

**Your studies**

# The School of Life Sciences

**Undergraduate**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
2020-21



University of Essex

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## Welcome

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



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

Undertaking a degree course is a major and important step in life, both in terms of personal development and in career planning. Studying for a degree is also a very complex activity, and science degrees in particular are very busy, because of the practical components. You may have concerns and questions about the organisation of your degree course, what is expected of you as an undergraduate student, what is the structure of the degree, what facilities are available, who to see, how is your work assessed etc. This Undergraduate Handbook should provide answers to many of your questions, encouragement and advice, and clarify much about the organisation of the degree courses and the School. We hope that your time here will be stimulating and rewarding, and that you will use the opportunities and facilities of the University and School to the full, to achieve your goals.

**Professor Leo Schalkwyk**  
School of Life Sciences

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## Introduction

All Schools and Departments at Essex create a Student Handbook each year. These are designed to be useful tools for you to find out what you need to know about your department, the University and its academic policies and procedures, and all of the resources available to you.

We know things might be a little different this year, but we remain absolutely determined to provide you with the best Essex education and student experience we can while safeguarding your health and wellbeing. Make sure that you keep up to date with what we all need to do to [keep safe as a community](#).

At Essex we celebrate diversity and challenge inequality. You are welcomed to a truly diverse community where differences are celebrated, and individuality is valued. Your contribution is welcomed and encouraged based on your own thoughts and experiences. As part of our community you will have the freedom to explore, experiment, challenge your discipline and have your ideas shaped by peer and professional knowledge from all over the world. Essex is about more than just getting a degree: we have so much to offer our students!

Things might have to change and adapt over the year, so make sure that you're checking online and keeping in touch with your department for the latest updates. The [Student Directory](#) contains a wealth of other helpful sources of information which you may also find useful.

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## Practicalities and Getting Started

### Registration

Whether a new or returning student, you will need to [officially register](#) at the start of each academic year. Registration is not only a formal procedure of enrolling you into the University, but also connects you to a number of vital systems which allow you to access your online Welcome and Induction information and start your studies. As part of this process, you will need to activate your Essex IT account, register online and, once you arrive on campus, undertake a Right to Study check and collect your student registration card.

### Right to Study

The University must ensure all students have the right to study at the University of Essex for the whole duration of their course. If you require [immigration permission](#) to study in the UK, this will be checked when you first arrive on campus and as necessary thereafter. Students have a duty to maintain valid UK immigration permission that allows study for the duration of their course, failure to do so may lead to withdrawal from the University under the [University's General Regulations](#).

### Student visas

The University has [many duties](#) as a Tier 4 sponsor and must ensure we remain compliant in order to retain our Tier 4 sponsor status. Students with a Tier 4 or Short-term student visa have responsibilities to the University and the Home Office. There will be conditions attached to your visa that restrict what you can do in the UK, breaking any of the conditions may mean you can't remain in the UK and complete your course. Please be aware that changes to your course, whether due to academic failure or choice, must be considered against the Immigration rules and guidance in place at the time, this can mean that some academic options may not be available to you.

If you are coming to the UK on or after 1 January 2021 to study, you may be applying for a visa under the new immigration rules that the UK government intend to introduce. These rules will also apply to European and Swiss nationals who do not already have EU settled status or UK immigration permission. The government aim to release the new rules in the autumn of 2020, we'll publish more information on our [immigration web pages](#) after they have been published and considered.

### Choosing your modules

You may have module options to select as part of your course structure. If you do, you must select the modules you wish to enrol on before the academic year begins. You can view and choose your specific options through the [eNROL system](#). New students can do so from the end of August and returning students can from the April preceding the next academic year. Early module enrolment ensures that timetables can be scheduled effectively. We'll talk more about how you might decide which modules to take in the [Learning and Teaching](#) section of this Handbook.

### Explore your Campus

There is a broad range of [facilities](#) across each of our campuses to support your experience at Essex, whether in person or virtually. For the latest information, see the updates on [services on campus](#) and make sure that you're aware of the [guidance](#) for those coming onto campus.

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## Get connected

### Your IT account

You will need to activate [your Essex IT account](#). Once you're set up, you can access your Essex email, log in to Moodle, access lab computers and library services, print for free on campus, connect to campus wi-fi, and much more. When you activate your account, you should register an external e-mail address and passphrase so that if you [forget your password](#), you can also reset it using these details. If you have forgotten those also, you should either visit the IT Helpdesk or call 01206 872345. Make sure you keep your password safe and do not share it with others!

### Campus Wi-fi

If you are studying on any of our campuses, connect to our Wi-Fi by simply finding the 'eduroam' network on your device and use the same log in details as your IT account to connect up!

### Essex Apps

The University has a variety of online systems and platforms designed to enhance your learning and help make processes, such as submitting coursework, easier. We have rounded up the top platforms, portals and apps that you need to know about!

#### MyEssex

[MyEssex](#) is your online account. This is different to your applicant portal – you can use MyEssex to view your timetable, update your personal details, request replacement student cards or supporting documents, monitor your course progress, let us know if you'll miss a lecture or class, contact the Student Services Hub, and much more.

#### PocketEssex

[Pocket Essex](#) is the University's official app for students; its interface of icons act as a portal through to a variety of areas and resources. PocketEssex links to many areas that MyEssex does, but also takes you through to other key resources, such as the Students' Union, FindYourWay and the Library.

### Find Your Way

When on campus, we know that finding your way can be challenging to start with. Our Colchester campus in particular can be difficult to navigate with a historically complex room numbering system! [FindYourWay](#) is our interactive campus map designed to get you from A to B on either the Colchester or Southend campuses with quick and easy directions.

## Working while studying

Many students choose to work part-time to supplement their income. Working during your course can also give you excellent skills and experience to boost your CV. Our [Student Services Hub](#) can help you find part-time work. There are also many opportunities to [work in paid jobs on campus](#).

You can access recommendations on working hours, as well as guidance on rates of pay and National Insurance contributions on the [Careers Services webpages](#).

If you have a student visa, please read our information on [working in the UK for international students](#) before you start looking for a job. The country you're from and your visa type will determine whether or not you can work in the UK. If you can work, the type of work you are allowed to undertake and the number of hours you can work will be restricted.

## Your personal belongings

The University does not cover costs for personal damage or loss of possessions; only in instances where the University has been negligent would a claim be viable for compensation for personal



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belongings. Therefore, you are strongly advised to take out personal insurance cover for your possessions. This is especially important for valuable items, such as laptops, phones and tablets.

## **The Essex Experience**

The University of Essex is proud of its inclusivity and its international community. Our campuses are places that are welcoming, where every single person can feel they have a place where they belong and where you can find the world in one place. As part of our ongoing commitment we have created a [Student Charter](#) as a pledge that every student becomes a part of when they join us. With the Student Charter you agree to support our community and we promise to provide you with a transformational educational experience.

