Biomedical Sciences Handbook for undergraduate students

Contents

**Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 6
Introduction to Biomedical Sciences at York .................................................................... 6
The purpose of this handbook ......................................................................................... 6
Where else can I find information? ................................................................................ 7
If things go wrong .............................................................................................................. 7
Disclaimer ......................................................................................................................... 8

**The Biology Department** .............................................................................................. 8
Welcome to Biology .......................................................................................................... 8
Departmental facilities ..................................................................................................... 9
Biology Student Services ................................................................................................. 9
Biology teaching labs and computer rooms ..................................................................... 9
Access to biology .............................................................................................................. 10
Communicating with the department ............................................................................. 10
Health, safety and security ............................................................................................... 11
Your supervisor ................................................................................................................ 11
Changing your supervisor ............................................................................................... 12
Departmental committees ............................................................................................... 12
Academic and course representation ............................................................................. 13
Student evaluation of modules ......................................................................................... 14
Equality and diversity ...................................................................................................... 14

**Your Course** .................................................................................................................. 16
Course Structure .............................................................................................................. 16
Stages ............................................................................................................................... 17
Stage 1 (first year) .......................................................................................................... 17
Stage 2 (second year) ...................................................................................................... 17
Stage 3 (final year) BSc programme ................................................................................ 17
Stage 3 integrated masters programme (3rd or 4th year) .................................................. 18
Stage 4 integrated masters programme (4th or 5th year) .................................................. 19
Optional Year Away........................................................................................................... 19
Year in industry .................................................................................................................. 19
Erasmus Study Placements ............................................................................................... 20
Erasmus Laboratory Placements ....................................................................................... 20
Exchange programmes outside Europe ............................................................................. 21
Change of degree programme .......................................................................................... 21
Modules .............................................................................................................................. 21
Compulsory / Optional / Elective modules ........................................................................ 22
Choosing modules ............................................................................................................. 22
Changing modules ............................................................................................................ 23
Project and research skills (stage 3 BSc)........................................................................ 23
Project and research skills (stage 3 integrated masters) ................................................... 23
Project (stage 4 integrated masters) ................................................................................ 23
Credit-weighting ............................................................................................................... 24
Languages for All (LFA) .................................................................................................... 24
Centre for Global Programmes ........................................................................................ 24
Problems with your course ............................................................................................... 25
Making a complaint .......................................................................................................... 25
Change your plan .............................................................................................................. 25
Transferring to another programme of study .................................................................. 25
Leave of absence ............................................................................................................... 25
Withdrawal ....................................................................................................................... 26

Teaching and Learning ..................................................................................................... 27

Teaching and Learning ..................................................................................................... 27
Studying at University ...................................................................................................... 27
Teaching methods ............................................................................................................. 27
Lectures ............................................................................................................................ 27
Practical classes ............................................................................................................... 27
Workshops ....................................................................................................................... 28
Tutorials ............................................................................................................................. 28
Code of conduct ............................................................................................................... 29
Attendance ........................................................................................................................ 30
Absence .............................................................................................................................. 31
Academic integrity – compulsory exercise to complete in term one .................................. 32
Academic misconduct ...................................................................................................... 32
Ethics........................................................................................................................................... 32

**Study skills and support** ............................................................................................................ 33

Managing your workload through private study ........................................................................... 33
Online resources – IT facilities, VLE and others .......................................................................... 34
Reading lists .................................................................................................................................. 35
Library ........................................................................................................................................... 35
Student Skills Hub ......................................................................................................................... 35
Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT) ........................................................................... 36
Weeks 8 – 10 provision .................................................................................................................. 36
Accessibility and disability support ............................................................................................... 36
Prizes, bursaries and scholarships ................................................................................................ 37
Activities and societies ................................................................................................................... 37
Departmental talks ........................................................................................................................ 37

**Assessment, progression and award** ......................................................................................... 39

Guide to assessment ...................................................................................................................... 39
Assessment methods ..................................................................................................................... 39
Formal examination requirements ................................................................................................. 39
Assessment format and submission of work ................................................................................ 40
Deadlines ....................................................................................................................................... 40
Penalties ......................................................................................................................................... 41
Extensions for assessed work ........................................................................................................ 41
Failure to submit ............................................................................................................................. 42
Style guides ................................................................................................................................... 42
How is my work marked? ................................................................................................................ 42
Feedback on assessment ................................................................................................................ 43
Examination papers ....................................................................................................................... 43
Tutorial reports ............................................................................................................................... 44
What do I need to do to get a good degree? ................................................................................ 44
What happens if I fail a module? ................................................................................................... 44
Compensation ................................................................................................................................ 44
Reassessment .................................................................................................................................. 44
Resits, repeats and readmission .................................................................................................... 45
Procedures for unsatisfactory performance .................................................................................. 45
Report procedure ............................................................................................................................ 46
Programme extensions and termination.................................................................47
Exceptional circumstances..................................................................................47
Making an appeal...............................................................................................47
External examiners ............................................................................................48
Your final degree classification .........................................................................49
Departmental criteria for a BSc first class degree with distinction ....................49

**Personal development and employability**.........................................................50

Careers ................................................................................................................50
Personal development planning (PDP) ................................................................50
Introduction

Introduction to Biomedical Sciences at York
Welcome to Biomedical Sciences at York - we are delighted that you have decided to study with us. We hope you enjoy your time at York and we look forward to making sure you get the very best from your studies here.

An understanding of health and disease is best approached from different angles. A distinctive feature of our new programme is that it will be delivered by four departments with outstanding biomedical research activity:

HYMS
Department of Biology
Department of Health Sciences
Department of Psychology

The administration of your programme is based in the Department of Biology - one of the top Biology Departments in the country; a community of academics and students who work together in teaching and learning about all areas of modern Biology. We pride ourselves on offering an excellent education within a supportive atmosphere.

For nearly all of you, studying at University will be very different from the work you have done at school or college. Higher education offers the opportunity to obtain an in depth education; you will learn analytical rigour and develop your scientific creativity – you will quickly discover that doing a degree demands a lot more of you.

This handbook has been prepared to cover the information you will need for your programme and to assist you as a student in the Department. Please read it through and use it as a first point of reference. If you have any questions, your supervisor and/or our Undergraduate Office, provide a friendly and helpful service.

The purpose of this handbook
It is a reference guide to help you and should be kept along with the University Handbook.

This handbook provides a comprehensive introduction to your department and information on all aspects of your degree programme.

It outlines what you should expect of your department and what they expect from you, and clarifies the policies and procedures relevant to your area of study.
Where else can I find information?

This departmental handbook should be kept for reference alongside the University Handbook.

The University Handbook provides information on central services and support for students, including accommodation, finance, living in York and further advice on careers and study skills.

You should also log in to the Student Homepage for your personalised timetable, information and news. For general information you can search the student pages from this site via the left-hand side navigation.

Yorkshare is York’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), a system of managed web pages that provides you with access to learning resources and allows you the means to communicate and collaborate with other students and staff over the Internet. VLEs are an increasingly important part of learning, improving flexibility of study and enhancing the learning process through increased feedback, access to resources and interaction with your peers and teaching staff. You should have received access to the ‘preparing to study site’ and we hope you have spent some time looking through it.

Each module has its own ‘site’ and you will be able to access booklists, lecture information, power point presentations and various electronic learning resources that we hope will help you with your studies. The module sites also contain module synopses (for module aims and learning outcomes and information on lecture topics and staff teaching on the module) and copies of past examination papers with specimen answers.

Another useful source of information is our WEB pages: [http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currentundergraduatestudents/] you can access all of the general information you need for your programme of study here.

If things go wrong

We hope your time at University will be amongst the best experiences of your life. However, it is important that you know where to turn to, should you experience any difficulties.

We have a set of web pages dedicated to providing support for you if things go wrong. For further information, visit: [www.york.ac.uk/students/help/]
Disclaimer

Whilst the University tries to ensure that information contained in this document is accurate when published, the University does not accept liability for any inaccuracies contained within it. Where circumstances occur or change outside the reasonable control of the University, the University reserves the right to change or cancel parts of, or entire, programmes of study or services at any time without liability, before or after students have registered at the University. Circumstances outside the University’s reasonable control include: industrial action, over or under-demand from students, staff illness, lack of funding, severe weather, fire, civil disorder, political unrest, government restrictions and concern regarding risk of transmission of serious illness. The University’s contract with its students does not confer third party benefits under the Contract (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999.

The Biology Department

Welcome to Biology

You are now a member of an academic department. The department is made up of teaching staff, researchers, support staff and other students like you.

- **Academic teaching staff** - they are there as leaders in their field willing to share their expertise and experience to help you learn, grow and push the boundaries of your capabilities and knowledge. Around 50 academic staff will contribute to your teaching through lectures, practicals, tutorials and project supervision. A [full list of academic staff](#) is available on our web pages.

- **Your supervisor** is a member of the academic staff community and is there to help guide your studies and to monitor your progress over your degree programme.

- **Post-doctoral staff** - you may occasionally meet research fellows or ‘post-docs’ – post-doctoral staff who are senior researchers; they may offer tutorials or work with you on your project in your final year.

- **Administrative and technical support staff** - they are the mechanics behind making the department run smoothly. They will communicate important information, provide technical assistance and help signpost you to other services and support you might need within the University. Please see our web pages for contact details of administrative and technical staff.

- **Course representatives** you are now also part of a student community belonging to your department. Course reps are there to help represent your views to the department and to the University – so there is always a way to get your views heard.
Departmental facilities

Biology Student Services

Biology Student Services manages all aspects of student administration and is based on the ground floor of T Block.

