

**Your studies**

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# SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

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Postgraduate taught

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
2018-19



University of Essex

# Introduction

## Welcome

**Welcome to the School of Biological Sciences and thank you for choosing to study with us.**



Welcome to the School of Biological Sciences. The School is a rich community of administrative, research, teaching and technical staff, and postgraduate and undergraduate students, working together to provide learning, research and scholarship opportunities. You join in this community through your study, your participation in lectures/seminars and through your daily interaction with staff. We hope that your experience here will confirm the reputation of the School as a friendly, informal but supportive place in which to work and study, and that you will contribute positively to that atmosphere.

Undertaking a degree course is a major and important step in life, both in terms of personal development and in career planning. Studying for a degree is also a very complex activity, and science degrees in particular are very busy, because of the practical components. You may have concerns and questions about the organisation of your degree course, what is expected of you as a postgraduate student, what is the structure of the degree, what facilities are available, who to see, how is your work assessed etc.

The Postgraduate Taught Student Handbook should provide answers to many of your questions and clarify much about the organisation of the MSc Courses and the School. We hope that your time here will be stimulating and rewarding, and that you will use the opportunities and facilities of the University and School to the full, to achieve your goals.

**Professor Phil Mullineaux**  
**Head of School**

### About your Student Handbook

This handbook gives you essential information about your School and the University.

Other helpful sources of information are available at: [www.essex.ac.uk/myessex](http://www.essex.ac.uk/myessex) and [www.essex.ac.uk/students](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students). Our friendly school staff are also here to help and you can find their contact details in this handbook.

At our three uniquely intimate campuses we celebrate diversity and challenge inequality. Whatever your background, race or sexual orientation, you're part of a vibrant community that lives, learns and plays together.

All information in this Handbook was correct at the time of publishing.

## **Checklist of School Welcome Events at the beginning of Term**

### **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018**

#### **Registration for all new Postgraduate Taught Students**

Registration takes place **from 10.00 am – 12.00 pm on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October for all new Biological Sciences Postgraduate Taught Students** (Venue: Sports Hall).

### **Wednesday 3rd October 2018**

#### **Welcome for all new Postgraduate Taught Students (10.00 – 10.30 a.m.)**

A welcome from the Head of School, Postgraduate Taught Director and a brief introduction to the MSc Course Directors. (Venue: LTB 8).

#### **Essential Key Skills Talk for Postgraduate Taught Students (10.30 – 12.00pm)**

Dr Ralf Zwacka (Postgraduate Taught Director) will explore some key skills required for success at Masters level. This event is compulsory for all Masters students. (Venue: LTB 8)

#### **Lunch Mixer (12.00 – 13.30 p.m.)**

An opportunity to meet with MSc Course Directors and some of the Academic Staff involved with PGT teaching within the School over lunch. (Venue: Flexible Teaching Space in STEM Building)

#### **Welcome and introduction for all MSc Biotechnology Students (13.30 – 14.30pm)**

An introduction by Dr Corinne Whitby, Course Director. (Venue: LTB 1).

#### **Welcome and introduction for all MSc Molecular Medicine Students (13.30 – 14.30 pm)**

An introduction by Dr Vassiliy Bavro, Course Director. (Venue: LTB 5).

#### **Welcome and introduction for all MSc Tropical Marine Biology Students (13.30 – 14.30 pm)**

An introduction by Professor David Smith, Course Director. (Venue LTB 9).

### **The Postgraduate Taught Office**

The School Postgraduate Taught Office (Room 4.00a) is located in the Biological Sciences building and is immediately ahead after entering the back entrance from Square 2 (2SE). The Postgraduate Taught Administrator, Nicola Reason, is based in the Postgraduate Office and will be happy to help with any queries you may have during the first few weeks of term.

### **Late Arrivals**

Any students who miss the introductory welcome sessions on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October should report to the School Postgraduate Office, Room 4.00A and speak to Nicola Reason the Postgraduate Taught Administrator at the earliest opportunity.

Students are advised to check their online personal timetable on a regular basis for any last-minute timetabling changes particularly during Weeks 2 and 3.

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## 1.2 Term Dates and Academic Week Numbering System

### 2018-2019

Autumn Term	4 October 2018 – 14 December 2018
Spring Term	14 January 2019 – 22 March 2019
Summer Term	22 April 2019 – 28 June 2019



### 2019-2020

Autumn Term	3 October 2019 – 13 December 2019
Spring Term	13 January 2020 – 20 March 2020
Summer Term	20 April 2020 – 26 June 2020

Information relating to the University's term dates for students can be found at:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/key-dates>

**NB These term dates are for general guidance only. Work associated with Research Projects will be timetabled outside of the University's stated term dates.**

## University of Essex Week Numbering System

The University uses a week numbering system that covers the 52 weeks of a calendar year, beginning with Welcome Week as Week 1. Autumn term teaching takes place during Weeks 2-11, spring term teaching takes place during Weeks 16-25 and the summer term is Weeks 30-39. You can find the University week structure/calendar here: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/timetables/viewing-teaching-timetables>

The official University teaching day runs from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. You must be available during these times every week in term time.

## Examination Dates

The BS934-7-AU (Gene Technology and Synthetic Biology) Exam for MSc Biotechnology and MSc Molecular Medicine students will be scheduled in Week 15 (week commencing 7th January 2019). Attendance at this exam is compulsory and you should be aware that **Week 15 is the week before the start of the spring term.**

Please do not book any holidays or trips during Week 15.

If you are absent from the University during teaching weeks or if you miss any scheduled events outside of term-time, you should follow the procedure outlined in section 4.

### 1.3 Teaching Timetable

You can view your timetable at: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/timetables/login.aspx> (you will be prompted to login using your Essex username and password). Once you have chosen all your modules and received confirmation, they will appear on your personal timetable. You may find that the first week of your timetable is blank if you do not have any course commitments in Welcome Week. You can also access your timetable on most mobile devices including smart phones and tablets.

Timetable changes are sometimes unavoidable and you should be alert for any changes, especially in the first couple of weeks of term. Your personal timetable will be updated automatically every evening. Any last minute changes will be sent via e-mail or Moodle. When changes are made at very short notice (less than 24hours before the teaching session) changes will also be texted to students who have provided mobile phone numbers.

#### Technical Issues

You may wish to use the my pocket timetable app to view your timetable but be aware that if the app is experiencing technical issues then you **must ensure you check your online personal timetable too**. If you miss a teaching event due to technical issues this will not be accepted as a valid extenuating circumstances claim.

**If you have any timetable difficulties you should contact the Timetabling and Operations Administrator ([bstimetb@essex.ac.uk](mailto:bstimetb@essex.ac.uk)) in the first instance.**

### 1.4 Link to MyEssex Student Portal



MyEssex is the University's student portal that you used during your application process. Once you're a registered student, you can also use myEssex to update your personal details and as a quick reference guide to other student webpages: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/myessex/>





## 2 About Our School


### 2.1 Details of Academic Staff

This is a list of the academic staff that you are likely to be in contact with most frequently.

Most academic staff work from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday during term-time. However, they tend to have busy schedules so you should email or telephone first if you need an appointment. Their availability in the vacations will normally be much more limited as they may be undertaking research or on holiday. You cannot generally expect to receive a prompt response to any emails that you send to teaching staff during vacations. If you have an urgent query during the vacations, you can contact the Postgraduate Office.

<p><b>Dr Ralf Zwacka</b> Postgraduate Taught Director</p> 	<p>Dr Ralf Zwacka is the Postgraduate Taught Director. He oversees the management of all aspects postgraduate teaching in the School. Dr Zwacka can also advise on Board of Examiners outcomes and appeals and matters relating to the PGT Student Staff Liaison Committee.</p> <p>Link to Research Area: <a href="https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/profile.aspx?!D=3386">https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/profile.aspx?!D=3386</a></p>	<p>Office: 5.15 E-mail: rzwacka Tel: 2036</p>
<p><b>Dr Vassiliy Bavro</b> MSc Molecular Medicine Course Director</p> 	<p>Dr Vassiliy Bavro is the MSc Molecular Medicine Course Director. You can contact him regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area: <a href="https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/profile.aspx?!D=5017">https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/profile.aspx?!D=5017</a></p>	<p>Office: 3.08 E-mail: vb16181 Tel: 2243</p>


<p><b>Professor David Smith</b> MSc Tropical Marine Biology Course Director</p> 	<p>Professor David Smith is the MSc Tropical Marine Biology Course Director. You can contact him regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area: <a href="https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/profile.aspx?ID=1250">https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/profile.aspx?ID=1250</a></p>	<p>Office: 5.37 E-mail: djsmitc Tel: 2242</p>
<p><b>Dr Corinne Whitby</b> MSc Biotechnology Course Director</p> 	<p>Dr Corinne Whitby is the MSc Biotechnology Course Director. You can contact her regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area: <a href="https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/profile.aspx?ID=1256">https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/profile.aspx?ID=1256</a></p>	<p>Office: 5.13 E-mail: cwhitby Tel: 2062</p>
<p><b>Dr Julie Lloyd</b> Director of Education</p> 	<p>Dr Julie Lloyd is the Director of Education for the School.</p>	<p>Office: 5.39 Email: lloyj Tel: 3307</p>
<p><b>Dr Louise Beard</b> Senior Tutor</p> 	<p>Dr Louise Beard is the Senior Tutor for the School. She provides pastoral support and advice to students who have issues that are affecting their studies. Louise can also be a point of contact if you do not want to approach your MSc Course Director.</p>	<p>Office: 5.09 Email: lhbeard Tel: 4048</p>


<p><b>Dr Phil Reeves</b> Disability Liaison Officer</p> 	<p>Phil is the School's Disability Liaison Officer (SDLO) If you have a disability, medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty Phil is the School representative who can help you to access your studies.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.31 Email: preeves Tel: 3763</p>
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Full Academic Staff List: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/Staff.aspx?type=academic>

## 2.2 Details of Administrative Staff

The School Administrative Offices are open 9am – 1pm and 2pm – 5.15pm Monday to Thursday and 9am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm on Friday.

<p><b>Nicola Reason</b> Postgraduate Taught Administrator</p> 	<p>Nicola handles all matters relating to the administration of postgraduate taught students and is your first point of call for general and administrative enquires and matters relating to postgraduate coursework submission. She is also secretary to the PGT SSLC meetings.</p>	<p>Office: 4.00A Email: n.reason Tel: 2051</p>
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<p><b>Vickie Banks</b> Timetabling and Operations Administrator</p> <p><b>Works part-time</b></p> <p><b>Office Hours:</b> (Monday 9.15-3.45, Tuesday 9.15-3.45, Thursday 9.15-1.15 &amp; Friday 9.15-1.15)</p>	<p>You should contact Vickie with any issues you experience with your timetable.</p>	<p>Office: 4.00 Email: <a href="mailto:bstimetb@essex.ac.uk">bstimetb@essex.ac.uk</a> Tel: 6380</p>
<p><b>lateKate Hollands</b> School Manager</p> 	<p>Kate is the Professional Services Lead, with responsibility for managing educational, technical and research support in the School.</p>	<p>Office: 4.06 E-mail: smbs Tel: 2248</p>
<p><b>Kerry Alban</b> School Office Administrator</p> 	<p>Kerry is secretary to the School Undergraduate Progress and Late Submissions Committee and provides support to the School's Plagiarism Officer.</p>	<p>Office: 4.30 (School Office) Email: kerrya Tel: 4074</p>

## 2.3 Our Location

Colchester Campus  
School of Biological Sciences  
University of Essex  
Wivenhoe Park  
Colchester CO4 3SQ

### Opening Hours

The Postgraduate Taught Office (3SW.4.00A) and School Office (3SW.4.30) are open from 9am –1pm and 2pm – 5.15pm Monday to Thursday and 9am –1pm and 2pm – 5pm on Friday.



The School is open weekdays from 8am – 6pm. Access to the School outside these hours is not permitted without special permission.

### **Common Room**

The School Common Room (Room 4.11) is a recreational area for staff and students. It has tea and coffee making facilities, a microwave, fridge and a seating area.

### **Noticeboard**

The Postgraduate Taught Noticeboard is located outside the School Postgraduate Office (Room 4.00A).

### **Photocopying**

There are photocopiers in the Library, or you can visit the Copy Shop on Square 4.

## **2.4 School Support for Students**

### **Your Personal Tutor**

Your MSc Course Director will be your Personal Tutor during your studies. They are there to help you feel connected to your School and provide someone you can talk to if you have questions about your course or encounter any difficulties which affect your studies. Your MSc Course Director may also recommend other support services on campus that might be able to help.

**Students studying on the MSc Tropical Marine Biology course will be allocated a Personal Tutor (this will be an academic member of staff from the School) during the beginning of the Autumn Term and will be notified of their name/contact details by e-mail.**

### **Support for Female Students**

The School of Biological Sciences has a large and vibrant community of female scientists working at all levels in research, teaching, management and outreach. The University was awarded the Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award in November 2013 in recognition of its continuing work to support women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and the School of Biological Sciences achieved an Athena SWAN Bronze Departmental Award in November 2014.