### **Embrace the Essex Values**

We are different at Essex. We are brave, we are bold, and we embrace challenges and drive change. Our values are underpinned by this very culture. While we full heartedly encourage students to challenge the status quo and explore the unknown, we expect that students do so respectfully, intelligently and act as true ambassadors for the University. The University has a [Code of Student Conduct](#) that outlines the rules and regulations that help us maintain our high standards of behaviour.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The University of Essex celebrates diversity, challenges inequality and is committed to nurturing an inclusive and diverse community that is open to all who have the potential to benefit from membership of it, and which ensures equality of opportunity for all its members.

We expect all members of our campus communities, employees, workers, contractors, students and visitors to be treated, and to treat others, with dignity and respect. We do not tolerate discrimination against any individual or groups of people because of their age, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, race, religion of belief, sex, sexual orientation, because they have a disability, or because they are pregnant, breastfeeding or have recently given birth.

To support our value – commitment to inclusivity, we extend protection from discrimination beyond our legal obligations to cover other forms of difference such as socio-economic background, political beliefs and affiliations, family circumstances, appearance, personal interests.

The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this [policy](#) is fully effective.

### **Student communities**

We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive student community. The University recognises the value of diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity within the University. We aim to create an environment whereby students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, and solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential regardless of their background whether that is race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or any other distinction.

We offer a wide range of support to individuals and [groups of student members](#) – our student communities - who may have specific requirements, interests or responsibilities- to help fulfil your potential. Whether you are an international student, a mature student, a BAME student or have any other requirements or needs, we here at Essex want to welcome you with open arms. The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this [policy](#) is fully effective.

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## Essex Sport

Learning doesn't just happen in the classroom. Keeping active during your studies is a great way to meet new people, help relieve stress, maintain good physical and mental wellbeing, increase productivity, and improve your employability.

Visit the [Essex Sport](#) website or [download the app](#) to discover all the ways you can keep active during your time at Essex. In order to ensure the welfare of our community there may be changes to opening hours or what's available, so do check on the website for the latest information.

## Students' Union

We're famous for our [Students' Union at Essex](#), and for good reason. Here you're not just a member of a normal Students' Union; you're part of a family. We're here from day one to the moment you graduate to support you in any way we can.

The Students' Union is run by students for students, and you have the ability to shape what we do. From deciding who leads the SU, to shaping your own experiences at Essex, we are here to represent your views and work with you to make amazing things happen.

### Get involved!

There are opportunities to join [Sports Clubs](#), to get involved with our [BUCS teams](#) which offer the opportunity to play competitively in a wide range of sports across the year. If you just want to try a sport, don't want to commit to a regular team, or would rather not play competitively, check out our [Just Play](#) programme.

We have [120 Societies](#) where you can meet people with similar interests, challenge yourself with something new or, if you can't find what you're looking for, [start your own!](#)

We also have our very own letting agency [SU Homes](#) designed to offer help and support for students to find off campus accommodation.

## Essex Spirit, social media and What's on?

Keep up to date with important news, events and offers from across the University with our Essex Spirit newsletter, delivered directly to your Essex email address.

Follow us on social:

 /uniofessex

 /uniessex

 /Uni\_of\_Essex

 /uniofessex

 /uniessex

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Our [Events calendar](#) brings together all the events happening across our three campuses, so you can make the most of your time at Essex.



## About The School of Life Sciences





### Meet the team




A full list of all staff can be found on <https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/life-sciences/people> Below is a summary of the roles of staff that can help you with a variety of areas during your time at Essex. Most academic staff work from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday during term-time. However, they tend to have busy schedules so you should email or telephone first if you need an appointment. Their availability in the vacations will normally be much more limited as they may be undertaking research or on holiday. You cannot generally expect to receive a prompt response to any emails that you send to teaching staff during vacations. If you have an urgent query during the vacations, you can contact the Undergraduate Office.

### Key Contacts



#### Academic Staff




<p><b>Dr Leanne Hepburn</b> Director of Education</p>		<p>Dr Leanne Hepburn is the Director of Education for the School. Leanne oversees the management of all aspects of undergraduate teaching in the School. You might need to contact Leanne regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval. She can also advise on Board of Examiners outcomes and appeals and matters relating to the UG Student Voice Group Meetings.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.6.17 Email: ljheb Tel: 2752</p>
<p><b>Dr Louise Beard</b> Senior Tutor Student Peer Mentor Coordinator</p>		<p>Dr Louise Beard is the Senior Tutor for the School. She provides pastoral support and advice to students who have issues that are affecting their studies. Louise can also be a point of contact if you do not want to approach your allocated personal tutor.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.09 Email: lhbeard Tel: 4048</p>

<p><b>Dr Phil Reeves</b> Disability Liaison Officer</p>		<p>Phil is the School's Disability Liaison Officer (SDLO) If you have a disability, medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty Phil is the School representative who can help you to access your studies.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.31 Email: preeves Tel: 3763</p>
<p><b>Dr Gareth Jones</b> Year 1 Organiser Incoming Study Abroad Officer</p>		<p>Dr Gareth Jones will be able to help Year 1 students with queries about academic matters.</p> <p>Gareth will also be your first point of contact in the School if you are here studying on a term or year abroad.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.4.08 Email: gareth Tel: 2079</p>
<p><b>Dr Selwa Alsam</b> Course Director (Biomedical Science) Lead Professional – Biomedical Science</p>		<p>Dr Selwa Alsam is responsible for the development and academic organisation of the Biomedical Science degree course.</p> <p>Selwa is also the Lead Professional for the Biomedical Science course. Selwa will be able to advise you on undertaking a placement year in the NHS and is the academic point of contact for Biomedical Science students whilst they are away on their placement year.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.4.12 Email: salsam Tel: 3328</p>
<p><b>Dr Brandon Reeder</b> Course Director (Biochemistry)</p>		<p>Dr Brandon Reeder is responsible for the development and academic organisation of the Biochemistry degree courses.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.6.15 Email: reedb Tel: 2119</p>
<p><b>Dr Michelle Taylor</b> Course Director (Marine Biology)</p>		<p>Dr Michelle Taylor is responsible for the development and academic organisation of the Marine Biology degree courses.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.3.22 Email: michelle.taylor Tel:2310</p>

