



New Student Guide

Edinburgh Medical School: Biomedical Sciences

2026-2027

BSc (Hons) Anatomy & Development
BSc (Hons) Biomedical Sciences
BSc (Hons) Infectious Diseases
BSc (Hons) Neuroscience
BSc (Hons) Pharmacology
BSc (Hons) Reproductive Biology

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Disclaimer:

Every effort has been made to ensure the contents of this booklet are accurate at the time of printing. Unforeseen circumstances may, however, necessitate changes to the procedures, curricula and syllabuses described. The UG-BMS Student Administration Service undertakes to operate within the rules and regulations as set out in the University of Edinburgh *“Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study”*, Taught Assessment Regulations and the Examination Regulations.

This guide is produced by the UG-BMS Student Administration Service to provide guidance for students enrolled for the Biomedical Sciences degree programmes.

If you require this document or any of the internal University of Edinburgh online resources mentioned in this document in an alternative format please contact the Biomedical Sciences UG Student Administration Service [biomedug@ed.ac.uk]

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Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to your studies with us in Biomedical Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. This guide provides key information about learning, teaching and student support as you start your degree programmes. We suggest you take some time to familiarise yourself with the information you find here, and refer back to it through your studies.

Links to useful resources referenced within this guide

[DRPS: Degree Programme Tables](#)

[PATH: Course choice and timetable builder](#)

[Assessment regulations](#)

[DRPS: Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#)

Important note:

Throughout this guide, courses are referred to by the terms, '**core**', '**compulsory**' or '**elective**' which are briefly defined below. Further details can be found within this guide under '[Satisfactory Academic Progress](#)'.

Core course: A course that must be taken and passed to graduate with an Honours degree in a Biomedical Sciences programme*.

Compulsory course: A course that must be taken but passing is not an absolute requirement for the award of an Ordinary or Honours degree in Biomedical Sciences disciplines.

Elective course: A course chosen by a student from a selection of suitable courses to meet the credit requirements at each level. While an elective course must be passed to obtain the required credit points, the actual course itself is not an absolute requirement for graduating from the degree programme.

* Biomedical Sciences programmes refers to the Honours degrees in the following disciplines: Anatomy and Development, Biomedical Sciences, Infectious Diseases, Pharmacology, Neuroscience, and Reproductive Biology.

Coping with the transition from School to University

One aspect of the transition from School to University will be the different teaching methods you are likely to encounter. Many courses are based around a traditional lecture format. Understanding how to get the most out of these sessions is an important skill. Many lectures are recorded so you can review them later to supplement your notes (check specific course information for this). You will always get more out of sessions if you attend in person - please read the [guidance on how to get the most from lecture recordings \[PDF\]](#).

University examinations and assessments can also be different from those with which you might be familiar. The course teams will provide you with examples of questions and many courses have formative assessments so you can get plenty of feedback to help you prepare.

Sources of advice and help for biomedical sciences students

Being new to the University environment along with some very big classes in some first and second year courses means it is not surprising that at some point you may feel a little lost or confused. Help is available from several different sources in your support network, where you can be treated at a more individual level:

Student Advisor

Your Student Advisor is a sympathetic member of staff who will follow your progress during the whole of your undergraduate studies. They should be your first point of contact when seeking advice, support or guidance on a range of academic and pastoral issues that might arise during your time on the programme. They will ensure you receive guidance and advice about course choices in any area of Biomedical Sciences and they also have an abundant supply of information about other aspects of the University. Anything that affects your progress will be of interest, and this includes accommodation problems, sickness or loneliness, or if you are not enjoying studying your courses / subject matter. The ability to develop professional relationships like the one you should develop with your Student Advisor reflects a graduate attribute highly valued by future employers. It will also be invaluable as you progress through your studies, for example at certain points you may require independent references or recommendations when applying for vacation work, further study or future careers. Student Advisors can be contacted in person, by telephone or email or through the Student Advisor IT tools on MyEd.

You must notify your Student Advisor whenever you change address and telephone number (and you should also update these through your MyEd account). You should also notify them if you miss scheduled teaching sessions and/or assessments through illness, and they can help support you if you need to make an application for Exceptional Circumstances. For more detailed information see the Exceptional Circumstances section on the Exceptional Circumstances Services website: (<https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/extensions-and-special-circumstances-service/exceptional-circumstances-changes>).

Biomedical Sciences UG Teaching Support

If you experience any difficulties with your studies on first and second year courses run within Biomedical Sciences UG i.e. Medical Biology 1, Biomedical Sciences 1 and Biomedical Sciences 2, help and guidance of a general academic nature can be obtained from the appropriate Cohort Lead.

Biomedical Sciences: Director of Teaching

The Director of Teaching: Biomedical Sciences is Dr Dawn Livingstone and she can be a source of guidance if there are issues of an academic or personal nature that are adversely influencing your studies, or if you are seeking advice on the direction of your studies. Dr Livingstone can be contacted by email (Dawn.Livingstone@ed.ac.uk) or, alternatively, she can be contacted through EMS.BMSStudentSupport@ed.ac.uk.

Additional sources of help can be found in the [appendix](#).

Path

PATH is an online tool to help with course selection. It is particularly useful for identifying elective courses with timetables that are compatible with core/compulsory courses. You can access PATH by logging in to your MyEd account and following this link: <https://path.is.ed.ac.uk/>

The Biomedical Sciences degree programme tables are incorporated into this system and can be found by following,

- Browse degrees in MVM
- Search..."Edinburgh Medical School"
- Undergraduate.. Biomedical Sciences (Hons) BSc Hons or Infectious Diseases (BSc Hons) and so on, for your specific programme

- You should start by placing the core/compulsory courses into “My Courses”.
- You can then search for, and view details of, appropriate elective course choices.
- Place a course alongside the core courses in “My Courses” (Drag the course icon onto the “My Courses” icon).
- Click the “My Courses” icon followed by one of the timetable options and you will be able to evaluate timetable compatibility (remember to refer to the allocated optional sessions in your core courses detailed in this guide. This also applies to the Biological Chemistry courses you may be required to take).

At this stage you only need to decide on your first (or for Direct Entry students second) year curriculum though you are free to view later years. Bear in mind though that there may be changes to the courses that are available in future years.