The School has a Women in Biological Sciences webpage with a range of information and resources for female staff and students [https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/about/women\\_in\\_science/](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/about/women_in_science/)

## Staff Research Interests

Research in the School is organised into four main groups: Genomics and Computational Biology, Ecology and Environmental Microbiology, Protein Structure and Mechanisms of Disease, and Plant Productivity.

Academic staff are actively engaged in research on topics across a wide spectrum, including: agricultural sustainability; coral reef ecology; virology and immunology; molecular complications of diabetes; oxidative stress; photosynthetic metabolism and plant responses to environmental stresses.

If you are interested in finding out more, see: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/research/default.aspx>

## School Seminars

You are encouraged to attend the School Seminar Programme which is held on Thursdays between 1-2pm. Details are published on the School Facebook page and circulated via email.

## 2.5 Correspondence and Communication

Most information is sent by email, but important documents and letters may be sent by post to your term-time or permanent home address. You must keep your contact information up-to-date through MyEssex, or you will miss important information.

You should check your University email account at least daily in term time. Moodle is also an important source of information and will be used to update you about module and timetabling information.

### Communication Methods

Most information is sent by email, but important documents and letters may be sent by post to your term-time or permanent home address. You must keep your contact information up-to-date through MyEssex, or you will miss important information.

You should check your University email account at least daily in term time. Moodle (the University's e-learning environment) is also an important source of information and will be used to update you about module and timetabling information. General information is also placed on the School Postgraduate Taught Student Notice Board located on Floor 4 in the Biological Sciences building, just outside the Postgraduate Taught Office.



## Communicating with Members of Staff

Most members of staff within the School of Biological Sciences operate an open-door policy by which you are free to contact them directly by e-mail, telephone or in person.

Before you make a query please make sure you have checked all of your course documentation (i.e. the Postgraduate Taught Student Handbook/Module Handbook on Moodle and online resources). The answer to at least 80 per cent of student queries is already documented.

Avoid directing general questions about the course or administrative matters towards individual lecturers or members of staff. Please reserve these questions for the Postgraduate Taught Administrator by either visiting the office in person (Room 4.00A) or by contacting Nicola Reason by email: [n.reason@essex.ac.uk](mailto:n.reason@essex.ac.uk) or telephone: 01206 872 051.

## MSc Biotechnology and Molecular Medicine Course Directors Academic Support Hours

The MSc Biotechnology and Molecular Medicine Course Directors operate regular Academic Support Hours to deal in person with any student queries.

Dr Corinne Whitby is available in her office (Room 5.13) to meet with MSc Biotechnology students between **9.00 a.m. – 10.00 a.m. on Mondays**. Students are advised to make contact by e-mail to arrange an appointment. Dr Whitby's e-mail is as follows:- [cwhitby@essex.ac.uk](mailto:cwhitby@essex.ac.uk)

Dr Vassiliy Bavro is available in his office (Room 3.08) to meet with MSc Molecular Medicine students between **2.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m. on Tuesdays**. Students are advised to make contact by e-mail to arrange an appointment. Dr Bavro's e-mail is as follows:- [yb16181@essex.ac.uk](mailto:yb16181@essex.ac.uk)

If your matter is **extremely urgent, you can e-mail or visit Dr Whitby/Dr Bavro in their office outside of these Academic Support Hours**.

## Postgraduate Taught Director Academic Support Hours

Dr Ralf Zwacka, Postgraduate Taught Director operates Academic Support Hours to deal in person with any queries/problems that students do not wish to discuss with their MSc Course Director.

Dr Zwacka is available in his office (Room 5.15) to meet with Postgraduate Taught students between **2.00 p.m. – 3.00 p.m. on Tuesdays**

If your matter is **extremely urgent, you can e-mail or visit Dr Zwacka in his office outside of these Academic Support Hours**.

## 2.6 School Annual Prizes

The School has several endowed postgraduate prizes which are awarded annually. The award of a School prize is noted on student transcripts. Postgraduate prizes are awarded at the Degree Day Reception.

# 3 Learning and Teaching

## MSc Courses

We offer a wide range of carefully structured and innovative MSc courses that give you a thorough and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the subject. All of our courses are taught by staff who are experts in their fields and actively involved in research of international standing.

### 3.1 Learning, Teaching and Independent Study

The School's broad educational purpose is to:

- 1) Deliver an education in the chosen subject of high academic standard set in a framework of procedures to monitor and improve quality;
- 2) Offer coherent MSc degree courses, shaped by the research strengths of the School, allowing specialisation in relevant disciplines;
- 3) Provide a choice of MSc degree courses with curricula designed to promote the progressive development of subject knowledge and understanding;
- 4) Deploy a range of teaching, learning and assessment modes structured to meet the requirements of the curriculum in a well resourced environment, making reasonable adjustments where appropriate to support individual student needs;
- 5) Stimulate interest in and enthusiasm for the chosen subject and encourage students to realise their academic potential;
- 6) Help students by providing a friendly, supportive environment and clear, comprehensive information relating to degree organisation, module content and assessment methods;
- 7) Produce graduates who can proceed either to PhD study particularly in appropriate subject areas, or to a range of careers, using the key skills acquired during their study.

Successful teaching and learning involves a partnership between student and staff.

## Course Participation

### Lectures, Practicals and Seminars

In a Masters-level course the mode of study is different from a first degree. Students are expected to have acquired good study skills in their first degree, and to be self-motivated in their study.

They should, therefore, require less supervision in their assimilation and follow-up of lecture and seminar material than undergraduates. Lectures, practicals and seminars in this course are designed to stimulate the students' academic development, and to provide up to date teaching in this specialised material.

Students are expected to do a substantial amount of work outside the lectures, which may involve learning or refreshing material that is unfamiliar using basic text books; though this should only be necessary in one or two areas that will differ for each student.

However, much of the material will be advanced texts and journal papers referred to by the lecturer, which will require considerable study.

Students should expect therefore to put in three to four hours of study for every formal contact hour, including preparing assessment work; and a typical weekly work rate at Masters level is 40-48 hours.

While some time off during the University vacations is essential, this should be limited, as there will be reading to do and assessments to prepare. Students should expect to use the library extensively and will probably need to purchase several books.

### Guidance on Study Methods for Masters Courses

Everyone has their own style and methods of study and on a Masters course there is much flexibility in how you organise your study to accompany lectures, practicals and seminars. You should try to develop a method that best suits you. We provide here some guidance that you might find useful in helping you to get started, particularly if you have been away from formal study for some time.

### Learning is an Interactive Process

Moodle: <http://moodle.essex.ac.uk> provides for each module: a Module Handbook; learning materials including presentations and handouts. Staff may also add other information such as useful weblinks and additional reading material. You should access Moodle regularly but do note that the extent of lecture materials on Moodle will vary from module to module, depending on staff preferences. You can also access Moodle through MyEssex. Moodle supports lectures but is not a substitute for attending lectures.

It is well to remember that learning is an interactive process. It is often useful to go back to something you studied earlier to find out whether it now makes more sense or has more meaning.

You may find it helpful to read some material quickly to gain an overall sense of content and direction, and then to return to that topic and study other material more closely later.

It may also help you to have confidence to tackle a less familiar area. The interactive aspect of learning should be kept in mind particularly if you feel you are getting stuck on something. Sometimes it may be better not to spend too much time on an idea or topic you cannot grasp immediately but schedule to return to this topic at a later date.

It is more likely that you will be able to tackle it more effectively at some later point, without becoming bored, or frustrated, or losing your patience.

It is important always to look at the aims and objectives of a course or seminar. You will make the best use of your time and effort if you have a clear understanding of what you should be achieving at each stage of your study. Take some time to examine the course outline and to understand its structure and progression and how the various components link together.

### **Organisation - The Study Habit**

A number of studies have shown that the most successful students are normally those who are well organised. One important aspect of organisation is being able to order your course materials, notes, newspaper cuttings and journal articles that you might collect. Find a way of filing or organising these things so that they are easy to get hold of when you need them. We will introduce you to referencing software (for example EndNote, Reference Manager) and you should use these to organise important information for easy retrieval and inclusion in your written work.

It is also important to organise your work times. You need to develop a study habit at the outset. Let your family and friends know too. Although it may seem rigid and difficult at first, it can be a good idea to draw up a timetable so that you have a clear idea of what you should cover within a given period. A milestones chart will provide you with a long-term view of the work you need to complete. Creating a weekly timetable should help to guide you towards regular concentrated work and improve your efficient use of time. It takes away the excuse for indecision by focusing your attention on what you are going to complete each week and helps to create that study habit.

## Support from others

Much of your study will involve you working alone. So try to take any opportunity you can of getting support that might help you. The value of discussion with others cannot be underestimated. Whether you talk to people who know something about your new area of study, or those who know little, their input can be of use to you in many ways.

Talking to other people is a good way of helping to clarify, in your own mind, some of the new ideas and concepts that you will be coming across in the course material.

If you are given the opportunity to talk about or argue a point of view or perspective prompted by the course material it will help to show what you have learnt, highlight areas you do not really understand and develop your skills in expressing a point of view or developing a well-structured argument.

## Reading and Note Taking

Modules vary in the amount of reading they ask for, but you will probably find that your course involves a considerable amount of reading. How you organise and use reading is, therefore, of central importance. Think of reading as a fundamental intellectual activity. As you read, you should be:

- Thinking about the content
- Making notes, if appropriate
- Relating concepts and ideas, particularly to other disciplines
- Comparing information with other knowledge and experience that you have
- Working out how what you are reading can help you formulate issues and answer questions
- Considering the applications of what you are studying

You should always adopt a critical approach to the materials. You are dealing with very complex issues and in some cases there will be gaps in the knowledge.

There is no substitute for making your own notes of key concepts, techniques, issues and arguments. In note taking, the choice you make about what you think is most important, interesting and relevant, and putting it in your own words, are a powerful means of acquiring and developing your knowledge of a subject.

By the end of your course you should have a set of notes which provides you with a useful summary of what you have learned and constitutes your own commentary on the subject matter of the course.

Your notes will build up into your own reference collection of the material you have covered and will also act as an important tool or resource when it comes to clarifying and understanding what you have been learning, especially in preparation for your assignments and Project. Note taking increases the time spent concentrating on a study topic and it reinforces your ability to absorb what you have been learning.

Notes should be:

- Well organised
- Well-structured with headings, numbers and indentations
- Full in content with neither too much nor too little detail
- Able to convey clearly the meaning of the source to which they refer

It is important to remember that any notes you take should record, probably at the start of the page, the source of the information. Reference to the pages that the notes are taken from, as you go along, will also be helpful, particularly if you use your notes when you come to write an essay.

## 3.2 Teaching and Learning Expectations

**You can expect that we will:**

- Work to achieve our aims;
- Provide clear and comprehensive documentation for all modules;
- Provide teaching sessions which (a) are well prepared and delivered, (b) are supported by sufficient materials and equipment and (c) for practical work, are safe;
- Notify you as far in advance as is possible of any changes to the teaching timetable;
- Return assessed work within 3 term time weeks, with clear and helpful feedback and marked in accordance with the marks classification in this handbook, on a coversheet where appropriate;
- Deal with queries you may have relating to modules within a reasonable timescale.

**We expect that you will:**

- Make the best use of the educational opportunities and resources available and work to achieve the stated objectives and to realise your academic potential;
- Familiarise yourself with the contents of this handbook and the documentation which accompanies each module and follow the guidance, procedures and rules described;
- Attend prescribed instruction of all types and where absence is unavoidable notify the relevant person;
- Regularly consult noticeboards and your email and keep your address updated so that you do not miss important information;
- Prepare adequately for and participate actively in teaching sessions;
- Support your formal tuition with an appropriate level and intensity of student managed learning;
- Submit assessed work in the appropriate form and by the published deadlines;
- Use feedback on written work constructively, both to build on your strengths and to identify and remedy your weaknesses;
- Regularly review your academic progress (marks) and take appropriate action where and when necessary;
- Contribute to the development and improvement of the student learning experience by providing accurate and considered feedback on modules when required, and by participating in the student staff liaison process;
- Abide by the various rules and regulations in the School and University that have evolved in order to provide safe, fair and effective teaching and learning support for all students.

## Job References: Requesting References from Members of Staff

If you require a personal reference, always ask permission from a member of staff before giving their name as a referee. You should consider from whom it is most appropriate to request a reference and who will be best equipped to provide evidence of your character and performance in the subject.

Every reasonable effort will be made to meet a request for a reference for graduates up to three years after they leave the University. Requests received outside of this timescale may, of course, be met if a member of staff is equipped with the necessary information on the student and is willing to provide a reference. Requests received after this three-year period has lapsed will be dealt with by providing a more factual statement, comprising details of academic attendance and marks, drawing on records held within the School and/or central administration, as appropriate. Transcripts are supplied by the Registry. Attendance and participation are borne in mind by staff when references are given. It is helpful if you can provide the member of staff with details of the course or job you have applied for and a CV. Please try to ask for references in good time as it will not always be possible for a member of staff to write a reference immediately.

### Copies of References

A copy of any reference provided will be retained within our School for no longer than three years for taught students. If a reference is retained beyond this timeframe, our School will seek explicit consent from the student concerned.