<p><b>Dr Toni Marco</b> Course Director Genetics, Genetics and Genomics</p>		<p>Dr Toni Marco is responsible for the development and academic organisation of the Genetics and Genetics and Genomics degree courses.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.3.06 Email: amarco Tel: 3339</p>
<p><b>Dr Mike Hough</b> Placement Officer</p>		<p>Dr Mike Hough is the School's Industrial Placement Officer. You can contact Mike if you have queries about securing a placement or if you are considering transferring onto a placement version of your degree course.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.15B Email: mahough Tel: 3317</p>
<p><b>Dr Charalampos (Babis) Rallis</b> Study Abroad Officer (Outgoing)</p>		<p>Dr Babis Rallis is the School Study Abroad Officer. If you have any enquiries regarding undertaking a year abroad you can contact Babis.</p>	<p>Office: 3sw.4.16 Email: c.rallis Tel: tbc</p>

### Administrative Staff

<p><b>TBC</b> Student Administrator</p>		<p>The Student Administrator is your first point of call for general and administrative enquires and matters relating to Year 1/ Final Year coursework submission and marks. She is also involved in monitoring student attendance and progress.</p>	<p>Office:4.00 Email: TBC Tel: 3014</p>
<p><b>Angela Chan</b> Year 2 Undergraduate Administrator</p>		<p>Angela is your first point of call for general and administrative enquires and matters relating to Year 2 coursework submission and marks. She is also involved in monitoring student attendance and progress. Angela also supports students who are enrolled on a placement version of our courses and is secretary to the UG Student Voice Group meetings.</p>	<p>Office: 4.00 Email: achan Tel: 3320</p>
<p><b>Vickie Banks</b> Timetabling and Operations Administrator</p> <p><b>(Part time - (Mon 9.15-3.45, Tuesday 9.15-3.45, Thurs 9.15-1.15 &amp; Fri 9.15-1.15)</b></p>		<p>You should contact Vickie with any issues you experience with your timetable.</p>	<p>Office: 4.00 Email: <a href="mailto:bstimetb">bstimetb</a> Tel: 6380</p>

<p><b>Olivia Pink</b> Education Services Manager</p> <p>(Part time – Tuesday – Friday, 9.15 – 2.45)</p>		<p>Olivia leads the undergraduate administrative support team in the School. She is also the School's Examinations Officer and can help with queries about exams, rules of assessment and exam results. She will also administer changes of course, special syllabus, intermission and withdrawal requests.</p>	<p>Office: 4.32 Email: esmbs Tel: 4459</p>
<p><b>Maz Brook</b> School Manager</p>		<p>The School Manager is the Professional Services lead, with responsibility for managing educational, technical and research support in the School.</p>	<p>Office: 4.02 Email: maz Tel: 2248</p>
<p><b>Kerry Alban</b> School Office Administrator</p>		<p>Kerry is secretary to the School undergraduate progress and late submissions committee and provides support to the School's plagiarism officer.</p>	<p>Office: 4.30 (School Office) Email: kerrya Tel: 4074</p>

### Module Tutors

There are dedicated Module Tutors (also known as Module Supervisors) to support students for each module. The module tutor for each module can be found on Moodle. All teaching staff hold regular weekly academic support hours during term time. This is a time when you can go and see them about anything to do with your modules, from difficulties you might be having with your seminar readings, to discussions about feedback on your coursework. These academic support hours operate on a 'drop-in' basis - this means that you do not need to book an appointment; you can just turn up during the time advertised. Details of academic support hours are posted on office doors. They may also take place via zoom. If you cannot make the advertised time for any reason, you can e-mail your tutor to make an appointment.

Please note that academic staff do not hold regular academic support hours during the vacations, and may, on occasions, be away from the University on research trips and visits. Therefore, if you need to get in touch with them during the vacation periods, you should e-mail them in the first instance.

### Your Personal Tutor

All undergraduate students have a Personal Tutor who will meet you soon after you arrive, and regularly throughout your course. Your Personal Tutor will be a member of academic staff and is someone you talk to about your course or any difficulties that you may encounter. They can recommend and direct you to other support services that might be able to further help and support you. You can find out who your Personal Tutor is through [MyEssex](#).

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If you're unsure who your personal tutor is, please ask a member of the administrative staff in the School. You'll also have timetabled tutorial sessions with your personal tutor which will form part of the BS143 Transferable Skills in Life Sciences. Your tutor's name will also appear on these events - check your online personal timetable.

### **Your Peer Mentor**

All first-year students are assigned a [Peer Mentor](#). Peer Mentors are either a second or final-year student. They will contact you to introduce themselves and organise how you'll stay in contact. Mentors act primarily to signpost Year 1 students to information and support mechanisms as appropriate.

The frequency of meetings is left up to the mentor and mentees. You are encouraged to benefit from the experience your mentor has to offer and to meet on a monthly basis so that any issues or concerns can be discussed. However, you may prefer to do this via e-mail. You should be aware that the role of the mentor is not to replace your Personal Tutor or Year Organiser and you should not save up problems and expect your mentor to resolve them. The mentor programme finishes at Easter to allow all students time for revision and examinations.

### **Become a Mentor**

If you are in second or final-year and are interested in [becoming a Peer Mentor](#), a call for mentor applications is usually circulated in the Spring term. If you have any questions in the meantime, you can contact Aurelie Villedieu ([a.villedieu@essex.ac.uk](mailto:a.villedieu@essex.ac.uk)) for further details.

### **Support from GLAs**

In your practicals you and the Lecturer will usually be supported by Graduate Laboratory Assistants (GLAs). These may be technicians, postgraduate students or research staff from the School. The postgraduate students are trained and briefed before each practical. They are not there to carry out the work for you or to provide you with the answers, but they are there to help, to answer technical and scientific questions, and to check and aid your understanding. They will also check that you have tidied up your bench space before you leave the laboratory.

GLAs may mark some of your practical work. They receive training in marking and are given model answers and marks schemes to ensure consistency. The Lecturer retains overall control of the marking process and moderates the final marks. If you have concerns about the GLAs, either relating to their marking and feedback on your work or in the practicals, you should contact the Module Supervisor in the first instance.

### **Support for female students**

The School of Life Sciences has a large and vibrant community of female scientists working at all levels in research, teaching, management and outreach. The University was awarded the Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award in November 2013 in recognition of its continuing work to support women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and the School of Life Sciences achieved an Athena SWAN Bronze Departmental Award in November 2014. The School has a webpage on Equality and Inclusion with a range of information and resources for staff and students:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/life-sciences/equality-and-inclusion>.

### **Staff research interests**

Research in the School is organised into four main groups: Genomics and Computational Biology, Ecology and Environmental Microbiology, Protein Structure and Mechanisms of Disease and Plant Productivity. Academic staff are actively engaged in research on topics across a wide spectrum, including: agricultural sustainability; coral reef ecology; virology and immunology; molecular

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complications of diabetes; oxidative stress; photosynthetic metabolism and plant responses to environmental stresses.

If you are interested in finding out more see: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/life-sciences/research>

### **School seminars**

All undergraduate students are welcome to attend the School Seminar Programme which is held on Thursdays between 1-2pm. Details are published on the School Facebook page and circulated via email. Some seminars will be more suited to final year students, but there may be other seminars of general interest.

