

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

|                                                                                                         |                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name, title and level of final qualification(s)                                                         | <b>Cert HE Life Sciences for Subjects allied to Medicine</b><br>(Level 4) |
| Name and title of any exit qualification(s)                                                             | Cert CE                                                                   |
| Awarding Body                                                                                           | University of London                                                      |
| Teaching Institution(s)                                                                                 | Birkbeck, University of London                                            |
| Home School/other teaching departments                                                                  | School of Natural Sciences                                                |
| Location of delivery                                                                                    | Central London                                                            |
| Language of delivery and assessment                                                                     | English                                                                   |
| Mode of study, length of study and normal start month                                                   | Full-time (1 year)<br>Part-time (2 years)<br>October                      |
| Professional, statutory or regulatory body                                                              | N/A                                                                       |
| <u>QAA subject benchmark group(s)</u><br><u>Higher Education Credit Framework for</u><br><u>England</u> | N/A                                                                       |
| Birkbeck Course Code                                                                                    | UCLIFSC_C (1 year)<br>UCLIFS2_C (2 years)                                 |
| HECoS Code                                                                                              | 100346<br>100417                                                          |
| Start date of programme                                                                                 | Autumn 2010                                                               |
| Date of programme approval                                                                              | Spring 2010                                                               |
| Date of last programme amendment approval                                                               | October 2024                                                              |
| Valid for academic entry year                                                                           | <b>2026-27</b>                                                            |
| Programme Director                                                                                      | Dr Paul King                                                              |
| Date of last revision to document                                                                       | 02 April 2026                                                             |

## Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

For part-time courses, standard requirements are a minimum of two A-levels or equivalent.

To apply to study the Certificate full-time requires 48 UCAS tariff points, with some evidence of study in a science-related subject. The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a [tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

If you have non-standard entry qualifications, you may be required to complete a small assessment task and be invited to an informal interview with the programme director.

Applicants are advised that this intensive programme requires a high level of commitment and they need to have a keen interest in science and sufficient time to devote to their studies

## Course aims

- To widen and encourage participation of mature learners in science.
- To promote equal opportunities to higher education for non-traditional learners needing to study in the daytime or evening.
- To provide a sound framework and body of knowledge for understanding the ideas and methodology of life sciences.
- To provide laboratory work which aids understanding of underlying scientific concepts and encourages the solution of practical problems.
- To develop laboratory skills and safe practice.
- To provide an enjoyable and stimulating learning experience.
- To encourage and support the development of self-confidence and independence in the learning of science.
- To provide a programme of study that will enable successful students to progress to more advanced programmes of study in life sciences and subjects allied to medicine.

## Programme Rationale:

The programme was developed to:

- Enable progression to a wide range of further study in science both at Birkbeck and at other HEIs. The School of Natural Sciences at Birkbeck encourages progression of students from this award, and where learners' aspirations are to disciplines not within the College's portfolio, particularly within medicine and related fields, progression is offered by many of the other Colleges of the University and other HEIs.
- Provide a firm foundation which relates to the subject benchmarks for the Biosciences and Chemistry to ensure not only progression, but which will sustain success of learners within the next phase of their studies.
- Meet the needs of adult learners who wish to study Life Sciences via a part-time mode of study.
- Provide a stopping-off point for those participants who wish to widen their knowledge and understanding of science without immediate progression to further study beyond the Cert HE.
- Contribute to the national endeavour to widen participation in science e.g. in line with the SET and STEM agendas by increasing the number of students able to progress to science-based disciplines; to raise the profile of science and to encourage participation by non-traditional groups.
- Meet Birkbeck's mission to provide access to science to a wide audience and in-line with principles of EDI.

- Include a module which guide students through the fundamental requirements of university-level study so that they are equipped with the practical knowledge and skills to succeed in tertiary education.

The programme may be undertaken over a single academic year in full-time mode or by part-time study over two academic years. Subject-specific modules will provide a sound foundation in basic chemistry as well as in cellular and molecular biology. Thus successful completion will provide you with the knowledge and skills needed to progress to degrees in the life sciences and subjects allied to medicine.