You will visit the office to submit and collect forms, assessed work and examination papers. It is also a good place to take any general queries / questions you may have.

| Biology Student Services is open from 09.00 –17.00, Mon-Fri in term time and 10.00-16.00 during University vacations. |

Biology teaching labs and computer rooms

*The Biology teaching labs and computer rooms are situated in R and T blocks.*

The computer rooms are open 24 hrs, access after 18.00 is card controlled.

Please note, food and drink cannot be taken into the teaching labs or computer rooms and you will be required to wear a lab coat in all practical classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R blocks Computing Rooms R012</th>
<th>24 hour access, 7 days a weeks, swipe card required for access after 18.30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R/T block teaching laboratories</td>
<td>08.30-18.30 swipe access (Mon-Fri)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An emergency phone is situated in R012 and is available for use in the event of any kind of incident or accident occurring out-of-hours (6.00pm-8.00am). Campus-based Security can be summoned by calling 3333 and reporting your problem. Special arrangements can also be made for any student with a disability who encounters difficulty accessing R012 out-of-hours (6.00pm-8.00am). Please contact the Biology Student Services for further details.

For information on printing and University computing facilities please refer to the University handbook and the following web link: [https://www.york.ac.uk/it-services/it/](https://www.york.ac.uk/it-services/it/)
Access to biology

Corridors and Rooms in the Biology Department are coded according to the scheme illustrated below. This letter is then followed by a number signifying the floor (‘0’ being Ground Floor, ‘1’ being First Floor etc.) and finally a two-digit room number.

Departmental access beyond the Atrium’s in K and T block is controlled by a **swipe card**. On arrival you will be issued with a card that will give you access, during working hours, to the teaching laboratories and the research wings for academic staff offices.

**Communicating with the department**

It is important that you stay in contact with us during your studies and our main means of communication with you is via email. It is your responsibility to check your University email account regularly, we recommend a minimum of every day and it is helpful for us if you always contact us from your University email and make it clear who you are in your email – i.e. sign off using your full name and include your student ID number (available on your university card).
Information on timetable changes, examinations and arrangements for meetings with supervisors will always be communicated to your via your University email.

Urgent updates may be communicated to you via text messages (so make sure you always update your mobile number with the University if it changes) and general notices are also posted on the notice boards in the concourse area and teaching labs. If we receive any mail for you, we will ask you to collect it from the Biology Student Services.

Notifications and updates on teaching material will also be communicated through Yorkshare, the University virtual learning environment and our web pages.

**Health, safety and security**

*For information about the University’s Health, Safety and Security policy, visit:*  
[www.york.ac.uk/admin/hsas/](http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hsas/)

Safety training is an important feature of all our work activities and, for undergraduate students is particularly appropriate to practical classes in the teaching labs.

All undergraduate students will be given a safety induction briefing at the start of their studies. A further safety talk is organised before students embark on their final year project. This supplements the more detailed safety instruction and information given by the project supervisors.

**Your supervisor**

We allocate you an academic supervisor who is there to offer you support and advice throughout your degree programme.

Your supervisor will meet with you to discuss your academic progress and check all is well with you and your studies. They will encourage you to develop your academic personal skills (see Personal Development Planning in the section below on Personal Development and Employability) and can also act as a reference for any applications you might make in the future.

They can advise what to do if things go wrong and refer you to the right people in the University for help with more personal matters.

**To get the most out of supervision:**

- attend the meetings your supervisor organises
- prepare for these meetings
• ask for advice if you are having problems – academic or personal
• tell them what is happening in your life so they can identify any support you might need
• ask for feedback on your progress – discuss your marks and go through examination papers with them
• keep them updated on your career aspirations so that they can provide you with relevant references

If you cannot attend a pre-arranged meeting always let your supervisor know, if you miss a meeting without good reason your supervisor should offer you a further meeting, If you miss two meetings we will contact you to see if you are having problems and this will be noted on your file.

If you are an overseas student on a Tier 4 visa, you will need to attend at least two individual meetings per term with your supervisor.

For further areas of student support, see the University handbook or visit: www.york.ac.uk/students/support/

Changing your supervisor

Sometimes students ask to change supervisor – if you do want to change, please let us know by raising the matter with the Biology Student Services, the Chair Board of Studies (Professor Richard Waites) or any member of staff. We don’t ask you to explain why you want to change.

Departmental committees

The work of the Department is overseen by a number of committees, the most relevant Committees are: the Board of Studies, Teaching Committee, the Board of Examiners, Examinations Committee, Exceptional Circumstance Committee, the Student Staff Liaison Group (SSLG) and Quality Group.

The Board of Studies deals with all matters of academic business in the Department and is responsible for overseeing the Department’s programmes of study. The current Chair of the Board is Professor Richard Waites and two student representatives from each year of study attend the meetings; there are five meetings a year.

Teaching Committee is responsible for detailed annual course planning and quality assurance, monitoring and strategic consideration of admissions and graduate employment performance, and any other issues as determined by the Board of Studies. The current
Chair is Dr Gareth Evans and it usually meets once a term. Student representatives also attend Teaching Committee meetings.

Between them the Board of Studies and Teaching Committee approve new programmes and modules, revisions to existing programmes and changes to individual students’ programmes. They consider student feedback and monitor student admissions and achievement.

The Board of Examiners deals with matters relating to the examining of students’ work, student progress and the awarding of degrees. The Chair of the Board of Examiners is Professor Richard Waites. Student representatives do not attend Board of Examiners meetings.

Examinations Committee is responsible for formulating examinations policy for approval by the Biology BoS; organising and vetting the setting of examination papers and developing and up-dating marking guidelines. The current Chair is Dr Louise Jones and the Secretary is Dr Colin Beale. Student representatives do not attend Examinations Committee meetings.

There is also a Exceptional Circumstance Committee which considers student requests for extensions and re-assessment (please see section on Exceptional circumstances). The current Chair is Dr Louise Jones.

University information and policy on Exceptional circumstances is available at the following link: https://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/academic/mitigation/

The Student Staff Liaison Group was developed to improve communication between students and staff. It offers feedback on teaching, learning, assessment and research training and enhances teaching, learning, assessment and research training, the Board of Studies student representatives have an important role to play here.

You may raise any issues for discussion at regular meetings of the Student/Staff Liaison Group, Teaching Committee and the Board of Studies.

Quality Group considers all the comments and evaluations submitted by students in their post-module feedback.

Minutes of all meetings and terms of reference are available on our committee web pages.

Academic and course representation

Academic and course Reps are elected by students in their departmental year group to represent the views and interests of students on department committees and within the
student union. You can go to them with any concerns or suggestions about how the department or aspects of your course are run.

Course representation is a partnership between YUSU and the departments of the University of York. Together, we aim to ensure that students play an essential role in guaranteeing and driving the quality of the academic experience here.

Biology has two student representatives for each year group and the course reps will attend meetings of the Student Staff Liaison Group, Teaching Committee, Programme Committees and the Board of Studies.

The purpose of student representation is to encourage student input into the continued improvement and development of our teaching programmes. As the 'end-users', you are in an ideal position to comment on any problems encountered and put forward ideas for positive changes particularly concerning organisation and administration. Your views are valued by us and over the years many changes have been incorporated into the teaching programme because of student feedback.

If you’d like to represent the views of your fellow students and have a say in how your course is run, why not apply to be a course rep? You can stand for election at the beginning of Autumn term.

Visit: http://www.yusu.org/representation/academic-reps

For a more detailed description of the role, visit: www.york.ac.uk/about/organisation/governance/members-secretaries/guidelinesforstudentreps/

Student evaluation of modules

Evaluation of teaching and assessment in Biology is carried out electronically, at the end of the teaching on the module and after the assessments. All students are asked for their comments (anonymously), which are then reviewed by Quality Group and staff who teach on the modules.

Students are also asked for general feedback on project direction and supervision.

At the end of each year student reps are also asked to coordinate a feedback session for all the students in their year group to gain their views and suggestions on all aspects of the course. They will then discuss these views with the Chair and Associate Chair of the Board of Studies.

Equality and diversity
The University of York values the diversity of its students and staff and is committed to the creation of a positive environment which is fair, welcoming and inclusive and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

For further information about the University’s equality and diversity policies, visit: http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/
Your Course

The Biomedical Sciences programme at York is a degree that focuses on the science underpinning medicine. A distinctive feature of our programme is that it is delivered by four departments with outstanding biomedical research activity: the Department of Biology, the Hull York Medical School (HYMS), the Department of Health Sciences and the Department of Psychology. Students that study Biomedical Sciences will be equipped to pursue careers in many aspects of the fight against disease.

The Biomedical Sciences course and its approaches to teaching and learning are based on the undergraduate degrees offered by the Department of Biology, which has an outstanding reputation and is consistently rated as one of the top UK Biological Sciences departments for research and teaching. It should be noted that our degree is distinct from accredited Biomedical Sciences programmes that provide training for NHS-based technical careers.

Biomedical Sciences is an interdisciplinary course with breadth and depth in diverse topics such as human biology, pathogens, epidemiology and psychology. You will be taught by enthusiastic non-clinical academic scientists from four disciplines, including Biology, Medicine, Health Sciences and Psychology with additional contributions from clinician-researchers. There are therefore strong links throughout the course between your studies, scientific research and clinical applications.