## 3.3 Information on Moodle and FASER

We use **Moodle** as our online learning environment, to enhance face-to-face teaching. It lets you get to course materials and has built-in features to enhance learning such as discussion forums, chat facilities, quizzes, surveys, glossaries and wikis.

**FASER** is our **online coursework submission and feedback system**. Use it to check coursework deadlines, upload coursework and receive electronic feedback all in one place.

[faser.essex.ac.uk](http://faser.essex.ac.uk)

[www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/learning-technology/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/learning-technology/)

**Further information about using FASER is given in Section 5.**



### 3.4 MSc Course Structures

We offer a wide range of carefully structured and innovative MSc courses that give you a thorough and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the subject. All of our courses are taught by staff who are experts in their fields and actively involved in research of international standing.

Students currently in the School may be studying the following MSc Courses:

MSc Biotechnology
MSc Molecular Medicine
MSc Tropical Marine Biology

**You will find a table showing current optional and compulsory modules for your MSc Course in the appendices at the back of this handbook.**

#### Items you will need

Text books: You will need to purchase the key text books for your course. You cannot rely on the Library to have sufficient copies of these texts. You may be able to find second hand copies online, but take care not to buy an out-of-date edition unless you have been told it is suitable by your Module Supervisor. A new purchase may be necessary to obtain an access code for online content and assessments. Please refer to individual module pages on our Moodle site at: <http://moodle.essex.ac.uk/> for details on reading lists.

Laboratory coats and safety glasses: You must wear an appropriate, clean, protective laboratory coat in the laboratory. It is compulsory to bring your laboratory coat with you to all practicals. Laboratory staff cannot supply spare laboratory coats. You must not wear your laboratory coat outside the laboratory. Safety glasses must be worn at all times in the laboratory (except when the practical schedule or the member of staff running the practical states otherwise). Laboratory coats and safety glasses will be provided as part of a package of essential equipment.

Other items required in practicals: Ensure that you bring a sharp H grade pencil, an eraser and a ruler to all practical classes.

Laboratory books: A laboratory book is essential for taking notes and recording data during practical sessions.

## Programme Specifications

Programme Specifications provide key information, such as the structure and aims of your course, as well as the knowledge and skills you will develop. The relevant Programme Specification for your course and stage of study will be available to you when you log onto either myEssex or eNROL

## Learning Outcomes

Your course's learning outcomes are set out in Programme Specifications. They are categorised into knowledge, intellectual, practical and key skills, and are linked to the aims, learning outcomes and assessment on the modules you take. You can measure your progress against the outcomes, for example when reviewing coursework feedback, and they can be used to guide you when undertaking independent study. You can find a copy of the module map showing how your course learning outcomes are connected to the modules in the programme specification for your course, online through the MyEssex webpage or via this link: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/programmespecs/>. Full module outlines are located on the module directory: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/modules/>

## Credits

The University credit-rating system for Postgraduate study is based on a nationally recognised framework. The Postgraduate academic year consists of 180 credits and each postgraduate module is assigned a number of 'workload credits'. In our Biological Sciences MSc Courses, individual modules are assigned 15, 30 or 60 credits.

## 3.5 Changing your Degree

If you are thinking about changing course, we recommend that you speak to someone in your school as soon as possible. They will be able to advise you if there are any specific requirements for the course you are looking to change to. If the course you are looking to change to is within a different school, then you should also speak to someone in that school.

There are deadlines in place for when you need to change course by, so please make sure you are aware of these deadlines before requesting to change. Further details on changing course and the relevant deadlines can be found at [www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/changing-course.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/changing-course.aspx) or by visiting [your Student Services Hub](#). Investigate your potential new course by looking at course information on the department's web pages, talking to students on the course and speaking to tutors. You should also look at our [Rules of Assessment](#) for the new course to check whether there are any course-specific requirements.

If you want to **change your mode of study** from full-time to part-time, you should discuss this with our school staff. If this is possible, you will need to make a formal request using the online **Change of Mode of Study form** which you can find here: [www.essex.ac.uk/esf/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/esf/)

Changing your mode of study may affect your immigration status and you may need to contact the Home Office or make a new Tier 4 application.

**Please read carefully our guidance on visas and course changes here:**  
[www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/studies/changes](http://www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/studies/changes)

### 3.6 Listen Again

Did you miss something? Our Listen Again digital recording service lets you listen again to lectures so you grasp every detail. Available in teaching rooms or lecture theatres where you see the sign.

[listenagain.essex.ac.uk/](http://listenagain.essex.ac.uk/)

### 3.7 Disability and Emotional Wellbeing

We would encourage all new students with a disability, long term medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty to disclose and register with the Student Services Hub so that we can plan how best to support you in your studies.

You can find out about the support we offer here: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/help.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/help.aspx)

UK students may be eligible for a Disabled Students' Allowance grant. See our webpages for more information, including application forms and key changes:

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/disability/funding.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/disability/funding.aspx)

### 3.8 International Students

We are proud to be a global community and we recognise that living and studying in the UK may be very different from your own country.

Essex has a wide range of support covering academic and health and wellbeing issues. Our friendly and professional staff will be able to guide, give advice and assist you during your time at Essex.

You can find helpful information here:- [www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/international/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/international/default.aspx)

If you are studying on a **Tier 4 visa**, don't forget to read section **8.4 Tier 4 Information** of this handbook which has further information and links

### 3.9 Mature and Part-time Students

We appreciate that studying as a mature student can present challenges. This is particularly true if this is your first experience of higher education and you have other commitments and responsibilities to meet such as work and family. We want you to be aware of the support available so that you can make the most of your time at Essex.

You can find more information here: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/groups/mature-students.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/groups/mature-students.aspx)

### 3.10 Student Representation, Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC), Student Assessment of Modules and Teaching and Student Surveys

Student feedback is a vital part of the University's approach to quality assurance and enhancement. It is therefore important that you are given the opportunity to feedback and that you take time to feedback to the University. You can do this in a number of ways:



You can contact (or volunteer to be) a **student representative** who represent the voice of fellow students in school Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) and other University level committees.

[www.essexstudent.com/representation/course reps/](http://www.essexstudent.com/representation/course reps/)

[www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student\\_representation/student\\_rep.asp](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student_representation/student_rep.asp)

[/www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student\\_representation/sslc.asp](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student_representation/sslc.asp).

Every year, we will ask you to complete the **Student Assessment of Module and Teaching (SAMT)**. This survey will be summarised and discussed by SSLCs and will inform reports written by us for central University committees as part of our quality assurance processes.

### 3.11 Library Services

At our Colchester Campus, the **Albert Sloman Library** on Square 5 has a variety of study spaces over six floors, including 24/7 facilities and group work areas. The Library offers a wide range of learning resources, online and in print, with a dedicated Helpdesk, overnight chat service and the opportunity to book appointments with your Subject Librarian to help you through your studies and beyond.

[libwww.essex.ac.uk](http://libwww.essex.ac.uk)

The library has a team of Subject Librarians who can help you to find appropriate resources for your assignments and show you how to search effectively. They can also provide advice on referencing and how to avoid plagiarism, using reference management software, and evaluating sources. Your Subject Librarian is Greg Cadge – contact him at: [greg.cadge@essex.ac.uk](mailto:greg.cadge@essex.ac.uk) / or use the Book a librarian form on the Library website to get in touch.

For guidance in relation to third-party proofreading of student work: [www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading](http://www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading)

### 3.12 Attendance Monitoring (Count-me-in) and Absence from Sessions

Your attendance at lectures and classes has a significant impact on how successful you are in your studies. At Essex, we monitor attendance so we can identify students who may need guidance and support.

You will need to **record your attendance** at teaching events using your registration card and the electronic reader in the teaching room. Just 'tap in' for every timetabled teaching event you attend.

**You should not tap in for someone who is not attending the class; and also you should not tap in if you then immediately leave the teaching event.** This may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

If you **lose your card** or it is **faulty**, go to the Student Services Hub to get a new card (a fee may be applicable). If you attend a teaching event but are unable to record your attendance as you don't have your registration card, you should speak to a member of administrative staff in your school.. In the case of a lost card, your department will normally record you as present for up to seven days.

For more information on attendance, and for links to forms and guidelines visit: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/attendance.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/attendance.aspx)

If you need to **report an absence** from a teaching event, test or exam due to medical reasons, representing the University in British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) competitions, or in regional, national or international competitions; being selected or training for a national sports team e.g. Home Nationals or Great Britain, on a University organised placement, or other circumstances you should do so by completing the relevant form in myEssex for a **notified absence**. Your school will consider the reasons and may record it as an **authorised absence**. Be aware that you may need to **provide evidence**, including medical evidence if relevant. Please contact your MSc Course Director, school staff or the Student Services Hub for advice and support, particularly if you are going to be absent for several weeks.

Please note that **absence from practical sessions** will result in a mark of zero for the associated work. The School will not be able to schedule alternative assessment. Participation in a practical is confirmed by your **signature on the hard copy register** provided so it is essential you sign this during the session. Note: you should also 'tap in' for your practical so that your presence is recorded for general absence monitoring. If your **absence is the result of extenuating circumstances, you should complete an Extenuating Circumstances form, in addition to the 'Notified Absence from Teaching form'**, for the Exam Board that meets at the end of the year (see section 4.2 for further details).

If you are **absent from an examination**, you should complete an *Absence from Exam Notification Form*. Depending on the reason for your absence, you may also need to complete an Extenuating Circumstances Form (see 4.2).

For more information about how to report an absence, and for links to the online form and guidelines, visit [www.essex.ac.uk/see/attendance](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/attendance)

### 3.13 Your Progress

Your engagement with your programme of study is primarily measured by attendance, and completion of, and performance in, assessments, as appropriate. We monitor attendance and will follow-up concerns about any student in accordance with the University's Progress Procedures at:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/policies>

As a student, if engagement in your studies, as measured by attendance and/or submission of assessed work, is unsatisfactory you'll be contacted and offered guidance and support.

If your progress causes concerns you will initially be contacted by your MSc Course Director, and then by the School Progress Officer. Where serious concerns persist, you may be referred to the Deputy Dean Education and your case formally considered by a Progress Committee.

## 4 Assessment

### 4.1 Rules of Assessment and Credit Accumulation

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgt/assess-rules.aspx>

**The Rules of Assessment** are the rules, principles and frameworks which the University uses to calculate your course progression and final results. Some departments also have variations to the main rules, which you can find listed on our website above. If you have questions about whether a variation applies to you, contact your school.

Each module you will take will have a credit value which you are awarded if you successfully complete the module. You need to obtain a certain amount of credits to be awarded your degree, and the Rules of Assessment give you more information about this.

These decisions are made by the Board of Examiners who use the Rules of Assessment to decide:

- you can be awarded credit for the modules you have studied
- you have done enough to move on to the next stage of your course (if you are on a course which lasts more than one year)
- you need reassessment
- whether you have done enough to pass your course
- whether you are eligible to receive a merit or distinction

The following is only a summary of the key points. You should read the rules and make sure you understand them. If you need advice, ask your MSc Course Director, Postgraduate Taught Administrators, or SU Advice.

If you **fail your course** you are not able to repeat it. The Rules of Assessment for Postgraduate Taught Awards only allow reassessment for up to a maximum of 60 credits worth of modules for taught masters degrees. The Board of Examiners will inform you if you are eligible for reassessment once it has considered your marks.

If you **fail your dissertation** you may be permitted by the Board of Examiners to resubmit your work, provided you meet the criteria as set out in the Rules of Assessment for Postgraduate Taught Awards.

Alternatively, if you have obtained enough credits in your taught modules, you may be eligible for another award such as a postgraduate diploma or certificate.

You can decide if you want to **accumulate credit** by taking individual modules with the aim of achieving a postgraduate award; this is called **modular study**. There are opportunities to achieve postgraduate awards through **credit accumulation study** in an increasing number of departments, as an alternative to standard full or part-time study. You can find more information on the 'Study by credit accumulation' webpages: [www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/university\\_policies/credit-accumulation.asp](http://www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/university_policies/credit-accumulation.asp)

Individual modules can yield 15, 20, 30 or 40 credits depending upon which school you are studying in. Each award has a defined structure, normally consisting of a combination of core, compulsory and optional modules, and requires a specific volume of credit to be achieved:

- Graduate/Postgraduate Certificates - 60 credits (all taught module credits)
- Graduate/Postgraduate Diplomas - 120 credits (all taught module credits)
- Masters Courses - 180 credits (normally 120 credits of taught module credits and a 60 credit dissertation or equivalent)

Credit is awarded for successful completion of individual modules. Students taking a credit-accumulation route of study register for the separate modules individually and accumulate the required volume of credit for the relevant award, including the dissertation if necessary. You will be given a different registration number for each module.

The Rules of Assessment are different when you study individual modules; make sure you check the relevant Rules of Assessment for the award you're studying towards. **You will have a maximum of six years to study** (this is usually five years with a sixth year for a dissertation). We measure the six years from the first module you register on towards the award.

You can find out more information here: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgt/modular> and you should talk to your MSc Course Director about fees, and applying accumulated credit towards an award.

## 4.2 Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners meets in mid June for the Interim Exam Board in order to consider results, progression outcomes (as determined by the Rules of Assessment) and extenuating circumstances claims.