### Course structure

| Level                                   | Module Code | Module Title          | Credit | Comp Core/ Option | Likely teaching term(s) |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Full-time – 1 year (120 credits)</b> |             |                       |        |                   |                         |
| 3                                       | CASE002S3   | Fundamentals of Study | 30     | Core              | T1                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC011H4   | Biology 1             | 15     | Core              | T1                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC012H4   | Chemistry 1           | 15     | Core              | T1                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC021H4   | Biology 2             | 15     | Core              | T2                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC022H4   | Chemistry 2           | 15     | Core              | T2                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC031H4   | Biology 3             | 15     | Core              | T3                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC032H4   | Chemistry 3           | 15     | Core              | T3                      |
| <b>Part-time – 2 years</b>              |             |                       |        |                   |                         |
| <b>Year 1 (75 credits)</b>              |             |                       |        |                   |                         |
| 3                                       | CASE002S3   | Fundamentals of Study | 30     | Core              | T1                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC011H4   | Biology 1             | 15     | Core              | T1                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC021H4   | Biology 2             | 15     | Core              | T2                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC031H4   | Biology 3             | 15     | Core              | T3                      |
| <b>Year 2 (45 credits)</b>              |             |                       |        |                   |                         |
| 4                                       | FFSC012H4   | Chemistry 1           | 15     | Core              | T1                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC022H4   | Chemistry 2           | 15     | Core              | T2                      |
| 4                                       | FFSC032H4   | Chemistry 3           | 15     | Core              | T3                      |

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

### How you will learn

Your learning and teaching are organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

A wide range of teaching methods including lectures, laboratory experiments and demonstrations, problem-solving, group work and presentations are used.

On-line learning materials (module and programme guides, lecture overheads and handouts, assessments and past papers, pre-recorded videos and other relevant materials) are provided on Moodle.

All modules emphasise the development of active and scholarly engagement with the curriculum. The module Fundamentals of Study supports students in the acquisition of independent study skills including skills for revision and examination preparation.

Home study is encouraged by referenced weekly reading and textbook problems, question sheets, and by a programme of home assignments.

### **How we will assess you**

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

Assessment in the first two modules of Biology and Chemistry is entirely through a range of different types of coursework, including:

- Theory (home) assignments;
- On-line (short) quizzes;
- On-line assignments;
- Practical assignments (assessment of report either written in class or at home);
- In-class tests (unseen).

Students are strongly encouraged to attempt all the assessments and the overall mark for each module is calculated from a suitable weighted average of all the elements of assessment.

Fundamentals of Study is assessed through a range of coursework tasks, including short answer questions, an article review and reflective writing.

The assessment strategy is designed to support the students' development with a balance of coursework and in-class tests. All coursework and tests are subject to sampling and moderation.

The minimum pass mark for each module is 40%, and students must pass all seven modules to be awarded the Certificate of Higher Education.

### **Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)**

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

#### **Subject specific**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the life sciences and be able to evaluate and interpret these within the context of their studies.
2. Apply chemical and biological concepts to a diverse range of issues and to the solution of problems.
3. Analyse and interpret data collected personally in the laboratory or provided in exercises.

### **Intellectual**

4. Extract, evaluate and accurately document relevant information from scientific sources.
5. Present and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts.
6. Communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably in writing with structured and coherent arguments and using academic conventions.
7. Demonstrate scientific and mathematical literacy.

### **Practical**

8. Use standard laboratory equipment confidently and correctly.
9. Demonstrate an awareness of laboratory safety and materials handling issues.
10. Take measurements, handle, record and process data.

### **Personal and Social**

11. Work independently and in a group including in a laboratory setting.
12. Manage their time and work to deadlines.
13. Demonstrate qualities and transferable skills which would be necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

### **Careers and further study**

Graduates can pursue further study and career paths in research, education or medicine.

Possible professions include:

- Microbiologist.
- Veterinary surgeon.
- Research scientist.
- Physiotherapist.
- Healthcare scientist.
- Radiographer.

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website.](#)

### **Academic regulations and course management**

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

### **Support for your study**

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

Please check our website for more information about student support services. This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

### **Quality and standards at Birkbeck**

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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