Within PATH, “Programme Builder” allows you to monitor course requirements and recommendations across years of the programme. This allows you to plan your degree programme by observing how course choices in earlier years impact on available courses in later years. Equally, if you have identified a course in later years that you wish to take, you will be able to use this tool to identify the required and recommended courses in earlier years.

You should discuss outside courses with your Student Advisor and, if advised by your Student Advisor, the Cohort Lead.

Your timetable

There is a helpful video and detailed guidance on how to find and use your personalised timetable on the New Students Webpage: [“Your timetable”](#). We strongly recommend that you also check the Learn page for each course, as they will explain what will and won’t be included in your personal timetable and when you can expect to find out which practical class and tutorial groups you have been assigned to. Some courses will allow you to change your allocated group and you can find guidance on how to request a change on the [Timetabler guidance page](#).

Information for those with an offer of Direct Entry into second year

You have been offered direct entry into the Second Year because of your prior academic achievements. What follows may at first make it appear as though there are formidable hurdles and difficulties ahead. That certainly isn’t the intention behind this advice; rather students in previous years have suggested from their experience that it would be helpful to clarify the year ahead and spell out the support provided by Biomedical Sciences UG and individual course organisers. The section in this guide entitled “Considerations relating to the offer of Direct Entry” draws on the experiences of students in previous years who have taken this route and offers reassurance in relation to some commonly expressed questions and anxieties.

The decision to accept direct entry is an important one, and you will have given it serious consideration, nevertheless, you should not be too anxious about it. There will be increased demand on you from of second year courses, but your previous attainment suggests you will have the academic ability to meet the challenges.

You should arrange a meeting with your Student Advisor early in Welcome Week as they must confirm your attendance. This may also be a good opportunity to discuss your decision with someone who can provide additional insight and advice. They will also be able to provide you with

guidance on selecting elective courses. There is also an opportunity to discuss your decision with the Year 2 Cohort Lead: Direct Entrants Welcome Meeting - 1pm on Weds 16th September 2026 in Teaching Room 9, Teviot.

Finally, the decision on whether to start in year 2 is yours to make but it will not be irrevocable. Should you change your mind, it will be possible to reverse your decision providing you do so within the first two weeks of the academic year (by Friday 2nd October 2026). After that, change may still be possible but may become more challenging.

Considerations relating to the offer of direct entry

In arriving at your decision to enter Year 2, some factors are more important than others. Our experience suggests that concerns such as, “Will I be able to cope? Will I be able to make friends easily if I choose second year entry?” should not be the decisive factors. The answer is likely to be “yes” for both questions, although you may have to work a little harder.

Coping with the transition from School to Second Year University

In addition to the general information above about transition from School to University study, second year courses provide some additional challenges. Many courses build on material and styles of teaching, learning and assessment from first year University studies. You should not hesitate to ask your course teachers for guidance in getting up to speed with topics that are new to you, or if you have any questions about assessments

Finally, do try to re-evaluate your choice once you have experienced the first week of teaching. Again, you may find discussion with your Student Advisor and/or Cohort Lead helpful here. Remember you can change your mind providing you do so in the first two weeks. This is not long for you to arrive at a conclusion so if you have doubts or difficulties call in to or email EMS.BMSStudentSupport@ed.ac.uk to arrange to see the Director of Teaching: Biomedical Sciences.

Choosing second year elective courses: Implications for third year course choices

This guide also contains details of third year courses because you will need to consider how your choice of courses in the first and/or second year impacts on the whole structure of your degree. Many Junior Honours (3rd year) courses require, or strongly recommend, prior attendance at specific second year, and, in some cases, first semester third year courses. Details of the common prerequisite courses are shown in the table under the heading “**Courses recommended or required for third year courses**”.

You can prepare for your meeting with your Student Advisor by thinking about the courses you might want to take. Your Student Advisor will ensure you receive guidance and advice about course choices and guide you through the process.

The first-year programme in Biomedical Sciences

Overall aims of the first-year programme

- To provide foundational knowledge and understanding of key concepts in the breadth of biomedical disciplines (physiology, pharmacology, neuroscience, reproductive biology, infectious diseases) and use this knowledge to develop a recognition and understanding of the importance and scope of biomedical sciences.
- To foster an understanding of the way chemistry, molecular and cellular biology and key concepts in quantification and analysis support the development of biomedical knowledge and understanding.
- To engender an appreciation of the importance of appropriate experimentation in the investigation of the major biomedical questions facing us today.
- To nurture the excitement instilled by biomedical discovery and encourage a positive and inquisitive attitude to science and medicine.
- To develop a recognition that the work of biomedical researchers underpins advances in medicine and public health.
- To be aware of the social responsibility of scientists to society and to each other.

Generic learning objectives of the first-year programme

- To promote independent, self-motivated learning.
- To foster the skills that promote learning in a group and an understanding of how this can facilitate development as an independent learner.
- To encourage effective organisation and use of time.
- To develop efficient and effective assimilation of information from classes and to supplement this with appropriate material from other sources (library, internet, etc.).
- To be able to perform experiments with safety and accuracy, and to record, analyse and summarise the results.
- To promote autonomous learning skills that allow students to research a subject and effectively communicate their findings.
- To develop academic writing skills, including the gathering of relevant information and effective reading practice.
- To carry out numerical calculations confidently and accurately.
- To encourage reflection and re-evaluation especially in relation to the use of feedback and assessment practice.
- To be able to use a wide range of IT resources.

The first-year curriculum

Through study in Biomedical Sciences we understand the basic sciences that underpin advances in medicine and public health, particularly as relating to the specific disciplines of Anatomy, Physiology, Pharmacology, Reproductive biology, Neuroscience and Infectious Diseases. Each year of all our biomedical degrees is based around a key theme. The first year looks at the importance of Biomedical Sciences to medicine and health. The second year develops foundational understanding of Biomedical Sciences. Year three explores how we develop knowledge through experiment and the final year culminates in the opportunity to experience research in practice in a specific biomedical discipline.