Very occasionally when there is a problem with the assessment for a module, the Exam Board may scale (increase or decrease) the marks for a whole module in order to achieve a fair result for students.

Students will be required to withdraw at this stage if the accumulation of further credit would not result in the achievement of an award according to the Rules of Assessment:

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgt/assess-rules.aspx>

To enable the Board of Examiners to confirm the marks relating to the taught modules of the degree, all coursework will be recalled and made available for the External Examiner to view.

The Final Board of Examiners Meeting will review and confirm the Research Project marks and will determine the appropriate final award for each student.

For your information, the timing of the Interim Board in 2018-19 is yet to be finalised, but Final Boards are usually held during Week 8 of the following academic year. The Exam Board timetable should be available by Week 9; please contact the Postgraduate Taught Administrator if you require any further information regarding the timing of the Board of Examiners Meetings for your course.

## Results

Results are published by the Registry within 48 hours of the relevant Exam Board at:

[www.essex.ac.uk/results](http://www.essex.ac.uk/results)

You can access your results using your University login and password. Formal transcripts will not be issued to students who are in debt to the University and degrees will not be conferred until any debt has been cleared.

If you have a query about your exam results you can contact the Postgraduate Taught Administrator ([n.reason@essex.ac.uk](mailto:n.reason@essex.ac.uk)).

## 4.3 Extenuating Circumstances, Withdrawing and Intermitting

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx)

**Extenuating circumstances** are circumstances beyond your control which cause you to perform less well in your coursework or examinations than you might have expected. In general, extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affect you for any significant period of time and/or during the assessment. .

You need to submit your form by the deadline given here - <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx>

You will **not** get extra marks if you submit an extenuating circumstances form. Boards of Examiners use other methods to take into account extenuating circumstances, such as permitting further reassessment opportunities for uncapped marks.

You should read the guidance on extenuating circumstances very carefully before submitting your form and evidence. Seek advice from the Students' Union Advice or the Student Services Hub ([www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/default.aspx)).

### **Thinking of leaving or taking a break from your studies?**

You may experience doubts at some point during your studies, if you're thinking about leaving Essex, we're here to support you and give you the advice you need to help you make an informed choice.

**Intermission** is a temporary withdrawal or leave of absence from the University and provides you with the opportunity to take a break from your studies. Normally, this is for reasons beyond your control (e.g. health or personal problems) although other reasons are permitted. Intermission must be approved by the University first, so if you are thinking about intermitting, we strongly advise you to contact your department and your Student Services Hub to talk to one of our advisers.

You should also read our guidance on intermitting very carefully at [www.essex.ac.uk/see/intermit](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/intermit). If your intermission is agreed to, we will also give you the advice and support you need to help you carry on with your studies.

**Withdrawing** is the formal process for permanently leaving your programme of study and the University. If you are thinking of withdrawing, you should seek advice from your Department or the Student Services Hub at the earliest opportunity. It is very important that you discuss your circumstances with the University and follow the formal procedure for withdrawing. If the university is not formally notified, then you may risk continuing to incur further tuition or accommodation fees. More advice and information is available at [www.essex.ac.uk/see/withdraw](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/withdraw).

## **4.4 The Marking Policy and Requests for re-marking of coursework and essays**

All students have a right to request formal re-marking if they suspect there has been a procedural/administrative error. Please contact the Postgraduate Taught Administrator to make this request.

When a student disagrees with a mark they may also request re-marking, unless the original was second marked or moderated, *only* if:

- The student has met with the initial marker (or suitable nominee appointed by the Postgraduate Taught Director) to obtain further feedback on the reason for the initial mark before making a formal request for a re-mark; and
- The form to request a re-mark has been completed and submitted with the signature of the first marker (or nominee, see above) confirming that the meeting has taken place, **no later than two weeks of term time** from the date of the initial feedback to students.

If a request for a re-mark is approved, work will be either second or double-marked and marks must be reconciled. Students should be aware that marks can increase, decrease or remain unchanged after a request to re-mark. Please contact the Postgraduate Taught Administrator to request a copy of the form to request a remark.

The full University Marking Policy can be found at:

[www.essex.ac.uk/quality/university\\_policies/examination\\_and\\_assessment/marking\\_policy](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/university_policies/examination_and_assessment/marking_policy)

## 4.5 Moderation, Second Marking Policies and External Examiners

The University policy on **moderation** can be found as part of the Marking Policy. When work is moderated, it means that a second member of academic staff takes a random sample of the work for a particular assessment and reviews the marks given. A moderator would not change the individual marks for the work but would liaise with the first marker to agree whether marks would be reviewed across the particular piece of assessment or module, which may lead to marks being adjusted.

**Second Marking** is where a second marker marks the work but has access to the first marker's marks and/or comments.

**External Examiners** are usually academics from other universities but may be from industry, business or the profession depending on the requirements of the course. They give an impartial view of the course and independent advice to ensure that courses at the University meet the academic standards expected across UK higher education. External Examiners write reports on the courses and modules they are responsible for which are made available to you via your school. You can find the name and institution of the External Examiner for your course and modules by looking on the Programme Specifications Catalogue and the Module Directory. You can find out more about how the University uses External Examiners by following this link: [www.essex.ac.uk/quality/external\\_examiners](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/external_examiners)

**Please note: you may not contact External Examiners directly under any circumstances.** If you have any concerns about the quality and standards of your course, please contact your student rep, your Head of School or the Students' Union.

## 4.6 Appeals, Complaints, and Fitness to Practice

Examiners and the publication of your results. Be aware that there are strict deadlines for the submission of the appeal form and your evidence.

We strongly advise all students thinking about making an appeal to contact the Students' Union Advice.

**You may not appeal against academic judgement.** This means that you cannot appeal against the marks you have been given by a Board of Examiners without evidence of extenuating circumstances or procedural irregularity

More information about appeals, including the deadlines and forms to complete, can be found online at: [www.essex.ac.uk/see/appeals](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/appeals)

**Making a Complaint:** The University is a large community engaged in many activities of both an academic and non-academic nature. From time to time, you may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of your dealings with the University and, when that happens, it is important that the issue is dealt with constructively and as quickly as possible without risk of disadvantage or recrimination.

A complaint is defined as *the expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities* (this is in line with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints). The University aims to resolve complaints quickly and informally.

You can find the complaints procedure and the forms here: [www.essex.ac.uk/see/complaints](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/complaints)

**Fitness to practise** is only applicable to students on certain professional courses (such as nursing or social work). If this applies to you, you will have been told by your department. You can find the full Fitness to Practise procedure online at: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg)

## 4.7 Academic Offences Policy

The University expects students to act with honesty and integrity in relation to coursework, examinations and other assessed work, and to follow our conventions for academic writing (including appropriate referencing of sources) and ethical considerations. If you don't meet these expectations, then you may be charged with having committed an academic offence, a matter the University takes very seriously.

It is your responsibility to make yourself aware of the regulations governing examinations and how to correctly prepare your coursework. An academic offence can take place even if you didn't mean to commit one, and examples include plagiarism, falsifying data or evidence, and communicating with another candidate in an examination.

If you aren't sure what the conventions are, particularly in relation to referencing, you should ask your department, contact the Talent Development Centre, and also refer to **7: Referencing and good academic practice** in this handbook.

More information about academic offences and getting support can be found at:

[www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence)

## 4.8 Ethics

All research involving human participants, whether undertaken by the University's staff or students, **must** undergo an ethics review by an appropriate body and ethical approval **must** be obtained before it commences. You can find our Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants here - [www.essex.ac.uk/reo/governance/human.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/reo/governance/human.aspx) - along with the Ethical Approval application form.

'Human participants' are defined as including living human beings, human beings who have recently died (cadavers, human remains and body parts), embryos and fetuses, human tissue and bodily fluids, and personal data and records (such as, but not restricted to medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements). Research involving the NHS may require and research involving human tissue or adults lacking capacity to consent will require Health Research Authority approval.'

# 5 Coursework

## 5.1 Assessment

A variety of types of assessment are used in the School. The two categories are:

Coursework, e.g.:

- Essays
- Worksheets, data analysis and interpretation (DAI) exercises
- Practical field or lab reports: including SPF (Scientific Paper Format) reports
- Posters
- Oral presentations
- Web-based, pod or vodcast productions
- Writing summaries, popular scientific articles
- In class tests

Exams:

- A written exam, including short questions and longer essay questions. **This applies to MSc Biotechnology and Molecular Medicine students only. The exam is held in January (Week 15 during the Christmas Vacation Exam Period).**

The details of assessments are given in the Module Handbooks. We use defined marks criteria to mark all assessments (see 'Marking' section). You should study the marks criteria carefully to fully understand what is expected of you for each assignment. The marks criteria will also be provided in the Module Handbook on Moodle.

## Interpreting Assignment Marks

It is important that you correctly interpret the assessment of your work. Customs vary considerably across disciplines, universities and countries. What appears as a poor mark, according to the customs of a particular country, may in fact represent a very good performance, simply because the conventions for awarding marks are different. The conventions on this course are given below.

70%	Excellent	Anything over 70 is Distinction level. Well done.
65-69%	Very good	Merit: not quite Distinction level, but a very commendable standard.
60-64%	Good	A Merit, and a very sound performance. Maintain this level and you will achieve a high standard.
50-59%	Satisfactory	A Pass, but there is no room for complacency. The <i>minimum</i> standard to be maintained.
40-49%	Improvement needed	This would be a failure at Masters level, and it implies the need for a more sustained focus. If in doubt regarding the problem seek immediate advice.
<40%	Major improvement needed	An outright Fail. The student should be very concerned that they have either not allowed enough time for study, or that the approach to written work is inadequate. If in doubt regarding the problem, seek immediate advice.

## 5.2 Assignment and Essay Length

Part of your training in writing assignments is to produce a piece of work by a given deadline and conforming to a specified length. The work should be clear, comprehensive and concise and should answer the question. Significantly exceeding the word limit is a way of seeking an unfair advantage. When a word limit is set all students are expected to submit work **within** the limit and provide a **word count** on the title page. The word count should **include** all the main text but **exclude** figures, tables and the reference list.

Staff will pay strict attention to word limits. If you have a particular problem with the word limit, you should discuss your difficulties with the member of staff who set the work.

If your work exceeds the word limit it may not be concise or well-focussed on the question and will require editing. If your work is significantly (>10%) below the word limit it is likely that you will not have covered the material in sufficient depth and you may receive a lower mark as a consequence.

## 5.3 Guidelines on Writing Assignments

### How to Approach Writing an Essay

An essay should be a well-structured and well-reasoned written argument answering a particular question. It should not only help others to assess how much you understand about a particular topic, but also act as a piece of creative work that enables you to explain your point of view about a subject area or helps you explore or develop your widening knowledge base.

When you are asked to write an essay, the first step is to read the title carefully and identify what exactly it is you are being asked to write. You should identify the key words in the question and properly understand what the question is asking and how you should write the essay.

The definitions of common 'process' words used in essay questions are listed below:

#### **Compare**

Look for and explain similarities and differences between arguments/approaches, and reach a conclusion about which is preferable.

#### **Contrast**

Set different ideas or concepts in opposition in order to bring out and discuss differences.

#### **Criticise**

Give your reasoned and well-informed judgement or opinion about the merit of theories, concepts or accepted truths, discussing the evidence.

#### **Define**

Set down the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or idea; in some cases, explain how the distinctions and assumptions implied in the definition are necessary.

#### **Describe**

Give a detailed account of.



**Discuss**

Explore an issue by reasoned argument, debate and give reasons for and against.

**Enumerate**

Write in a list or outline form, giving points consistently one by one.

**Evaluate**

Make an appraisal of the worth of something, which can include your own well informed opinion.

**Explain**

Clarify, make plain, interpret or account for; in some cases, give reasons for differences of opinion or for results, and try to analyse causes.

**Illustrate**

Use a figure, diagram or examples to explain or clarify an issue.

**Interpret**

Clarify the meaning of: make clear and explicit, also usually giving your judgement.

**Justify**

Show and explain adequate grounds or evidence for decisions, or examples.

**List**

As in 'Enumerate', write an itemised series of concise statements.

**Outline**

Organise a description under main points and subordinate points, omitting minor details and stressing the arrangement or classification of things.

**Prove**

Establish that something is entirely accurate by citing factual evidence or giving clear, logical reasons.

**Relate**

Show how things are related to, or connected with, each other or how one causes another, correlates with another, or is like another.

**Review**

Make a survey of a point or idea, examining the subject critically.

**State**

Present the main points in brief, clear sequence, usually omitting details, illustrations or examples.

**Summarise**

Give a brief account of the chief points or substance of a matter.

*Source: Wye College External Programme*

**Organising Your Thinking**

Organise your thoughts by producing a scheme or plan of the essay topic. There are many ways of arranging your ideas on paper, but what is important is that it helps you clarify the interrelationships, ideas, concepts, and examples you will be writing about. This will also be something concrete to which you can refer as you write, keeping your ideas and arguments progressing in a logical and ordered way.

One way of putting your initial thoughts down on paper is in the form of a spider diagram, mind map, or network, which clusters and links ideas together (see below).

