in a particular field of study, or to respond to student feedback on delivery and/or assessment. Students who would be affected by proposed changes are consulted about them, either via their Staff/Student Liaison Committee or directly, depending on the nature of the change.

As we have already experienced, it is sometimes necessary to make changes due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances. Outside of the global pandemic, this could be for reasons such as:

- the accrediting body requiring changes to be made to the course, or,
- being unable to run an option unit because too few students selected it.

When this happens, we always try to ensure that the impact on students is minimised and that those affected are informed of the changes at the earliest opportunity.

Information on how we assure the quality and standards of your programme of study is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

FURTHER STUDY

The department provides guidance and information on applying for PhD studies after a Masters, through a 'Thinking of Applying for a PhD?' session, sometime around October – November. Video recordings of these sessions will be available on Moodle. The Faculty Careers Advisory service is also available through the University Careers Team.

GIVING FEEDBACK ON YOUR PROGRAMME TO THE UNIVERSITY

The University is committed to continually improving its practice and aims to engage students as active partners in their education (Education Strategy 2016-21). The three main ways in which your feedback will be sought will be through:

- Staff / Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs)
- surveys and evaluations
- the Students' Union.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

ASSESSMENT

Full information is available online. For signposts to important information on many aspects of assessment, please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

Any exam-based assessment during the 2020/21 academic year will be online. More information on assessment arrangements for this year, including online assessment, will be provided via the University webpages and updated as necessary.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

You will be informed of the deadline to submit your assessment.

LATE SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK

To ensure fairness to all students, you will be expected to hand in all assessed coursework and dissertations/projects by a specified date and time, and there are penalties for submitting work after the specified deadline. If there are valid circumstances preventing you from meeting a deadline, your Director of Studies may grant you an extension to the specified submission date. Forms to request an extension are available from the Department.

Please note that:

- if you submit a piece of work after the submission date, and no extension has been granted, the maximum mark possible will be the pass mark
- if you submit work more than five working days after the submission date, you will normally receive a mark of 0 (zero), unless you have been granted an extension.

It is not usually possible to mark coursework anonymously if it is submitted after the deadline.

It is important that you speak to your Director of Studies as soon as possible if you become concerned about your submission deadlines.

See also the section in this Handbook on **Submission deadlines**.

WORD COUNTS

Coursework tasks will normally have a word limit or word range. This, and the penalty for non-compliance, will be confirmed when you receive an assignment. You will be required to declare the word count for your work when submitting it for assessment.

If you do not observe the given word range or limit for the coursework task, for example if you exceed the word limit, then a penalty will be applied. The penalty that would apply should be stated in writing when the assignment task is distributed. You should take note of what is included when calculating the total word count (e.g. whether or not contents pages, appendices, footnotes, bibliographies and other elements that are not part of the main text are included).

You should check with your Director of Studies if you have questions about word counts and penalties.

FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT

During your course, you will receive feedback on your assessed work. This feedback may take different forms, depending on the subject and type of assessment. You will be informed of the timing and nature of the feedback you will receive on each assessment, including whether the piece of work itself will be returned to you. For exam-type assessment, you may receive general feedback relevant to all who took the assessment rather than individual feedback. You can discuss feedback you receive on assessments alongside your performance and progress in your studies at meetings with your Personal Tutor.

Feedback can enhance the student learning experience and it is widely recognised that in order for it to be effective departments should have clear mechanisms for providing timely feedback to students.

Examinations are primarily used as summative assessment tools. Since exams are normally held at the end of semesters, their effectiveness in providing timely feedback to students is limited. The Department's policy on feedback encompasses not only feedback on the examinations taken but especially focuses staff and student attention on mechanisms (feed-forward) that enhance ability prior to the taking of the examination. Nevertheless, students can access their examination scripts to help them improve, upon request to the administrator.

Coursework can take many forms but often include essays, presentations, lab reports among others. Feedback opportunities are more numerous than those for examinations and usually include informal verbal feedback, formal written / audio feedback. Feedback on all coursework assignments will normally be provided within 3 working weeks of submission, unless mitigating circumstances cause delays.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University has a wide range of resources available to you to help you understand academic integrity and enhance your academic writing and practice.

It also has in place an Academic Integrity Test you are required to take and pass (the pass mark is 85% but you can take the test as many times as you need to). You will not be able to progress beyond the next progression point in your studies until you pass this test.