Biomedical Sciences undergraduates will be taught a brand new teaching building that will house high-tech teaching laboratories and a 120 seat computer room. Further highlights of the degree include a personal supervisor throughout, an excellent small group tutorial system, research seminars and a 20 week independent final year research project. Our graduates will therefore be equipped for careers in biomedical research or other health-related industries and services.

Course Structure

The first year is a foundation year, taken by all Biomedical Sciences students and comprises seven core modules together with scientific skills and tutorials. The modules are delivered through lectures, practicals and workshops. The scientific skills and tutorial sessions develop key transferable skills, including scientific and research methods, scientific writing, criticising scientific literature, oral presentation skills and problem solving.
**Stages**

An undergraduate programme of study is divided into a specified number of stages. Each stage is equivalent to a year of full-time study. You must satisfy the requirements for one stage of your programme before being able to progress to the next stage. You must get 120 credits either by passing your modules at first or second attempt (subject to the modules being re-assessable) or by compensation (where you meet the compensation criteria).

**Stage 1 (first year)**

The first year is an introduction to the main areas of modern biomedical sciences, and lays the foundation for specialised study in the second and final years.

You need to pass stage 1 to progress to stage 2 of your degree programme but stage 1 modules do not count towards your degree mark.

**Stage 2 (second year)**

In the spring term of stage 1 you will select programme modules for stage 2 of your study. You have some choice in your stage 2 programme and the Module Choice Information provided for you contains information on all modules that will be available throughout stages 2 and 3 of study; you are provided with full outlines of all modules, via the WEB and VLE.

The second year is a time to start to focus on your areas of interest, extending your knowledge and deepening your understanding through your choice of modules and tutorials. You choose from a ‘range of modules’ and complement these choices with a range of core modules that include tutorials, a group research project and practical skills options plus sessions that address wider issues relating to the field of biomedical sciences, health care and related research. These sessions give insight into the views and approaches of healthcare providers and clinical researchers.

In stage 2, we hope that you will develop your interests and apply and deepen your knowledge and understanding from the broad introduction provided in stage 1. The modules you follow in stage 2 will have implications for stage 3 as some stage 3 modules require particular stage 2 modules as prerequisites.

Stage 2 modules counts for 40% of your overall degree mark.

**Stage 3 (final year) BSc programme**

The 20 week (40 credit) research project is central to your final year and is your opportunity to work with one of our many research groups and gain hands-on research experience. Based on the research and practical skills gained during years 1 and 2, you will choose a
unique project, and carry this out independently with supervision by academic staff. You are expected to spend 2 days a week working on your project across the autumn and spring terms of your final year. You will also undertake a 20 credit Research Skills Module.

The purpose of both your project and the skills modules is to give you the opportunity to practice many of the transferable and practical skills that you have learnt and which will be of considerable use to you whatever career you follow. Examples of the skills you will develop and use are - project planning, oral presentations, report writing, IT skills (project write-up), statistics, data analysis, problem solving, information gathering, reading and deconstructing scientific papers, critical analysis and essay writing.

Your project is assessed by a 6000 word write up and the research skills module is assessed by two examinations; an open essay paper produced over a number of weeks and a 2 hour comprehension and criticism paper.

If you are interested in the types of projects available to undergraduates, please look at the project pages on our website. Project selection takes place in the summer term at the end of your stage 2 (this will be the end of your placement year for a 4 year student).

Your research work is complemented by a choice of six specialist modules. Stage 3 modules normally reflect the research interests of academic staff and cover a wide range of topics of current interest.

Please note that there will be changes to this list.

**Stage 3 integrated masters programme (3rd or 4th year)**

Stage 3 of the MBiomedsci is similar to stage 3 of the BSc programme, although the research project is a smaller component of the year and you will select more taught modules. You have to complete a 40 credit research project/research skills module across the autumn and spring terms and select 80 credits of taught modules.

The purpose of both your project and the skills modules is to give you the opportunity to practice many of the transferable and practical skills that you have learnt and which will be of considerable use to you whatever career you follow. Examples of the skills you will develop and use are - project planning, oral presentations, report writing, IT skills (project write-up), statistics, data analysis, problem solving, information gathering, reading and deconstructing scientific papers, critical analysis and essay writing.

Stage 3 modules normally reflect the research interests of academic staff and cover a wide range of topics of current interest.
Stage 4 integrated masters programme (4th or 5th year)

The final year of this programme introduces an extra year that specifically focuses on the skills needed for a career as a biomedical sciences research scientist. During this time you work with research scientists within one of the UK’s top bioscience departments to learn specialised research techniques and gain experience in a cutting edge research lab. You also undertake specialist research training and take specific Masters level courses that will enable you to:

- solve problems of a numerical sort, and other problems that involve interpreting complex data sets. To present these problems and their solutions in a creative and systematic manner
- deliver oral and written presentations in a professional and effective manner
- learn more about the very latest technologies that are driving biomedical sciences research
- gain extensive practical experience and knowledge by working with the experts
- develop your business and interpersonal skills to maximise employment potential

Obtain a valuable postgraduate qualification

Enhance your chances when applying for scientific jobs or a PhD degree

Optional Year Away

The optional year away runs from the end of your second year to the beginning of your final year and is open to all programmes (BSc and masters level). Even if you are registered for a three-year degree programme you can change to the four-year BSc or masters programme, but you should do so before the end of the summer term of stage 1; many placement application deadlines are in September and early October.

Year in industry

This is a unique opportunity to gain first hand research experience in the laboratories of an industrial or research institute employer and to find out what it is like to undertake biological research in an applied setting. You will find out how research is conducted, planned and financed in major institutions and you will become part of an operational research laboratory. If you are interested in (or registered for) this degree you will probably find it useful to look at the detailed information on the main Biology Year-In-Industry web-pages: https://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currenttaughtstudents/year-in-industry/

PLEASE NOTE - we cannot guarantee to find a placement for you; in the end it is up to the potential employer whether they hire you or not.
**Erasmus Study Placements**

You will study at either the University of Aarhus in Denmark, the Universities of Jena in Germany, the University of Grenoble in France or the Universities of Madrid and Valencia in Spain. Your year abroad is spent between the second and final years of your programme. You will take a range of courses and carry out a project to complement your studies at York.

It is essential to have some knowledge of German, French or Spanish on entry (AS level is the course requirement, except for the exchange to Denmark where teaching is in English). *Languages for All* courses (2 hours per week), during stage 1 and 2 are **compulsory** to prepare students for a year in Europe, and we expect students intending to partake in the scheme to achieve a minimum of Level 3 in their chosen language by the end of Term 6. Students with an existing A level in a language are encouraged to continue to Level 4.

The *Languages for All* website contains information on registering for courses, availability, times, workload and payment. Students who satisfactorily complete these courses and who are still registered for the Year in Europe degree will be reimbursed the cost of the tuition at the end of their second year of study.

To be eligible for this scheme you will normally be expected to receive a minimum average mark of 50 in the assessments of stage 1.

**Erasmus Laboratory Placements**

As an alternative to a study placement, you can elect for a full-time laboratory placement during your third year, working on a research project in an internationally renowned European laboratory, either in a university or in a research organisation. This scheme is independent of any bilateral exchange agreements, so there will be a wide choice of country and institution available. Since English is the accepted working language in these laboratories, familiarity with the language of the host country is not a prerequisite.

This programme is open to good students who have shown a performance significantly above average (minimum 65 during stage 1).

You will apply to a laboratory of your own choosing, in consultation with your supervisor and the Year-in-Europe co-ordinator, Dr Michael Schultzze.

As with the year in Industry we cannot guarantee to find a placement for you. Further information on placements and study abroad is available from the Biology [https://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currenttaughtstudents/erasmus-scheme/](https://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currenttaughtstudents/erasmus-scheme/) and Centre for Global Programmes web pages [http://www.york.ac.uk/study/study-abroad/](http://www.york.ac.uk/study/study-abroad/).

The optional year away is assessed on a pass / fail basis.
Exchange programmes outside Europe
The University has a number of links in North America (U.S.A and Canada), Asia with the University of Hong Kong and the National University of Singapore and Australia with the University of Sydney. These exchanges provide opportunities to spend a year at one of our partner institutions and they do not lengthen the overall period of your studies. The period abroad replaces the Second Year at York for students on three-year degree programmes. Students who are registered for four-year degree programmes in Biology are not eligible for the exchange unless they transfer to a three-year programme.

If you are interested in this scheme look at the Global Exchange Office website.

Change of degree programme
If you wish to change between BSc degree programmes, you may do this at any time as long as you have completed the required modules. Discuss your proposed change with your supervisor and then contact the Biology Student Services for a course change form.

To transfer onto the Integrated masters programs (MBiomedSci) you should have met the terms and conditions of entry to the programme and will also need to meet the university progression hurdles:

Progression from stage 2 to stage 3 requires a mark of > 55% at the end of stage 2.

Progression from stage 3 to stage 4 requires a mark of > 50% at the end of stage 3.

Transfers to the programme for students who do not have the initial entry requirements but who perform well in stage 1 will be considered if there are places available.

Students enrolled on the integrated masters programme who do not meet the University progression hurdles will be automatically transferred to the equivalent BSc programme.

If you wish to change to any other programme in the University, you should discuss the matter with your supervisor as soon as possible.

Modules
Each stage is made up of modules which you will take. Each of the modules you undertake will have a credit value (e.g. 10 credits – 20 credits – etc.) and a ‘level’ which indicates the module’s level of difficulty. One credit should mean about 10 hours work either in class or independently. You will achieve the credit for a module by passing the module assessments. Modules are assessed by a range of methods which will result in a numerical module mark out of 100.