Alternatively, a hierarchy is a more ordered, structured way of organising information under different headings and subheadings. Try to experiment with a number of techniques before deciding which is best for you.

Preparation always requires time, but it is a mistake to start writing before you have a definite plan and before you have thought matters out. Be selective about the information you provide.

**The Mind Map Method**

Unlike conventional linear notes which work down the page, this method involves starting in the middle of the page and working outwards. The title/main idea/topic is written in a box or bubble in the centre of a plain sheet of paper.

Then, major points/themes are written along lines radiating out from the centre. Subsidiary points branch off from these main branches.

A key word or phrase is used to encapsulate each point - the rationale being that if the word/phrase can be summoned up, the whole point will return to mind, in more detail.

Dotted lines/arrows can be added in, to bring out links and connections; different coloured pens used, to highlight main points, and so on. Around these basic guidelines you develop your own system.

*From: Wye College External Programme*

### **Essay Structure**

Your essay should be well structured. There should be:

- A clear *introduction*, which should state briefly the material you are going to cover and act as a lead into the subject of the essay.
- A *middle section*, which forms the discussion or main body of your essay.
- A *conclusion*, which very concisely rounds off your writing.

Your prepared plan outlining what you intend to cover in each part of the essay will give you something to refer to as you write. It will also help you maintain a clear, unified and precise piece of writing. Note, however, that there is never only one way to write to produce a sound and relevant answer.

Your writing should be composed of paragraphs, which together clearly convey to the reader the content, structure and thread of your argument.

You should, as you write, be aiming for clarity of expression and, as the essay may have a word limit, you should make sure that every word you write counts (see George Orwell's six rules on the following page).



## George Orwell's Six Elementary Rules for Good Writing

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech that you are not used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a scientific word or jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Also try to avoid verbose or long-winded language or expression. What matters about an essay is quality of writing rather than sheer quantity of words.

Your essay should also be clearly referenced (see guidance below) and you are advised to be familiar with and closely follow the advice given in this handbook avoiding cheating and plagiarism).

### Style of Writing

Use the third person (this means not using 'I'). You will be expected to use the third person as it enables you to show that you are being objective. You could try using:

This essay discusses the importance of ...

This research shows that ...

When you have thought about what you are going to write, you should ideally produce a first draft of your work in one sitting.

It is true that many new ideas tend to occur whilst you are actually writing. Interrupting your writing might cause you to produce a piece of work that is stilted or less thorough than it might otherwise have been.

After completing your first draft, it is a good idea to put your work to one side and come back to it after a day or two to re-read what you have written and check it for errors.

Whilst you review your essay draft you should be asking yourself whether you have kept to the main themes, as suggested by the essay question or title; if each paragraph is a natural and logical unit; if you have included an adequate number of relevant examples; and if the general effect of your writing is what you intended.

You might find it useful to ask somebody else to review your work and to offer some constructive criticism, and to spot flaws and weaknesses.

It is also useful to remember that diagrams and tables can often convey ideas in a concise and immediate form.

*The entire process of writing an essay, then, should follow this basic pattern:*

- Read the question carefully
- Think about the question
- Order your thoughts and ideas, produce a plan, gather source material
- Write a draft essay
- Review your work
- Correct and redraft your work
- Produce a final copy

*The main things to bear in mind to achieve a good essay are:*

- Logical, well reasoned argument
- Relevance of examples, diagram and argument
- Effective use of source material
- Clear and easily understood presentation

## **5.4 Referencing in Coursework**

Please refer to Section 4.6: Academic Offences and Section 7: References and good academic practice for information on referencing and where to seek advice.

Drawing on the wide range of reading you do around your subject area, and demonstrating how you have used this to develop your knowledge and form your own views, is a key aspect of your coursework. It's essential that you reference your source materials so it's clear where the information has come from, and to avoid any misunderstanding over whether you are presenting ideas as your own.

You should reference any examples, quotes, or sources of information as you write your essay following the formal conventions.

The purpose of referencing is to acknowledge the sources of data and material that you are using, and also to provide the reader with sufficient details so that they might find the information you have used for themselves.

References to authors' names and date of publication should appear in the text, with full publication details listed at the end of your essay. Please, use the HARVARD outputs style in Endnote, unless another specific style is requested.

A free online version of Endnote as well as tutorials can be accessed on: [www.myendnoteweb.com](http://www.myendnoteweb.com) To find out more about departmental referencing style and for help with referencing please also visit the library website: <http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/referencing.htm>

## 5.5 Coursework Submission Details

All PGT coursework and the Research Project must be submitted in electronic format using the University's Feedback, Assessment (Assignments), and Submission electronic repository (FASER) . The system allows you to upload a digital copy of your assignment to the web. Word counts (if applicable) should be stated clearly on the front page of your submission.

The online coursework submission system (FASER) can be accessed through MyEssex or at this web address: <http://faser.essex.ac.uk/> where you will find full instructions.

You are encouraged to log on to FASER at the start of the year so that you understand how it works before you reach your first deadline. There is a trial module and deadline for you to use as a practice submission. There is a helpful guidance on how to use FASER here: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/e-learning/tools/faser/Student/HelpCentre#uploading>

To submit a file to FASER:

- Go to myEssex and log in with your campus username and password.
- You will see an overview page with tabs underneath your name that read: Overview, Current Modules, Previous Modules, Student Support and Help.
- Click on 'Current Modules' and a list of your modules with assignment deadlines should appear.
- Click on the Module and find the assignment you are submitting for.
- Click on 'Upload Files' and 'Browse'
- Find your file on your computer or memory stick. Click on Open.

**When uploading your work to FASER please:**

- use pdf documents only (unless otherwise instructed) and
- give a file name in the format of the module code and the name of the assignment

Click to agree to the statement with regards to plagiarism awareness and then on 'Submit (upload) file'.

- This should upload your file to FASER. You will receive an email to confirm that this has happened.

You can upload as many draft versions of your work as you like onto the server. Indeed, you are encouraged to use this as a safe and secure area to store your coursework. This can help to avoid the problem of your computer crashing at the last minute and your important files being lost. In cases where multiple versions are uploaded you will **need to make any which you do NOT want to be included in the final submission to the School a 'draft'** otherwise just the most recently uploaded file will be taken as the final version. The maximum file upload size is **50 mb**.

**Problems with FASER:**

If you find you are having a problem with FASER, please do not wait to tell someone about it. We understand that there can be circumstances beyond your control (e.g. loss of internet connection) that may make uploading to FASER difficult.

If you have technical difficulties: Please contact the Learning Technology Team [ltt@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ltt@essex.ac.uk) as soon as possible to find out if this is a University issue or whether it may be a problem with your computer. You can contact the IT helpdesk on [desk@essex.ac.uk](mailto:desk@essex.ac.uk).

If you are confused or unsure how to upload, or are having non-technical difficulties, you should contact the Postgraduate Taught Administrator.

## **5.6 Coursework Deadlines and Late Coursework Deadline Policy**

Deadlines for coursework have been organised so as to give an even flow to the work you have to submit. Learning how to prioritise tasks, plan and manage your time are important skills and it is your responsibility to plan your affairs to meet these deadlines

### **Assignments and Deadlines**

All coursework must be submitted by the published deadlines, which are set out in the relevant Module Handbooks. You should use this information to assist with planning your coursework throughout the year to ensure you are able to meet all your deadlines.

Changes of deadline can only be made by the MSc Course Director. Any changes to deadlines will be circulated by email. It is your responsibility to check for changes to deadlines.

As far as possible, your deadlines will have been organised to avoid clashes, but inevitably some deadlines will fall on the same day, especially for students who have optional module choices. It is an important skill to learn how to prioritise tasks and manage your time. It is your responsibility to plan your work to meet your deadlines.

**If you take optional modules outside your home department, you should make sure you are aware of their coursework submission policy.**

### **Postgraduate Taught Coursework Deadline Policy**

We have a single policy at the University of Essex for the late submission of coursework in Postgraduate Taught courses: All coursework submitted after the deadline will receive a mark of zero. No extensions will be granted. A student submitting coursework late will have the University's and School's arrangements for late submission drawn to their attention. The policy states that the mark of zero shall stand unless you submit satisfactory evidence of extenuating circumstances that indicate that you were unable to submit the work by the deadline. More information about extenuating circumstances relating to late submission of coursework can be found below and is available at:

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/default.aspx)

### **Late work submitted within 7 days of the deadline**

If you submit your work late but within 7 days of the deadline, it will be marked and you will be notified of the mark that you would have achieved, so long as the work is submitted before any model answers or other feedback have been given out. The mark recorded for the late work will be zero.

If you had a good reason for missing the deadline you may make an application to the Late Submissions Committee to request that the mark be instated. You need to submit a **Late Submission of Coursework form** (available at the link below or on the Biological Sciences Postgraduate Taught Student Resources Area on Moodle) and evidence to support your case, if available. Both the late work and the form must be submitted as soon as possible and no later than 7 days after the original deadline, normally by 10am on the Tuesday or Friday of the following week.

The Late Submissions Committee will meet several times during the year to consider applications for the instatement of marks for late coursework. The Postgraduate Taught Office will normally notify you of the outcome of the decision, but it will also be your responsibility to check your marks when your coursework marks are emailed to you for checking during the year. The Late Submissions Committee may not always reach a decision and may refer your case to the Exam Board that meets at the end of the year.



All decisions taken by the Late Submissions Committee are provisional, subject to the approval of the Exam Board.

Guidelines explaining what circumstances might be taken into account by the Late Submissions Committee are available here: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/late-submission.aspx>

A submission to the Late Submissions Committee does not prevent a separate claim for extenuation on other grounds to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.

### **Long-term Issues/Extenuating Circumstances**

If you experience significant, long term extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your work by the deadline or within 7 days of the deadline, you can submit your late work for feedback and you will be told what mark it would have achieved, providing the marked assignments or model answers have not already been released to students. The mark that will be recorded will be zero. Students in this position should submit an Extenuating Circumstances form to the Exam Board. Further details of the Extenuating Circumstances procedure can be found here: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ>

In considering how to proceed, you should seek advice from your MSc Course Director about the impact of your circumstances upon your ability to manage your workload, for example, it may not be in your best interests to return after a three week absence and spend all your time undertaking missed assignments.

From time to time the Postgraduate Office will email you a copy of all your coursework marks for a module. It is your responsibility to check that these are correct and to notify the Postgraduate Office of any errors or omissions.

## **5.7 Anonymous Marking Policy**

Work submitted online via FASER will all be marked anonymously where it is practical to do so. Exceptions include presentations and other performance-related work and MSc research projects.

Marking policy: [www.essex.ac.uk/quality/university\\_policies/default.asp](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/university_policies/default.asp).

**If you take optional modules outside your home department, you should make sure you are aware of the policy on whether coursework is marked anonymously or not, and how to submit coursework.**

## **5.8 Return of Marked Coursework**

For coursework submitted electronically (via FASer) you will receive an email notification alert when your marked work is available. Marked work is normally returned within three weeks of the hand-in date. Where this three week deadline falls during the vacations, work will be returned to you in the first week of the next term.

## **5.9 Samples of Coursework**

One of the roles of the External Examiners is to comment generally on the standards of marking and performance. To facilitate their work, a sample of coursework undertaken by Postgraduate Students is recalled (if hardcopy) and made available for the External Examiners to view. Where applicable, you will be e-mailed by the Postgraduate Office in the summer term and notified of the arrangements for this. Work submitted online will also be made available to the External Examiner.

## **5.10 Reassessment in Coursework**

If the Board of Examiners has required you to complete essays or assignments over the vacation, the School will send you a letter by email with further information. Please check your Essex email account regularly once your results have been published. The School will then send you details of the assignments which you are required to undertake. You should note that this will, in most cases, take the form of a substantial piece of work equivalent to the entire coursework component of the module. If you haven't received anything within three weeks of the results being published, you must contact your School or the Registry.

## **5.11 Disputed Coursework Marks**

If you are unhappy about a mark you receive for a piece of work, you should first ask the Module Supervisor for a fuller explanation of the mark. If you are still unhappy you can ask for a second opinion and to do this you should approach the Postgraduate Taught Director. Any requests for second marking must be made within two weeks of return of the work. You should be aware that a mark might go up or down in the process of second marking. You will be obliged to accept the outcome as final, no matter what the mark.

## 6 Examinations

### 6.1 Examination Regulations

The General Regulations which govern examinations can be found here, namely under Regulations relating to Academic Affairs: [www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations](http://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations)

Attendance at examinations is **compulsory** and if you do not attend them and do not have extenuating circumstances then you are at risk of being withdrawn. See 'Attendance Monitoring' above for more information about absence. For exams that are more than an hour long, you will not be allowed to enter the examination room if you arrive later than 55 minutes after the start of the exam. If your exam is only an hour long, you will only be admitted up to ten minutes after the start of the exam.

### 6.2 Access to Exam Scripts

If you want to see your exam script, you should normally make the request within four weeks of the exam to the department which is responsible for that module. The department should either: let you see the script in the presence of one of the staff responsible for teaching the module *or* give you a copy or summary of the examiners' comments on your performance.

