Second Year Tutorial Guide

Description

BIOL20000 Year 2 Student Tutorial Handbook

The School of Biological Sciences Tutorial Programme

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. Year 2 tutorials also include preparation for the assignments in the Science Communication Skills Unit (BIOL21392; Figure 1).

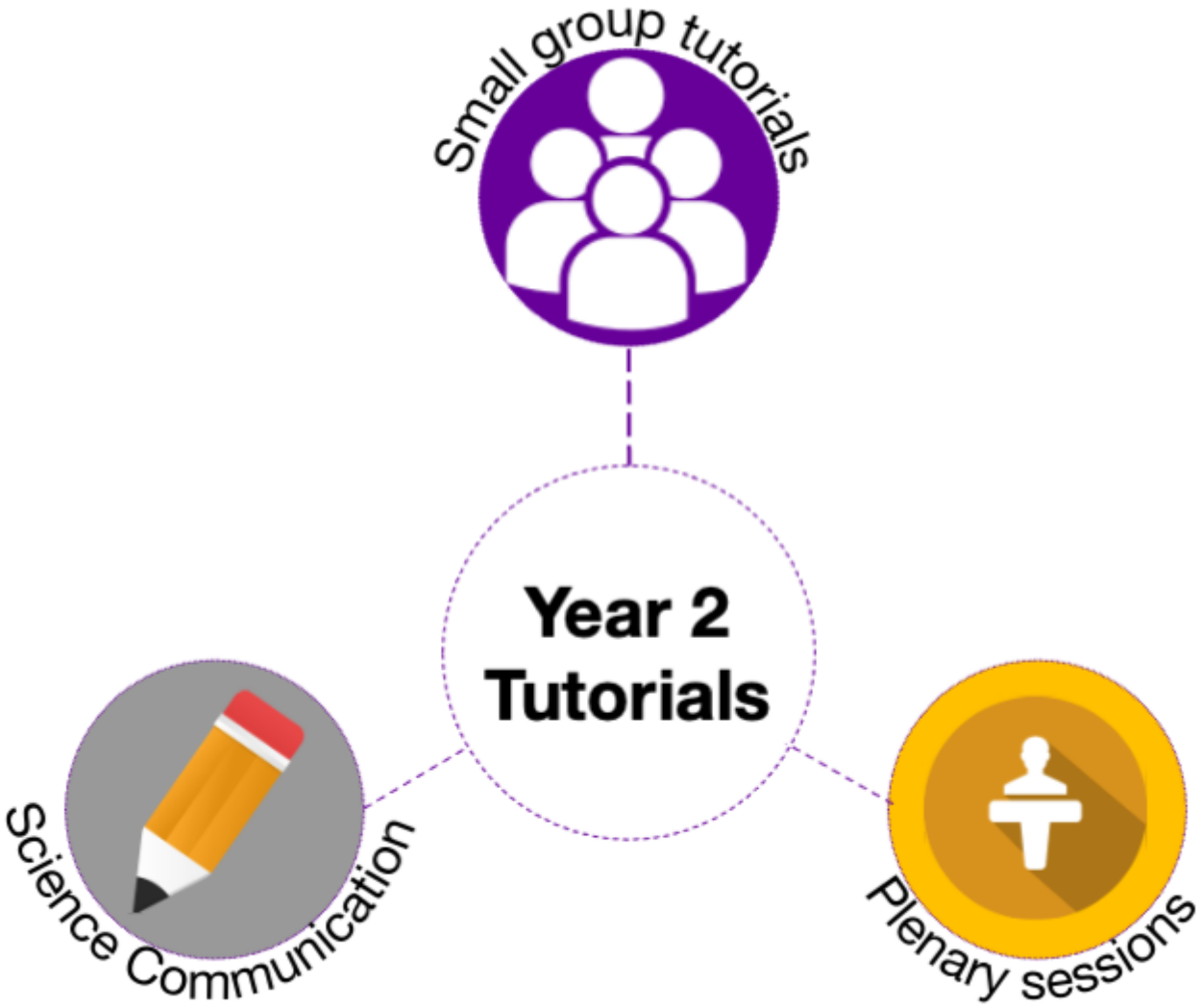


Figure 1. *Tutorials in Year 2 include small group and plenary sessions and are linked to the Science Communication Unit (BIOL21392). Your tutor will assist you with choosing the topic for your Extended Essay, which they will mark along with the other assignments that count towards the BIOL21392 unit mark.*

Small group tutorials will take place with other students from your degree programme and your Academic Tutor. To some extent, the nature and content of small-group tutorials will depend on your degree programme and is at the discretion 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 specialists to larger groups of students from multiple degree programmes. This format ensures consistent delivery of information to students, and the plenary sessions cover topics that are relevant to all SBS students. Some plenary sessions have associated pre-session work, which should be completed in advance of the session. Plenary sessions will show on your personal timetable and will be delivered in hybrid format so that you can attend live on campus or

remotely via Zoom. Each plenary has a folder on the tutorial Blackboard site (BIOL20000), where you can find Zoom codes and supporting information.