If you fail a module there are two possible ways in which you might be able to still pass your year and progress to the next level; these are compensation and reassessment and are explained in more detail in the Assessment section.
Modules and stages are also subject to credit-weighting; more information on this can be found in the ‘Credit-weighting’ section below.

Your stage 1 (first year) programme modules are listed below and detailed outlines of stage 1 modules are available at the following link:

[http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currentundergraduatestudents/stage1biomedicalsciences2015cohort/stage1biomedicalsciencescohort2015/](http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currentundergraduatestudents/stage1biomedicalsciences2015cohort/stage1biomedicalsciencescohort2015/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Term taught</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIO00007C Genetics I</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO00010C Microbiology</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aut</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIO00004C Molecular biology and biochemistry</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Aut, Spr, Sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO00013C Introduction to biomedical sciences</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Aut, Spr, Sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO00015C Biomedical sciences skills and tutorials</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Aut, Spr, Sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO00009C Genetics II</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Spr, Sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO00011C Cell and developmental biology</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Spr, Sum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO00016C Human reproduction and development</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Spr, Sum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Provisional stage 2 modules**

**Provisional stage 3 modules**

**Compulsory / Optional / Elective modules**

Your modules could be comprised of a mixture of compulsory, optional and electives. All your stage 1 modules are compulsory, in stages 2, 3 and 4 you have the opportunity to personalise your degree by selecting a number of ‘optional modules’. The number of optional modules you can take depends on your degree programme. In addition to the Biology modules on offer, across stages 2 and 3, you may choose up to 20 credits of electives (modules from other departments):

[www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/programmes/modules/](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/programmes/modules/)

**Choosing modules**

You select your stage 2 modules in the spring term of your first year and your stage 3/4 (final year) modules in the spring term of stage 2 (your second year). Students who participate in one of the year away schemes select final year modules during the placement year. Once you have selected your modules the Department registers your choices and you can check your choices at any time in e:Vision. A small number of modules may have maximum number limits.
Changing modules

Particularly in stage 3, where you have a significant choice of the modules you take, students often ask to change module selections. Please note that you will not be allowed to change modules in any given term after the end of Week 3 of that term, but you may make changes to subsequent terms’ choices. You need to be aware that the timetable is constructed on the basis of student module choice – therefore modules that do not have an overlap of students may become mutually exclusive through timetabling, or may become ‘full’ because of room capacity. If you wish to change a module you must complete a change of module form available from the Biology Student Services. Please note that timetable changes and other information from both the administrative offices and academic staff are e-mailed to students officially registered for a module. If you change module without informing the office you will not be on the e-mail list for that module and will not be registered for the assessments attached to the module.

Project and research skills (stage 3 BSc)

The 20 week research project, is worth 40 credits, so a substantial part of your degree. It is assessed by a 6000 word report and is your opportunity to work with one of our many research groups and gain hands-on research experience. Based on the research and practical skills gained during years 1 and 2, you will choose a unique project, and carry this out independently with supervision by academic staff. The project is an essential part of your degree and one of the most popular parts of our programme, most students find it an interesting and stimulating experience, and we hope you will gain a lot from it.

You choose your project in the summer term of your second year.

The research skills module involves writing a 3000 word essay in the autumn term of your final year and critical appraisal of research literature via a closed examination in the summer term of your final year.

Project and research skills (stage 3 integrated masters)

Students will take a compulsory Research skills and Project module worth 40 credits. This module consists of analysis of research papers (25 %; taught element journal clubs, assessed element Comprehension and Criticism paper), preparation of a research-inspired Open Essay (25 %), and a research project (50 %). The project will be conducted in groups of 6-10 students, working in a general topic area under the supervision of an academic member of staff. There will be an opportunity for group training and team working.

Assessment of the project will be by individual written report.

Project (stage 4 integrated masters)

This will be an 80-credit Research project which consists of two thirds of the student work effort in stage 4.
Credit-weighting

Credit-weighting means, in calculating your average stage mark, each module mark will be given more or less weighting according to the volume of credit (i.e. workload) that is associated with it.

Credit-weighting means, in calculating your average stage mark, each module mark will be given more or less weighting according to the volume of credit (i.e. workload) that is associated with it. The University considers 10 credits to be equal to 100 hours work, comprised of taught classes and private study. You are required to take 360 credits during a three-year programme of study and 480 credits during a four year programme of study; 120 credits of modules across the year.

For further information on credit-weighting, including how you can use it to calculate your marks, consult the Student Guide to the University’s Rules for Progression and Award in Undergraduate programmes:

www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/academicregistry/registryservices/Student_guide_to_rules_for_progression_and_awards_in_ug_programmes.pdf

Further information on calculating your final degree mark is available under ‘Your final degree classification’ in the ‘Assessment, Progression and Award’ section.

Languages for All (LFA)

If you want to improve your language skills or take up a new language, Languages for All runs classes every term to help you do just that. In stages 2 and 3 of your programme you can take some of these modules for credit as electives.

During your time as an undergraduate at York, you’ll have the exciting opportunity to learn a foreign language for free. For further details including how to register, visit: www.york.ac.uk/Ifa

Centre for Global Programmes

If you’re interested in spending part of your studies abroad, or would like to make the most of your Easter and Summer vacations, the University offers exciting opportunities to study, work or volunteer in countries across the world. We offer programmes abroad from three weeks to 12 months duration and grants and bursaries are available to eligible students. Most application deadlines will be during your first year, and places are limited, so start thinking about this early and attend events run by the Centre for Global Programmes throughout the Autumn term.

For further information, including the full range of opportunities and how to apply, visit: www.york.ac.uk/globalyork
Problems with your course
Anything that stops you from undertaking your studies in the usual way is called ‘an academic progress issue’. If you are having problems with your course you should seek help and advice as soon as possible (in the first instance you may wish to talk to your supervisor).

You can also find advice here www.york.ac.uk/students/help

If you are having any problems while studying at York which might affect your ability to complete assigned work, you may be eligible to apply for Exceptional Circumstances. If successful, this would allow you an extension or a resit for the assessment affected. See the section on Exceptional Circumstances under Assessment for further information.

Making a complaint
You can complain about your experience of a service you have received as a student within the University, whether academic or non-academic.

For further information, visit: www.york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals/

For information on academic appeals, see the Assessment section.

Change your plan – absence, transferring or withdrawal
Most students progress routinely through their course with no changes. However, if you do wish to or need to make changes to your plan you should discuss any problems or doubts you are experiencing with your supervisor in the first instance. We try to accommodate students who encounter changes or challenges and who may need to change their plan.

Transferring to another programme of study
You may wish to transfer to another programme of study due to changing academic interests or because you want to change the structure of your degree programme. Transfers cannot be guaranteed, and are dependent on you meeting the academic requirements of the new programme and there being space on your preferred programme. Transfers usually happen during or at the end of the first year of study, but if you are considering transferring, you should speak to your supervisor as soon as possible.

Leave of absence
A leave of absence allows a student to take an authorised break in their studies for a maximum of one calendar year in the first instance. This can be on a variety of grounds including medical or compassionate grounds.
Withdrawal

Withdrawal is the term used when a student decides to permanently leave the University prior to completion of the award for which they are registered, whether for personal or academic reasons.

Details about these options are available at: www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/plan/

For further support, visit Student Support in Market Square or visit: www.york.ac.uk/sshub

Also see section on Assessment and Exceptional Circumstances
Teaching and Learning

Studying at University

You are now part of a dynamic academic community that will encourage, challenge and support you to reach your full potential.

At university we expect you to take more responsibility for your own learning than before. This means being self-motivated and independent when it comes to your studies and your personal development. You will get out of your time at university what you put in.

You will graduate into a world in which you will continually refresh and increase your knowledge. Our aim is to equip you as a life-long learner who can excel in this environment.

We offer the support and the facilities you need to become an independent learner who is equipped to succeed in a fulfilling career. In return we expect you to attend your lectures and seminars, research and study your subject areas and complete your assignments on time. We also expect you to approach your studies with enthusiasm and put in the effort to excel at your studies and master your subject.

Teaching methods

Your teaching is delivered by a variety of methods:

**Lectures** provide you with a framework for your whole programme; they are used to deliver knowledge, to interpret and explain difficult concepts and to illustrate their use. In most lecture courses you will find that you need to consolidate your understanding of the content by extra reading between lectures. An important skill to develop is the ability to write a coherent set of notes covering the essential points of each lecture.

For many of you the lecture will be an unfamiliar form of teaching. A good lecture should not be a listing of facts, or dictation of notes, but should give a stimulating and challenging perspective on a subject which encourages you to study further.

You will find that lecturers use a variety of styles to convey information and electronic information sources will also be provided for you to access through Yorkshare – the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which is a web-based portal for the exchange of academic materials (http://vle.york.ac.uk).

Lectures last for 50 minutes, giving 10 minute breaks between them. This is not possible if the late arrival of students prevents a prompt start to the lectures.

**Practical classes** have several aims. They should make you familiar with practical techniques and they should train you to use these methods precisely, but at the same time assess objectively the errors in your results, and their reliability. Beyond this, particularly later in the programme, you will learn how to plan experiments to solve problems, and this
will culminate in your research project in stage 3 of the programme. Demonstrators in the laboratory are there to give advice about your practical technique and to help you to understand the other lessons which can be learned from each experiment.