Each of the biomedical degree disciplines (Anatomy & Development, Biomedical Sciences, Infectious Diseases, Neuroscience, Pharmacology and Reproductive Biology) follows the same curriculum in first and second year. The degree programmes are structured with a combination of core,

compulsory and elective courses, to deliver a common core Biomedical Sciences knowledge base to all students alongside a student selected programme of learning. The first year curriculum introduces the breadth of basic Biomedical Sciences and reflects on important scientific and medical questions. It also establishes the importance of Chemistry, Molecular and Cellular Biology and key concepts in quantification and analysis for the expansion of biomedical knowledge and understanding.

In each year of the Biomedical Sciences Degree programmes, students are required to achieve 120 credit points by passing selected courses. While courses can have units of 10, 20 and 40 credit points, the first year of the Biomedical Sciences Degree programmes will typically be made up of six 20 credit point courses, three to be taken in each semester. The framework of the first year programme is illustrated in **Table 1** below. You will see that the programme is composed of a number of “core” and “elective” courses.

The suite of courses in first year incorporate a broad range of teaching methods (lectures, laboratory practicals, tutorials, computer workshops, project-based investigations, etc.). They will introduce you to aspects of Biomedical Sciences, including relevant chemical, mathematical and physical principles, and provides a solid foundation upon which courses in subsequent years are built. The content of these courses start at a basic level but build to give greater depth. You will be introduced to some of the major biomedical and biological issues and controversies of the day, by staff who are experts in their chosen fields. Of equal importance, these courses are designed to facilitate your transition into university teaching and learning methods while fostering the development of the key attributes and skills (essay writing, presentation, team working, data handling, library research, independent learning, deductive reasoning, use of statistics and mathematics etc) that will enable you to fulfil your academic potential.

Many components of the first, second and third years of the Biomedical Sciences programmes are also taken by students enrolled on other programmes such as Biological Sciences, Ecological Science, Geography, Geology and Chemistry.

Table 1: First year courses

Course	Course Code	Course Information
Biomedical Sciences 1 (semester 1 - core)	BIME08013	Course Catalogue – Biomedical Sciences 1 (BIME08013) (ed.ac.uk)
Medical Biology 1 (semester 2 - core)	BIME08004	Course Catalogue – Medical Biology 1 (BIME08004) (ed.ac.uk)
Molecules, Genes and Cells 1 (semester 2 - core)	BILG08015	Course Catalogue – Molecules, Genes and Cells 1 (BILG08015) (ed.ac.uk)
Biological Chemistry 1A (semester 1)	CHEM08022	Course Catalogue – Biological Chemistry 1A (CHEM08022) (ed.ac.uk)
Biological Chemistry 1B (semester 2)	CHEM08023	Course Catalogue – Biological Chemistry 1B (CHEM08022) (ed.ac.uk)
20 credit elective course (semester 1)		See suggested courses below

Core courses

Our BSc. degree programmes require all first year entrants to take three core courses: **Biomedical Sciences 1** in Semester 1 and **Medical Biology 1** and **Molecules, Genes and Cells 1** in Semester 2.

Chemistry courses

In addition to the core Biomedical Sciences courses, the expected norm is that all first year entrants must study at least one Chemistry course, **though it is recommended** that both courses are taken. In semester 1, “**Biological Chemistry 1A**” is the standard first Chemistry course for Biomedical Sciences students. The SQA Higher, GCE A-Level and IB Chemistry minimum entry requirement for the Biomedical Sciences programme means that students should be in a position to take the “Biological Chemistry 1A” course. If you are unsure about your Chemistry proficiency, this is the course that is recommended. You can discuss this with your student advisor and/or cohort lead.

In semester 2, “**Biological Chemistry 1B**” introduces the key chemical principles underpinning many biological processes. If you are confident in your proficiency in Chemistry and would like to open up elective course choice in semester 1 then this is the Chemistry course that you should take. Nevertheless, in combination with Biological Chemistry 1A it is strongly recommended to all Biomedical Sciences students.

Exemption from the practice of taking Biological Chemistry courses may be allowed for students with an “A” at A-level, an “A” or “B” at Advanced Higher Chemistry or Higher level Chemistry Grade 6 or 7 in the IB. The Biomedical Sciences Programme team stress that a good knowledge of Chemistry is extremely important for understanding many areas of the Biomedical Sciences. As such you are strongly advised to consider taking both Chemistry courses even if you meet these standards.

Elective courses

To fulfil the requirement of obtaining 120 credit points in the year, elective courses must be taken in addition to the core courses.

You are strongly advised to choose an elective from the following list. BMS students generally enjoy and perform well in these courses, and they have been the most popular in the past:

Table 2: Suggested elective courses

Course	Course Code	Course Information
Our Changing World	BIME08006	Course Catalogue - Our Changing World (BIME08006) (ed.ac.uk)
History of Medicine	STIS08012	Course Catalogue - History of Medicine (STIS08012)
Discovering Astronomy	PHYS08039	Course Catalogue - Discovering Astronomy (PHYS08039) (ed.ac.uk)
Astrobiology	PHYS08051	Course Catalogue - Astrobiology (PHYS08051) (ed.ac.uk)
Investigating Science in Society	STIS08008	Course Catalogue - Investigating Science in Society (STIS08008) (ed.ac.uk)
Introduction to Data Science	MATH08077	Course Catalogue - Introduction to Data Science (MATH08077)
Mapping Health and Illness	SHSS08001	Course Catalogue - Mapping Health and Illness

Across Societies		Across Societies (SHSS08001)
Introduction to Cognitive Science	PPLS08002	Course Catalogue - Introduction to Cognitive Science (PPLS08002)

If you do not wish to take an elective course from the list above you can choose an elective course from the wider University catalogue. However there are a number of criteria that must be met for an elective course to be approved for your programme of study such as credit load, credit level, delivery period, location and timing.