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 2. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for the Level 2 tutorials are available here. These build on the skills you acquired in Year 1 and form the basis for Level 3.

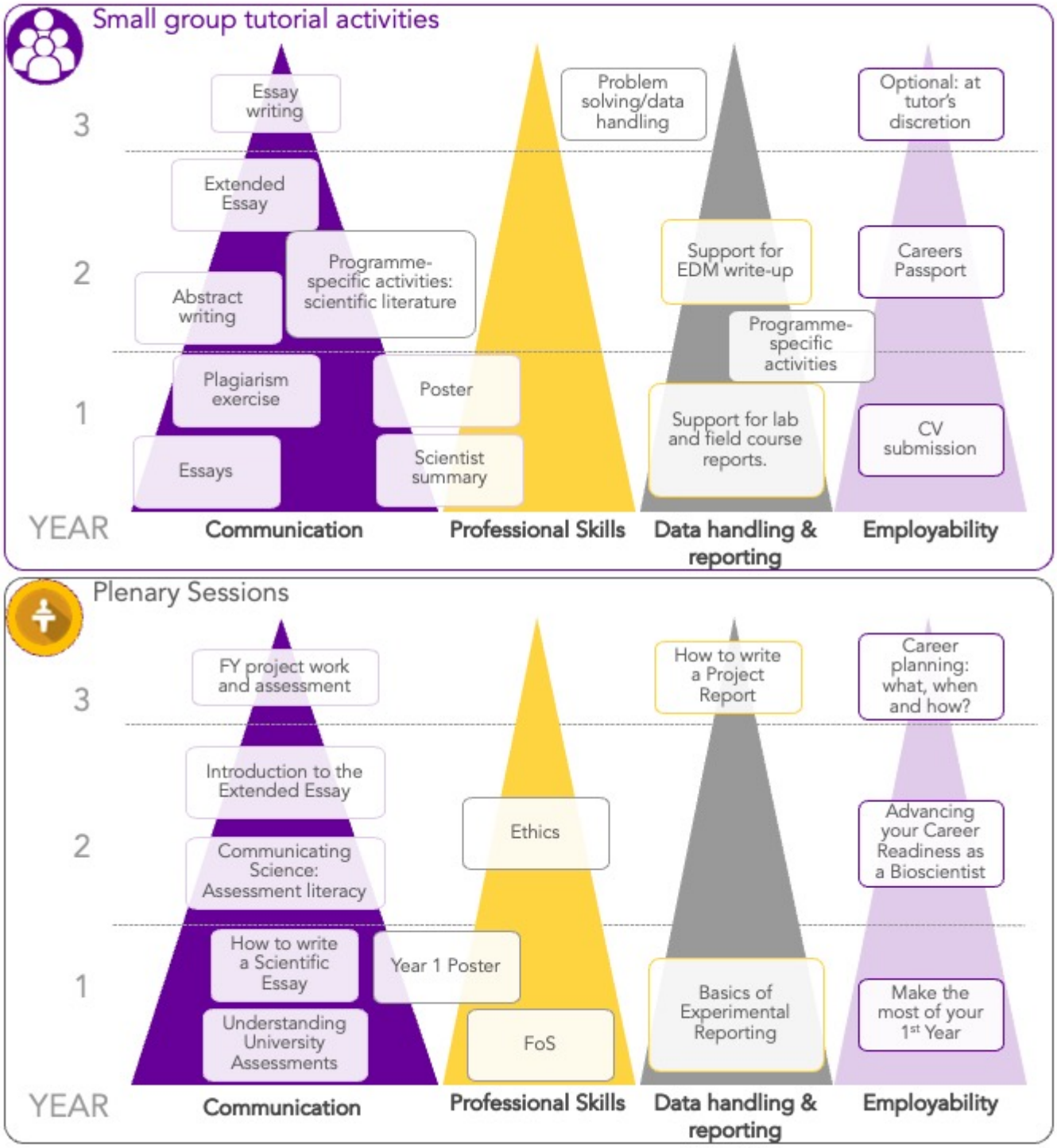


Figure 2. *Summary of the topics you can expect to cover in small group tutorials (top) and plenary sessions (bottom). Your Tutor and Programme Director may, at their discretion, alter the content of your tutorials. FSB = Focused Study in Biosciences.*

Tips for success.



