

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	Foundation Year for Life Sciences undergraduate programmes. Final award dependent on student's chosen pathway
Name and level of intermediate awards:	none
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Cavendish Campus, 115 New Cavendish St
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	One year full time study commencing in September
QAA subject benchmarking group(s):	Biosciences
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	none
Date of course validation/review:	March 2015
Date of programme specification approval:	March 2015
Valid for cohorts:	level 3 intake for 2016/17
Course Leader:	Stephen Reed
UCAS code and URL:	westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate

What are the minimum entry requirements for the course?

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-to-apply

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-to-apply

Aims of the course

The same Foundation Year programme provides an academic base for students intending to follow a range of different human bioscience-related pathways. The course aims to create students who, through their knowledge, academic achievements and practice skills are able to benefit fully from degree-level study and so participate effectively in professional practice. The programme has been designed to ensure that enrolled students acquire the level of scientific knowledge and study skills necessary to meet the entry requirements of their chosen undergraduate degree pathway.

The Life Sciences Foundation course will produce level 4 students who;

1. are well informed on and have a secure comprehension of appropriate aspects of natural science,
2. are proactive and confident independent learners;
3. have the ability to integrate information from discrete but related scientific and professional disciplines;
4. possess practitioner and career-related skills;
5. have a clear view of future study and career opportunities open to them after graduation;
6. are acculturated into the discipline and practices of higher education.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

- The overall **knowledge and understanding** you will gain from your course (KU).
- **Professional and personal practice learning outcomes** (PPP) are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course
- **Key transferable skills** that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)
- **Graduate attributes** are characteristics that you will have developed for the duration of and are embedded into your course (GA).

Learning Outcomes. Upon completion of level 3 you will be able to:

- CLO 3.1 Identify and use with due regard for validity a variety of information sources (KTS);
- CLO 3.2 Demonstrate good understanding of fundamental facts, major concepts and theories associated with biological systems (KU);
- CLO 3.3 Demonstrate good understanding of fundamental facts, major concepts and theories associated with chemistry (KU);
- CLO 3.4 Provide evidence of a knowledge of the scientific method and experimental process (KU);
- CLO 3.5 Discuss the ethics of clinical practice and/or scientific research (PPP);
- CLO 3.6 Demonstrate competence in appropriate interpersonal and team-working skills (KTS);
- CLO 3.7 Apply numerical, problem-solving and practical skills (KTS)
- CLO 3.8 Communicate clearly ideas, concepts and numerical information *via* appropriate means (KTS)
- CLO 3.9 Reflect upon own career-related skills, knowledge and awareness (PPP)

How will you learn?

The learning and the teaching of the course relies on a mixture of face-to-face teaching and tutorial sessions using both didactic and student-centred styles. This strategy is appropriately supported with technology-enhanced learning where applicable to encourage mastery of the knowledge base. Much of the learning activities of the course rely on a blended approach which mixes classroom-based activities with on-line study material. Planned learning activities relate directly to the stated learning outcomes which have been defined to reflect both subject-related knowledge, intellectual and manual or practical skills along with an awareness of the professional and ethical contexts within which disciplines must operate. In addition to the formal programmed teaching & learning sessions, the Faculty operates a series of research seminars and 'academic conversations' given by invited expert speakers or staff from within the university. Attendance at such events allows all students within the Faculty the chance to learn about cutting-edge research and scientific developments.

Self-directed and tutor-directed private study forms a significant part of the learning experience. Laboratory-based practicals and, where appropriate, clinic-based sessions will begin to develop the necessary 'hands-on' skills required of competent practitioners within the chosen discipline. The majority of students on the Foundation programme are returning to study after a period of time, and the Academic Tutorial System (ATS) will provide additional opportunities for students to develop or enhance appropriate study skills and to gain the confidence required to make the transition to higher education.

How will you be assessed?