- Most importantly any course you choose must timetable with your core/compulsory courses. Under normal circumstances two factors indicated below govern timetable clashes.
 - Time.** If one or more scheduled classes in a non-core (elective) course are at the same time as, or overlap with, classes in a core course then you will not be allowed to take that elective course.
 - Location.** Teaching takes place at a number of different University locations (e.g. Central area, Kings Buildings, BioQuarter). In all cases the 10 minute gap between teaching time-slots is insufficient for transfer between these locations. Thus, two scheduled classes in adjacent time-slots but in different geographical locations are also considered as a clash and will prevent the elective course being allowed. (There is one exception to this. There is a 20 minute changeover time to allow movement between different locations from 10.50am to 11.10am).
- An elective course chosen in the first year must be at SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level 7 or 8. Courses taken in the first year are usually designated by a “1” at the end of the course name e.g. “Biology 1A”. Many SCQF level 8 courses are designated as second year courses. **Exceptionally, taking such a course in first year might be acceptable though only with the permission of the Deputy Director of Students (BMS UG).**
- You must be qualified for the course (some courses may have a pre-requisite for a specific subject in your school qualifications).
- There must be a place available on the course. Some courses have a limited number of places. In this case, priority will be given to students enrolled on programmes for which that course is a core/compulsory element.

You will find all courses for which you are enrolled under your courses tab in MyEd. When you first log in to MyEd and look at your courses tab, you will be enrolled on 100 credit points of courses. All students are pre-enrolled on “Biological Chemistry 1A” and “Biological Chemistry 1B” and this may be changed as appropriate after discussions with your Student Advisor. Once you have settled on your elective course(s) your Student Advisor will enrol you to complete your full 120 credit point study package.

A complete list of all the University courses can be found in the University publication “Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study” (DRPS), which can be consulted online under the following URL: <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/26-27/>

If you wish to choose a course not in the elective listing above you can discuss your selection with your Student Advisor or the Year 1 Cohort Lead Team.

The second-year programme in biomedical sciences

Overall aims of the second-year biomedical sciences programmes

Theme: Foundational understanding of Biomedical Sciences

- To provide a firm foundation in the core skills and knowledge across the whole range of modern biomedical science.
- To provide a significant degree of specialist knowledge from the combination of courses that you select for study, whilst retaining flexibility of course choice in later years appropriate to individual career aspirations.
- To encourage proficiency in a wide range of analytical and investigative skills relating to Biomedical Sciences.
- To develop, through a diversity of in-course assignments, your subject-based and generic skills.
- To provide potential access to elective courses in a range of biomedical and non-biomedical subjects.

Generic learning objectives of the second-year biomedical sciences programmes

- To be able to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the content of the subject-specialised courses that you elect to study.
- To be able to demonstrate proficiency in practical laboratory work and in the interpretation and analysis of experimental results.
- To be able to extract information from a range of specialised literature sources, including review-type scientific journals (secondary sources).
- To be able to demonstrate a critical approach to science and to the strengths and weaknesses of scientific claims.
- To be fully competent in the use of IT resources, and to use them as appropriate for producing text, tables, charts, graphs and images.

The second-year curriculum

Through study in the “*Biomedical Sciences*” we understand the basic sciences that underpin advances in medicine and public health, particularly as relating to the specific disciplines of Anatomy, Pharmacology, Reproductive Biology, Neuroscience and Infectious Diseases.

Each year of our biomedical degrees is based around a key theme. The second year develops foundational understanding of Biomedical Sciences. The main principles relating to genes and gene action, structure, production and function of biological molecules, intracellular signalling, intercellular communication including by the immune, nervous and endocrine systems will be studied and related to cellular, organ and whole body functioning in health and disease. The functioning of, and interplay between, the major body systems – especially the reproductive system, the cardiovascular system, the endocrine systems and the brain, will be studied and related to developments in pathways biology and translational medicine.

In each year of the Biomedical Sciences degree programmes students are required to achieve 120 credit points by passing selected courses. The second year of the Biomedical Sciences Degree

programmes will typically be made up of one, whole year, 40 credit point and two 20 credit point, core courses, and two 20 credit point elective courses.

Core Courses

The core Biomedical Sciences courses are indicated in the table below.

Table 3: Year 2 core courses

Course Name	Course Code	Course Information
Biomedical Sciences 2 (Full year, 40 credits, core)	BIME08007	Course Catalogue - Biomedical Sciences 2 (BIME08007) (ed.ac.uk)
Cells to Organisms 2 (Semester 1, 20 credits, core)	BIME08011	Course Catalogue – Cells to Organisms 2 (BIME08011) (ed.ac.uk)
Microorganisms, Infection and Immunity 2 (Semester 2, 20 credits, core)	BIME08012	Course Catalogue – Microorganisms, Infection and Immunity 2 (BIME08012) (ed.ac.uk)

Automatic progression into the Biomedical Sciences Junior Honours (third) year is dependent on you obtaining **50% or more at the first sitting of Biomedical Sciences 2 and one other core course and, by the end of the August examination diet, students must have passed all three core courses with an overall mean of at least 50%.** You will also be expected to have passed your two, second year, elective courses before you can progress into a third year of study.

Elective Courses

In addition to the core courses students must choose two elective courses, one in each semester, to meet the required 120 credit points for the year. It is expected that most Biomedical Sciences students would take two further biomedical or biology courses that reflect their favoured direction of specialisation and provide a firm basis for third-year study. Your Student Advisor will help you with this process.

Table 4: Year 2 elective courses

Semester 1

Biological Chemistry 2	CHEM08030
Biology2B: Genetics and Evolution	BILG08025

Semester 2

Animal Biology 2	BILG08011
Biology 2C: Systems and Regulation	BILG08026
The Microbial World 2	BILG08018

While there are other Biomedical, Biology and Chemistry courses, many have timetable clashes with core Biomedical Sciences courses and are, therefore, not compatible with the second year Biomedical Sciences programme.

It is important to realise that some non-compulsory second year biomedical and biology courses are

required, or at least strongly recommended, for subsequent third-year courses. You should be aware of the difference between a **“required”** course and one which is **“recommended”**.

- A course that is **“required”** is one you **must take and pass** for entry to a course. If you do not take a course that is a **requirement** for a course in later years you **will not** be eligible to take the later course.
- A **“recommended”** course should be taken if possible but can be omitted without necessarily barring entry to the third-year course. If you omit a **recommended** course, you will be eligible to take the later course, however, you might be at some disadvantage in terms of background knowledge compared to students who have done the recommended course, and additional study may be required to gain background knowledge.

Required and recommended second year courses for third year elective courses are indicated in the tables on following pages.