To supplement your small group tutorials and plenary sessions, there is a curated list of resources available on the BIOL20000 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. The Semester 3 tips for success can be accessed here. The Semester 4 tips for success can be accessed here.

How to pass the tutorial unit BIOL20000

In order to pass the Tutorial Unit, you must fulfil two requirements:

1. you must have satisfactory attendance at small-group tutorials AND
2. you have to obtain an overall mark of at least 40% for your tutorial assignments.

Therefore, you will fail BIOL20000 if:

1. you have more than one absence from small-group tutorials without an authorised reason, OR
2. your overall mark for BIOL2000 assignments is <40%.

Consequences of failing the Tutorial Unit

Tutorials are an important part of the attendance requirements for your degree course and ***compensation*** for partial failure of unit examinations is available only to students who have passed their tutorial unit. In addition, students who fail the tutorial unit ***will be removed from Four Year Programmes*** and required to complete a ***re-sit essay*** during the summer vacation. For further details see the Second Year Handbook.

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 relevant guidelines set out in the Second 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 over the academic year will result in **failure** of the tutorial unit, with the consequences listed above. Additional unauthorised absences from tutorials may lead to the issuing of a formal warning letter. Unauthorised absences may have detrimental effects on decisions on progression to subsequent years of your degree programme, or even lead to exclusion from study in the Faculty. For further information on this and other related

matters, please read the relevant sections of the Second Year Handbook.

Plenary sessions

Attendance at all plenary titles (see Table 1) is recommended. Their content relates to assignments that you need to complete, and they support the development of transferable skills. Most sessions will be delivered in hybrid format so that you can attend in person or live on Zoom. Each plenary has a folder on the BIOL20000 Blackboard site, where you can find Zoom codes and supporting information.

Table 1. Year 2 Plenary Sessions.

Plenary title	Teaching Week	Pre-session work	Who should attend
Semester 3 (Teaching Week 1 begins September 23rd, 2024)			
Communicating Science: Assessment Literacy	2	YES	All Year 2 students
Employability: Advancing your Career Readiness as a Bioscientist	4	No	All Year 2 students
	7		
Communicating Science: Introduction to the Extended Essay		No	All Year 2 students
Year 2 January Assessments Q&A	9	No	All Year 2 students
Semester 4 (Teaching Week 1 begins January 27th, 2025)			
Ethics	10	No	All Year 2 students

Table 1. Year 2 Plenary Sessions. Some plenary sessions have associated pre-session work, which should be completed in advance of the session. You will find timetabling information, descriptions of the sessions, ILOs, and instructions for pre-session work in the relevant folder in the â??Plenary Sessionsâ?? area of the BIOL20000 Blackboard site.

Tutorial Assignments

Tutorial Assignment Deadlines

Table 2 summarises Year 1 tutorial assignments common to all degree programmes and lists their deadlines. Your Academic Tutor will give you a deadline and instructions for submission for the programme-specific assignment. Note that, depending on your programme, you may have additional

assignments with deadlines that will be set by your Academic Tutor.

Late submission of tutorial assessments will be penalised with a deduction of 10% of the marks per day (or part thereof, including weekends and holidays) beyond the deadline.

DASS-related automatic extensions, if applicable to you, can be used for tutorial assignments that count towards the tutorial mark (Abstract and Career Skills Audit), but may not apply to the Programme-Specific Assignment, depending on its nature â?? e.g., group work or presentations donâ??t qualify for the extension. Other tutorial assignments, which donâ??t count towards the BIOL2000 mark, do NOT qualify for DASS-related automatic extensions. You may want to remind your tutor if you qualify for DASS-related extensions.

The assignments that count towards **BIOL21392,** Science Communication, will also be marked by your tutor and are listed here for information. You should check the BIOL21392 Blackboard site once available in Semester 4 for full descriptions of these assignments.

Table 2. Year 2 tutorial assignments.