### **Departmental resources and facilities**

A wide range of facilities and resources are available for all students to access and use as part of their study at Essex. Each department and school also has a selection for the exclusive use of their students. Below is a summary of the facilities and resources that are likely to be most useful to you.

#### **School of Life Sciences Common Room**

The School common room (room 3SW.4.11) is a recreational area for staff and students. It has tea and coffee making facilities, a microwave, fridge and a seating area. Marked hard copy Year 1 coursework is returned to students in the pigeon holes near the entrance to the common room.

#### **Printing, photocopying and scanning**

All students can [print, copy and scan for free at Essex!](#) You can even [print from your mobile](#) by sending your attachment to [mobileprinting@essex.ac.uk](mailto:mobileprinting@essex.ac.uk).

Once you've located a device, simply log in using your Essex login and password, or tap with your student card to print. Whilst printing is free for all students, please think of your carbon footprint and only print if necessary.

Please note that there are strict laws about infringement of copyright; more information can be found on the [library website](#) which explains what and how much you are permitted to copy. Usage is monitored and subject to a fair use policy.

#### **Premium printing**

Premium services for printing and finishing, including binding your documents for presentational purposes, are available at [The Copy Centre](#) (Square 4, Colchester Campus). These services are chargeable.

#### **Noticeboards**

Every department and school has their own noticeboard providing information on staff, courses and classes, updates, careers, events and opportunities. Year 1, 2 and Final Year noticeboards are located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, just around the corner from the main entrance and coral reef aquarium. Further along this corridor there are also noticeboards for events, outreach and career opportunities. There will also be a virtual noticeboard area on Moodle.

### **Departmental prizes**

Each year we are pleased to award prizes signifying excellence. The following prizes are available for award to undergraduate students:

- **The John Shire Memorial Prize:** Awarded to the most outstanding student in the final year.



- **The David Whytock Memorial and Syngenta Prize:** Awarded for the most outstanding overall final year performance in a Biochemistry-based course.
- **The Biotechnology Project Prize:** Awarded for the most outstanding performance on a final year research project in Molecular, Biochemistry and Biomedical-based courses.
- **The Glaxo Smith Kline Prize:** Awarded for the most outstanding final year performance on BSc Biomedical Science.
- **The John Gorrod Prize:** Awarded for the most outstanding project in Biomedical Science.
- **The IBMS President's Prize:** Awarded for the best overall degree mark by an IBMS student member on a Biomedical Science course.
- **The John Shire Prize for Biology:** Awarded for the most outstanding final year performance on BSc Life Sciences.
- **Royal Society of Biology Student Award:** Awarded for the highest year mark in the final year on a Biology-based course.
- **The Environmental and Conservation Prize:** Awarded for the most outstanding final year performance on an Environmental and Conservation-based course.
- **The Abel-Imray Project Prize:** Awarded for the most outstanding final year project on an Environmental and Conservation-based course.
- **The Pearson Life Science Award:** Awarded to the student who achieves the highest mark in Pearson's 'Mastering Biology' assessments (used for Year 1 modules).
- **The OUP Achievement in Biosciences Prize:** Awarded to the Year 1 student with the top year mark.

## Communications

The University will predominantly use e-mail for routine communication between staff and students. Your Essex e-mail address will have been added to the relevant e-mail groups specific to your department or school, course and modules to ensure that you receive the essential information relevant to you. It is recommended that you check your Essex e-mail each day to ensure you do not miss any important updates to classes and assessment.

You will also automatically be subscribed to a small number of opt-out lists, again, based on your course. You can always [opt in or out](#) of these communications online.

### How you should communicate

While email can be a quick and easy means of communicating, you should still consider how you structure and write each email to ensure it is appropriate when contacting members of staff at the University. How you communicate is a reflection on your professional and academic self, and so we have provided some useful tips to consider when constructing an email for different purposes. These are also useful when contacting professionals and academics outside of the University and are widely recognised as a matter of courtesy in the United Kingdom.

#### *The level of formality*

- If you are writing to your lecturer for the first time, it is good practice to use a relatively formal manner and use their correct title, for example, 'Dear Dr Bercow' or 'Dear Professor

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Hammond’.

- If your lecturer signs their reply using their first name, then it is generally acceptable to reply using just their first name in your response; if not, continue to address them with their full, formal name.  
If you are unsure of your lecturer’s title, you can find their full details here: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/life-sciences/people/academic>. If no title is noted, then you should use the member of staff’s full name.

#### *Identify yourself*

- In the first few weeks of term, academic staff will be busy getting to know all of their students. Therefore, it is important that you begin by introducing and identifying yourself to them as they will not know every student right away. For example, ‘I am taking module AB123 and was at your lecture on Research Methods on Tuesday morning...’
- You should always use your Essex email as your full name will appear to the member of staff you are emailing, but still remember to sign off your email with your name, including your preferred name if this is different to your official legal name on your record and account.

#### *Consider your question*

- You should always check that who you are contacting is the most appropriate person to answer your query. The useful department contact list provided earlier in this section should help you determine who will be able to help you on a range of different queries.
- Before emailing the member of staff, you should make sure that you have checked the resources provided, including the University website, Student Directory, School Moodle pages and this Student Handbook in case the answer to your question can be found in one of these.

If your question is particularly long or complex, it may be quicker and more useful to see someone in person. Your School office is open daily and all staff hold academic support hours when you can just drop in. If you cannot make the advertised support hours, or wish to notify the member of staff before you drop in, you can always email them beforehand to arrange an alternative time or make them aware you will be coming along.

### **Social Media**

The School has a Facebook page: [School of Life Sciences](#)

### **The use of personal devices**

You can use laptops and tablet PCs during teaching classes for purposes related to the class you are attending. You should refrain from using your mobile phone during all teaching events, except in cases where a lecturer uses a programme which requires these devices to be switched on for participation.

## Learning and Teaching

The University is committed to providing equal opportunities for all our students regardless of where or how you study. Our diverse student population is considered when developing the resources, services and facilities on and off campus, when we create our courses, write publications and course materials, and set our policies and regulations.

### The academic year

The academic year uses a week numbering system that covers the 52 weeks of a calendar year but corresponds to typical term dates. So, the start of the academic year is week 1, which is Welcome week, with teaching commencing in week 2.

Term	Week numbers
Autumn	2-11
Spring	16-25
Summer	30-39

You can view the University's week numbers with the equivalent dates in the week by week [calendar](#). The University's [key dates](#) include an overview of the start and end of each term and exam periods.

Some courses have slightly different term dates. In the School of Life Sciences field courses for Marine Biology and some Biological Sciences students can take place out of term time. You will be informed about the dates of these well in advance.