Students must not attempt to engage the member of staff in discussions about whether the work has been marked correctly. The marks will have been approved by the external examiners and ratified by the examination board.

A student who wishes to view an examination script or project should first contact the Postgraduate Taught Administrator, Nicola Reason in the Postgraduate Office.

### 6.3 School policy on the use of Dictionaries and Calculators

#### Dictionaries

Dictionaries are not permitted. If you take a dictionary to an exam where it is not permitted, you will be reported on suspicion of committing an academic offence. Even if English is not your first language you are still not entitled to use a translation dictionary.

## Calculators

If you are allowed to use a calculator in your examinations, the **only** models you are permitted to use are the **Casio FX-83GT PLUS** or the **Casio FX-85GT PLUS**.

The only exception is for certain **Finance** exams that require a **financial** calculator, in which case you may use the **Hewlett Packard 12c** (all variants) or the **Texas Instruments BAII Plus** (including the BAII Plus Professional).

A limited number of the Casio calculators will be available to borrow **on the day of your exam** from the Exams Office on a first-come, first-served basis, on production of your registration card. Please note that financial calculators will not be available.

## 6.4 General Information about Examinations and Examination Results

You can find your personalised exam timetable online at: [www.essex.ac.uk/examtimes/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/examtimes/) The exam timetable will be published on the date shown at <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/dates-and-timetables.aspx>

**You must bring your registration card and exam entry form with you to the exam.** You will not be allowed entry without them. Remember to check your exam entry form carefully and contact the Examinations Office if there are any errors.

You can download a guide to examinations and watch a short video at:  
[www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-oursework/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-oursework/default.aspx)

You will receive an email to your Essex email account as soon as your results are published. You can find the publication schedule at: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/schedule.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/schedule.aspx)

## 6.5 Help to prepare for your Examinations

Exams for the **MSc Biotechnology and Molecular Medicine students take place in the Christmas Vacation exam period (Week 15)**. You should plan to have completed your revision for all your exams before the exam period starts, with gaps between exams reserved for some relaxation and for quickly refreshing your memory of what you already know.

This requires you to organise your time so that you study the material as each module progresses, consolidating and extending your knowledge and understanding.

Module Handbooks are an important learning tool because they provide detailed documentation of what you should know for each module. The learning outcomes define what you should be able to do on successful completion of a module, and the detailed learning objectives specify how you will be assessed to see if you have met those outcomes.

Note in particular which terms are used – to meet a learning objective that specifies “Discuss ...” would usually require much more work in preparation than one which is “Define...” or “List...”.

### **Exam stress**

Exams create stress for most people. The University Talent Development Centre offers a series of Exam Workshops which are run by specialist staff. These sessions cover revision planning and techniques, as well as sessions on relaxation and how to cope with stress. Staff in the Counseling Service can also provide sessions on stress management if required.

## **6.6 Anonymous Marking Policy in Examinations**

All formal examinations at the University of Essex are marked anonymously.

## **6.7 Reassessment in Examinations**

Resit exams are scheduled in early September in the summer of the following year. A considerable amount of useful revision material is available on Moodle. Students can contact staff, particularly Module Supervisors for the modules they are resitting if they need help with revision or specific queries (do not leave this until the last minute as staff availability will be reduced throughout the summer). Staff can give individual feedback on exam performance, if requested. You can find information relating to resitting exams at: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/resits.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/resits.aspx).

Remember that reassessment in examinations (and coursework) carries a fee.

# 7 Referencing and Good Academic Practice

## 7.1 Good Academic Practice

Respecting authorship through good academic practice is one of the key values of higher education in the UK.

The University takes academic offences very seriously. You should read the sections of this handbook which refer to referencing, coursework and examinations very carefully.

Referencing is a key academic/scientific skill. It is how you will acknowledge all sources used within a piece of work. You must reference all works used directly (quotes) and indirectly (paraphrasing and summarising).

Referencing allows you to give credit to authors'/researchers' concepts and ideas/ideas and results, demonstrate your breadth of reading and knowledge on a subject, direct readers to your sources, and avoid plagiarism.

You should always use the best available sources of evidence, such as peer reviewed journals and recognised books.

To find out about your school referencing style and for help with referencing see your **School of Biological Sciences Postgraduate Taught Assessment Guide** or visit the library website: [libwww.essex.ac.uk/referencing.htm](http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/referencing.htm)

The Talent Development Centre provides online courses and guides to help you fully understand what is required from you. You can find out about the full range of workshops and resources that are available to you by visiting [www.essex.ac.uk/see/tdc](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/tdc). You can also complete the online Academic Integrity course at: [moodle.essex.ac.uk/login/index.php](http://moodle.essex.ac.uk/login/index.php)

You should read the sections of this handbook which refer to referencing, coursework and examinations very carefully. Failure to understand the academic conventions may result in you being found to have committed an academic offence (see section **4.7 Academic Offences Procedure**).

Remember, if you have any questions about referencing you can ask our academic staff, or staff in the Talent Development Centre.

## Repeated Work

You may also be accused of an academic offence if you repeat work previously submitted for an assessed assignment without full acknowledgement of the extent to which that previous work has been used; in other words, if you hand in the same or a very similar essay to one that you have already submitted. You should note that it is also an offence for a student knowingly to assist another student to commit an academic offence, whether in an examination, or in any other piece of work.

## Group Work

Sometimes students who have been working together end up submitting almost identical work and are accused of an academic offence. While we do not want to dissuade you from working with or discussing your work with another student, you must be careful that you do not collaborate too closely, and it would be wise to seek advice from your tutors on the limits of collaboration before you submit your work.

Please see section 4.7 and remember that the Academic Offences Policy applies to all students [www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence)

## 7.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is to steal ideas, verbalisations or writings from another person without correct acknowledgement, presenting these as your own work. It also includes utilising your own previous assessment submissions, without correct identification of such ('Self-plagiarism'). Any source you access and utilise when preparing your work (book, journal article, newspaper article, internet page, podcast etc) must be referenced appropriately to avoid plagiarism – ignorance of correct referencing techniques is inexcusable.

You may also be accused of assisting plagiarism if you lend your work to another student who then copies your text. Plagiarism is indefensible and will not be tolerated in any form within the University of Essex. This Academic Offence carries severe penalties, and you may be withdrawn from your programme. If you are concerned about plagiarism, you should talk with your MSc Course Director.

### How to Avoid Plagiarism

To avoid plagiarism give yourself enough time to plan, draft, write, edit and proof-read your work. Make sure you print or save full details of all sources, so that you can reference them easily once you have used them.

Do not copy and paste large chunks of text from the internet – look at the source, read it critically, identify the main themes, and then paraphrase or present as a direct quote.

NB: paraphrasing does not mean changing the odd word within a sentence. You need to re-phrase the entire sentence in your own words, thus demonstrating your understanding. In addition, do not copy from other students.

## Responsibilities Relating to Plagiarism

### 1. Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is cheating
- Submission of work that is plagiarised is unacceptable
- Poor academic practice with regard to referencing, which may be considered as contributing to plagiarism, is also unacceptable

### 2. Students' Responsibility

- To appraise him/herself of the nature of plagiarism
- To appraise him/herself of the academic offences policy of the University of Essex
- To submit work that does not contain plagiarism
- To utilise plagiarism checking systems where available

### 3. Our School's Responsibility

To ensure that all **School** staff have a shared understanding of the nature of plagiarism and action to be taken in the event of plagiarism being uncovered (Head of School)

- For 'standalone' modules (regardless of whether they form part of a programme) - to include within each module induction, accurate information regarding plagiarism (Module Supervisor)
- For modules studied as components of a single programme – to include within the programme induction, accurate information regarding plagiarism and supporting information within the VLE. A record of attendance at plagiarism induction will be maintained (Course Director).
- To include supporting information and links on our School website and on our School's Moodle Study Skills resource (Head of School)
- To advise all students that they should expect that submissions for assessment will be subjected to a plagiarism check (Director of Education)
- To refer plagiarism to the Plagiarism Officer in a transparently fair and equitable manner (all markers)
- To remind students on commencement of each term of their responsibilities regarding plagiarism (Director of Education)
- To transparently apply University Rules regarding plagiarism (Head of School)





#### 4. The University's Responsibility

- To apply the Academic Offences Policy universally and transparently
- To provide equitable access to plagiarism checker systems

### **7.3 The University Academic Offences Procedure**

Please see section 4.6 and remember that the Academic Offences Procedure applies to all students:

[www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/academic-offences.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/academic-offences.aspx)

# 8 Practicalities: Getting Started and IT Matters

## 7.1 Registration

All new and returning students are required to **register** at the start of each academic year. The process for new students includes activating an IT account, completing Pre-Arrival Online, and attending the University's main registration event. New students: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/registration.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/registration.aspx)

Returning students are required to complete Online Registration. In addition to this, returning students who hold Tier 4 visas are required to complete a document check in person at the University's main registration event.

Returning students: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/registration.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/registration.aspx)

## 8.1.2 Module Enrolment

Students registered on programmes of study leading to a degree may have options to select as part of their course structure. The eNROL system is an online tool to review and select available modules specific to a particular course and year of study. All new and returning students should use the online system prior to the start of each academic year. Returning students will access the system from the April preceding the next academic year. New students will access the system from the end of August. Departments will approve student selections within a few weeks of eNROL use and timetables will take module enrolment into account when planning for the next academic year. Early module enrolment will ensure students know which modules to attend and where the lectures and classes are held.

## 8.1.3 Award Documents

As your studies draw to a close, and once your exam board has met, it takes up to five working days for your results to be confirmed. You will be sent an email to inform you when the results are live on a password protected web page. Graduating students will receive a degree certificate at Graduation.



## 8.2 Find Your Way and Room Numbering System

Find Your Way is our interactive campus map app. Download it to help you find any location on campus and get directions quickly and easily. There's also a handy web version -

<https://findyourway.essex.ac.uk/>

If you're looking for a specific room, follow these rules.

**If the room number has three parts and the first is alphabetical** eg TC.1.20 then the room is in one of the outer buildings. The format is building.floor.room. The first part indicates the building - "TC" is the Teaching Centre and "LH" is the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall. The second part tells you the floor and the third the room number. For example, LH.1.12 is Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall, floor 1, room 12.

**If the number has three parts and the first contains numbers and letters** eg 5N.7.16, then the room is in square 4 or 5. The format is entrance.floor.room. The first part tells you the square and corner (eg 4S is the south corner of square 4), which matches the labels on the entrances (eg door 4NW is next to The Store). The second part is the floor and the third part the room. For example, 5NW.6.12 is in the north-west (NW) corner of Square 5 (entrance "5NW"), floor 6, room 12.

**If the number has two elements and the second element has three digits** eg 4.722, the room is in the Maths/Social Studies/Rab Butler/Square 1 building area. The first number shows the floor and the last three digits show the room number.

**Also...** if the last three digits are 700-799 the room is off Square 1, and if the last three digits are 500-599 the room is in the Square 2 area (Computer Science). For example, 5.512 is room 512, floor 5.

## 8.3 IT Support

Visit our website to set up your IT account and password, register an external email address and passphrase and request a reminder for a forgotten passphrase: [www.essex.ac.uk/it/getaccount](http://www.essex.ac.uk/it/getaccount).

You must change your password within four weeks of your account being created, and then once every four months after that. The easiest way to **change your password** is online at:

[www.essex.ac.uk/password](http://www.essex.ac.uk/password).

Once you're set up, you can access email, log on to lab computers, connect to eduroam wi-fi and much more.

As part of your Office 365 email account you get 1TB cloud storage space for all your documents with OneDrive. OneDrive lets you create, edit, and share documents online.

You also get at least 300 MB of local storage, known as your M: drive. You can access this by going to 'My Documents' on any lab computer.

Visit the IT Services website for helpful information, including how-to guides, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to video screencasts. [www.essex.ac.uk/it](http://www.essex.ac.uk/it)

If you can't find what you're looking for, or if you need to talk to someone, then you can get help from the IT Helpdesk in the Silberrad Student Centre. Open Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 6.00pm, and Friday 8.30am to 5.45pm.

If you need to use a **computer on campus** our computer labs are the perfect place to study or work. Many labs stay open until late and some are open 24/7. Information on computer lab locations, opening hours, real-time availability, study group pods, software, computer servers and assistive technology please view: [www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/computers-and-software/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/computers-and-software/default.aspx)

## 8.4 Immigration Information

If you are a citizen of a country that is not part of the European Economic Area or Switzerland it is likely that you will require a **visa** to enter or remain in the UK to study. The University must ensure all students hold the right to study in the UK throughout their studies and there are regulations regarding your Immigration status. For Tier 4 students, the Home Office attach conditions to your Tier 4 leave that restrict study, work and access to state benefits, some nationals have to register with the Police. The University has many duties as a Tier 4 sponsor and must ensure we remain compliant in order to retain our Tier 4 licence. Find out more on the University's website: [www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/) and [www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations).

## 8.5 On-Campus Facilities

There is a broad range of **facilities** to support your living and learning experience at our Colchester Campus – including study-based services like the IT helpdesk and group study pods, but also various food and drink venues, one bank, a general store run by the Students' Union, a printing and copy centre, market stalls each Thursday, a Post Office, launderettes, and much, much more. Full details on all on-campus facilities feature on our student webpages and in the campus guide you received with your welcome information when you joined us as a student member.