Submission	Deadline (DD/MM/YYYY)	Mark allocation	DASS auto-extension?	Submission Area
		BIOL20000		
BIOL20000-1 Research Paper Abstract	10/10/24; 14:00	40% of marks for BIOL20000	YES	Assessments area BIOL20000 Blackboard site
BIOL2000-2 Initial Career Skills Assessment	24/10/24; 14:00	5% of marks for BIOL20000	YES	Assessments area BIOL20000 Blackboard site
BIOL20000-3 Programme-Specific Assignment	TBA with Academic Tutor	45% of marks for BIOL20000	Maybe*	TBA with Academic Tutor
BIOl2000-4 Year 2 Career Progress	08/05/25; 14:00	10% of marks for BIOL20000	YES	Assessments area BIOL20000 Blackboard site
		BIOL21392		

1 page plan	28/01/25; 14:00	0% of marks for BIOL21392	NO	TBA with Academic Tutor
Oral presentation on extended essay	TBA with Academic Tutor	15% of marks for BIOL21392	NO	TBA with Academic Tutor
Extended Essay	25/03/2025; 14:00	80% of marks for BIOL21392	YES	Assessments area BIOL21392 Blackboard site
Peer Review	29/04/2025; 14:00	5% of marks for BIOL21392	NO	Details available in Semester 4

Table 2. Year 2 tutorial assignments. *Additional assignments may be specified by your tutor. TBA = to be arranged. Tutors will not give feedback on the content of your Career Passport or Career Skills History submissions; you may want to discuss these with your Advisor. *Maybe: applicability of the DASS-related auto-extension to the programme-specific assignment depends on what it is â?? your tutor will advise on this.* ***BIOL21392*** *assignments are shown for information. Please consult the BIOL21392 Blackboard site for further information on these assignments.*

Formatting of Tutorial Assignments

Formatting is important, and mark penalties will be applied where assignments are formatted incorrectly or exceed the specified page or word limit, as specified in your assignment briefs.

- All written tutorial assessments should be formatted in the following way unless you are told otherwise: **A4 page (portrait) with 2.5cm margins, Arial 10pt font, 1.5 line spacing.**
- Page or word limit and referencing style for each assignment will be specified by your Academic Tutor if not stated in the assignment brief.
- Your tutor may advise you to add a completed copy of the tutorial feedback coversheet as the first page of your assignment before you convert to PDF. If used, the coversheet does not count towards the page limit.
- PDFs should be named using the standard naming convention: your Academic Tutorâ??s surname followed by your university ID, and the course code BIOL10000**, e.g. SMITH12345678BIOL10000.** This name should be used as your â??Submission titleâ?? during submission.

How to submit tutorial assignments.

Most assignments should be submitted via the Assessments area of the BIOL20000 unit Blackboard site (see Table 2), where you can also find instructions for uploading an assignment. If you have technical difficulties during submission, you should submit an eLearning enquiry through Blackboard (â??Technical Supportâ?? link in the left-hand menu). Your Academic Tutor will advise you how to

submit any other tutorial assignments

Marking and Feedback

Your assignments will be marked by your Academic Tutor and returned to you with feedback (apart from your Career Skills Audit) that will allow you to improve your work for the next assignment. It is important that you view and save a copy of your feedback once it is available. Instructions for doing so are in the â??How to format and submit assignments and access feedbackâ?? folder. If you donâ??t understand the feedback you have been given, you should ask your Academic Tutor about it.

Semester 3: Developing Scientific Literacy Skills

Introduction and Semester 3 Tutorial Schedule

In Semester 3 your small group tutorials and the tutorial plenary sessions work together to build your skills in reading primary research literature (important for a professional scientist) and writing about it (communication). Developing your scientific literacy skills will be immediately useful as your lecture units will increasingly refer you to original papers rather than textbooks as you progress on your course. Scientific literacy is also essential for the Extended Essay (BIOL21392), which will require you to refer to papers in scientific journals.

An outline schedule for Semester 3 is shown in Table 3. Tutorial activities and assignments, including plenaries, are described by week number (e.g., Semester 3 week 3). These refer to **teaching weeks**, with week 1 of teaching starting on Monday September 23rd 2024 for Semester 3 and on Monday 27th January 2025 for Semester 4. This schedule doesnâ??t contain the dates and times of your small group tutorial sessions, which will be arranged by your Academic Tutor. The exact content of small group tutorials is not described as this will depend on your degree programme and your Academic Tutor. You should ensure that you record times of your tutorials and the assignment deadlines. More information about each plenary session, including details of pre-session work and how to attend via Zoom, will be available on the BIOL20000 Blackboard site in advance of each plenary.