You are expected to be available during term time to attend teaching events, unless otherwise advised by your Department.

### My Course

Each course at the University has its own syllabus, full details of which, including the aims and learning outcomes of your course, can be found in the University's [Programme Specifications Catalogue](#).

Your own course structure, including your specific programme specification, can be found in the MyStudy section of your [MyEssex](#) homepage. The full course structures for 1st, 2nd and final-year students will also be made available on Moodle.

### Credits

Your course will be made up of a certain number of credits. Generally, undergraduate degrees contain 360 credits worth of modules in total during your course at Essex. This is divided into 120 credits per each year of study, with credits allocated to each module that you take.

### Learning outcomes

Each course has learning outcomes which need to be met in order to progress. Course learning outcomes are categorised into knowledge, intellectual, practical and key skills, and are also defined more specifically at a modular level. Having this information means that you can measure your progress against the outcomes, for example when reviewing coursework feedback.

### Grade boundaries

Marks for undergraduate modules fall into one of the classifications set out in the table below. Bachelor degrees are usually awarded under these classifications too. The method for calculating

your final award classification will take into account module marks and any other requirements - full details are set out in the [Rules of Assessment](#).

Degree mark	Class
69.5% and over	Class 1
59.5 - 69.4%	Class 2.1
49.5 - 59.4%	Class 2.2
39.5 – 49.4%	Class 3
39.4% and under	Fail

The number of dominant credits at each class can also impact award classifications, as follows:

First Class Honours can be awarded to a candidate who has 120 credits at 70 or more and a Degree Mark of at least 68.

Upper Second Class Honours can be awarded to a candidate who has credits at 60 or more and a Degree Mark of at least 58.

Lower Second Class Honours can be awarded to a candidate who has 120 credits at 50 or more and a Degree Mark of at least 48.

## Module enrolment

Most modules taught reflect the individual research interests of members of our academic staff. New modules are regularly explored, researched and developed to expand our transformative educational offering at Essex.

The University provide [further guidance](#) on choosing modules, and meetings for first and second-year students will be held by your department where students can discuss their choices with their Personal Tutor. Your preferred choices must be submitted prior to the start of term through the [eNROL](#) system.

A full list of modules available can be found on this [webpage](#).

## Changing Modules

In instances where you need to make a change to your module choice, you may do so up until the second week of the Autumn Term. If you wish to change an optional module after the deadline, you should seek advice from the Department or School Office that runs the particular module that you may wish to change to.

Late changes may be permitted but will be subject to the approval of the department that runs the module and the relevant Dean. Late changes of modules that run for one term or less will not usually be permitted. Students may not change modules that are core or compulsory for the course for which they are registered.

If there is a module that you would like to study that isn't available as an option on your course, then you can ask for a change to your syllabus to be made by submitting a [special syllabus](#) request. Special syllabus requests are not automatically available and require approval. It is a good idea to talk to your Department or School responsible for your course, as well as the Department that teach the module if it is an outside option.

## Module Directors

Module Directors/Supervisors are responsible for individual modules. They design, teach and examine them. They monitor student progress and can also talk to students about any related academic issues.

## External requirements

BSc Biomedical Science is accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS). In addition, the BSc Applied Biomedical Science (NHS placement) programme is approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). It is important for students on either course to understand the respective roles of the HCPC and the IBMS.

### HCPC

The HCPC is the UK statutory regulator for 16 professions including Biomedical Scientists. The HCPC sets standards of professional training, performance and conduct for all these professions. The main aim of the HCPC is to protect the health and well-being of those using the services of the health professionals registered with them. For further information please visit the HCPC website at: [www.hcpc.org.uk](http://www.hcpc.org.uk)

### IBMS

The IBMS is the UK professional body for Biomedical Scientists and is concerned with the promotion and development of both Biomedical Science and Biomedical Scientists. The IBMS offers student membership to those on BSc Biomedical Science programmes. You can find further information on our IBMS notice board and on the IBMS website at: [www.ibms.org](http://www.ibms.org).

The School Professional Suitability Group meets annually to consider whether BSc Biomedical Science (Integrated) students meet the requirements for professional suitability.

### Fitness to practise

Fitness to practise is only applicable to students on certain professional courses, such as BSc Biomedical Science. Fitness to practise is designed to ensure and regulate that a student is suitable for engagement in the relevant profession. Students are notified at the point of enrolment if their course of study is subject to the terms of this procedure.

Students enrolled on courses where a practical professional placement is required have additional responsibilities placed upon them regarding not only their conduct but also their professional suitability as outlined in relevant regulatory and/or professional body codes of practice. Failure to meet these responsibilities can lead to the Breach of Professional Conduct with the Fitness to Practise and Termination of Training Procedure being invoked. You can find the full Fitness to Practise procedure online at: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/values/fitness-to-practise>

## Employability Modules

Employability and career development is embedded in all our degree courses, in particular as part of our Year 1 and Year 2 Skills modules: BS143 Transferable Skills for Life Sciences, BS211 Enterprise and Employability for the Biosciences, BS214 Biomedical Science: Practice and Employability and BS257 Professional Skills for Ecological and Marine Scientists. Employability is also embedded into the Final Year Research Project Modules.

## Study Abroad

With a heavy heart, we have taken the very difficult decision to [postpone the 2020-21 Year Abroad](#) for all students. For future years, there will be a variety of opportunities at Essex to study abroad. Many courses may be taken as a four-year variant to include a year studying at an overseas University. It is also possible for students to study abroad for one term in their final year. You may have applied for and been accepted on a course with a Year Abroad, but if not and you are interested in undertaking a Year Abroad or other international experience, you should contact with the [Essex Abroad Team](#) for more information.

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## Work Placements

Our primary concern is for the safety and wellbeing of our students and we want to ensure that students are not put at undue risk. We also want to ensure that students get the best possible placement experience. In many cases placements planned for the Academic year 2020/21 will go ahead - these are being approved on a case by case basis. For further information or to discuss your own placement circumstances, you should contact the Placements team ([placements@essex.ac.uk](mailto:placements@essex.ac.uk)) or the Academic Supervisor in your department (Dr Mike Hough). Students expecting to undertake clinical placements should contact their Academic placement/module supervisor or your Personal Tutor if they have any outstanding questions or concerns.

There are a variety of opportunities to undertake work-based learning and placements either during or as part of your studies. Many courses may also be taken as four-year variant to include a Placement Year. If undertaking a placement year, it is your responsibility to find a work placement, however, the Industry and Placements Team can help prepare and support you and will advertise relevant placements. If you are interested in undertaking a Placement Year, or other work-based opportunities that may be available to you and your course, contact the [Industry and Placements team](#). Some work placements may require a DBS check where you are engaging in regulated activity with vulnerable groups. More information about the DBS check process can be found on the [University's DBS webpages](#). Please be aware that there are restrictions for Tier 4 students under the Home Office rules and guidance relating to the type of work and length of placements.