An important conclusion to be drawn from the information in the following tables is that “Biology 2B” and “Biology 2C” are either **required or strongly recommended for a large number of third year Biomedical and Biology courses**. As such, they should be seriously considered as elective options for second year Biomedical Sciences students.

Courses recommended or required for third year courses

Table 5: Recommended / required year 2 courses
Semester 1

Year 3 Course name	Required and Recommended Year 2 Courses
Clinical Biochemistry and Endocrinology 3	Required: Biomedical Sciences 2. Recommended: Biology 2C, Cells to Organisms 2
Immunology 3	Recommended: Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2
Mechanisms of Brain Development 3	Required: Biomedical Sciences 2. Recommended: Biology 2B, It is recommended that students also take Physiology 3
Molecular Genetics 3	Required: Biology 2B
Pharmacology 3	Required: Biomedical Sciences 2. Recommended: Biology 2B, Biology 2C
Physiology 3	Required: Biomedical Sciences 2. Recommended: Biology 2B, Biology 2C, Cells to Organisms 2
Structures and Functions of Proteins 3	Recommended: Biology 2B, Biology 2C, Biological Chemistry 2

Semester 2

Year 3 Course name	Required and Recommended Year 2 Courses
Anatomy and Development 3	Required: Cells to Organisms 2, Biomedical Sciences 3 Prohibited combinations: Students must not also be taking Anatomy and Pathology 2 (MSBM08001)
Applied Pharmacology 3	Required: Biomedical Sciences 2, Pharmacology 3 Recommended: Biology 2B, Biology 2C
Clinical Immunology and Haematology 3A	Required: Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2. Prohibited combination: Students must not also be taking Immunology 3
Developmental Biology 3	Recommended: Cells to Organisms 2
Medical Microbiology 3	Required: Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2. Recommended: Immunology 3 OR Clinical Immunology & Haematology 3A Additional note: To be eligible for Senior Honours Infectious Diseases a pass in MM3 AND either Immunology 3 or CIH3A is REQUIRED .
Molecular Cell Biology 3	Recommended: Biology 2B, Biology 2C, Biological Chemistry 2, Cells to Organisms 2, Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2. It is recommended that students also take Structures and Functions of Proteins 3
Neuroscience 3	Required: Biomedical Sciences 2
Reproductive Biology 3	Recommended: Biomedical Sciences 2

Non-Biomedical electives

Notwithstanding the above courses, students can, if they wish, select elective courses from a range of non-biomedical courses run throughout the University thereby giving the opportunity to broaden knowledge and experience.

A complete listing of all courses available at the University of Edinburgh can be found in the University publication “**Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study**”, which can also be consulted on line under the following URL:

Elective course selection

When selecting an elective course there are some important criteria that must be met for it to be acceptable for your programme of study.

1. Most importantly any course you choose must timetable with your core/compulsory courses. Under normal circumstances two factors indicated below govern timetable clashes.
 - a. **Time.** If one or more scheduled classes in a non-core (elective) course are at the same time as, or overlap with, classes in a core course then you will not be allowed to take that elective course.
 - b. **Location.** Teaching (in normal years) takes place at a number of different University locations (e.g., Central area, Kings Buildings, Little France). In many cases the 10-minute gap between teaching time-slots is insufficient for transfer between these locations. Thus, two scheduled classes in adjacent time-slots but in different geographical locations are also considered as a clash and will prevent the elective course being allowed. (There is one exception to this. There is a 20-minute changeover time to allow movement between different locations from 10.50am to 11.10am).
5. An elective course chosen in the second year must be at SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level 7 or 8. Courses usually taken in the second year are designated by a “2” at the end of the course name e.g., “Biomedical Sciences 2”. You are, however, open to take any SCQF level 7/8 course as an elective as long as it meets these criteria.
6. You must be qualified for the course (some courses may have a pre-requisite for a specific subject in your school qualifications).
7. There must be a place available on the course. Some courses have a limited number of places. In this case, priority will be given to students enrolled on programmes for which that course is a core/compulsory element. Note that for elective courses delivered by other parts of the University **YOU** (not your Student Advisor) will need to make the appropriate enquiries with the course organiser / administrator regarding your eligibility to enrol on the course.

Changing your mind with elective courses

You can change your mind (to enrol on or withdraw from an elective course) up to two weeks after a course has started, but not from core courses and not normally after that time. Note that you may only change course with the permission of your Student Advisor, and that permission is not automatic.

Study abroad

Students have the opportunity to study abroad for their Junior Honours year and applications are made during Year 2. An Open Meeting in October will provide details on study overseas options. More information can be found on the [Edinburgh Global website](#) and this also gives details of how to apply and which Universities you may go to.

It is essential that you plan this well in advance and decide which Senior Honours degree programme you would like to take in fourth year (i.e. after returning from overseas), as you will be

required to ensure that the courses you take at your host institution will give you the necessary background for your chosen programme. Thus, discussions with the Honours Programme Organiser of your intended programme are imperative, and should be done in plenty of time. These discussions will guide you in your choice of university abroad. Bear in mind that it is up to you to research the offerings at foreign universities, and weigh the advice of the Honours Programme Organiser before making a final decision.

Be aware that your subject will not necessarily be offered by all our partner institutions so you must check, before you apply, that suitable courses are offered by any university you plan to apply to. This can be done by checking the partner university's online information or in the course catalogues in the Edinburgh Global offices.

BMS Study Abroad Coordinator: Prof Mike Ludwig:
BMSGoAbroad@ed.ac.uk

The third-year Biomedical Sciences programmes

Towards the end of the second year, you will be asked to select the Biomedical Sciences Honours discipline that you wish to enter. This may be the same as the programme that you initially entered into though you are also free to change your mind and enter any of the others. The third year of the Biomedical Sciences degree programmes forms a Junior Honours year. Students will study exactly 120 credit points of courses (with a minimum of 80 credits of EMS: Biomedical Sciences UG courses), equally balanced across each semester. Courses in the third year see a significant increase in the intellectual demands placed on students. You must make sure that you are available for course work throughout the working week.

Biomedical Sciences 3 is a **compulsory (required)** course for all students on Biomedical Sciences degree programmes. In addition, each Honours programme has a 20-credit point, designated **core (required)** course that **must be taken and passed** for Senior Honours progression. Some programmes also have a further 20 credit point **compulsory (required)** course that **must be taken** in the Junior Honours year. These are summarised in the table below.

