

Description

MSc Biochemistry, MSc Biological Sciences, MSc Cancer Research and Molecular Biomedicine, MSc Cell Biology, MSc Neuroscience, MSc Nanomedicine

1. Introduction

1.01 Welcome to the University of Manchester and the School of Biological Sciences

1.02 This handbook is accurate at the start of the 2025/6 academic year

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18600â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Welcome from Head of School 25-26â?³]

1.04 Key Contact Details

If you have any queries or concerns at any time during your period of study at The University of Manchester, there is a range of people you can approach. Your Programme Administration Team will be your first point of call for general issues. Alternatively, you may wish to contact the Programme Director for specific aspects to do with the course or your Academic Advisor for career development issues. If you wish to raise a confidential matter at School level, you should approach the Head of Teaching, Learning and Student Experience â?? contact details below.

Responsibility for overall management of the Programme lies with the Programme Director who has assembled a Programme Committee, which meets regularly, to advise on content, structure, management, student supervision, and regulatory matters such as Programme improvement and refinement. The Committee also includes the student representative who is democratically elected by you to attend these meetings.

Programme Administration Team

Your first point of call should be directed as follows:

Student SharePoint site: [School of Biological Sciences Student Information â?? Home](#)

Student Hub

- sbs.hub@manchester.ac.uk

Student Support

- sbs.wellbeing@manchester.ac.uk

Assessments

- sbs.assessment@manchester.ac.uk

Programmes and Curriculum

- sbs.programmes@manchester.ac.uk

Student Representative

• To be appointed democratically

Director of Education (UG and PGT)

• Professor Nicky High

• nicky.high@manchester.ac.uk

Head of Teaching, Learning and Student Experience

• Kerry Mycock

• kerry.mycock@manchester.ac.uk

Teaching and Learning Manager

• Kelly Salimian

• kelly.salimian@manchester.ac.uk

Student Service, Support & Development Manager

• Sam Green

• sam.green-1@manchester.ac.uk

Programme Director

• Prof Andreas Prokop

• andreas.prokop@manchester.ac.uk

Deputy Programme Director

• Dr Alan Roseman

• alan.roseman@manchester.ac.uk

Co-Director for MSc Nanomedicine

• Sandra Vranic

• sandra.vranic@manchester.ac.uk

1.05 Key dates in the academic year

A summary of the key dates is given below and additional information can be found here:

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/key-dates/>

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•19128â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Responsibilities of staff and studentsâ?•]

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1.09 Changes/Updates to your personal details recorded in the Student System

It is your responsibility to ensure that the Student System is kept up to date with changes to your recorded personal or programme details. Any change of personal details must be completed online via My Manchester. Incorrect information can lead to problems with your fees and funding, at Examination times and with other official processes.

Please read guidance available on the University of Manchester Student Support webpage for details on [Updating your bank details](#) and changes to your [personal information](#) (for example, your address or name).

If you need any help, please contact the [Student Support Hub](#)

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18619â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? The Student Charter 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18621â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? The Digital Equity Charter 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18726â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Dignity at Work and Study 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18627â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Health and safety information 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18629â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? University learning resources 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18631â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Library 25-26â?³]

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[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18635â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Developing Digital Skills 25-26â?³]

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[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18647â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Other facilities/resources â?? 25-26â?³]

2.About your programme

2.01 Programme overview for MSc Life Sciences

2.02 Aims and Learning outcomes of the programme

The aims of this programme are

- to attract and nurture high calibre students and prepare them for continuing research in industry or academia by providing them with laboratory experience, a comprehensive set of practical research skills, and professional, transferable skills that will be vital for their future professional development.
- to meet the needs of universities and industrial employers by supplying high calibre graduates with a proven commitment to research, coupled with a broad base of practical research skills, general transferable skills and laboratory experience; to enable students to make an informed decision about their personal suitability and motivation for a research career.

Upon completion of this programme you are expected to

- have acquired a comprehensive set of practical research skills in your chosen areas of interest, including the ability to identify and analyse problems, design a series of experiments to test hypotheses, and to analyse and present results and conclusions,
- have acquired a broad set of transferable skills to help prepare you for the workplace; these will include oral and written communication skills, time management, group skills and leadership, data management and understanding of different research environments,
- have acquired critical skills in reading scientific documents and responding to the research of others,
- have acquired the ability to plan and organise an in-depth piece of scientific writing which sets a coherent description of the work undertaken, including timeliness, relevance, methodology, and a discussion of the findings.
- have acquired the ability to communicate research in lay terms and to scientific audiences using a range of formats including presentations, posters, written reports and podcasts.
- have acquired a high level of library and IT skills, including the ability to use a range of reference tools to search and retrieve information.

2.03 Summary of the programme structure

The programme will start with taught units on laboratory skills as well as statistics and experimental design to prepare you for the later laboratory work. In parallel, you will have chosen and been allocated to your personal research project for which you will prepare by writing a literature review and project outline. Beginning of February you will carry out your research project in a lab setting until start of August. In parallel to all activities you will learn about ethics and gain skills in different forms of science communication through attendance of tutorial sessions or group work. All assignments and

assessments will be explained to you in great detail in accompanying interactive plenary sessions.

2.04 Modes of study

This is a full-time Master's course.

2.05 Programme specification

These documents are stored internally within the School.

2.06 Course Units

All course unit specifications were reviewed March 2025

BIOL60210 Tutorials and Workshops

[Course unit information | MyManchester](#)

BIOL60330 Scientific Communications

[Course unit information | MyManchester](#)

BIOL65161 Statistics & Experimental Design

[Course unit information | MyManchester](#)

BIOL66111 Laboratory Skills

[Course unit information | MyManchester](#)

BIOL66121 Research Project 1

[Course unit information | MyManchester](#)

BIOL66132 Research Project 2

[Course unit information | MyManchester](#)

2.07 Information on the way in which a student can progress through the programme

Please be aware this programme has some higher requirements to the University degree regulations and details of these are outlined below:

The programme will not permit compensation rules to be applied to Research Project 1 or BIOL 65161.

The Pass mark for BIOL65161-Statistics and Experimental Design is 65% but is Pass/Fail and not included in averages.

Compensation rules will apply to BIOL65161 within the mark range of 55-64%.

Reassessment will be permitted in up to half of the taught units plus Research Project 1 (i.e. 50% of total number of taught units (60 credits) + Research Project 1 (30 credits) = 45 credits)

The programme will not permit compensation rules to be applied to the following unit:

â?¢ Research Project 1

The University Postgraduate degree regulations can be found online:

[Postgraduate Degree Regulations](#)

In order to progress to the dissertation/research project you must have satisfactorily achieved the relevant pass mark in taught course units, including by use of resit and/or compensation as outlined in the degree regulations, in order to continue to this element of the programme.

2.08 Consequences of unsatisfactory progress

Not relevant to programme

2.09 Programme specific regulations

Not relevant to programme

2.10 Professional and statutory body requirements

Not relevant to programme

2.11 Fieldwork and placements or study abroad

Not relevant to programme

2.12 Additional costs

All students must normally be able to complete their programme of study without having to pay additional study costs over and above the tuition fee for that programme.

Any unavoidable additional compulsory costs totalling more than 1% of the annual home undergraduate fee per annum must be made clear at the point of application and in the programme handbooks, with details of what these costs are.

Optional costs must be made clear at the point of application and in the programme handbooks. Where costs are unknown or uncertain, information about how these will be calculated must be set out

2.13 Degree classification algorithm

During your degree programme, you will complete 180 credits including four Taught (teaching-based) course units and two larger Research-based course units. Except one PASS course, all units contribute to the mark and carry a weighting proportional to their credits: every 15 credits contribute a weighting of one, i.e. the 30-credit unit has a weighting of 2 and the 90-credit unit a weighting of 6. An average is calculated at the end of your degree programme serving as your final degree mark out of 100. For the final calculation see the example provided in the table below

Unit		credits	weight	example mark	weighted mark
BIOL65161	statistics	15	0	PASS	0
BIOL66111	lab skills	15	x1 (~9%)	55	55
BIOL60210	tutorials	15	x1 (~9%)	78	78
BIOL60330	sci comm	15	x1 (~9%)	70	70
BIOL66121	RP1	30	x2 (~18%)	75	150
BIOL66132	RP2	90	x6 (~55%)	66	396
total:					749 / 11 = 68

Please note that in cases where students have approved mitigating circumstances for some of their marks, the final mark may be calculated differently, at the discretion of the exam board, for example a 15 credit unit where the student has under-performed may be excluded from the final calculation.

Degree Classification:

For Masters Programmes, students must achieve an overall average of at least 50 to be eligible for an MSc award. If you achieve an average below 50, you will not be awarded an MSc award, but may be eligible for a lower exit award of a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate.

Degree classifications are awarded as follows:

Final mark of 50 – 59.9 : Pass

Final mark of 60 – 69.9: Merit

Final mark of 70 or above: Distinction

Classification Review:

For final degree marks which fall within the boundary zone; 2 marks of the higher classification (68 – 69.9 for a Distinction or 58 – 59.9 for a Merit), the examination board will consider whether there is a case for the student to be awarded the higher classification and in some cases students will be awarded the higher classification where their final degree mark falls in the boundary zone.

PLEASE NOTE: There is no guarantee if your final degree mark falls in the boundary zone that you will be awarded the higher degree classification. This will only be awarded automatically if you have achieved a degree mark above the degree classification boundary (e.g. 70 for a Distinction).

If your mark falls in the boundary zone; you will be awarded the higher degree classification in the following situations:

- If two thirds or more of the credits you have completed during your degree programme (120 credits or more) are marks at the higher degree classification, you will be automatically promoted to the higher degree classification (so 120 credits with marks above 70 would be needed to be promoted to a distinction)
- If you do not have two thirds of credits at the higher classification but are in the boundary zone, there will be an independent review of your final research project by the external examiner who will make a recommendation to the board as to whether or not there is a case for the student being awarded the higher degree classification. The board will then make a decision based on this and on the mark profile whether or not to promote the student to the higher classification. This is at the discretion of the examination board, is not a guarantee, and is a decision that cannot be questioned or challenged.

There is no classification review available for the classification of Pass; any degree mark below 50 cannot be awarded an MSc degree under any circumstances.

3. Assessment and academic standards

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[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•19015â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? 3.03 Examinations and coursework (PGT)â?•]

3.04 Laboratory work and practical reports

Your performance in your practical and experimental laboratory work will contribute 15% to your unit mark for the BIOL66132 Research Project 2 unit. Criteria for your mark will include your motivation, skill, professionalism and creative contributions as will be explained to you by the PD. In the BIOL66111 Laboratory Skills unit you will have to provide a laboratory report, and in the BIOL66132 Research Project 2 unit a project report. For both assignments detailed instructions will be provided.

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3.06 Programme-specific assessment requirements

Not relevant to programme

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[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18665â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Plagiarism and academic malpractice 25-26â?³]

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3.12 External Examiner

External Examiners are individuals from another institution or organisation who monitor the assessment processes of the University to ensure fairness and academic standards. They ensure that assessment and examination procedures have been fairly and properly implemented and that decisions have been made after appropriate deliberation. They also ensure that standards of awards and levels of student performance are comparable with those in equivalent higher education institutions.

The External Examiner for the MSc Life Sciences (Biological Sciences/Developmental Biology/Neuroscience) programmes is Vincent Croset, Durham University.

The External Examiner for the MSc Life Sciences (Biochemistry/Cell Biology/Cancer Research & Molecular Biomedicine/Nanomedicine) programmes is Tobias Zech, University of Liverpool.

Please note that it is inappropriate for students to make direct contact with External Examiners under any circumstances, in particular with regards to a student's individual performance in assessments. Other appropriate mechanisms are available for students, including the University's appeals or complaints procedures and the UMSU Advice Centre. In cases where a student does contact an External Examiner directly, External Examiners have been requested not to respond to direct queries. Instead, External Examiners should report the matter to the School contact who will then contact the student to remind them of the other methods available for students.

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18673â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Academic Appeals 25-26â?³]

4. Student Voice

4.01 Representation at programme, School and Faculty level

Every year, Student Representatives will be recruited to represent each degree programme. Student Reps are the link between the study body and the University on all things course related. They listen to your thoughts and ideas about your programme and feed this back to your School. Student Reps represent their cohorts at every level of the decision-making process within the University. Student Representatives help to drive positive change within the University to make sure you are getting the best experience you can whilst at Manchester.

If you are interested in becoming a Student Representative, please speak to your Programme Director or respond to the email from the SBS Hub which you will receive shortly after you start your programme. Student Reps are also invited to attend Programme Committee meetings and School Board meetings to represent their student cohorts.

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18677â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Role of the Student Voice Committee (PGT) 25-26â?³]

4.03 Role of the Programme meeting

The committeeâ??s functions and responsibilities are to maintain the standards of teaching, to evaluate and revise the programme in the light of feedback, to monitor student progression and to provide a forum for discussion between the University and the students.

The meeting reviews the annual monitoring report and acts on recommendations arising from the annual monitoring process.

The membership of the meeting includes: the Programme Directors; the Programme Administration Team; Teaching Staff and Student Representatives. The PGT Programme meeting reports to the PGT Programme Committee.

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18679â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Mechanisms for collecting and 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18681â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Use of University unit surveys and 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18683â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Student Complaints 25-26â?³]

5. Attendance requirements, Interruptions and Mitigating circumstances

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5.04 Procedure for reporting ill health

Absence from examinations due to ill health

You should make every effort to participate in all examinations. It will not be possible to make special arrangements to take the exams in an alternative location, unless this has been arranged through the Disability Advisory Support Service.

If you are so ill you are unable to take an exam, you **must** contact the SBS Hub â?? email sbs.hub@manchester.ac.uk or telephone **0161 275 1387** as soon as possible, and certainly **no later than the day and start time of your examination**. You should complete a Mitigating Circumstances application which must be accompanied by appropriate evidence.

Illness not resulting in absence from examinations

You may be unwell but able to proceed with an examination but feel that your performance will have been impaired. If you wish this to be taken into account, you must follow the same procedures as stated in the earlier Section Absence from Examinations due to Ill Health by applying for mitigation. Note that typical levels of exam stress that are not diagnosed as a long-term condition, would not normally be considered a mitigating circumstance. If you anticipate or experience high levels of stress related to your exams, or studies in general, we strongly recommend you contact the Student Support and Wellbeing team (sbs.wellbeing@manchester.ac.uk), who will be able to support you.

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18693â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? How to change, interrupt or 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18695â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Mitigating circumstances 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18697â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Policy on Supporting Health 25-26â?³]

6 Support for students

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18699â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Student Support microsite 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18701â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? The role of the Programme Director, AA, SS Hubs 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18703â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Studentsâ?? Union and SU Advice Service 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18705â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Counselling and Mental Health Service 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18707â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS -Disability Advisory and Support Service 25-26â?³]

[intense_snippet snippet_id=â?•18709â?³ snippet_title=â?•SBS â?? Student Occupational Health Service 25-26â?³]

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