Table 3. Semester 3 Suggested Tutorial Schedule.

Teaching Week	Small-group Tutorials	Plenary Sessions	BIOL20000 Submission DEADLINES (Thursdays 14:00)	Related submission DEADLINES (not BIOL20000)
1	1 Tutor-led tutorial			
2	1 Tutor-led tutorial	Communicating Science: Assessment Literacy		

3	1 Student-led tutorial		Research Paper Abstract
4	1 Tutor-led tutorial to be held by week 5	Employability: Advancing your Career Readiness as a Bioscientist	
5			Initial Career Skills Assessment
6		*No tutorial: Reading week*	
7	1 Tutor-led tutorial	Communicating Science: Introduction to the Extended Essay	
8	2 Tutor-led and 1 student-led tutorials to be held by week 11	Year 2 January Assessments Q&A	
9			
10			
11			
12	*No tutorial â?? EDM submission week.*		EDM report.

Table 3. Semester 3 Suggested Tutorial Schedule. *Teaching Week 1 begins September 23rd, 2024. Your Tutor or Programme Director may provide an alternative schedule at their discretion.*

Semester 3 Tutorial Assignments and Activities

BIOL20000-1 Research Paper Abstract Assignment

A research paper abstract summarises the content of a research paper, usually in a single paragraph. This assignment is intended to prepare you to write abstracts for future assignments, including EDM, RSM, Field Course, and final year project reports.

The Research Paper abstract assignment is worth 40% of the marks for BIOL20000 and qualifies for a DASS-related automatic extension.

Assignment brief and marking scheme: download from the â??Assignment Informationâ?? folder on the BIOL20000 Blackboard site. Your Academic Tutor will specify the research paper for which you should write the abstract.

Skills being developed**:** reading the scientific literature, written communication.

Related plenary sessions: â??Communicating Science: Assessment Literacyâ??: pre-session work involves marking two scientific abstracts written to the same assignment brief.

BIOL20000-2 and BIOL20000-4 Employability Assignments

There are two Employability assignments to complete during Year 2 that are collectively worth 15% of the marks for BIOL20000. There is a submission in Semester 3 (Initial Career Skills Assessment) and one in Semester 4 (Year 2 Career Progress). Both submissions qualify for a DASS-related automatic extension.

***Assignment briefs*:** Guidance for these assignments is provided in the â??Employability Assignmentsâ?? folder on the BIOL20000 Blackboard site. See also the â??Week 4â?? resources in Semester 3 tips for success on the BIOL20000 Blackboard site.

Related plenary sessions: â??Employability: Advancing your Career Readiness as a Bioscientistâ??.

BIOL20000-3 Programme-specific Assignment

The programme-specific assignment is worth 45% of the marks for BIOL20000. Your Programme-specific assignment will be specified by your Programme Director and may run in Semester 3 or Semester 4. Details, including the assignment brief and deadline, will be provided by your Academic Tutor. It may or may not qualify for a DASS-related automatic extension, depending on its nature (e.g., group work does not qualify). This assignment may be a Group Based Learning (GBL) activity, which are generally organised as described in Appendix 1.

Other tutorial activities

Exam preparation

At the end of Semester 3 your exams will be mostly short answer and/or essay based. To help you prepare for these exams, your Tutor may run a tutorial activity that will help you to understand the exam essay marking scheme.

Experimental Reporting

Your tutorials will include activities focusing on experimental reporting. These will help you with writing reports such as those for Experimental Design module (EDM), Research Skills Module (RSM), or Field Course units.

EDM Report Assignment

If you are enrolled on one of the EDM units (BIOL21041/21051/21061) you will be required to write a report on one of the EDM practicals during Semester 3, which contributes 20% of the final EDM unit mark. Your Academic Tutor will confirm which practical you will need to write up, and **all members of your tutorial group will write up the same practical.** Further instructions and a resource entitled â?? ***How to write your EDM report***â?? will be available on the EDM Blackboard sites. There is also a more general resource on â??How to write Scientific Reportsâ?? recommended in Week 7 of Semester 3 tips for success.