## NHS Placements

BSc Biomedical Science students can also apply to complete an NHS placement in their third year of study. If you are interested in this opportunity you should contact Dr Selwa Alsam ([salsam@essex.ac.uk](mailto:salsam@essex.ac.uk)).

## Assessment of placement years

Placement years in the School of Life Sciences are assessed for credit purposes only and do not contribute to your degree outcome. See Model 1 in the relevant Rules of Assessment.

Students due to go on placement as part of their degree course will be issued with a specific placement handbook which will contain further detailed information.

## Summer vacation studentship awards

There are sometimes opportunities for undergraduates (usually Year 2 students) to apply for a competitive studentship (awarded by external organisations such as the Society for General Microbiology, the Nuffield Foundation and the Wellcome Trust). Studentships provide a small bursary for students to work in the School's research laboratories over the summer vacation, usually for 8 to 10 weeks. Details of how to apply are issued by individual members of staff who place advertisements on the undergraduate notice boards, and/or by email. Also look out for University of Essex awards as part of the UROP (University Research Opportunities) scheme.

## Module Materials

### Additional costs for fieldwork

Marine Biology students have a compulsory field course module and additional field course options are available to Marine Biologists and Biological Scientists. All field courses are heavily subsidised by the University, however contributions are required from students to cover part of the costs of tuition, accommodation and subsistence or travel, depending on the module. Approximate costs are given below but these may be subject to change and will be confirmed by the Module Supervisor.

Field course	Module Supervisor	Available to students	Estimated student contribution 2020-21	Scheduling
BS114 Marine Biology Field Skills	Dr Michael Steinke	<b>Compulsory</b> BSc Marine Biology	Costs for travel with a railcard is about £100 including transfers.	Spring term Exact datesTBC
BS256 Tropical Marine Field Research Skills	Dr Boyd McKew	<i>Optional</i> BSc Marine Biology and Biological Sciences	£TBC +/-1500	Exact dates TBC

In order to secure a field course place students are required to attend all meetings, pay deposits as requested and provide any relevant information requested by the School in good time.

### Items you will need

#### Text books

Online reading lists for your modules can be found via the module Moodle page alongside other information and module materials.

You will need to purchase the key text books for your course. Year 1 students are given a key online text book with access to learning resources (see Year 1 guide in the appendix of this handbook).

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

#### Calculators

A pocket calculator is essential for coursework, practicals and exams. A model with logs, square roots, trigonometry and statistical functions and a memory is essential. Please note that calculators with text storing capabilities are not permitted in University exams. Specific details can be found in in the Exams section of this Handbook.

#### Laboratory coats and safety glasses

You must wear an appropriate, clean, protective laboratory coat in the laboratory. It is compulsory to bring your laboratory coat with you to all practicals. Laboratory staff cannot supply spare laboratory coats. Failure to bring your laboratory coat after Monday of Week 4 may result in you being excluded from the practical. You must not wear your laboratory coat outside the laboratory. Safety glasses must be worn at all times in the laboratory (except when the practical schedule or the member of staff running the practical states otherwise). Laboratory coats and safety glasses will be provided as part of a package of essential equipment during School Registration.

#### Other items required in practicals

Ensure that you bring a sharp H grade pencil, an eraser and a ruler to all practical classes.

## Laboratory books

A laboratory book is essential for taking notes and recording data during all first and second year practicals. You will be provided with a laboratory book in Welcome Week. Please bring it to every practical.

## Field work

You will need a pair of wellington boots and a clipboard for all fieldwork.

## Teaching timetable

Once you have selected all of your modules (if applicable) and received confirmation, they will appear on your personal timetable. Every student has a [personal timetable](#) published at the start of term which shows when and where your teaching is taking place. You can access your timetable on most mobile devices, including smart phones and tablets. You will need to have registered and activated your University of Essex log-in before you will be able to access your teaching timetable.

If you wish to report a timetable clash or request a class change, you should do so via the [online timetable](#) or from the [Pocket Essex mobile app](#).

During Welcome Week (week 1) you may find that your timetable is blank as teaching normally commences week 2. **Please be aware that there may be changes to the location of teaching during the year, so regularly check your personal [online timetable and Essex e-mail](#) for up to date teaching information.**

Information about teaching timetables, including requesting a class change, reporting a timetable issue and accessing your individual timetable can be found on the [University's website](#).

## Recording your attendance

We monitor your attendance at teaching sessions on campus using your [student card](#) and an electronic recording system called [Count-Me-In](#). Your attendance at online teaching sessions is monitored by reviewing your logins to sessions on Zoom. You're expected to attend all of your mandatory sessions on [your individual timetable](#) and [report an absence](#) if you are unable to do so. Please be aware that for Tier 4 students, **poor attendance may affect your visa**.

Please contact your Personal Tutor, department staff or the [Student Services Hub](#) for advice and support, particularly if you are going to be absent for several weeks.

## Making changes to your study

### Changing your course

If you are thinking about changing course, you will need to do so by a [certain date](#) and should first speak to your department and personal tutor. They will be able to advise of the [things you should be thinking about](#) before changing your course. If you are thinking of undertaking a placement year or year abroad, you should check the requirements and any potential visa implications for these programmes by contacting the [Industry and Placements Team](#) or [Essex Abroad Team](#). Students with a Tier 4 visa may not be able to change their course without first obtaining a new visa, if eligible.

### Thinking of leaving or taking a break?

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



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You can contact your department, Personal Tutor or Student Services Hub to speak in confidence about your concerns, and also the [different options available to you](#) and the impact they may have.

## Library Services

The library aims to provide all of the resources you will need to succeed in your course, via online reading lists and access to extensive digital collections of books and journals. The library team can help you learn how to search effectively so you can find appropriate resources for your assignments. They can also provide advice on referencing, academic integrity, using reference management software and evaluating sources. A range of online support in these areas is also available via the library website, including [subject guides](#) for each department, and support in developing [search skills](#).

At our Colchester Campus, the **Albert Sloman Library** on Square 5 is open for long hours and has a variety of study spaces, including individual and group work areas. The Library offers a wide range of learning resources, online and in print, with a dedicated Helpdesk, live chat and the opportunity to book appointments with your Academic Liaison Librarian to help you through your studies and beyond.

See the [Library website](#) for the latest information on all our libraries and the services available, including opening hours.

## Academic Skills and Support

Every student arrives at Essex with the same spirit of determination but different experiences of education and levels of academic readiness. Skills for Success can help you identify your talents and strengthen those areas you need to develop.