Table 6: Courses required for Honours programmes

Required courses are shown in **bold**, with recommended courses listed below.

Honours Programme	3 rd Year Courses	2 nd Year Courses
Anatomy and Development (Criteria for progression to Senior Honours include the requirement of a pass in Anatomy and Development 3.)	Biomedical Sciences 3 Anatomy and Development 3 Mechanisms of Brain Development 3	Biomedical Sciences 2 Cells to Organisms 2 Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2
Biomedical Sciences (Criteria for progression to Senior Honours include the requirement of a pass in at least one of the selected designated required third year courses.)	Biomedical Sciences 3 TWO of: Anatomy & Development 3 Applied Pharmacology 3 Clinical Biochemistry & Endocrinology 3 Clinical Immunology & Haematology 3A Medical Microbiology 3 Mechanisms of Brain Development 3 Neuroscience 3 Pharmacology 3 Physiology 3 Reproductive Biology 3	Biomedical Sciences 2 Cells to Organisms 2 Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2
Infectious Diseases (Criteria for progression to Senior Honours include the requirement of a pass in Medical Microbiology 3 AND either Clinical Immunology & Haematology 3A OR Immunology 3)	Biomedical Sciences 3 Medical Microbiology 3 ONE of: Immunology 3 OR Clinical Immunology & Haematology 3A	Biomedical Sciences 2 Cells to Organisms 2 Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2

Honours Programme	3 rd Year Courses	2 nd Year Courses
Neuroscience (Criteria for progression to Senior Honours include the requirement of a pass in Neuroscience 3.)	Biomedical Sciences 3 Neuroscience 3 Mechanisms of Brain Development 3 Pharmacology 3 Physiology 3	Biomedical Sciences 2 Cells to Organisms 2 Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2
Pharmacology (Criteria for progression to Senior Honours include the requirement of a pass in Pharmacology 3.)	Biomedical Sciences 3 Pharmacology 3 Applied Pharmacology 3 Physiology 3 Clinical Biochemistry & Endocrinology 3 Molecular Cell Biology 3 Neuroscience 3 Structures and Functions of Proteins 3 Genomes & Genomics 3 Reproductive Biology 3	Biomedical Sciences 2 Cells to Organisms 2 Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2
Reproductive Biology (Criteria for progression to Senior Honours include the requirement of a pass in Reproductive Biology 3.)	Biomedical Sciences 3 Reproductive Biology 3	Biomedical Sciences 2 Cells to Organisms 2 Microorganisms, Infection & Immunity 2

Final Honours Degree Classification

Third year will contribute towards your final Honours degree classification.

It is important to remember that **all** 120 credit points worth of level 9/10 courses taken in 3rd year will contribute to your final degree classification awarded at the end of the 4th year. **The weighting of third year marks to fourth year marks, for the purposes of degree classification, will be 1:2.**

Your performance at the first sitting of assessment for any third- and fourth-year course will be the only mark recorded for that course that contributes to degree classification. There will be no resit examinations for third- and fourth-year courses.

Progression into the Senior Honours

In order to proceed to the fourth, Senior Honours, year you must previously have achieved at least 320 credit points **AND** met the requirements set out in the DRPS which include,

- passes in all core 1st, 2nd and 3rd year Biomedical Sciences courses.
Core courses are listed in the Biomedical Sciences Degree Programme Table
http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/26-27/dpt/drps_bms.htm
- at least 80 credit points obtained by passing level 9 or level 10 courses in the Junior Honours year.
- an overall aggregate mark of at least 40% in 120 credit points* of level 9/10 courses taken in the Junior Honours year.

Requirements for Graduating

All “**core**” courses in years 1 - 3 of a Biomedical Sciences degree programme in your chosen discipline must be passed to ultimately graduate with a degree.

[Edinburgh Medical School Degree Programme Tables \(DPT\)](#)

Remember that you must also achieve 480 credit points over the degree programme to graduate with Honours. No exceptions can be made to these rules; however, up to 40 credit points can be awarded by aggregation for failed courses in each of the Honours years as long as the progression requirements indicated above are met.

How to choose your third-year courses

On the following pages are tables indicating the third-year courses in Biomedical Sciences and Biology. For up-to-date information on the timetable slots and outline of the courses please refer to the DRPS links given.

When choosing your courses, the following points should be considered;

- Students in Junior Honours (Year 3) **must** take exactly 60 credit points of level 9/10 courses in semester 1 and exactly 60 credit points of level 9/10 courses in semester 2.
- You must take at least 80 credits of Biomedical Sciences courses
- You will see that some courses occupy the same timetable slot and cannot, therefore, be taken together.
- Several third-year courses have required or recommended attendance at second year courses as pre-requisites. Refer to the earlier tables for details.
- The course choice allows you the opportunity to take diverse Biomedical Sciences options or to focus on specific related discipline combinations. You should discuss your choices with your Student Advisor who can then provide guidance and advice specific to your own circumstances.

During Semester 1 of 3rd year, you can change your mind about semester 2 course choices. Remember, only your Student Advisor can enrol and withdraw you from courses so consult with them if you are thinking of changing courses.

Third Year Core and Compulsory Biomedical Sciences Courses.

Biomedical Sciences 3 is a compulsory course for all Biomedical Sciences Honours programmes. Most Honours programmes have additional third year core course requirements, see table above.

Third Year Elective Biomedical Sciences Courses.

In addition to the compulsory third year course(s) Biomedical Sciences students must choose elective courses to meet the required take 60 credit points of courses in each semester / 120 credit points for the year.

Please click on the links to view details of this course in the DRPS

Please note that course content and/or structure can vary year to year.