If information has been provided in advance, it is expected that you will read this carefully, prior to attending the practical session. It is very important to do this for your understanding and enjoyment of the practical work.

You are expected to attend all of your scheduled practical classes and attendance at assessed practical classes (i.e. practical classes during which assessed work is produced) is compulsory. You cannot submit work and will not be given a mark for an assessed practical you did not attend. Absence from all or part of a practical session (due to illness or other Exceptional circumstances) needs to be reported by you (see section on Exceptional circumstances for guidelines on this).

Practical work is often performed in groups and the work should be shared between group members. However, all write-ups, including the preparation of graphs and analysis of data must be carried out independently by each member of the group. You are encouraged to co-operate and discuss your work in practical classes, but clearly collusion in assessed work cannot be allowed. The lecturer concerned will clarify the point at which co-operation in your work becomes collusion in the assessment, and any students shown to have knowingly colluded or cheated may face severe penalties.

Pocket calculators can be used during practical sessions, but all other personal electronic equipment (such as laptop computers and mobile phones) should be switched off and remain in your bag/locker.

**Workshops** are structured activities, usually in support of lectures, in which you work in a group under the guidance of a tutor, often supported by demonstrators, who will give you help and advice. The objective of a workshop is to provide you with an opportunity to practise techniques in problem solving, statistics and interpretation of data. Classes emphasise interactive activities, they provide the opportunity to work in groups in which knowledge is shared and judgements and solutions to problems or new situations are made and conclusions are communicated. Classes will also help you to develop decision-making, teamwork, and communication skills.

**Tutorials** provide the opportunity for a group of four or five students to study and discuss a wide variety of topics with a tutor. In your first term your supervisor will also be your tutor. You will have six tutorials in the autumn and spring terms of your first and second year of study with a further two tutorials early in the summer term.

You will find that the styles of tutorials are as diverse as the personalities of the tutors, but as a general guideline, you are expected to spend at least six to eight hours per week in
preparation for tutorials, and to submit two pieces of written tutorial work during the term, one of which should be an essay.

After the first term you have the opportunity to choose your tutor for the following terms. You are encouraged to select tutors covering a wide range of interests reflecting the breadth of the programme and we do our best to allocate you one of your requested tutors but you should not submit a request for a tutor with whom you have previously had tutorials.

Since tutorials depend largely on the students for their success, it is most important that you have the enthusiasm to raise questions that interest you, and the courage to explain your difficulties, however stupid they may seem. Not only will you get more from the tutorial this way, you may also help others in the group. Tutors always appreciate a group willing to contribute their own ideas.

You will find the document ‘Written work – what is the purpose of it?’ on our web pages: http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currentundergraduatestudents/tutorials/. This document is intended to help you define more precisely what is expected in written work, particularly in tutorials and how this will benefit your academic career at York.

**Code of conduct**

We have a code of conduct for both lecture and practical classes that we expect you to pay particular attention to and which is detailed below:

- You should arrive in plenty of time to take your place before a lecture or practical class is due to start. If, for some reason, you are unable to arrive on time you should enter as quietly as possible by the rear entrance.
- Eating and drinking is not allowed in lecture theatres, laboratories, or other teaching rooms. Eating and drinking in computer rooms may result in your access to Biology computers being withdrawn.
- Talking in a lecture is distracting for the lecturer and for other students. Don’t do it.
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones, music players, or similar devices in lectures, workshops, or practical classes is not permitted. It is distracting to others, including the lecturer, and shows that you are not giving your attention to the lecture. This applies, obviously, to sending and receiving emails/text messages as well as to spoken conversations.
- **Switch off your mobile phone before the session starts.**
- Any recording is for personal use only and must not be distributed or circulated in any way. All recordings must be destroyed at the end of a module. Recordings should be audio only unless there is good reason for a video recording and this is agreed with the lecturer. Any contravention of these regulations is a disciplinary matter.
• Pocket calculators can be used during practical sessions, but all other personal electronic equipment should be switched off and remain in your bag/locker.
• If descriptions have been provided in advance, it is expected that you will read these carefully prior to attending the practical session. It is very important to do this for your understanding and enjoyment of the practical work.
• You are expected to attend all of your scheduled practical classes: attendance at assessed practicals is compulsory, and you will not be given a mark for an assessed practical you did not attend. Absence from all or part of a practical session (due to illness or other extenuating circumstances) needs to be reported by the student through the Biology Student Services using the formal procedure for assessed sessions.
• Practical work is often performed in groups and the work should be shared between group members. However, all write-ups, including the preparation of graphs and analysis of data must be carried out independently by each member of the group.

Attendance
You should attend all scheduled teaching sessions that we set for you. Regular attendance is vital to your progression through your degree programme and will help you become a well-rounded learner capable of achieving your full academic potential.

University Regulations state that you should be present at any time at which teaching or other academic engagements have been arranged for your programme (including Saturdays).

Tutorials are a compulsory component of the programme. Feedback from former students highlights tutorials as one of the most valuable parts of your programme and they work best when all students engage actively. If you are unwell or unable to attend a tutorial for any other good reason, please email your tutor and the Undergraduate Office to let them know and self-certify your illness in e:Vision. Even though tutorials are not formally assessed students with poor tutorial attendance and performance may fail to progress to the following stage of study.

Lecture attendance is very strongly advised; you will be less well prepared for your examinations if you do not attend. Apart from specific lecture material a lot of general module information is disseminated in lectures.

Practical classes are an essential component of a Biology degree. Some practical classes are ‘assessed’ i.e. they generate practical work that is submitted for assessment and counts towards your progression or degree. You will be notified which of the practical sessions are ‘assessed’ at the beginning of the module, these are compulsory and an attendance register will be taken. Absence from all or part of a practical session (due to illness or other extenuating circumstances) needs to be reported by the student through the University
Exceptional Circumstance procedure, forms for this are available from the Biology Student Services or on-line (see section on Exceptional circumstances). You should also inform the practical organiser that you will be missing the session.

**Assessments/Examinations** are compulsory. Absence from an assessment, due to illness or other extenuating circumstance, needs to be reported through the University Exceptional Circumstance procedure, forms for this are available from the Biology Student Services or on-line.

**Absence**

If you need to be absent during term-time you must consult your Supervisor who can permit an absence of up to three days. An absence of over three days, but no longer than four weeks, can be approved by the Chair of the Board of Studies. Any longer absence during a term which will be counted towards completion of your degree programme requires the approval of Special Cases Committee. See the information on taking a Leave of Absence in the ‘Change Your Plan’ section of ‘Your Course’.

If you stop turning up to scheduled teaching sessions without saying you are withdrawing and do not respond to our efforts to make contact with you within a specified time-scale, the Board of Studies will assume that you have withdrawn from your studies. For further information on the decision process, visit:

[www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/academic/taught/withdrawing/](http://www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/academic/taught/withdrawing/)

If you are unable to attend due to illness please see section below on Self certification. If you are having problems with completing your studies please see the section on Assessment - Exceptional Circumstances.

**What if I am ill and cannot attend scheduled teaching sessions**

If you are unwell for up to seven consecutive days during term-time you should register your illness, either through your e:Vision account or by completing an ‘illness self-certificate’ form and forwarding it to the Student Support Hub.

*If your illness interferes with your studies see the section on Exceptional Circumstance under Assessment.*

For further information, including self-certification forms, visit: [www.york.ac.uk/students/support/health/](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/health/) or see the University handbook
Academic integrity – compulsory exercise to complete in term one

Academic integrity represents a set of values and behaviours which members of the academic community abide by. To be a trusted member of this academic community you must understand and demonstrate academic integrity in your studies and the work you produce. Such values include honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Please note: Online Academic Integrity Tutorial: This module will take you through key principles around integrity and how to avoid things like plagiarism and collusion.

You are required to successfully complete the University Online Academic Integrity Tutorial within your first year, preferably within your first term to progress smoothly onto your next term (i.e. receive 100% on the three tests included in the tutorial).

The tutorial can be found on the VLE; more information is available on www.york.ac.uk/integrity

If you do not uphold the values and conventions of academic integrity and conform, you may be subject to the University’s academic misconduct procedures.

Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct means breaking the rules of academic integrity and this is why we regard any form of academic misconduct is viewed as a very serious offence.

For a list of what the University considers as academic misconduct, and the policy covering misconduct visit: www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/academic-misconduct/

Ethics

There is an Ethics Committee in Biology whose remit is to ensure that our research and teaching activities conform to the highest ethical standards; undergraduate students can be members of this committee. Further information on the activities of the committee and a link to the Universal Ethical Code for Scientists is available at: http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/ethics/.

Ethics may also be covered in tutorials, skills teaching and project work.
Study skills and support

Departmental study support is integrated into your teaching and learning programmes specifically through tutorials, workshops and other skills sessions. If you feel the need for further support you should discuss this with your supervisor and look at the section below on the student skills hub.

Managing your workload through private study

Teaching at York is done by academic experts who will introduce you to academic subject areas, key concepts and outline your learning objectives. You are responsible for researching, studying and managing your own learning.

Independent learning means you are expected to do the work involved to prepare for lectures, seminars and tutorials and to produce assignments and exams based on your studies. You will have world-class facilities and resources at your disposal and fellow students with opinions and experience you can share your thoughts and study experience with. So make the most of your time and the opportunities available to you.

You will need to plan your time carefully and be aware of timescales and deadlines for assessments, projects and exams.