When you submit assessment, you will be expected to make a declaration that the work is your own and, where you have re-used your own work and/or used other sources of information, that you have referenced the material appropriately. The University uses a plagiarism detection service (currently Urkund), which searches the web and databases of reference material and content submitted by other students, to identify duplicated work. Where practical, all summative assessment is submitted to this service to check for

similarities as an initial indicator of whether work has been plagiarised and an assessment offence committed.

Submission of your assessment to the Plagiarism Detection Service - Data Protection statement

The Plagiarism Detection Service complies with European Data Protection legislation. When you registered with the University, you gave it permission to process your personal data for a variety of legitimate purposes. This includes allowing the University to disclose such data to third parties for purposes relating to your studies. The University, at its sole discretion, may submit the work of any student to the Plagiarism Detection Service (in accordance with Regulation 15.3e) and may make, or authorise third parties to make, copies of any such work for the purposes of:

- 1) assessment of the work
- 2) comparison with databases of earlier work or previously available works to confirm the work is original
- 3) addition to databases of works used to ensure that future works submitted at this institution and others do not contain content from the work submitted.

The University will not make any more copies of your work than are necessary, and will only retain these for so long as remains necessary, for these purposes.

Please note that, if at any time the University submits any of your work to the Plagiarism Detection Service, the service will be provided with, and will retain, certain personal data relating to you – for example, your name, email address, programme details and the work submitted. Such data may be transferred by the Plagiarism Detection Service to countries worldwide (some of which may not be governed by EU data legislation) in order for the work to be checked and an originality report generated in accordance with the proper workings of the Plagiarism Detection Service. Personal data is retained indefinitely by the Plagiarism Detection Service upon submission of work. You may ask for your personal data to be removed by contacting the University's Data Protection Officer.

Assessment offences – penalties

Any student who is found to have used unfair means in an assessment procedure will be penalised. 'Unfair means' here include cheating, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, unfair collaboration or collusion. Penalties for use of unfair means may include failure of the assessment unit or part of a degree, with no provision for reassessment or retrieval of that failure. Proven cases of plagiarism or cheating can also lead to an Inquiry Hearing or disciplinary proceedings. Claims of inadvertence or ignorance will not be accepted as a basis for mitigation of a penalty.

If you are accused of an offence, the Students' Union's welfare services are available to support you. You have the right to appeal against the outcome of the investigation.

Important information on academic integrity, the Plagiarism Detection Service, assessment offences and penalties, and support, as well as the Academic Integrity Test itself, is available online. Please refer to Important Links and Information in this Handbook.

IF CIRCUMSTANCES IMPACT ON YOUR ASSESSMENT ATTEMPT

Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs) are the conditions which temporarily prevent you from undertaking assessment or significantly impair your performance in assessment. As such, the measure of their severity is not about impact on you, but the impact on your affected assessment. Full information about IMCs is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook. **It is strongly advised that you become familiar with the available guidance and related regulations.**

ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

Assessment and marking processes at the University are designed to ensure that assessment of your work is fair and consistent, and that academic standards are appropriate and comparable between the University and other higher education institutions. This is achieved in a number of ways.

Marking: Assessments you will complete during your programme are marked according to:

- *marking criteria (or assessment criteria)* - these are the knowledge, understanding and skills which it has been identified that students should demonstrate in the assessment and which are taken into account during marking. They are based on the learning outcomes being assessed
- *marking schemes* - these are detailed descriptions of how specific numbers of marks should be assigned against individual components of an answer within the assessment task
- *grade descriptors* - these are descriptions of the levels of achievement required in order to get a result within a given band of marks (e.g. 70% or more).

Anonymous marking: The University has adopted a principle of anonymous marking in order to protect students and staff from bias, and the perception of bias, in the marking process. It applies to all assessment where practicable. It is not possible to mark all coursework anonymously as in some types of assessment the student can be easily identified by the marker (e.g. presentations, group work, laboratory work) or it might not be practical, or in the student interest, to do so. You will be informed when your coursework is to be marked anonymously.

Moderation: Both the setting and the marking of assessments are independently checked through a process known as moderation to ensure that questions test the learning outcomes and are set at the right standard, and that marking is consistent and fair. Moderation is conducted by internal examiners and also by your External Examiner (see below).