We are committed to ensuring that every student is able to get the most out of their academic study and achieve their potential on their course, which is why [Skills for Success team](#) is available to help by providing support, resources and workshops on:

- [Academic writing](#)
- [Maths and stats](#)
- [Digital skills](#)
- [Research](#) and [referencing](#)
- [English language](#)
- [Exam revision](#)

The Skills for Success team can also provide further [learning and study skills information and support](#) for disabled students.

## Departmental Support

All students are allocated a personal tutor who they can approach for support and guidance. Your Personal Tutor will be a member of academic staff and is someone you talk to about your course or any difficulties that may encounter. They can recommend and direct you to other support services that might be able to further help and support you. You can find out who your Personal Tutor is through [MyEssex](#).

## Proofreading services

Before considering the use of proofreading services, all students should first discuss their work with their personal tutors. Although they cannot proofread draft work for you, they can advise you on referencing, for example. Many students seek 'proofreading' services at some point during their studies, but different types of editing can occur under this name which may not be appropriate in an academic context where work is assessed and could potentially qualify as an [academic offence](#). The University is keen to ensure as far as possible that students understand what [proofreading work should entail](#) and the acceptable boundaries to which any proofreading or editing must adhere to.

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The University maintain a list of [local freelance proofreaders](#) who offer services to students and staff at Essex that have read and agreed to abide by the [University's policy and guidance on proofreading](#).

## **Language classes**

### **English classes for dependants**

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

### **Learning a Language**

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

## Assessment and Academic Integrity

All schools and departments at the University employ a variety of assessment methods designed to ensure that the learning outcomes of each module, and course, have been successfully met by the student.

### Rules of Assessment

The [Rules of Assessment](#) are used to calculate your results. There is a main set of rules for [3 year](#) and [4 year courses](#), but some departments also have additional variations to the rules, which must be met. These are published alongside the Rules of Assessment for your year of study.

In the School of Life Sciences we do have a variation to the Rules of Assessment for our BSc Applied Biomedical Science (NHS Placement) B99. Details can be found here:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/rules-of-assessment/roa-4-year-honours-degrees>

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

The following is only a summary of the key points. You should read the rules and make sure you understand them. If you need advice, ask your personal tutor, departmental administrator, or SU Advice.

### Core, compulsory and optional modules

To understand the requirements to pass your course, you need to know the status of the modules that you are taking. You can find details of the status of your modules in Section C of your programme specification via [My Essex](#).

<b>Core</b>	You must take this module	Must pass this module. No failure can be permitted.
<b>Compulsory</b>	You must take this module	There might be limited opportunities to continue on the course/be eligible for the degree if you fail it.
<b>Optional</b>	You can choose which module to study	There might be limited opportunities to continue on the course/be eligible for the degree if you fail it.

Most modules in each year must be passed, with only a small number of credits, if any, being allowed to be failed in the degree.

### Academic Integrity and Academic Offences

The University expects students to complete all assessment with honesty and integrity and to follow our [conventions for academic writing](#) (including appropriate referencing of sources) and ethical considerations. If you don't meet these expectations, then you may be charged with having committed an [academic offence](#), a matter the University takes very seriously.

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

## Methods of Assessment in The School of Life Sciences

Whether a module is core, compulsory or optional, all methods of assessment are compulsory. If you do not complete coursework or attend examinations, and do not have extenuating circumstances to support your non-submission or absence, then you are at risk of being withdrawn from the University.

A wide range of different types of coursework and formal exams are used for assessment. The criteria we use for marking each type of assessed work are stated clearly in the School of Life Sciences Assessment Guide and are given on coursework feedback grids. A very important part of our teaching and your learning is the feedback that we give you on all assessed coursework; this may be comments written directly on your work, or on marks criteria grids, or it may be more general feedback included when the work is returned. You should review carefully and learn from all these sources of feedback. Whilst staff may give general feedback on the MCQ exams, you will not receive feedback on the summer exams, unless you specifically request it.

### Coursework

Coursework is compulsory in all modules and failure to participate in coursework is interpreted as evidence of lack of academic progress. Your academic progress is monitored throughout the year. In severe cases, students with poor academic progress can be required to withdraw from the University (even before the final examinations).

A variety of types of assessment are used in the School:

- Essays
- Worksheets, data analysis and interpretation (DAI) exercises;
- Practical field or lab reports: including SPF (Scientific Paper Format) reports;
- Posters;
- Oral presentations;
- Web-based, pod- or vodcast productions;
- A detailed written extended SPF Report for the Final Year Research Project;
- In class tests;
- Log books, portfolios and diaries particularly for work placements;

**Please refer to your separate School of Life Sciences Undergraduate Assessment Guide for guidance on writing, presentation, referencing and assessment of coursework.**

### Data Analysis and Interpretation (DAI) questions

DAI questions are an important part of our teaching and assessment and they are regularly commended by our External Examiners. The purpose of DAI questions is to test your understanding of a topic rather than testing simple factual recall. You should apply your understanding to *analyse* and *interpret* a set of information ('data') that you will not have previously encountered. The 'data' in the question could be quantitative (e.g. numbers in tables, graphs, images) or qualitative (e.g. descriptive phrases, hypotheses, attitudes, figures, photos). Broadly, *analysis* is the identification and description of the major features of the data. It may include a critical assessment of the quality of the data (e.g. correctness of the method used to collect it, appropriateness of experimental design) and of any associated statistical tests. *Interpretation* involves discussing possible reasons for the features identified which may relate to issues such as the underlying biological processes and/or limitations of the methodology. The questions will give guidance about what aspects of analysis is expected.

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You will be given training in how to deal with DAI questions appropriate to the module subject. This may be through examples of DAI in lectures, or through DAI being set as all or part of the coursework. A worked example of a final year DAI exam question will be provided for each module on Moodle.

### Assignment and essay length

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

Staff will pay strict attention to word limits. If you have a particular problem with the word limit, you should discuss your difficulties with the member of staff who set the work. If your work exceeds the word limit it may not be concise or well-focussed on the question and will require editing. If your work is significantly (>10%) below the word limit it is likely that you will not have covered the material in sufficient depth and you may receive a lower mark as a consequence.

### Referencing in coursework

Respecting authorship through good academic practice is one of the key values of higher education in the UK. Referencing is how you acknowledge all sources used within a piece of work. You must reference all work used whether cited directly (quotes), or indirectly (paraphrasing and summarising).

Referencing allows you to give credit to other's ideas, work, research, theories, concepts, outcomes and results, and demonstrates your breadth of reading and knowledge on a subject. If you do not reference properly, this could amount to [plagiarism](#), which is an [academic offence](#).

There are styles of referencing which will determine exactly how you format your reference. Your departmental referencing style is Harvard. You must use this referencing style. Guidance on your referencing style is available [online](#), including an interactive referencing tutorial. You can also take the [Academic Integrity course](#) on Moodle.