[www.essex.ac.uk/students](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students)

[www.essex.ac.uk/welcome](http://www.essex.ac.uk/welcome)

## 8.6 Graduation

The culmination of all your hard work, **Graduation** ceremonies take place at our Colchester Campus each July in the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall. All eligible students studying at our Colchester, Loughton and Southend Campuses will be invited to attend. For more information visit our graduation pages:

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation)

## 8.7 Award Documents

As your studies draw to a close, and once your exam board has met, it takes up to five working days for your results to be confirmed. You will be sent an email to inform you when the results are live on a password protected web page. Graduating students will receive a degree certificate at Graduation.

Further information can be found at:

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/award-documents/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/award-documents/default.aspx)

Please use the Student Documentation Ordering System to order academic transcripts, award confirmation letters, bank letters, Certificate of Registration, Council Tax certificates and Degree certificates. It's online at: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/studentdocs/>

# 9 Skills, Employability and Experience

## 9.1 Employability and Careers Centre

Get valuable, one-to-one advice from careers specialists throughout your time at Essex and beyond. Come and see us or log in to CareerHub+ whether you have one hundred questions or just don't know where to start! We offer one-to-one advice and guidance, job-hunting workshops, CV and job application reviews, and online services for creating CVs, interview preparation and job vacancies.

[www.essex.ac.uk/careers](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers)

## 9.2 Learning a Language

Learn a language at Essex to increase your global and cultural awareness. **Language learning** can give you the confidence to work and travel internationally, expand your options for studying abroad, and get a competitive edge when you're looking for a job. There are a number of ways to do it, so look online to discover the best option for you.

[www.essex.ac.uk/study/why/languages](http://www.essex.ac.uk/study/why/languages)

### **English classes for the dependants of international students and staff (ECDIS)**

The Department of Language and Linguistics offers dependants of international students and staff at the Colchester Campus, the chance to improve their English language, through our ECDIS programme, at no extra cost. Classes are taught at three basic levels: Elementary (A1/A2), Intermediate (B1/B2) and Advanced (C1/C2) and will focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing.

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/language-and-linguistics>

[ecdis@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ecdis@essex.ac.uk)

## 9.3 Talent Development Centre

Operating on Colchester and Southend campus, the TDC offers a range of ways to help you realise your potential and improve your academic performance. Our tutors provide expert guidance on study skills; mathematics and statistics; assignment writing and English for academic purposes. Look online to find out more about our classes, workshops, drop-in clinics and on-line resources.

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/tdc/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/tdc/)

## 9.4 Career Hub+

Find hundreds of part-time jobs, internships and graduate vacancies, book on to careers events and workshops, take career assessments, practice your interview skills, build your CV, and connect with employers on **CareerHub+**, the online Essex careers and jobs portal. Login with your Essex IT ID and password. [//careerhub.essex.ac.uk/students](https://careerhub.essex.ac.uk/students)

## 9.5 Frontrunners

Challenge yourself. **Frontrunners** is Essex's unique on-campus work placement scheme for students. You'll get the chance to work on real projects in real workplaces and develop real skills for you to brag about on your CV. You'll get fully trained in your role and you'll get paid for it.

[www.essex.ac.uk/frontrunners/](https://www.essex.ac.uk/frontrunners/)

## 9.6 Student Ambassadors

Be a Student Ambassador and make a difference to others and make a difference on your CV! Student Ambassadors help to promote the University and higher education. You'll be a valued part of the Student Recruitment and Outreach teams. Keep an eye out for Student Ambassador vacancies on CareerHub+ in January. . [www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job\\_hunting/on\\_campus](https://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job_hunting/on_campus)

## 9.7 Volunteering

Join the vTeam and be the difference. There are plenty of opportunities to **volunteer** during your time at Essex. The vTeam, run by the Students Union, is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, make friends, give something to the local community, and gain valuable skills. [www.essex.su/vteam](https://www.essex.su/vteam)

## 9.8 Big Essex Award

The University's **employability award** is a guaranteed way to help you stand out from the crowd get recognition for all your extra-curricular activities and help you to identify and evidence your skills and experience to employers. Over 100 activities are included, so sign up and get started!

[www.essex.ac.uk/careers/bigex](https://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/bigex)

## 9.9 Essex Interns

Essex interns create paid internships exclusively for you as an Essex student. They are flexible too; part time during term time or full time in vacations.

You can even take part up to three years after you graduate, as part of our Essex graduates support package. Sign up for Essex Interns to kick-start your career. [www.essex.ac.uk/careers/internships](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/internships)



# 10 You Matter: Health, Welfare, Support and Safety

## 10.1 Student Services Hub

If you need practical advice, a confidential conversation, or general information and guidance on University life, no matter what the issue is, our **Student Services Hub**, within the Silberrad Student Centre, is the place to go. Ask us about health and well-being, accommodation, money matters and much more. Your questions matter, and you'll get answers from our team of experts.

Student Services Hub Colchester email: [askthehub@essex.ac.uk](mailto:askthehub@essex.ac.uk) / 01206 874000

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/)

## 10.2 Wellbeing, Counselling and Confidential Issues

Your Student Services Hub provides advice, information and support on a range of health and wellbeing issues

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing)

### Money Matters

If you get into financial difficulty get help and talk to someone as soon as possible. The sooner your problem is identified, the sooner it can be solved. Advisers in our Student Services Hub and our independent SU Advice Centre can listen and talk you through the issues.

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/money/>

<http://www.essexstudent.com/advice/money/>

### 10.3 Harassment Advisory Network, Dignity and Respect

We are Essex. We encourage a culture of dignity and respect. We're committed to upholding an environment that's free from any form of harassment or bullying. Though rare, these incidents can occur and if they do our network of trained harassment advisors are on hand to help.

[www.essex.ac.uk/equality](http://www.essex.ac.uk/equality)

[www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment](http://www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment)

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/new](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/new)

### 10.4 Faith Groups

We're proud of our vibrant and diverse multicultural community and we recognise and support the many different religions and beliefs on campus. The calm, friendly and supportive atmosphere in our Multi-Faith Chaplaincy is a welcoming place for staff, students and the wider community to meet, interact and engage with each other. [www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/mfc](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/mfc)

### 10.5 Nightline

Established at Essex in 1970, Nightline is a friendly help and support service run by students, for students. We work under strict confidentiality ensuring complete anonymity, and we're always willing to listen. From tea and toast to campbeds, whether you're waiting for a taxi, need a revision break, or just want to chat, pop in or call us. [www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/nightline](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/nightline)

### 10.6 Health and Safety on Campus

Our campuses are generally very safe environments. We want to ensure that things stay this way. In order to achieve this we work closely with local agencies including the police and borough councils. Take a look at our website for general advice and information. [www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/safety](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/safety)

Please read the emergency evacuation notice in your accommodation, work or study location for fire safety procedures. If you have a permanent or temporary disabilities that may mean you have difficulty in evacuating one or more areas, you can arrange for a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

[www.essexstudent.com/safetybus](http://www.essexstudent.com/safetybus)

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/campus/emergency](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/campus/emergency)

[www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/fire/peep](http://www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/fire/peep)

## 10.7 Safety in the Laboratory

The School is legally and morally obliged to ensure the safety of students and staff. However, the School expects students and staff to observe certain standards of safety for their own sakes and for those of their colleagues. You should familiarise yourself with the School Safety webpages

<http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/default.shtm>. The information is not exhaustive but is regularly updated.

You should remember that a laboratory is a potentially hazardous place with chemicals, glassware, gas, electricity, micro-organisms, etc., within it. Nevertheless, the laboratory will be a safe environment if a few simple, common-sense rules are observed, as outlined in the Practical Handbooks and Project Handbook.

Additional information relating to particular hazards associated with individual practicals can be found listed at the start of each practical schedule in the Practical Handbooks.

Please report all accidents, however minor, to the lecturer in charge of the practical session. The Technician in charge of the class laboratory is a qualified first-aider.

## 10.8 Residence Life

Our Residence Life team is here to help you settle in and support you during your time living on campus. Each residents' assistant (RA) is assigned an area and will aim to get to know you and organise a range of social activities. Plus, they can help if you've got any concerns or complaints. Residence Life operates outside of office hours when other University support services are closed.

[www.essex.ac.uk/accommodation/support/reslife](http://www.essex.ac.uk/accommodation/support/reslife)

## 10.9 Health Centre

If you're studying on a course for more than six months, you're required to register with a local doctor. Our Colchester Campus has its own health centre or you can use the NHS Choices postcode finder to find your nearest doctor.

[www.rowhedgesurgery.co.uk](http://www.rowhedgesurgery.co.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



## 10.10 Students' Union Advice

Our SU Advice service offers free, confidential, independent and impartial advice on many issue that might be affecting you. Our friendly, trained staff are on hand to support you throughout your time at Essex. You can speak to us about Academic processes and procedures, representation at University meetings, Tier 4 visa extensions, housing, complaints, welfare and consumer issues.

[www.essex.su/advice](http://www.essex.su/advice)

[suadvice@essex.ac.uk](mailto:suadvice@essex.ac.uk)

Tel: 01206 874034

## 10.11 University Privacy Statement

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, any individuals about whom the University may be holding personal data have the right to access the data that is being held about them. Full details about how this works, and how to request such information are available on the Records Management web pages, see: 'How to access your personal data'.

[www.essex.ac.uk/website-privacy](http://www.essex.ac.uk/website-privacy)

[www.essex.ac.uk/records\\_management/request](http://www.essex.ac.uk/records_management/request)

# 11 The Essex Experience

## 11.1 The Essex Student Charter

Our **Student Charter** is developed by the University of Essex and our Students' Union as a part of our ongoing commitment to create an outstanding environment that offers the highest standards of teaching, research and support in an international and multi-cultural community.

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/charter](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/charter)

## 11.2 Freedom of Speech Policy and Code of Conduct

For regulations relating to the **Code of Student Conduct**, see the University's website:

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/handbooks/default.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/handbooks/default.aspx)

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations>

## 11.3 Essex Spirit, Social Media and Other Channels of Communication with Students

Keep up-to-date with important news, events and offers from across the University with our Essex Spirit blog. Go to our email lists to subscribe to the fortnightly e-bulletin.

<http://blogs.essex.ac.uk/essexspirit/>

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/)

We have more than 60 Facebook pages, including one for each department. We're also on Twitter.

[www.facebook.com/uniofessex/](http://www.facebook.com/uniofessex/)

[https://twitter.com/Uni\\_of\\_Essex](https://twitter.com/Uni_of_Essex)

Our 'What's on?' calendar brings together all the events happening across our three campuses, so you can make the most of your time at Essex. <http://www.essex.ac.uk/events>



## 11.4 Students' Union

We're famous for our **Students' Union** at Essex, and for good reason. Here you're not just a member of a normal Students' Union, you're part of a family. We're here to cheer you on as you walk into exams and to help you absolutely destroy the competition in interviews and land your dream job.

The Students' Union is run by students for students, and you have the ability to shape what we do. From suggesting what we serve in our venues, to changing aspects of your course, we are here to represent you and work with you to make amazing things happen. There are opportunities to join 45 different Sports Clubs, to get involved with our BUCS teams which offer a wide individual championships programme of activities taking place across the year and lots of competitions take place on Wednesdays and weekends, or if you don't want to commit to a regular team check out our Just Play programme of activities. We have 120 existing Societies where you can meet people with similar interests, challenge yourself with something new or, if you can't find what you're looking for, start your own society! Furthermore, we have our very own letting agency SU Homes designed to offer help and support for students to find off campus.

Say hello and find out more at: [essex.su](http://essex.su)

## 11.5 Alumni

Essex is forever and although your time here will fly by, you'll be part of this place for life. When you graduate, you'll get an alumni card, and join a community of 100,000 fellow graduates around the world. We'd love to give you access to all alumni events, like our popular Sports Weekend, and allows you to keep in touch and invite you to our alumni events, networking and volunteering opportunities, as well as offer you special alumni benefits.

[alumni.essex.ac.uk/home](http://alumni.essex.ac.uk/home)

## 11.6 What Comes Next?

Choosing to be a **postgraduate student** at Essex is one of the few decisions in life that's black and white. Our research degrees include PhD, MPhil, MSc, MA and MD, and our culture of world-class research provides an outstanding and supportive environment in which to undertake your research study. If you decide to stay on for further study with us, you'll have a great opportunity to study a challenging course within a research-intensive and supportive environment. You'll develop knowledge in your chosen area and learn from some of the top academics in the field, while becoming a valued member of our postgraduate community.



University of Essex

Explore our courses on our coursefinder, and find out more about the value of being a postgraduate.