Boards of Examiners: Assessment decision-making at the University is the responsibility of Boards of Examiners established at three levels: assessment outcomes go first to *Boards of Examiners for Units*, then *Boards of Examiners for Programmes*, then finally to *Boards of Studies*. Boards of Studies confirm decisions relating to student progression from one stage of the programme to the next and the final award. **The assessment marks you are given initially by markers are therefore provisional up until the point when they have been confirmed by the Board of Studies for your programme.** An official release date is set when

your confirmed results will be made available to you via SAMIS (the University's student records system). An academic appeal can only be made in relation to a confirmed result (see the section in this Handbook on **Academic Appeals**).

Scaling: All marks for a unit are reviewed at a meeting of a Board of Examiners for Units which will verify that the assessment process has been conducted appropriately and that the marks are an accurate reflection of the standards achieved. A Board of Examiners can decide to recommend a change to the provisional marks, based on evidence that there was a problem with the assessment which means the initial marks do not reflect the standards achieved by students. This adjustment is known as scaling and under these circumstances the marks of all affected students will be changed.

External Examiner: An External Examiner is someone from another University or professional organisation who is qualified and experienced in the field of study. At least one External Examiner is appointed for each programme or group of programmes. The role of External Examiner is an important one in assuring that assessment processes are fair, academic standards are appropriate, and supporting the development of your programme. External Examiners review draft assessment and samples of assessed work, and attend Boards of Examiners. They are members of Boards of Examiners.

Once a year, the External Examiners will provide a written report. University staff, including the Head of Department and Director of Studies, will look at these reports and a response will be made to the External Examiner's comments. External Examiner reports and responses are made available to students. Staff/Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) also discuss External Examiner reports as part of routine monitoring activity.

The External Examiner(s) for your programme is (are):

- Dr Ann Walker, Associate Professor, UCL Institute of Cardiovascular Science (Molecular Medicine and Molecular Biotechnology programmes).
- Professor Alan McNally, Professor in Microbial Evolutionary Genomics, University of Birmingham (Molecular Microbiology and Bioinformatics).

It is not appropriate for students to make direct contact with External Examiners. If you are dissatisfied with the process or outcome of an assessment, and are considering whether to raise this either informally or formally, the sections of this Handbook on **Academic Appeals** and **Dissatisfaction with a University Service or Facility (Complaints)** give some more information about the University's procedures for student complaints and academic appeals. The University's mechanisms for student representation are designed to enable students to engage with the quality management process through which the University considers and responds to External Examiners' comments and suggestions.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

The University's New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations: Phases 2 & 3 for postgraduate taught programmes ('NFAAR-PGT') specifies the rules governing students'

progression from one stage of their programme to the next as well as for the award of degrees. The rules cover all areas of assessment, including supplementary assessment and the extent to which failure may be condoned.

If at any time you are in doubt about how NFAAR-PGT provisions apply to your work, please consult your Director of Studies.

This section highlights areas of the University's assessment framework for the type of programme you are undertaking. It explains the regulations that govern your assessment and outlines how the University makes decisions concerning your progression through your programme and award. Complete information is available in the NFAAR-PGT document.

The full NFAAR-PGT, and definitions of terms used in it, are available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

YOUR PROGRAMME AND HOW YOU ARE ASSESSED

Within a programme of study, there are *compulsory units* (i.e. those units in a programme which must be taken by every student registered on the programme), and there may also be *optional units* (i.e. those units students may choose from a range of options).

In the Programme and Unit Catalogues, there are links to the relevant appendices of the NFAAR-PGT which state exactly how the assessment rules operate for each stage of your programme.

The following points will help you to understand how the assessment rules relate to your specific programme, such as pass marks, averaging of marks and dealing with any failures:

Firstly, there are several references below to the persistent generic rules on the extent of any failures of units permitted overall. The rules are that you can only (1) fail and retrieve units, or (2) marginally fail units and have them condoned, within set limits. Breaking these rules results in failure of the programme.

- Your programme has Designated Essential Units (DEUs) which you must pass to gain the award you seek; even marginal failure in these units cannot be condoned.
- Your programme is divided into stages and follows the general principle that all stage assessment must be successfully completed before progression to the next stage is permitted. This means that, if you are required to undertake supplementary assessment, you will have to do so before you can progress further. You must also never break one of the persistent generic rules.
- Your programme has units that constitute the Taught Stage(s) Credits in a separate phase before the period in which you will do the Dissertation/Project type unit(s), as indicated in the table showing the structure of your programme. The Programme Progression Requirement to get from the taught phase to the Dissertation/Project phase is 50 %.