### Submission of coursework

You should submit all coursework online via [FASER](#) – the University's online submission system. (NB. There may be some Year 1 modules which require hard copy submission but you will be informed where this is applicable). You are encouraged to log on to FASER at the start of the year so that you understand how it works before you reach your first deadline. There is a trial module and deadline available for you to use as a practice submission, as well as helpful guidance on [how to use FASER](#).

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

### Problems with FASER

If you have technical difficulties: Please contact the [FASER Help centre](#) as soon as possible to find out if this is a University issue or whether it may be a problem with your computer. This will count towards your claim when submitting a late coursework form should you need to. You can also contact IT Services helpdesk on [it.helpdesk@essex.ac.uk](mailto:it.helpdesk@essex.ac.uk)

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If you are confused or unsure how to upload, or are having any non-technical difficulties you should contact your Undergraduate Administrator

### Late submission of coursework

We have a [single policy](#) at the University of Essex for the late submission of coursework in undergraduate courses: all coursework submitted after the deadline will receive a mark of **zero**. No extensions will be granted. The policy states that the mark of zero shall stand unless you submit satisfactory evidence of extenuating circumstances that indicate that you were unable to submit the work by the deadline.

Where a student is unable to undertake the assessment by the deadline, and it is deemed impossible to consider a late submission request due to the nature of the assessment (e.g. absence from in-class tests, practical assignments and presentations), an [extenuating circumstances](#) form should be submitted which will be considered by the Board of Examiners.

### Return of coursework

Marked work may be returned:

1. electronically via FASER. You will receive an email notification alert when your marked work is available.
2. in student pigeonholes in the Common Room. You will receive an email from the Undergraduate Office to advise you when your work is ready for collection. Please collect your work promptly.
3. directly to students in a feedback class or tutorial.

Marked work is normally returned within four weeks of submission

### Ethics in research

All research involving human participants, whether undertaken by the University's staff or students, **must** undergo an ethics review by an appropriate body and ethical approval **must** be obtained before it commences. You should first read the [Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants](#) and then submit an Ethical Approval application form via [ERAMS](#). You should be aware that ethical approval cannot be granted retrospectively so it is very important that you make your application before you start to recruit participants or collect data from them.

**Research involving the NHS may require and research involving human tissue or adults lacking capacity to consent will require Health Research Authority and / or NHS Research Ethics Committee approval.**

### Examinations

Attendance at examinations is **compulsory** and if you do not attend them and do not have [extenuating circumstances](#) then you are at risk of being withdrawn.

### Exam timetable

The University [publishes the dates for exam periods](#) at the start of each year. You will receive your personalised [exam timetable online](#) and will be sent an email to your Essex account when it is available to view.

Two types of examination assessment are used in the School

- Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) papers.

- Written exams, including short questions and longer essay questions.

The main exam period takes place from Weeks 33-36. Exam scheduling can include Saturdays and Bank Holidays.

**Some exams will be scheduled outside of the main exam period. Multiple Choice Exams (MCQs) for some Year 1 modules will be scheduled in Week 15 (week commencing 11 January 2021) and Week 30 (first week of the summer term). Attendance at the MCQs is compulsory and you should be aware that Week 15 is the week before the start of the spring term.**

**Year 2 Biomedical Science Students will also have MCQ exams which will take place in week 32.**

Please do not book any holidays or trips during the MCQ exam weeks.

### Attending an exam

You must bring your registration card and [exam entry form](#) to all invigilated exams where these take place. You will not be allowed entry without them. Remember to check your exam entry form carefully and email the Examinations Office ([exams@essex.ac.uk](mailto:exams@essex.ac.uk)) if there are any errors.

For exams that are more than 1 hour long, you will not be allowed to enter the examination room if you arrive later than 55 minutes after the start of the exam. If your exam is only 1 hour long, you will only be admitted up to 10 minutes after the start of the exam.

### Calculators in Examinations

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

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

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

### Dictionaries

Dictionaries are not allowed during invigilated exams. If you take any kind of dictionary into an invigilated exam, even if English is not your first language, this will be considered and reported as an [academic offence](#).

### Sample and past papers

Sample exam papers are available for Year 1 modules on Moodle, specially devised to help you prepare for your summer exam. Past exam papers for Year 2 and Final Year modules are available on Moodle. Final Year past exam papers will not include the DAI question but a suitable sample DAI question will be provided. Bear in mind that the detailed content of a module can change from year to year, so papers from previous years may contain questions no longer relevant.

### Revision classes

Revision classes will be timetabled at the beginning of the summer term.

## Common Terms Used in Exam Questions

Below are some of the terms commonly used in exam questions. Make sure you tailor your exam answers to the term used. For example, do not write a long description for a 'List...' question and note that you will get very few marks for writing a single line in answer to a question stating "Discuss..."

**Define** - Give the definition, but do not elaborate or explain. A typical answer will be a phrase or a single sentence.

**State or Give** - Answers will be a phrase, a short sentence or other single item of information e.g. state the first law of thermodynamics, give the formula for the standard error or a chemical compound. You should not be elaborating on this by describing or explaining it. The answer requires factual recall.

**List** - Do just that. Your answer should be a list of single words, phrases or (rarely) short sentences. Do not elaborate by describing or explaining items on the list. Typically 'List' is used for Year 1 short questions. The answer requires factual recall.

**Calculate** - Manipulate figures and/or formulae provided to obtain an answer.

**Outline** - Describe briefly (i.e. the main points) or give an overview. Much less detail required than for 'Describe' (see below). This is typically a Year 1 question.

**Describe** - Give an account of the material/topic/area (e.g. a structure, process, data or theory), using examples if appropriate. Labelled diagram(s) may be included. The answer requires predominantly factual recall.

**Derive (= prove)** - Show how a conclusion is obtained from a given set of premises by a series of logically or mathematically valid steps.

**Suggest** - Typically this will occur as a Data Analysis and Interpretation (DAI) question, where you are being asked to put forward possible reasons for the features of a set of data. You might also be asked to 'Explain' (see below) why your suggestions are appropriate.

**Compare** - As for 'Describe' but there must be an explicit identification and account of those points where there are similarities or differences

**Explain** - Present the relevant information to show knowledge and understanding, using examples and diagrams if appropriate. The answer requires some degree of analysis of the relationships/connections/comparisons between sets of information (e.g. structure and function, theory and evidence) and an ability to integrate this information. The answer requires factual recall, understanding and the ability to present the relevant information logically and clearly in continuous prose (i.e. not in note form).

**Discuss** - As for 'Explain' but, in addition, information must be selected, critically examined and evaluated, for example, discrepancies between facts and theories or between conflicting sets of facts should be examined and where possible resolved to produce a balanced answer. The answer requires factual recall, understanding, critical evaluation of information and integration.

Good answers to questions using Describe, Suggest, