Level 3 Tutorial Guide

Description

BIOL30000 Level 3 Student Tutorial Handbook

The School of Biological Sciences Tutorial Programme

All Level 3 SBS students are enrolled in the tutorial unit BIOL30000. Tutorials will provide you with knowledge and expertise related to your degree programme as well as transferable skills. The tutorial programme includes small group tutorials and plenary sessions.

Small group tutorials will take place with other students from your degree programme and your Academic Tutor. Please note that although times for your small group tutorials will appear on your personal timetable, there may be a delay at the start of each semester before they appear. Tutorial dates and times are arranged by your Academic Tutor and are subject to change. **Please check with your Tutor if you are in any doubt about the scheduling of your small group tutorials.**

Plenary sessions will be delivered by specialist speakers to larger groups of students from multiple degree programmes. This format ensures consistent delivery of information to students. . The tutorial programme builds year-on-year and focuses on four major strands of skills: communication (written and oral); professional skills; experimental reporting; and employability, as shown in Figure 1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for the Level 3 tutorials are available here. The Level 3 activities build on the skills you acquired in earlier years of your degree programme.

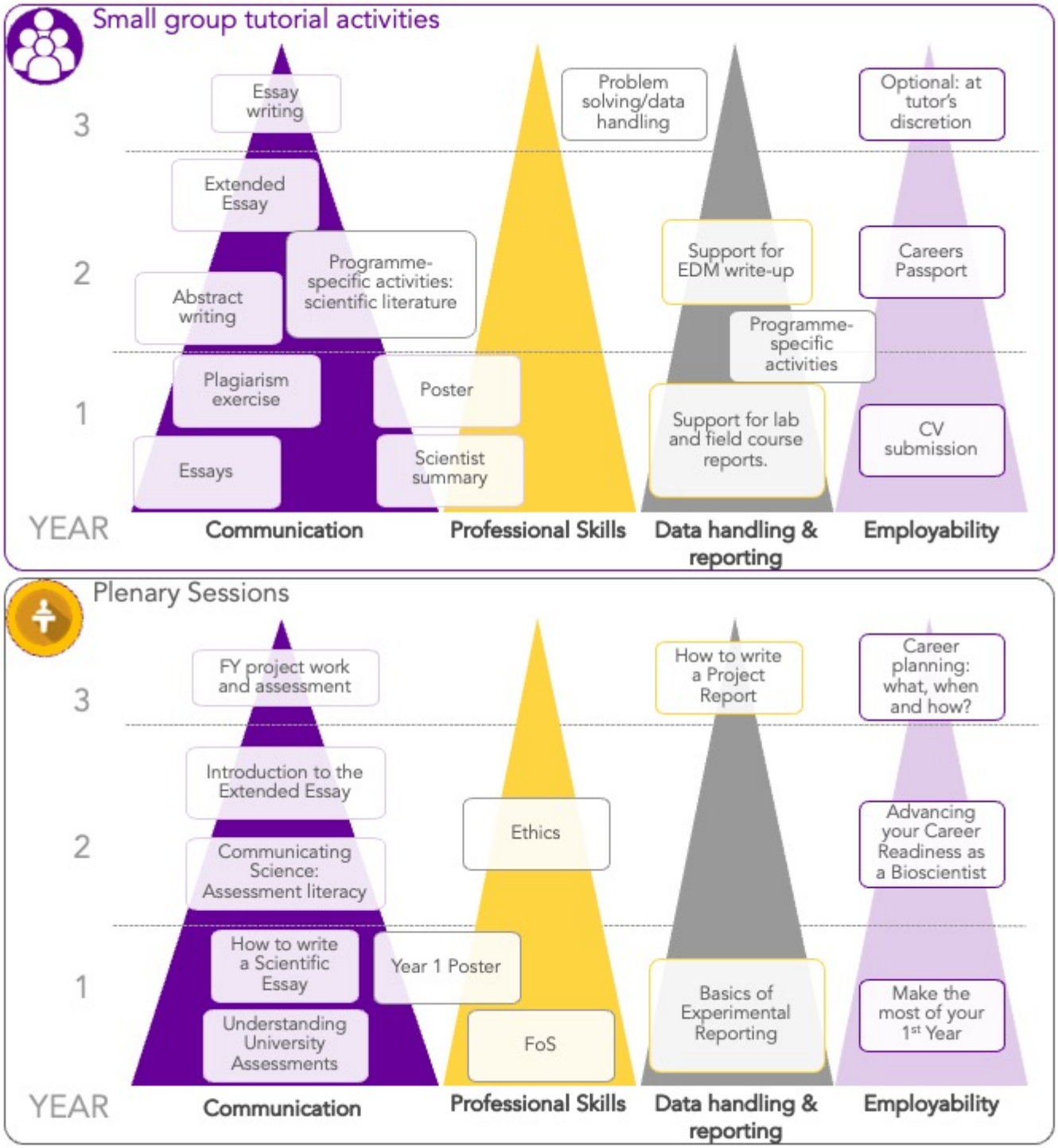


Figure 1. *Summary of the topics you can expect to cover in small group tutorials (top) and plenary sessions (bottom). Your Tutor and Programme-Director may, at their discretion, alter the content of your tutorials.*

Tips for success 

To supplement your small group tutorials and plenary sessions, there is a curated list of resources available on the BIOL30000 Blackboard site to guide you through the academic year. These â??Tips for Successâ??. are organised by week for each Semester, and they link you to supporting resources at the time that they are likely to be most useful and relevant to your tutorial activities and other major assignments. Completion of the resources is optional but you can keep track of your progress for your own purposes by marking each week as â??reviewedâ??. The Semester 5 tips for success can be accessed here. The Semester 6 tips for success can be accessed here.

Assessment

At least 5 tutorial assignments will usually be set each semester by your Academic Tutor. Feedback on these will be provided by your Academic Tutor and/or your peers.

Attendance

Small group tutorials

Attendance at ALL small group tutorials (tutor-led and student-led) is compulsory and will be monitored by your Academic Tutor. If you will be absent from a tutorial, or unable to complete a tutorial assignment due to illness, ***make sure that you follow the guidelines set out in the Final Year Handbook and email your Academic Tutor and SBS.Attendance@manchester.ac.uk before the start time of a missed tutorial.*** More than one unauthorised absence from small-group tutorials over the academic year will result in failure of the tutorial unit, with the potential for exclusion from study in the Faculty. For further information on this and other related matters, please read the relevant sections of the Final Year Handbook.

Plenary sessions.

Attendance at all relevant plenary sessions (see Table 1) is recommended. They will be delivered in hybrid format so that you can attend live on campus or remotely via Zoom. Dates and times of plenary sessions appear on your personal timetable. They are also listed in the â??Plenary Sessionsâ?? Area on the BIOL30000 Blackboard site, where each plenary has a folder that contains additional information, including Zoom codes. Some plenary titles have different versions â?? e.g., for different types of final year projects â?? that may not all be relevant to you depending on your unit choices.

All plenary sessions will show on your timetable if you are enrolled in BIOL30000 but please note that the first two plenary sessions, in welcome week and week 2, are aimed at students completing an undergraduate degree. ***MSci students will have their own version of these sessions, which are not part of BIOL30000.*** MSci students will be informed separately about these. Each plenary has a folder on the tutorial Blackboard site (BIOL30000), where you can find Zoom codes and supporting

information.

Table 1. Year 3 Plenary Sessions.

Plenary title	Teaching Week	Who should attend
Semester 5 (Teaching Week 1 begins September 23rd, 2024)		
Career planning for Final Year Students	0	BIOL30000 students EXCEPT MSci students.
Semester 5 Final Year Project Work and Assessment	2	BIOL30000 students EXCEPT MSci students and those enrolled in BIOL31080 or BIOL31250.
January Assessments Q&A Session	8	All BIOL30000 students
Semester 6 (Teaching Week 1 begins January 27th, 2025)		
How to Write a Project Report: Lab/Field/ Bioinformatics & Biomodelling Projects	1	Students doing lab, field, bioinformatics/biomodelling projects
How to Write a Project Report: Science Communication Projects (SCPs)	1	Students doing SCPs
How to Write a Project Report: Environmental Sustainability Projects (ESPs) and Bioscience Stakeholders Opinions Projects (BSPs)	1	Students doing BSPs or ESPs
Semester 6 Exams	9	All BIOL30000 students

Table 1. Year 3 Plenary Sessions.

Failure of the Tutorial Unit

Level 3 students can fail the tutorial unit:

1. By having more than one unauthorised absence from small-group tutorials OR
2. By getting a mark below 40% in tutorial assignments, averaged over the two semesters.

Small Group Tutorial Activities and Plenary Sessions

Level 3 small-group tutorials will be tailored to your degree programme. In most cases your Tutor will work through past papers and example questions to prepare the group for final year programme-specific exams. Programme-specific exam papers draw upon knowledge gained in the entirety of your degree programme, and participation in final year tutorials is the best method of preparation for these papers. Some final year degree programme specific papers from previous years are available here. Enter either your degree programme title or the word â??Essayâ?? in the search box. Past Problem papers are not normally released to this site, but your Tutor will provide examples.

Semesters 5 & 6: Enhancing Programme-specific Skills

Introduction

Your small group tutorials and the tutorial plenary sessions work together in semesters 5 and 6 to enhance your programme-specific skills. Suggested schedules for semesters 5 and 6, including the plenary sessions, are shown in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. Academic Tutors or Programme Directors may provide alternate schedules at their discretion. At the start of each semester your Academic Tutor will discuss with you details of the content of tutorials for the coming semester, and deadline dates for assignments. You should ensure that you record assignment deadlines. Tutorial activities and assignments, including plenaries, are often described by week number (e.g., Semester 5 week 3). These refer to **teaching weeks**, with week 1 of teaching starting on Monday September 23rd 2024 for Semester 5 and on Monday 27th January 2025 for Semester 6.

Semester 5 Tutorial Schedule

<table>
<tr><th>Teaching Week</th><th>Small-group Tutorials</th><th>Plenary Sessions</th><th>BIOL30000 Submission deadlines</th></tr>
<tr><td>0</td><td></td><td>Career planning for Final Year students: what, when and how to do this thing called a â??careerâ???</td><td rowspan="3">Your Academic Tutor will set deadlines for tutorial assignments</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td rowspan="2">8 Tutor-led tutorials</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>How to write the Focused Study in Biosciences</td></tr>
</table>

3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	January Assessments Q&A
9	
10	
11	
12	

Table 2. Semester 5 Suggested Tutorial Schedule. *Teaching Week 1 begins Monday September 23rd, 2024. Your Tutor or Programme Director may provide an alternative schedule at their discretion. Your tutor will specify deadlines for tutorial assignments. Please see the â??Plenary Sessionsâ?? area on the BIOL30000 Blackboard site for a full description of Level 3 plenary sessions, including ILOs and Zoom information.*

Semester 6 Tutorial Schedule

Teaching Week	Small-group Tutorials	Plenary Sessions	BIOL30000 Submission DEADLINES
1	8 Tutor-led tutorials (not week 11)	How to write a Project Report	Your Academic Tutor will set deadlines for tutorial assignments
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9		Semester 6 Exams	
10			
		EASTER	
11			
12			

Table 3. Semester 6 Suggested Tutorial Schedule. *Teaching Week 1 begins January 27th, 2025. TBC = to be confirmed. Your Tutor or Programme Director may provide an alternative schedule at their discretion. Tutorials will normally not be scheduled in a week with a major deadline such as the UG Project Report and MSci Research Proposal in week 11.*

Semesters 5 & 6 Tutorial Activities and Plenary sessions

Communication

Essay Assignments

All students registered for a programme-specific essay exam will usually complete essays and/or essay plans during the year. These will be evaluated by your Tutor and/or your peers. In addition to preparing you for programme-specific essay exams, essay writing practice will be helpful for final year unit exams with essay questions and will improve your critical thinking and written communication skills, which are

highly valued by employers.

â??Semester 5 Final Year Project Work and Assessmentâ?? Plenary Session

The â??Semester 5 Final Year Project Work and Assessmentâ?? plenary session will cover the assessments related to final year projects that you will produce during Semester 5. There will be separate plenary sessions focusing on the project report due in Semester 6.

Oral Presentations

Oral presentations may be assigned during the course of the final year at the discretion of your Academic Tutor in order to assess, and give feedback on, your presentation skills. This could be a presentation on your final year project or, for MSci students, on the topic of your Literature Review. The format of any presentations will be set by your Tutor. Resources to help with preparing and delivering oral presentations and highlighted in Week 3 of the Semester 5 â??Tips for Successâ??.

Professional Skills

Data Handling & Problem-Solving Assignments

Problems will be assigned for all students who are registered for the Problem paper in order to further develop your problem-solving skills. Participation in final year tutorials is the best method of preparation for the Problem papers. Data handling and problem solving are also key skills that are valued by employers.

Experimental Reporting Plenaries

To complement the advice given by your project supervisor, there will be plenary sessions detailing how to write-up a project report for Bioscience projects. These will be tailored to types of projects (e.g., Lab or Science Communication) and you should attend or complete the one that is specific to the type of project that you are doing. Details will be on the BIOL30000 Blackboard site from the start of Semester 6.

Employability

Employability skills are always important, and you will already have developed a range of skills from your experiences at The University of Manchester and beyond. This year is the time to consolidate and review how to express your employability skills. Soon you will be looking to transfer the skills youâ??ve developed during your undergraduate degree to your future work or study. Graduate schemes and some PhDs are advertised early in the year, later on in the year youâ??ll see postgrad courses, graduate jobs and graduate internships. If you are on a MSci programme this information will be useful to you for next year. We want to help you make the most of your time here, so we will be providing you with advice on how to find these opportunities, making applications and acing interviews. There will be an **Employability Plenary Session** aimed at Final Year students entitled **â??Career planning for Final Year Students: what, when and how to do this thing called a â??careerâ???â?•** in Welcome

Week. MSci students will have their own employability plenary that will be organised separately (i.e., not part of BIOL30000). Your Tutor may, at their discretion, discuss topics to assist in your applications for employment or further study in small-group tutorials. If you have questions relating to your future career, you should seek assistance from your Academic Advisor and from the University Careers Service.

The Careers Service

The Careers Service can help you with all your career needs. Common queries from final-year students are:

- I donâ??t know what I want to do.
- How can I get further lab experience?
- Where do I look for graduate jobs?
- Should I do a Masters or a PhD?
- I donâ??t like lab work, what else can I do?

There is further information about the Careers Service on the BIOL30000 Blackboard site, in the â?? General Resourcesâ?? folder.

Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellows

The Royal Literary Fund Writing Fellows are professional, published authors whose role is to help you strengthen your writing. Sign up for a one-to-one tutorial to help you:

- Plan your study time.
- Focus your reading for essay, dissertation or thesis writing.
- Express your ideas more clearly.
- Answer grammar and punctuation questions.
- Discover reading to improve your writing and editing skills.
- Increase your writing skills with the aim of improving your grades.
- Improve any academic writing â?? essays, reports, theses, dissertations, book chapters.

Further information about the writersâ?? expertise, and instructions for appointment booking are available on the BIOL30000 Blackboard site in the Writing Resources folder.

Help with English Language Skills

Should you need help with English language skills, you can contact the University Language Centre.

Student Feedback

In order to help us maximise the benefits that you gain from tutorials, we need feedback from you, both on the tutorial activities and on your Academic Tutorâ??s performance. For this purpose, you will be asked to complete unit surveys at the end of each semester. There will be a general survey for BIOL30000 to give feedback on the tutorial plenaries, and a separate survey run via Blackboard to give feedback on your small group tutorials. It is important for us to have your opinion, as these surveys will be used to determine how plenaries and tutorials are conducted in future years. Details of how to access and complete the surveys will be emailed to you each semester.