In order for students to demonstrate that they have met the course learning outcomes the foundation course offers a variety of assessment which aim to allow students to evidence their skills and knowledge *via* written and oral means. Typically, the diet of assessments for a module consists of two or three summative exercises. The assessment menu will consist of individual work including open & closed examinations, essays and objective tests and data-based exercises. Some aspects of summative assessment focus on group-work skills. Suitably well chosen integrative assignments will help to ensure continuity of learning across disciplines. Two of the core modules are assessed *via* coursework only, whereas others use a combination of both summative assessment (using either open or closed examinations) and coursework elements. Attempting assessments is not just a means to determine attainment but also a learning opportunity. Thus, formative (practice) assessments, including 'mock' examinations and exercises on examination preparation, self-assessment tests and monitoring by tutors of continuous activities will help students to undertake their own evaluation of their command of the material and so adapt their learning strategy according to need.

Employment and further study opportunities.

At the completion of four years of study, students will be able to demonstrate the following five Graduate Attributes:

- Critical and creative thinkers
- Literate and effective communicator
- Entrepreneurial
- Global in outlook and engaged in communities
- Social, ethically and environmentally aware

Successful Foundation students progress to BSc programmes within the University of Westminster or other institutions of higher education and thus gain valuable degrees in their chosen areas of interest. Recent results show that students who do well on the Foundation course invariably graduate with higher classification degrees in their chosen subject than those who enter at level 4. Inclusion within the curriculum of activities which support the development of 'Graduate Attributes' is an acknowledgment that future long-term career success is dependent upon a number of generic factors which support discipline specific knowledge in creating effective professional practitioners. University of Westminster courses capitalise on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of our students.

Table:
Alignment of Graduate Attributes to the Learning Outcomes at Foundation Level.

Graduate Attribute	Learning Outcome
Critical and creative thinkers	3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4.
Literate and effective communicator	3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.7; 3.8
Entrepreneurial	3.6; 3.7
Social, ethically and environmentally aware	3.5; 3.9
Global in outlook and engaged in communities	3.2

Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits per year. Somewhat unusually, the Foundation does not offer students any option or elective modules. The subject menu is restricted to those aspects of basic science which will provide a solid platform for further study. The only variation in programme planning is between two pathway-specific core modules, one for students who intend to follow a pathway in Complementary Medicine and the other for students on all other biosciences routes. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Credit Level 3				
Module code	Module title	Status	UK credit	ECTS
3ACHE001W	Academic Skills	Core	20	10
3BIOL001W	Biology and Human Biology	Core	40	20
3CHEM001W	Chemistry I: Inorganic and Physical	Core	20	10
3CHEM002W	Chemistry II: Bio-Organic	Core	20	10
3CHMA001W	Perspectives on Health *	BSc pathway specific Core	20	10
3BIOL002W	Science in Practice *	BSc pathway specific Core	20	10
Award of Foundation Certificate available				
Credit Levels 4, 5 and 6				
	all modules at L4, 5 and 6 dependant upon the student's chosen degree pathway and exit award			

* These two modules are disrequisites so students will register for *either* 3CHMA001W or 3BIOL002W

Professional Body Accreditation or other external references. Not applicable to the level 3 provision. Successful students who graduate after 4 years of study with BSc Human Nutrition are recognised by the Association for Nutrition (AfN).

Academic Regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

COURSE SPECIFIC REGULATIONS:

Biology & Human Biology, Chemistry I and Chemistry II must all be passed (not condoned) for progression to level 4.

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

Your course is managed through the Department of Life Sciences within the Faculty of Science & Technology. The Course Leader and the teaching team will meet you in the induction programme and can help you with enrolment, registration, and orientation to the university, its processes and the culture of higher education. The Course Leader is responsible for development and management of the course in conjunction with the Head of Department, the Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching and the departmental Learning & Teaching co-ordinator.

The course is monitored each year by senior members of the Faculty to ensure that it is running effectively and that issues that might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of student progression and achievement to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Academic Standards Group audits this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council of the University, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students. Students are assessed for their English language skills and if required can be offered a specific module, English for Academic Purposes, to enhance their success.

Learning Support

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University.

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2015. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed.

Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committee Meetings, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committee meetings is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.
- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.
- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.
- The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which seeks the opinions of students about their course and University experience. Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

Please note: This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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