We know that adjusting to new ways of working and having to produce work at this level in accordance with the many academic rules and regulations can be daunting. However, your tutors and your supervisors are there to assist and we have the support in place through the Student Skills Hub to help you gain any additional skills you might need with your maths, academic writing, referencing, IT skills and languages. See the section below on the Student Skills Hub.

In planning your work you should bear in mind that each 1 credit = 10 hours work, partially made up of contact time in lectures and practicals but also including a large amount of private study and many students find that they get more out of their subject by putting in more than the minimum amount of effort, those who don’t often struggle with the assessments. Within your pattern of work each week, you would expect in Year 1 to spend 10 hours attending lectures, 8 hours on practicals, 1 hour attending your tutorial with perhaps 5 hours spent in reading and preparing written work for it, and, on average, 2 - 3 hours preparing for practicals/workshops. This still leaves a significant amount of time to follow-up on each lecture and for private reading.

You should plan a pattern of work which suits you, though we would recommend that it includes the number of hours to be spent preparing tutorial work, going through lecture notes, reading a text book to enhance understanding, etc. It is important for such a weekly
plan to be realistic, and that you do not leave all your work until the last minute. Remember that a "normal working week" is not restricted to the hours 09.00 till 17.00 on five days: you may need to commit some evenings and weekends to study. Whatever you decide is best for you, try to stick to your programme, both during term time and vacations. If you are struggling with your study skills you should discuss this with your supervisor.

In order to help you in preparing for your stage 1 assessments, specimen papers and copies of past years’ examination papers are available on the web and various exercises are available on the VLE module sites. Working through past examination questions is a worthwhile and helpful exercise, this will help you to focus your revision.

We hope that during your time here you will develop skills which can be widely applied in life. The talk or essay you prepare for a tutorial will help to develop general skills of verbal and written communication. Your laboratory practicals help similarly to develop numeracy and dexterity; and in some practicals you will work and be assessed in groups to help you develop team-working skills. All these can help you in your future career.

There is no formal teaching in weeks 8-10 of the summer term (the post exam period) but we do expect students to be in York to discuss end of year results with supervisors and there are a number of events across campus and in Biology (Careers) that you will benefit from attending.

University vacations are not holidays (although they contain some holiday time) and they provide quiet periods when you can catch up with your private study, reviewing the previous term’s work, expanding your understanding in areas that interest you, and preparing for the assessment tests that sometimes fall at the start of term.

**Online resources – IT facilities, VLE and others**

**Yorkshare** is York’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), a system of managed web pages that provides you with access to learning resources and allows you the means to communicate and collaborate with other students and staff over the Internet. VLEs are an increasingly important part of learning, improving flexibility of study for home and distance learners and enhancing the learning process through increased feedback, access to resources and interaction with your peers and teaching staff.

Each Biology module has its own ‘site’ and you will be able to access booklists, lecture information and recordings, power point presentations and various electronic learning resources that we hope will help you with your studies. The module sites also contain module synopses (for module aims and learning outcomes and information on lecture topics and staff teaching on the module) and copies of past examination papers with specimen answers. For some modules open assessments are submitted via the VLE.

There is also a Biology ‘preparing to study site’ available in the VLE.
The **student homepage** provides you with personalised content, including your timetable, library record, news and links to your department and college web sites.

**e:Vision** provides you with electronic access to data held about you in the student record system and allows you to maintain your own address and contact details. If you change address or telephone number you can use e:Vision to notify the University of the changes. Assessed work that is submitted electronically is often returned to you via your eVision account which can also used to store progression information, notes on supervisory meetings and tutorial reports.

You are also able to check on the modules you are taking, access your module marks and personal examination timetables.

You have an obligation to keep your security details (e.g. password) for accessing this data confidential and not to disclose them to anyone else. Accessing another user’s account is expressly prohibited in the terms of the University’s Ordinances & Regulations (see regulation 11):


Where inaccurate information is provided deliberately to the University either via the system or in some other manner this will be reported to the Academic Registrar and may constitute a disciplinary offence.

For information on the facilities and services IT Services provides, consult your University handbook or visit: [www.york.ac.uk/it-services/](http://www.york.ac.uk/it-services/)

**Reading lists**

These are available in all the module VLE sites and recommended reading may also be suggested in lectures. We provide you with the basic textbook to support your stage 1 teaching and learning.

**Library**

[www.york.ac.uk/library](http://www.york.ac.uk/library)

For an introduction to using the University Library and its resources, visit: [www.york.ac.uk/library/informationfor/newusers](http://www.york.ac.uk/library/informationfor/newusers)

This includes, amongst others, information on using the library catalogue, your library account, online induction resources and opening hours. The University Library is open 24 hours a day, 362 days a year. For general help, contact the Library Help Desk in the JB Morrell Library.

Email: [lib-enquiry@york.ac.uk](mailto:lib-enquiry@york.ac.uk), Tel: +44 (0)1904 323873

This includes, amongst others, information on using the library catalogue, your library account, online induction resources and opening hours. The University Library is open 24 hours a day, 362 days a year. For general help, contact the Library Help Desk in the JB Morrell Library.

Email: lib-enquiry@york.ac.uk, Tel: +44 (0)1904 323873

35
Your Academic Liaison Librarian is Vanya Gallimore. She can help you search effectively for resources, understand how to use and evaluate these and how to reference your work correctly and can be contacted at [lib-biology@york.ac.uk]. Further details on your Academic Liaison Librarian and your subject guide can be found at: http://subjectguides.york.ac.uk/biology

**Student Skills Hub**

The Student Skills Hub offers a variety of ways to help you gain the necessary skills to study and deliver work at undergraduate level and beyond. These include:

- Academic writing skills – (The Writing Centre)
- Maths and numeracy skills – (The Maths Skills Centre)
- Information skills – (The Library)
- IT skills
- Language skills
- Transferable skills

There are many opportunities to develop a wide range of skills in York, across many disciplines.

For further information, visit: www.york.ac.uk/student-skills-hub

**Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT)**

The Centre for English Language Teaching provides a variety of term time classes and summer courses for intermediate and advanced level English language support.

Visit: www.york.ac.uk/celt

**Weeks 8 – 10 provision**

There is no formal teaching in weeks 8 to 10 of the summer term; the Department organises a large Careers Fair in week 9 and there are many University and College events to attend.

**Accessibility and disability support**

Please let the department know as soon as possible if you have a disability and may require support. You can discuss this with your supervisor and copies of any documentation you have, i.e. Assessments of Learning Needs etc should be given to the Biology Student Services and Disability Services. Dr Antje Kuhrs is the Biology Disability Officer. If you wish to discuss the arrangements that will be put in place to help you manage your studies please contact her on antje.kuhrs@york.ac.uk, her phone number is 01904 328586 (ext 8586 if an internal call) and her office is C 104a.
Disability Services can provide support, advice and guidance for those with a diagnosed disability, including: dyslexia and specific learning difficulties; Asperger’s syndrome; visual and hearing impairment and physical/medical impairments amongst others. All students with disabilities are encouraged to contact them to discuss meeting your individual needs.

For further information, visit: [www.york.ac.uk/students/support/disability/](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/disability/)

You may also require individual arrangements for formal examinations. See the information provided on formal examinations in the Assessment section for further information.

**Prizes, bursaries and scholarships**

**First Year**
Prize of £200 for the best academic performance in the first year

**Second Year**
Prize of £200 for the best academic performance to the end of the second year

**Final Year**
The Oxford University Press Prize for the most improved student

The Society of Biology award for the student who achieves the highest number of first class marks (membership of society)

The prize for the best final year project

Biology Head of Department’s prize for the best all-round contribution to the life of the Department

*For further information on bursaries and scholarships offered by the University, see the University handbook.*

**Activities and societies**

There are many opportunities at York to get involved with societies and extra-curricular activities both related and unrelated to your course. There is an active Biosciences Society run by Biology and Biochemistry students, the students enjoy a variety of social and sporting activities, as well as arranging scientific events such as a seminar program.

**Departmental talks**
Two or three times in the Autumn, Spring term and early Summer terms, York Biology Lectures will be given by eminent biologists visiting the University. These are aimed at a non-specialist audience and you are strongly encouraged to attend. These lectures are highlighted on your timetable.
There are a number of **lunchtime seminar groups** which meet regularly once a week during term time; each covers a particular area of research interest. These are primarily intended for final year undergraduates, research students, post-doctoral staff and lecturers, but first and second year undergraduates may also find them of interest and are welcome to come to any of the seminars. The seminar programmes are posted around the Department and are also available on the Department of Biology web pages: [http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/news-events/seminars/](http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/news-events/seminars/).

For a full list of societies and activities provided by YUSU, visit: [www.yusu.org/activities](http://www.yusu.org/activities)
Assessment, progression and award

Guide to assessment

The University’s guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback contains the University’s formal procedures relating to the conduct of assessment. It provides clear and detailed information on each aspect of student assessment and is a useful resource if you want to know more about how your work is assessed.

For further information, visit: www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/registry-services/guide/

Assessment methods

You will encounter two types of assessment during your time at University: formative and summative.

Formative assessment is there to help you develop. While it may not contribute to your final degree mark, it will help you learn more effectively – you will be provided with feedback on this type of assessment which will help you improve your performance.

Summative assessment takes into account the extent of your success in meeting the assessment criteria and how well you have fulfilled the learning outcomes of a particular module or programme. This type of assessment will contribute to your final degree mark or towards progression decisions.