[www.essex.ac.uk/masters](http://www.essex.ac.uk/masters)

[www.essex.ac.uk/coursefinder](http://www.essex.ac.uk/coursefinder)

### **Useful Information**

**School Website Address:** <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/bs/>

**School Facebook pages:** [School of Biological Sciences](#)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: MSc Biotechnology Course Structure

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Core/Compulsory/Optional for:		
			Masters	PG Diploma	PG Certificate
BS934-7-AU	GENE TECHNOLOGY AND SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY	30	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS982-7-AU	GENOMICS	15	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS983-7-SP	PROTEIN TECHNOLOGIES	15	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS985-7-FY	PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND THE BUSINESS OF BIOSCIENCES	15	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS984-7-SU	RESEARCH PROJECT	60	Core	Optional	
<b>Optional Modules Choose: 3</b>					
BS317-7-SP	RATIONAL DRUG DESIGN	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BS323-7-SP	PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BS937-7-SP	INDUSTRIAL BIOTECHNOLOGY: ENZYMES, BIOCHEMICALS AND BIOMATERIALS	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BS938-7-SP	MOLECULAR MEDICINE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BE244-7-SP	CREATING AND GROWING A NEW BUSINESS VENTURE	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
Total		<b>180</b>			

The course extends over a full year with taught modules scheduled during the Autumn (AU) and Spring (SP) Terms (until Easter) and FY modules (over the full year.) The preparatory work for the research project is initiated during the Easter vacation, with a Dissertation to be completed by early September.



The taught modules are comprised of four compulsory modules. The Research Project is a core module, meaning it must be passed with a mark of 50 or higher. There is also a choice of four specialist (optional) modules. The Research Project involves a literature search, research project proposal (research plan), safety assessments, twelve weeks' practical work, poster and oral presentation and project dissertation.

Students who do not pass sufficient credits to be awarded a Masters may receive a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) or a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert). Students must obtain 120 credits for the award of PGDip and 60 credits for the award of PGCert.

### **Core/Compulsory Modules**

MSc Biotechnology students take module BS934 (Gene Technology and Synthetic Biology) in the Autumn Term, along with the other compulsory module BS982 (Genomics) and BS985 (Professional Skills and the Business of Biotechnology) which is a full year module. Students then take BS983 (Protein Technologies) in the Spring Term along with three optional modules of their choice.

The compulsory/core modules provide a rigorous theoretical background to the key techniques in Biotechnology. These modules run as a thread through the first two terms and provide the foundation of the degree. The optional modules allow you to select subject areas for further specialisation. The compulsory and optional modules complement each other to provide a solid platform from which to approach the Research Project.

(The difference between core and non-core (compulsory and optional) modules is that a fail mark between 40 and 50 can be condoned in up to 40 credits worth of non-core modules. Core modules must be passed with a mark of 50 or above in order to pass the Masters degree.)

#### **BS934-7-AU Gene Technology & Synthetic Biology**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS934&level=7&period=AU&campus=CO&year=17>

#### **BS982-7-AU Genomics**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS982&level=7&period=AU&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS985-7-FY Professional Skills and the Business of Biosciences**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS985&level=7&period=FY&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS983-7-SP Protein Technologies**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS983&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**Optional (Specialist) Modules**

MSc Biotechnology students must select three of the following optional modules:

BS317-7-SP Rational Drug Design

BS323-7-SP Plant Biotechnology

BS937-7-SP Industrial Biotechnology: Enzymes, Biochemicals and Biomaterials

BS938-7-SP Molecular Medicine and Biotechnology

BE244-7-SP Creating and Growing a New Business Venture

**BS317-7-SP Rational Drug Design**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS317&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS323-7-SP Plant Biotechnology**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS323&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS937-7-SP Industrial Biotechnology: Enzymes, Biochemicals and Biomaterials**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS937&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS938-7-SP Molecular Medicine and Biotechnology**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS938&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BE244-7-SP – Creating and Growing a New Business Venture**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BE244&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**Please note that BE244-7-SP is an Essex Business School Module and students will be required to adhere to the Essex Business School Policy. Essex Business School do not operate a Late or Extension Procedure for their modules. If you submit your work late, you will be required to complete an Extenuating Circumstances Form (see: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx> ) and submit it to the Postgraduate Taught Administrator in the Essex Business School.**

Students should bear in mind their previous experience, future interests and career plans when choosing their optional modules.

**NB. Students who completed their Undergraduate degree at Essex are not permitted to repeat any module that they studied during their Undergraduate course.**

### **Selecting Optional Modules**

The University's online module enrolment system, eNROL will be open until 8.59am on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October (Week 4) for you to choose your optional modules. You can access eNROL at [www.essex.ac.uk/enrol](http://www.essex.ac.uk/enrol). Please direct any queries or problems to [enrol@essex.ac.uk](mailto:enrol@essex.ac.uk). eNROL will allow you to change your optional modules up to the beginning of Week 4, should you wish to. However, if you encounter any difficulties when attempting to change your optional modules, or if you wish to change your course, please speak to the Postgraduate Taught Administrator.

### **Changing Optional Modules**

Students should bear in mind their previous experience, future interests and career plans when choosing their optional modules. It is usually possible to change modules up to the end of the second week of the Autumn Term. If you are not sure which modules to take you could attend lectures for several different modules before making your final choice.

**Further information on the optional modules, including lecture content, details of assessment, timetabling and deadlines and reading lists, is available via Moodle:**

<https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/login/index.php>

## Appendix 2: MSc Molecular Medicine Course Structure

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Core/Compulsory/Optional for:		
			Masters	PG Diploma	PG Certificate
BS934-7-AU	GENE TECHNOLOGY AND SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY	30	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS982-7-AU	GENOMICS	15	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS983-7-SP	PROTEIN TECHNOLOGIES	15	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS985-7-FY	PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND THE BUSINESS OF BIOSCIENCES	15	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS938-7-SP	MOLECULAR MEDICINE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY	15	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS986-7-SU	RESEARCH PROJECT	60	Core	Optional	
<b>Optional Modules Choose: 2</b>					
BS317-7-SP	RATIONAL DRUG DESIGN	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BS320-7-SP	HUMAN MOLECULAR GENETICS	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BS326-7-AU	MOLECULAR AND DEVELOPMENTAL IMMUNOLOGY	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BS327-7-AU	CELL SIGNALLING	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BS331-7-SP	STEM CELL BIOLOGY AND AGEING	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BS350-7-SP	MECHANISMS OF NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
BE244-7-SP	CREATING AND GROWING A NEW BUSINESS VENTURE	15	Optional	Optional	Optional
Total		<b>180</b>			

The course extends over a full year with taught modules scheduled during the Autumn (AU) and Spring (SP) Terms (until Easter) and FY modules (over the full year.) The preparatory work for the research project is initiated during the Easter vacation, with a dissertation to be completed by early September.

The taught modules are comprised of five compulsory modules. The Research Project is a core module, meaning it must be passed with a mark of 50 or higher.

There is also a choice of four specialist (optional) modules. The Research Project involves a literature search, research project proposal (research plan), safety assessments, twelve weeks' practical work, poster and oral presentation and project dissertation.

Students who do not pass sufficient credits to be awarded a Masters may receive a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) or a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert). Students must obtain 120 credits for the award of PGDip and 60 credits for the award of PGCert.

### **Core/Compulsory Modules**

MSc Molecular Medicine students take five compulsory modules. The Research Project is a core module, meaning it must be passed with a mark of 50 or higher. The difference between core and non-core (compulsory and optional) modules is that up to a fail mark between 40 and 50 can be condoned in up to 40 credits worth of non-core modules, whereas core modules must be passed with a mark of 50 or above in order to pass the Masters degree.)

MSc Molecular Medicine students take module BS934 (Gene Technology and Synthetic Biology) in the Autumn Term, along with the other compulsory module BS982 (Genomics) and BS936 (Professional Skills and the Business of Molecular Medicine) which is a full year module. Students then take BS983 (Protein Technologies) and BS938 (Molecular Medicine and Biotechnology) in the Spring Term along with two optional modules of their choice either in the Autumn or Spring Term.

The compulsory/core modules provide a rigorous theoretical background to the key techniques in modern molecular biology and their applications to normal and pathological processes in cells and organisms. These modules run as a thread through the first two terms and provide the foundation of the degree. The optional modules allow you to select subject areas for further specialisation. The compulsory and optional modules complement each other to provide a solid platform from which to approach the Research Project.



**BS934-7-AU Gene Technology and Synthetic Biology**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS934&level=7&period=AU&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS982-7-AU Genomics**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS982&level=7&period=AU&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS983-7-SP Protein Technologies**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS983&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS938-7-SP Molecular Medicine and Biotechnology**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS938&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS936-7-FY Professional Skills and the Business of Biosciences**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS936&level=7&period=FY&campus=CO&year=18>

**Optional (Specialist) Modules**

MSc Molecular Medicine students must select two of the following optional modules:-

- BS317-7-SP Rational Drug Design
- BS320-7-SP Human Molecular Genetics
- BS326-7-AU Molecular and Developmental Immunology
- BS327-7-AU Cell Signalling
- BS331-7-SP Stem Cell Biology and Ageing
- BS350-7-SP Mechanisms of Neurological Disease
- BE244-7-SP Creating and Growing a New Business Venture



**BS317-7-SP Rational Drug Design**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS317&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS320-7-SP Human Molecular Genetics**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS320&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS326-7-AU Molecular and Developmental Immunology**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS326&level=7&period=AU&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS327-7-AU Cell Signalling**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS327&level=7&period=AU&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS331-7-SP Stem Cell Biology and Ageing**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS331&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS350-7-SP Mechanisms of Neurological Disease**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS350&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=18>

**BE244-7-SP Creating and Growing a New Business Venture**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BE244&level=7&period=SP&campus=CO&year=17>

Please note that BE244-7-SP is an Essex Business School Module and students will be required to adhere to the Essex Business School Policy. Essex Business School do not operate a Late or Extension Procedure for their modules. If you submit your work late, you will be required to complete an Extenuating Circumstances Form (see: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx>) and submit it to the Postgraduate Taught Administrator in the Essex Business School.

Students should bear in mind their previous experience, future interests and career plans when choosing their optional modules.

**NB. Students who completed their Undergraduate degree at Essex are not permitted to repeat any module that they studied during their Undergraduate course.**

The University's online module enrolment system, eNROL, will be open until 8.59am on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October (Week 4) for you to choose your optional modules. You can access eNROL at [www.essex.ac.uk/enrol](http://www.essex.ac.uk/enrol). Please direct any queries or problems to [enrol@essex.ac.uk](mailto:enrol@essex.ac.uk).

**Further information on the optional modules, including lecture content, details of assessment, timetabling and deadlines and reading lists, is available via Moodle:**

<https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/login/index.php>

### **Changing Optional Modules**

Students should bear in mind their previous experience, future interests and career plans when choosing their optional modules. It is usually possible to change modules up to the end of the second week of the Autumn Term. If you are not sure which modules to take you could attend lectures for several different modules before making your final choice.



### Appendix 3: MSc Tropical Marine Biology Course Structure

Module Code	Module Title	Credit Value	Indicate Core/Compulsory/Optional for:		
			Masters	PG Dip	PG Cert
BS705-7-FY	Tropical Marine Resources	30	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS706-7-FY	Tropical Marine Systems	30	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS707-7-FY	Methods in Tropical Marine Biology	30	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS708-7-FY	Professional Skills in Tropical Marine Biology	30	Compulsory	Compulsory	Compulsory
BS782-7-FY	Research Project	60	Core	Compulsory	Not Applicable
Total		<b>180</b>			

The course extends over a full year with taught modules during the Autumn and Spring Terms (until Easter), followed by a dissertation to be completed during the Summer Term. The course contains a programme of four Thematic Modules (BS705, BS706, BS707 (a Practical-based module) and BS708), all of which are compulsory, as well as the Research Project (BS782). The difference between core and non-core (compulsory) modules is that a fail mark between 40 and 50 can be condoned in up to 40 credits worth of non-core modules, whereas core modules must be passed with a mark of 50 or above in order to pass the Masters degree.

Students who do not pass sufficient credits to be awarded a Masters may receive a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) or a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert). Students must obtain 120 credits for the award of PGDip and 60 credits for the award of PGCert.

#### Compulsory Modules

##### Thematic Modules (BS705, BS706, BS707 and BS708)

There are four compulsory *Thematic Modules*. The Thematic Units are Tropical Marine Resources (BS705), Tropical Marine Systems (BS706), Professional Skills in Tropical Marine Biology (BS708), and Methods in Tropical Marine Biology (BS707), a more practical-based module which supports the other, theoretical modules. A wide range of assessment techniques is employed – please see the individual Module Handbooks for these modules to obtain further information on the assessments.



The Thematic Modules are designed to provide the fundamental knowledge and tools required to deal with marine biological issues and problems, and to increase graduates' knowledge base across a broad range of tropical marine biology topics.

**BS705-7-FY Tropical Marine Resources**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS705&level=7&period=FY&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS706-7-FY Tropical Marine Systems**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS706&level=7&period=FY&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS707-7-FY Methods in Tropical Marine Biology**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS707&level=7&period=FY&campus=CO&year=17>

**BS708-7-FY Professional Skills in Tropical Marine Biology**

<https://www1.essex.ac.uk/modules/Default.aspx?coursecode=BS708&level=7&period=FY&campus=CO&year=17>

Further information on the optional modules, including lecture content, details of assessment, timetabling and deadlines and reading lists, is available via Moodle:

<https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/login/index.php>