Courses offered by Biomedical Sciences

Full Year (compulsory)

Biomedical Sciences	BIME09008
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Semester 1

Clinical Biochemistry & Endocrinology 3	MSBM09001
Health, Illness and Society	MSBM09003
Mechanisms of Brain Development 3	BIME09005
Pharmacology 3	BIME09003
Physiology 3	BIME09004

Semester 2

Anatomy & Development 3	BIME09013
Applied Pharmacology 3	BIME09011
Clinical Immunology & Haematology 3A	MSBM09005
Medical Microbiology 3	BIME09002
Neuroscience 3	BIME09012
Reproductive Biology 3	BIME09006

Courses offered by Biology

Semester 1

Immunology 3	BILG09007
Molecular Genetics 3	BILG09002
Structures & Functions of Proteins 3	BILG09015

Semester 1

Developmental Biology 3	BILG09010
Genes and Genomics 3	BILG09005
Molecular Cell Biology 3	BILG09001

The Third Year Timetable

In-person teaching sessions for third year courses are timetabled on Mondays and Thursdays or Tuesdays and Fridays, mornings or afternoons, or Wednesday morning as shown below.

SEMESTER 1	
Monday & Thursday 09.00-12.30	Monday & Thursday 13.30-17.00
Clinical Biochemistry & Endocrinology 3 Structures & Functions of Proteins 3	Pharmacology 3
Tuesday & Friday 09.00-12.30	Tuesday & Friday 13.30-17.00
Molecular Genetics 3 Mechanisms of Brain Development 3	Immunology 3 Physiology 3 Health, Illness and Society 3* *Please note that this course has restricted places available.

Wednesday 09.00-13.00
Biomedical Sciences 3

SEMESTER 2	
Monday & Thursday 09.00-12.30	Monday & Thursday 13.30-17.00
Anatomy & Development 3 Clinical Immunology & Haematology 3A Genomes and Genomics 3	Applied Pharmacology 3 Developmental Biology 3 Medical Microbiology 3
Tuesday & Friday 09.00-12.30	Tuesday & Friday 13.30-17.00
Neuroscience 3 Molecular Cell Biology 3	Reproductive Biology 3
Wednesday 09.00-13.00	
Biomedical Sciences 3	

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students are expected to achieve **120 credit points** in each study year. However, the University rules for progression from year to year of a degree programme (Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations 36-38) [UGDRPS2026-27.pdf](#) state:

Students must attain the credits and other requirements, e.g. core courses, for each stage of study, as outlined in the relevant Degree Programme Table. In addition, students must meet any other requirements set out in their programme and/or course handbook. In order to progress, a full-time student must attain the following minimum number of credits (pro-rata for a part-time student):

- 80 credit points by the end of year 1 [#]
- 200 credit points by the end of year 2 ^{# *}
- 360 credit points by the end of year 3
- 480 credit points by the end of year 4

* Direct entry students (students entering directly into their second year of studies) are awarded 120 credits of recognised prior learning.

In Biomedical Sciences the requirement is 100 credit points by the end of year 1 and 220 credit points by the end of year 2

If, at the relevant stage you have not achieved the required credit points, your academic progress will be “unsatisfactory” and you may be required to suspend studies until you have made good the deficit; either by taking resit assessments or additional courses.

Progression into the Junior Honours Year of a Biomedical Sciences Degree Programme.

For **automatic progression** into the Junior Honours year of a Biomedical Sciences degree programme, in addition to the above, students must also fulfil the following criteria:

- Passes, with a mark of 50% or more, in Biomedical Sciences 2 and one other core course at the first sitting,

AND

- Passes in all three core second year courses with an average mark of at least 50% by the end of the August (second sitting) exam diet.

IN ADDITION,

- For progression into the third year, students must have obtained a minimum of 100 credit points in the second year and 220 credit points overall for the first two years of the degree programme
- To graduate with an Honours or Ordinary degree in Biomedical Sciences students must pass all core courses.

If a student fails to achieve these criteria for automatic progression, then a decision on whether or not they will progress into the Junior Honours year will be made by the Progression board who will look for evidence in the students' academic record of the potential to succeed on an Honours programme. This evidence may include any of the following;

- The profile of performance across all courses in the second year
- The record of passing and failing courses
- The average mark across all second-year courses
- Exceptional circumstances that may have affected second year performance.

* At the end of the second year of the Biomedical Sciences degree programmes a student could meet progression criteria in core courses but have a deficit of 40 credit points due to fails in elective courses. It is the policy of Biomedical Sciences UG that any student in these circumstances **must** extend their period of study so that the missing credits can be achieved prior to embarking on a Junior Honours year. Since the progression criteria outlined above have been met, the student would be allowed to resume in the Junior Honours year of the Biomedical Sciences programme once the credit point deficit had been made good. It would be expected that the deficit be made good in a single year of extended study.

Should any credit point deficit at the end of second year be the result of failure in any of the core Biomedical Sciences courses then the criteria for progression to Junior Honours will not have been met.

What happens if progression into the Junior Honours year of a Biomedical Sciences degree programme is not approved?

If your progression into the Junior Honours year of a Biomedical Sciences degree programme is not approved, you may be asked to meet with the Deputy Director of Students (BMS UG) to discuss your options. Two **possible** options are:

- Apply to transfer from the Biomedical Sciences degree programme to another degree programme. This would require discussion with the other School, be on a case-by-case basis where places are available, which cannot be assumed, and may require repeating a year to complete required courses. To be eligible to transfer you must meet published progression requirements for the degree programme.

- Continue on the Biomedical Sciences programme and graduate at the end of 3rd year with an Ordinary degree, if sufficient credits are achieved.

Where the option to continue on the Biomedical Sciences Ordinary degree programme is undertaken, under these circumstances, continuation into the fourth year of a Biomedical Sciences discipline will not be possible, no matter the level of attainment in the study towards the Ordinary degree.

Progression into the Senior Honours Year of a Biomedical Sciences Degree Programme.

In order to proceed to the fourth, Senior Honours, year you must previously have achieved at least 360 credit points **AND** have met the requirements set out in the DRPS which include,

- Passes in all core 1st and 2nd year Biomedical Sciences courses.
(Core courses are listed in the [Biomedical Sciences Degree Programme Tables](#))
- A pass at the first attempt in the core 3rd year course designated by the programme of study
- At least 80 credit points obtained by passing level 9 or level 10 courses at the first attempt in the Junior Honours year.
- An overall weighted average mark of at least 40% in 120 credit credit* of level 9/10 courses taken in the Junior Honours year.
*Only 120 credit points of level 9/10 courses can be taken in the third Junior Honours year, equally balanced across semester 1 and semester 2.