Semester 4: Developing Programme-specific Skills

Introduction and Semester 4 Schedule

Tutorial activities in Semester 4 will help you to consolidate your knowledge within the area of your degree programme. You will complete the BIOL21392 Extended Essay and Oral Presentation on a topic related to your degree programme. You will also have the opportunity to compare your work to others on your programme through a Peer Review activity. Other tutorial activities will vary by degree programme but may include group-based activities, data handling problems, and discussion of research papers and/or ethical topics. An outline of the suggested Semester 4 schedule, including the plenary sessions is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Semester 4 Suggested Tutorial Schedule.

Teaching Week	Small-group Tutorials	Plenary Sessions	BIOL21392 Submission DEADLINES (Tuesdays 14:00)	BIOL20000 Submission DEADLINES
1	1 Tutor-led tutorial		Extended Essay plan	
2				
3				
4				
5	4 Tutor-led and 1 student-led tutorials to be held by week 10 (but not in week 9)			
6				
7			Oral Presentation on Extended Essay	Your Academic Tutor will set deadlines for other tutorial assignments
8				
9		No tutorial: Extended Essay submission week	Extended Essay.	
10		Ethics		

	EASTER		
11	1 student-led tutorial	Extended Essay peer reviews	
12	1 Tutor-led tutorial		Year 2 Career Progress (Thurs 14:00)

Table 4. Semester 4 Suggested Tutorial Schedule. *Teaching Week 1 begins January 29th, 2024. Your Tutor or Programme Director may provide an alternative schedule at their discretion, which may include deadlines for additional tutorial assignments.*

Semester 4 Tutorial Activities

Extended Essay plan (BIOL21392)

You will prepare an outline plan of your Extended Essay for submission to your tutor by week 1 of Semester 4. Your tutor will give you feedback on this plan to help you finalise the content of your Extended Essay before submission in Semester 4 week 8.

Oral presentation on Extended Essay (BIOL21392)

You will be assessed on an individual 10-minute (including questions) oral presentation that you will deliver to your tutorial group on your Extended Essay topic. You will receive a mark and feedback from your Academic Tutor to help you to improve your oral communication skills. This presentation, and the feedback you receive, should also help you with writing your Extended Essay. There is a link to further support for presentations in the â??Week 4â?? resources in Semester 4 tips for success on the

BIOL20000 Blackboard site.

Data handling and problem solving (Programme-specific)

Your Tutor may assign exercise(s) to help you improve your skills in handling data, applying statistical tests and problem solving. These exercises will give you practice in the types of problems you may encounter on your final year Degree Programme-specific Problem Paper.

BIOL20000-4 Year 2 Career Progress

Please see section above: Employability Assignments.

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 or report 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 BIOL20000 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. 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.

Appendix 1: Group Based Learning (GBL) Tutorials

What happens in a GBL tutorial?

These are general guidelines for GBL tutorials, which may be modified at the discretion of your Academic Tutor. GBL tutorials are run by students and the Academic Tutor is the facilitator and does not take part, other than to provide guidance if needed. Further guidance on group work is available in week 3 of Semester 3 â??Tips for Successâ??.

A specific topic, short article from a journal or a research paper is chosen. In the first session students decide on the primary learning objectives of the topic and how they are going to go about researching these. This should be done using a wide variety of information resources focused on the primary literature.

At the second session (usually student-led; the Academic Tutor is not present) the group have a full detailed discussion of the topic, focusing on the primary learning objectives. During this session one of the students should act as chairperson. Students should also decide on how the material will be presented the following week to their Tutor. The final session is either a formal presentation of the topic to the Academic Tutor or a discussion of the topic between the Academic Tutor and students.

Attendance at all sessions is compulsory, as a primary aim of GBL is to develop an awareness of teamwork skills and increase the knowledge base of the whole group. Non-attendance jeopardises the learning of all other group members as individuals. For this reason, recordings of attendance and minutes of meetings in the absence of the Academic Tutor must be taken and be open to review by the Academic Tutor at any time.

Guidelines for the running of GBL tutorials

- A chairperson must be appointed at the beginning of each GBL to control the running of the discussion. Attendance must also be recorded.
- Another student is appointed as secretary and should record the agreed learning objectives and email these to all members of the group.
- All students should make a record of the agreed topics to be researched.
- Group communication is essential and everyone in the group should have input (this is strongly dependent on the chairperson).
- The sessions should cover set one-hour time periods. This helps to focus the group and develops time and resource management.
- The research information should come from a range of sources (for example, primary literature, textbooks, internet, reviews, personal experience etc.).

In GBL sessions based on a research paper the chairperson may want to split up the paper by figures and assign a figure or figures to one person to present the data.