- Should you fail to qualify for the award of the degree of Master, you may be considered for the award of a related Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate (subject to your having met the requirements for one of those awards).

The normal pass mark for a unit is 40%. In some units, you might need to achieve a threshold mark in one or more component assessments in order to pass the unit overall. Particular rules apply to failure of units of the 'Taught type', or in the 'taught' stages. They are as follows:

- If you fail any DEUs, you will have to undertake supplementary assessment – unless you have failed so many DEUs that you fail outright or the attempted retrieval would break the rule on how much failure can be retrieved.
- If you fail any non-DEU units badly (i.e. achieve less than 35%), you will have to undertake supplementary assessment – unless you have failed so many units that you fail outright or the attempted retrieval would break the rule on how much failure can be retrieved.
- If you fail only non-DEU units marginally (i.e. achieve 35%-39%), you might be able to progress without supplementary assessment. Whether you do progress will depend on the total credit value of the failed units.

Dissertation/Project units have their own special rule on failure: only cases of marginal failure (i.e. 35%-39%) will be given permission for attempted retrieval through supplementary assessment, and any resubmission that is permitted for marginal failure must be made within a specified period. Ultimately, you must pass a Dissertation/Project unit (or have an average of at least 40% for them if there are more than one) for satisfactory completion of the requirements for Dissertation/Project elements.

Your unit results are combined as follows to make overall assessment/award decisions:

- The Taught Stage(s) Average (TSA) will be calculated by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for all units required to contribute to the taught stage(s), or by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for all units defined as of 'Taught type' required to contribute to the programme.
- The Dissertation/Project Average (DPA) will be calculated by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for the unit(s) required to contribute to the Dissertation/Project stage(s), or by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for the unit(s) defined as of 'Dissertation/Project type' required to contribute to the programme.
- The Overall Programme Average (OPA) will be calculated by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for all units required to contribute to the programme.

A Board of Examiners will decide at appropriate points whether you are continuing to meet the requirements for the programme (including not breaking persistent generic rules whereby you can only fail and retrieve, or marginally fail and have condoned, units within set limits), and/or whether you have met all the requirements for your target award or any alternative that might be available. The outcomes will depend on both your performance in individual units and your overall performance. Generally, if you pass each of your units, you will progress and, in due course, be recommended for an award.

If you fail units beyond certain credit values, or you fail some too badly, you might break one of the persistent generic rules whereby you can only fail and retrieve, or marginally fail and have condoned, units within set limits, and this will result in failure of the programme - without any opportunity for supplementary assessment. (Further information on supplementary assessment is provided below.)

The criteria for making awards with distinction or with merit are described in the relevant NFAAR-PGT rules (paras. 78-80).

SUPPLEMENTARY ASSESSMENT

‘Supplementary assessment’ is the term normally used for an opportunity given to a student to retrieve failure before starting the next stage of a programme, or by the end of the programme if it is a single-stage programme or the failed units are not Stage Required Units (SRUs).

Academic year dates, including the supplementary assessment period, can be found online. See **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

Each unit’s method of supplementary assessment is shown in the online Unit Catalogue.

More information on arrangements for the 2020/21 academic year will be provided via the University webpages and updated as necessary.

At supplementary assessment, students will normally have the opportunity to gain credit for units then successfully passed and to have the mark gained reported to them for feedback purposes, but a maximum mark of 40% will be awarded and used in the Overall Stage Average, the Overall Programme Average, the Taught Stage(s) Average, and any award calculation.

If you pass all your supplementary assessments, you will be able to progress onto the next stage of your programme and/or, as appropriate, be considered for an award. If you do not pass them all, the outcome will depend on your overall performance including consideration of the rules about passing particular types of units and the persistent generic rules (as set out above).

ACADEMIC APPEALS

If you wish to submit a request for an academic appeal you should refer to Regulation 17 (Conduct of Student Academic Reviews and Appeals), which outlines the process and grounds for an appeal against formal Board of Studies decisions.

You are also strongly advised to read the online guidance on Appeals provided by the Academic Registry.