Important: Students in their Junior Honours year of study are not permitted to resit courses in order to progress into Senior Honours.

Requirements for Graduating with an Honours degree in a Biomedical Sciences discipline.

All “**core**” courses in years 1 to 3 of your Biomedical Sciences degree programme must be passed to ultimately graduate with an Honours degree in your chosen discipline.

In the fourth, Senior Honours, year compulsory courses **must be taken**. Your Senior Honours Programme Guide will explain the criteria for the award of your Honours degree.

You must also achieve 480 credit points over the degree programme to graduate with Honours. No exceptions can be made to this rule, although up to 40 credit points can be awarded for failed courses in each of the Honours years by a process called “aggregation”. Credits awarded by aggregate can be awarded subject to meeting the criteria required for your programme as long as your overall weighted average mark for 120 credit points of courses taken in each of the Honours years is at least 40%.

Degree Classification

Junior Honours (third year) course marks will contribute to one-third and Senior Honours (fourth year) marks two-thirds towards your final degree classification, i.e. a 1:2 ratio for BSc (Hons) Biomedical Sciences students.

For students who studied on exchange in third year the final degree classification is based solely on the marks in Senior Honours.

Biomedical Sciences qualifications

It is hoped that all students in Biomedical Sciences will graduate with an Honours degree. However, there are several other qualifications available to students who do not progress to Honours. The full list of qualifications is given below and the exact requirements to obtain these qualifications are set out in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study under College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. In summary these qualifications are:

1. Undergraduate Certificate of Higher Education
2. Undergraduate Diploma of Higher Education
3. Bachelor of Science (General) Degree
4. Bachelor of Science, Ordinary Degree in Biomedical Sciences
5. Bachelor of Science Degree with Honours in Anatomy and Development, Biomedical Sciences, Infectious Diseases, Pharmacology, Neuroscience or Reproductive Biology.

Important advice on assessment

As already mentioned, for each year of study, you are required to achieve 120 credit points. Usually, you must obtain a mark of 40% or more in each component of assessment to pass a course – specific details of the requirements to pass a course will be provided on Learn for each individual course.

The way that the University organises its teaching and timetable has implications for your study methods and, in particular, how you plan your consolidation and revision. Note that many first semester courses have examinations / assessments at the end of the semester and there is little time for revision after teaching has finished. If you leave all your revision in all courses to the last minute it is unlikely you will have enough time to complete it satisfactorily. You are strongly advised to keep your work and consolidation up-to-date and not leave it until the last minute.

Details of course assessments, submission deadlines and return of feedback and marks are included in course documentation provided on Learn at the beginning of each course.

The advice given above is equally applicable to second semester courses.

If you fail any of your first or second year courses you will be given the opportunity to resit the components of assessment you have failed. Usually, if you fail an assessment the reassessment will take place over the summer, and the exam diet is during August. Note this means you will have to spend time over the summer studying to engage with the assessment AND any in person reassessment will take place in Edinburgh.

The best way to make sure that you do not find yourself in this position next summer is to organise your study time effectively during the academic year thereby ensuring that you pass all your courses at the first attempt.

If you require any advice on these or related matters contact in the first instance your Student Advisor and, if subsequently directed by your Student Advisor, the Deputy Director of Students (BMS UG), or the Director of Teaching: Biomedical Sciences.

Feedback and Return of Summative Marks

Please refer to page 10 on the General Course Information Handbook - [Biomedical Sciences Undergraduate Student Handbook | Biomedical Sciences](#)

Appendix: Additional sources of help

In addition to those at the start of this guide, there are other sources of academic and pastoral help available to all students:

Lecturers

Lecturers are responsible for the content of courses. Much of this content will be available on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Learn. If you miss part of a course, fail to understand something, or want further information on a topic and this cannot be resolved through the material on the VLE, then ask the lecturer for help. It is most convenient for students and staff if you contact lecturers by email (please make sure your email is sent from your University email account and has the subject header completed otherwise it is likely to be identified as spam and ignored). Contact details for all staff teaching on a course will be provided in the relevant course on Learn. If for some reason this fails to elicit a response you should approach the course administrator who will be pleased to help you make contact with the appropriate member of staff. VLEs have discussion boards that allow you to raise issues with your classmates. These discussion boards can also be accessed by staff members. The relevant course documentation will provide details of how and when individual lecturers and tutors will respond through these discussion boards.

The Biology Teaching Organisation (BTO)

The BTO works along with the Biomedical Sciences UG in administering Medical Sciences, Biomedical Sciences and Biological Sciences courses. The BTO has an office and reception desk on the Ground Level of the JCMB, Kings Buildings Email: bto@ed.ac.uk.

BTO Tutors for Molecules, Genes and Cells 1

BTO tutors provide help and guidance on practical and specific tutorial topics in **Molecules, Genes and Cells 1**: Contact mgc@ed.ac.uk and questions will be passed over to the course organisers.

The BTO will arrange a “study group” for students taking **Molecules, Genes and Cells 1** who have limited background in Biology, or for students whose first language is not English. Other students who feel that they would benefit from this group can also attend. The group will provide support from staff and BTO tutors, and will also serve for mutual support among students. Participation is not obligatory, but we strongly encourage you to take advantage of the facilities it can offer. You should contact the BTO if you want to be involved in this group: (bto@ed.ac.uk)

Demonstrators in practical classes

Demonstrators (who are mostly postgraduate students in the University) are present in laboratory practical classes to explain practical approaches and help you cope with any difficulties. They are a valuable source of information and advice and you should ask them help and support in classes.

Edinburgh University Students Association

Edinburgh University Student Association provides information on everything, and advice about almost everything. In particular, they provide the **Student Handbook**, a complete guide for all students at Edinburgh; a **Welfare Handbook** with sound advice about health, finance, accommodation and studying; and the **Alternative Prospectus**, a frank critique of university courses. We welcome these independent judgements in the **Alternative Prospectus**, but you should bear in mind that each critique usually is written by one person - disgruntled, dismayed or delighted! Publications can be obtained from the Mandela Centre, Bristo Square.

Confidential personal advice is readily obtainable at **The Advice Place (Bristo Square)**, which also has an office at the King's Buildings in **KB House**.