Formal examination requirements

For information on the University’s formal examination requirements, consult your University handbook or visit: www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/assessment-and-examination/

Individual examination arrangements may be approved for students who are unable to sit formal University examination conditions as a result of a disability or other condition. It is important to note that such arrangements must be in place at least six weeks prior to the exam in question, so it is essential that students requiring individual arrangements contact Disability Services as soon as possible in order to ensure that adjustments can be made.

Visit: www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/assessment-and-examination/disability/making/
Assessment format and submission of work

You will be asked to complete a diverse range of assessments in the modules you follow. The form of assessment may vary from short answer or multiple-choice tests under closed conditions (closed examinations), to open essays, small projects or written accounts of your practical work (assessed practical work). Problem based questions, oral presentations or posters may also form part of your assessment. Some modules have a combination of open and closed assessments, some modules have closed assessments only and some will be based on posters, projects, essays or practical write-ups.

In stage 1 closed assessments will be comprised of ‘short answer questions’ of varying length and level of difficulty. In Stage 2 there will be a mixture of short answers, methodology questions, problem questions and a short essay. In Stage 3 there will methodology questions, problem questions and essays.

At the beginning of each module you will be informed of the type of assessments to expect. Where more than one type of assessment is involved, the marks from the various components will be combined (weighted appropriately) to provide an overall mark for the module. The VLE module site will hold information on assessments formats, deadlines and submission information for that module.

Some assessments are submitted in hard copy to the Biology Student Services, some will be submitted electronically to the relevant module VLE site. Details on presentation and layout for your assessment will be available on the module VLE site.

All work submitted for assessment (except for your stage 3 research project) must be identified by your examination candidate number (number beginning with Y on the back of your University card. Please do not put your name on your work.

A [general open assessment timetable](#) is also available on the Biology examination and assessment web pages.

**Deadlines**

In the interests of fairness, transparency and to be equitable we have strict rules around deadlines and the quality or quantity of work submitted and have clear penalties for any student these rules are not followed.

The standard deadline for all submitted work either to the office or to the VLE is 12 noon, usually the deadline day is set on a Monday.

All work submitted late, without valid Exceptional circumstances, will have a penalty mark imposed – see section below on penalties.
Please note that for work submitted electronically, the system will mark work as late if it is submitted 1 second after the published deadline, in the interests of fairness work submitted in hard copy to the Undergraduate Office will be treated in the same way. We recommend you always submit your work well within the published deadlines.

**Penalties**

Knowing how to manage your time, write succinctly and provide a complete and comprehensive piece of work to a strict deadline are skills you will develop at university.

All work submitted late, without valid Exceptional circumstances, will have ten percent of the available marks deducted for each day (or part of each day) that the work is late, up to a total of five days, including weekends and bank holidays, e.g. if work is awarded a mark of 30 out of 50, and the work is up to one day late, the final mark is 25.

After five days, the work is marked at zero. Note, however, that the penalty cannot result in a mark less than zero.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work submitted late</th>
<th>Penalty applied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 day late</td>
<td>10% deducted from mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 days late</td>
<td>20% deducted from mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 days late</td>
<td>30% deducted from mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 days late</td>
<td>40% deducted from mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days late</td>
<td>Work marked at zero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For some assessments there will also be restrictions on word counts and you will be asked to display your word count at the end of your work. Pieces of work that are over the work limit will usually be penalised by the deduction of marks after the work has been marked out of 100.

The title, abstract, tables, figures, legends or reference lists maybe excluded from the word count and the usual penalty is 1 mark for every 100 extra words.

**Extensions for assessed work**

Any extensions to deadlines for assessed work must be applied for through the Exceptional circumstance procedure – see section below.
Failure to submit

If you, have no valid Exceptional circumstances and fail to submit an assessment by the deadline or within the five day penalty period or you fail to attend an examination, a mark of zero will be awarded. You may be given the opportunity for reassessment but, if the examination or assessment missed is already a re-sit or re-assessment to redeem an initial failure, no further re-assessment opportunities will be available without proof of Exceptional circumstances.

If you are struggling to meet deadlines, submit a piece of work or will miss an exam due to personal circumstances you will need to inform the University as soon as possible and apply for Exceptional Circumstances – See section on Exceptional Circumstances.

Style guides

These are often useful for students faced with the task of transitioning to writing university-level pieces of work. You may find it useful to bookmark this link for future reference.

Information on style guides and exam technique for all assessed work are available on our web pages at the link below:

http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currentundergraduatestudents/common-pages/exam-technique/

How is my work marked?

It is very useful for you to know what the examiners are looking for when marking your work. You may find it useful to bookmark this link for future reference.

We have marking criteria for all assessed work and these are available on our web pages at the link below. Your supervisor would be a good person to discuss the marking criteria with so that you can use them to identify ways of improving your performance. This is vital for explaining to you what characteristics are expected of a certain level of work (i.e. how do I get a 2.1 or First?):

http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currentundergraduatestudents/common-pages/markingcriteria/

Work will be marked by the question setters and may be marked against specimen answers (i.e. questions in stage 1 and 2 assessments are marked by question setters); double marked (i.e. by two members of staff, this applies to final year closed and open essays) and blind double marked (i.e. independently by two members of staff, this applies to final year research projects). External examiners are also given the opportunity to review student scripts, they have a role here in ensuring assessment processes are fair and rigorous. Where more than one marker is involved in the marking process, they have to come to agreement on the mark to be awarded. If they cannot agree on the final mark a third marker is asked to review the script.
Feedback on assessment

‘Feedback’ at a University level can be understood as any part of the learning process which is designed to guide your progress through your degree programme. We aim to help you reflect on your own learning and help you feel clearer about your progress through clarifying what is expected of you in both formative and summative assessments.

The University guidelines for feedback are available in the Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback.

It is very important that you know how well you are doing on your course, so understanding how you are assessed and giving you useful feedback on your work is essential. The main assessment and feedback routes are:

**Examination papers** tell you how you did in each module, and the overall distribution enables you to judge your performance relative to the class. All stage 1 and 2 work is returned to you. We believe that feedback on performance in the stage 1 and 2 assessments is important to your learning process, and we have the agreement of the University to return this work to you after marking. An explanation of the marking scale used for assessment is at the end of this section.

You must retain your assessed work in an orderly portfolio that is always available for recall so that it can be further scrutinised by internal or external examiners if required. You are expected to comply promptly with any requests for material to be returned. In some instances, failure to return scripts to the Department when required to do so could result in the loss of marks. **Please note that a selection of work from across the range of achievement is photocopied by the Department before it is returned, and that these photocopies are retained for quality assurance purposes.** Your module marks are available to you and your supervisor via eVision and you should meet with them mid-spring and end of the summer term to discuss your marks and progress. You can also ask your supervisor to look through your examination papers with you to help you identify areas where you could improve.

Stage 3 examination papers are not returned to you; however you are given feedback on your January papers in the spring term and are allowed access to your scripts in order to benefit from the markers comments.

Specimen answers to examination papers, posted on the web, mean you can see clearly what was expected of you. For each module the markers will give general feedback on how well the questions were answered and point out any standard common errors that students may have made. See WEB link below:

[https://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currenttaughtstudents/common-pages/past-papers/](https://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/currenttaughtstudents/common-pages/past-papers/)
**Tutorial reports** on how you did in your term’s tutorials. These are written by your tutor at the end of each set of tutorials and shared with you and your Supervisor.

**What do I need to do to get a good degree?**

The Student Guide to Rules for Progression and Award in Undergraduate Programmes clarifies what we mean by ‘academic progress’. They explain what you need to do to progress through your degree programme and how you can calculate your current classification marks along the way.

[www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/academicregistry/registryservices/Student_guide_to_rules_for_progression_and_awards_in_ug_programmes.pdf](http://www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/academicregistry/registryservices/Student_guide_to_rules_for_progression_and_awards_in_ug_programmes.pdf)

**What happens if I fail a module?**

There are two possible ways in which you may be able to still pass your year and progress to the next level.

**Compensation**

For modules at an undergraduate level, in levels 4, 5 and 6, the pass mark for module assessments is 40. However, if your mark for a module is in the 30 – 39 range, you may still be able to get the credits for the module if your performance in other modules is good enough to compensate. In other words, ‘marginal’ failure in some modules may be compensated by achievement in others.

**Reassessment**

If you get a module mark below 30 (or 40 for Masters-level modules) this cannot be compensated and you will have to be reassessed. However, there is a limit to the number of credits failed below 30 (or 40 for Masters level) in which you can be reassessed. If you get a mark between 30 and 39 (or 40 and 49 for Masters-level modules) and you are not eligible for compensation, you may also need to be reassessed in those modules.

If you need to be reassessed to pass a module, it is important to note that it will be your mark on your original attempt that will be used to calculate your degree classification. We will not use your re-sit mark.

Please note that not all assessed components to modules can be reassessed - there are some assessment components to our modules that are based on attendance at specific practical classes – if you miss those classes you may not be able to submit the assessment or be re-assessed on this component.
For further information on compensation and reassessment, see the Student Guide to the University’s Rules for Progression and Award in Undergraduate Programmes.

http://www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/academicregistry/registryservices/Student_guide_to_rules_for_progression_and_awards_in_ug_programmes.pdf

**Resits, repeats and readmission**

- If you have failed or missed an examination because of medical or compassionate circumstances the department may request permission for you to take the examination again ‘as if for the first time’, which means discounting the failed or missed attempt.

- Students are not normally allowed to repeat any part of the teaching on their programme. Repeat study will only be considered in cases where a student can show that they had truly exceptional circumstances which did not allow them to benefit from the teaching on their first attempt.

- If you have to leave your programme because you have failed the year then you will not be permitted to restart the same programme at the University of York.

For further information, visit: www.york.ac.uk/students/support/academic/taught/resits/

You will need to submit evidence of Exceptional circumstances to qualify for resits and repeats. See ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ below.

**Procedures for unsatisfactory performance**

The failure (a mark of 39% or less) of any module assessment triggers a warning email reminding you of the rules for progression into the next stage of your programme.

You will be required to see your supervisor to discuss your progress and to identify the reasons for the failure so that they can be addressed. If you have any Exceptional circumstances you should make sure you follow the correct procedure for notifying the Board of these.

If poor attendance at lectures and practicals is identified as an issue the Chair of the Board of Studies may decide to place you on report (see below).

Tutorials are compulsory, students who fail to attend tutorials without good reason or who, in the judgment of the Board of Studies, fail to apply sufficient effort to the completion of tutorial assignments may also be put on report. Students will be deemed to have failed tutorials if,

- they fail to attend adequately
A student should attend all tutorial sessions organised by the tutor. A student will be said to have failed if they miss more than one session without an appropriate explanation.

- they fail to submit adequate written work

Tutors should set at least two pieces of written work during a tutorial series (including at least one essay). Students should submit this written work. Tutorials are essentially a formative experience, and students should not be penalised for poor quality of work *per se*, but for:

- Failure to submit
- Work that demonstrates a clear lack of effort (e.g. very short compared to the requested word count, no effort to find relevant literature sources, etc.)
- Academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, collusion)

**Report procedure**

It will quickly become obvious to the Board of Studies if you are struggling with your studies. We will be made aware of poor attendance from your tutors, practical class organisers, your submission (or lack of) of assessed work during the term and from module assessment results. The Chair of the Board of Studies may decide that being 'on report' will help you improve your performance.

If you are put on report you will be required to record your attendance at all your lectures, practicals and tutorials, on a weekly basis. Your attendance at each class must be signed for by the member of staff giving the lecture etc, immediately after the class has finished, not retrospectively at a later date. At the end of each week (by **5.00pm on the Friday**), the signed form must be handed in to the Biology Student Services who will check that you have attended all your taught classes.

In the past we have found some students have benefited from this system - it has helped if they have struggled with self-organisation, and if lack of application / motivation and poor attendance has been a problem some students have found the discipline of being 'on report' has helped with this.

Failure to meet the conditions of the Report Procedure (after due written warning) will constitute grounds for a recommendation to Special Cases Committee that their programme be terminated.
**Programme extensions and termination**

A programme extension can be recommended where a student cannot complete the programme within a normal timescale because of Exceptional circumstances. If you find yourself in this situation, talk to your supervisor.

If you are academically unsatisfactory the Board of Studies can recommend that your programme is ended before its normal end date. This may be due to reasons such as poor attendance (without good reason) or through having failed so much of the programme that it is no longer possible to graduate.

Further information can be found at [www.york.ac.uk/students/support/academic/taught/programme/](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/academic/taught/programme/)

Also, see ‘Exceptional Circumstances’ for any other circumstances which may affect you undertaking any assessments.

**Exceptional circumstances**

If circumstances in your life significantly affect you undertaking any assessments (including examinations) then you can submit what we call 'Exceptional circumstances' to the department. To find out how to submit an application for Exceptional circumstances visit: [www.york.ac.uk/students/support/academic/mitigation/](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/academic/mitigation/)

For a list of the circumstances that are normally accepted and not accepted, visit: [https://www.york.ac.uk/media/studenthome/supportwelfareandhealth/academicprogress/documents/3%20%20Acceptability%20of%20circs.pdf](https://www.york.ac.uk/media/studenthome/supportwelfareandhealth/academicprogress/documents/3%20%20Acceptability%20of%20circs.pdf)

If your claim is successful, and the committee accept that your assessment was significantly affected by your circumstances you will usually be given an opportunity to take the assessment again as if for the first time. If it is an open assessment then you may be given an extension. Grades will never be altered without a further attempt at the assessment, and work will not be ‘re-marked’, though you may be allowed to re-submit it following revisions.

**Please note:** it is very important that you submit your case for Exceptional circumstances as soon as possible, preferably **BEFORE** the assessment which you believe may have been affected.

For a full list of documents and policy information visit: [www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/academic/taught/mitigation/](http://www.york.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/issues/academic/taught/mitigation/)

**Making an appeal**

You can appeal against a procedural error in arriving at an academic decision or on the basis of Exceptional circumstances that, for good reason, the examiners didn’t know about (see above) or a procedural irregularity in the assessment.
However, you cannot appeal against an academic judgement of your work (this is the marker’s opinion under the Academic Appeals procedure).

For further details on both terms and how to appeal, visit:

www.york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals/

Assistance with appeals and representation at hearings is also available through the Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre. All communication is confidential and free. For further information, visit: www.yusu.org/advice-and-support

For information on making a complaint, see the ‘You and the department’ section.

**External examiners**

The purpose of the University’s external examining system is:

- to ensure that its assessment policies and procedures are fair and fairly operated, and that the principles of clarity, equity, consistency and openness are observed;
- to ensure that assessment methods are appropriate;
- to ensure that the structure and content of programmes of study are appropriate;
- to ensure comparability of standards with other similar institutions.

The Department of Biology has four External Examiners who cover the breadth or all our programmes:

Professor Zoe Wilson (Nottingham), Genetics
Professor Andrew Jarman (Edinburgh), Molecular cell biology, Biomedical Sciences
Professor Lorraine Maltby (Sheffield), Ecology
Professor Frank Sargent (Dundee), Biochemistry

*It is inappropriate to make direct contact with external examiners, in particular regarding your performance in assessments. If you have any issues or concerns you can register these through appeal (see below) or complaint (see above under Your Department).*

Part of the role of the Examiners is to hold informal meetings with our students, usually twice a year at the end of the spring and summer terms, to ask for your opinions of our teaching and assessment. We encourage as many students as possible to attend these meetings and we also share your comments on our teaching and assessment obtained through our teaching evaluation system with them.
Your final degree classification

The University applies the following mark scale to undergraduate work:

First-class Honours: 70-100
Upper second-class Honours: 60-69
Lower second-class Honours: 50-59
Third-class Honours: 40-49
Fail: 0-39

A different mark scale is used for masters-level modules, including any taken as part of an undergraduate programme. The pass mark for masters-level modules is 50. If you are on an Integrated Masters programme, you will have to undertake some masters-level modules in the later stages of your programme. Some modules at this level may also be available as options in some Bachelors programmes. You should be aware of the higher level and pass mark for such modules when deciding whether to take them as options.

For information on calculating your degree classification, see the Student Guide to the University’s Rules for Progression and Award in Undergraduate Programmes.

[www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/academicregistry/registryservices/Student_guide_to_rules_for_progression_and_awards_in_ug_programmes.pdf](http://www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/supportservices/academicregistry/registryservices/Student_guide_to_rules_for_progression_and_awards_in_ug_programmes.pdf)

Departmental criteria for a BSc first class degree with distinction

Overall integer mark of ≥ 80%

An integer mark of ≥ 70% in the following 5 components of the course:

1. Stage 2 credit weighted average
2. Stage 3 taught modules – combined average x 6 taught modules
3. Stage 3 Research skills module
4. Stage 3 Research project
5. Placement mark where relevant
Personal development and employability

Careers

Developing your employability is about extending your skills, making contacts, broadening your ideas, and understanding how to gain and use your experiences to enhance your future prospects. It is a good idea to start exploring career options in your first year.

Around 70% of our graduates go on to study for a higher degree or pursue a scientific career.

Employment opportunities are diverse, ranging from biological and biomedical research and development, to careers in science communication, the health service, forensic science, environmental health and wildlife conservation. Our graduates are not confined to science-related careers, and a significant number enter jobs within finance, public and private sector management, social and health service work, the media and law.

To get more of an idea of some of the career routes some of our graduates have taken, visit our Alumni pages:

http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/careers/ug-careers/alumni/

Peter Mayhew (peter.mayhew@york.ac.uk), Lorna Warnock (lorna.warnock@york.ac.uk) and Amanda Barnes (Amanda.barnes@york.ac.uk) offer Departmental Careers Advice in Biology.

There are regular lunchtime careers drop-in sessions in the atrium and a number of careers events throughout the year, culminating in a Careers Fair at the end of the summer term.

Further information is available on our careers web pages:

http://www.york.ac.uk/biology/intranet/careers/

or you can contact Lorna directly if you’d like a one-to-one chat about your careers ideas, either by email or phone on 01904 328558

The University’s Employability Tutorial enables you to assess your skills, research career options and access guidance on how to gain experience and develop new skills to prepare for your future.

It can be accessed via the VLE: http://vle.york.ac.uk

For further information on Careers and employability, visit: www.york.ac.uk/careers or see the University handbook.

Personal development planning (PDP)

As you work through the Employability Tutorial, you will complete your Employability Plan. You should discuss this with your supervisor on an annual basis; they will arrange a time for
This is a great opportunity for you to reflect on your personal, academic and professional development and plan for the future.

Your supervisor should:

- encourage you to think through and articulate personal ambitions and possible career paths
- encourage you to think about the skills and attributes you will need to develop and demonstrate in order to achieve your personal, academic and professional aims
- encourage you to seek relevant advice and guidance on these matters from other academic staff, the Careers team, the College System and YUSU and signpost development that is available within and beyond the curriculum.