Independent advice about academic appeals is offered by the Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

CORE UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS FOR STUDENTS

All registered students of the University are subject to the University's Regulations for Students. The Regulations contain rules and other important information about being a student at the University of Bath, including regulations governing the payment of fees due to the University, student discipline, fitness to study and those governing attendance, conduct and progress in studies. They also form part of the formal contract between you and the University. **You are strongly advised to read them carefully as they contain a lot of important information.**

For a link to the full Regulations for Students, see **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

ACCESSING UNIVERSITY EMAIL

You will need to use your University username and password to access your University email account. Your username also forms your email address (**username@bath.ac.uk**).

The University will often communicate with you about a range of important matters requiring action from you, including registration, assessment, degree ceremonies, and matters such as tuition fees, via your University email account. It is a University regulation that you access your University email account regularly, even if you are out on placement or study abroad.

You therefore have a responsibility to ensure that your University email account can receive incoming mail and that you read your email regularly.

Once you graduate or withdraw from your course, you will receive an email stating exactly when your account will be closed. The email will give at least 30 days' notice.

STUDENTS' UNION MEMBERSHIP

All students registered with the University are automatically given membership of the Students' Union; however you have the right not to be a member. Information on opting out of this membership, and the Code of Practice for the Students' Union, are available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

DATA PROTECTION

The University's Data Protection Policy and Guidelines on Data Protection may be accessed via the data protection website (see **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook).

REGISTRATION STATUS

Note that only registered students may use the University's facilities, such as email, Moodle and the Library. You will be asked to register online at the start of your programme of study and then to re-register at the start of every academic year thereafter until you have completed your programme. It is a requirement that you register when asked to do so. Tuition fees for each academic year are payable at registration in full or in instalments.

Regulation 1.1 explains the requirement to register. Regulations 2.4 and 2.10 explain the consequences of non-payment of tuition fees.

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT MONITORING FOR TIER 4 STUDENTS

Guidance and requirements on academic engagement for students who are Tier 4 visa holders, including the University's **Academic Engagement Monitoring Policy for Tier 4 visa holders**, and information on when and how to request an authorised absence, are available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

CHANGE IN YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES

It is important to ensure that the University holds your correct, up-to-date, personal and academic details within SAMIS, the University's student records database. If you change your address – either your semester-time or home address – please update your details online (see **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook).

If you change your name, you will need to provide valid proof of the change. Please speak to your Department or Faculty/School administration, or Student Services, for advice on how to do this.

If you are considering suspending your studies, transferring from one programme to another, or withdrawing from your programme, please discuss your situation with your Director of Studies. They will be able to advise you on an appropriate course of action.

The financial implications of withdrawing from the University or suspending your studies can be significant. See **Important Links and Information in this Handbook.**

The Student Money Advice Team in Student Services and the Student Finance Office will be able to advise you on the implications for fees in your situation and on how to suspend any student funding you are receiving.

If you are an international student holding a Tier 4 visa, you should consult the advisers in the Student Immigration Service about the implications of suspending or withdrawing from your programme. See **Important Links and Information in this Handbook.**

You will need to register any change of academic circumstance, including a change of optional units, with the University. Please speak to your Department or Faculty/School administration who will advise you on how to do this.

DISSATISFACTION WITH A UNIVERSITY SERVICE OR FACILITY (COMPLAINTS)

We want to ensure that, if you have a problem concerning the University, it is resolved as quickly as possible. The University is committed to continuing review and improvement, and seeks regular feedback from students. There are student representatives on the University's formal decision-making committees who can raise issues so that they can be dealt with promptly. The University is also committed to providing an environment within which students are encouraged to raise any matters of concern in an informal manner as soon as they arise. This often removes the need for formal complaints.

It is expected that most complaints can be resolved at an early stage by discussing the matter informally at a local level. If you have a problem concerning the University, you should bring the matter to the attention of an appropriate member of staff, who will aim to resolve it by informal discussion. If you have attempted to resolve matters informally but are not satisfied with the outcome, you may elect to proceed to the next stage by submitting a formal complaint. You may also submit a formal complaint if the issue involved is too complex or serious for informal resolution.

If you do need to make a complaint, there are procedures in place to deal with it, outlined in the University's **Student Complaints Procedure**. These procedures are designed to ensure that your complaint will be dealt with in good faith and that you will not be penalised for complaining.

There are separate procedures for requesting a review of progression or award classification decisions. See the section in this Handbook on **Academic Appeals**.

The University recognises that making a complaint can be stressful. Students are therefore advised to seek advice and support before making a complaint, from Student Services, or from the Students' Union Advice and Support Centre, whose advice is independent of the University.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.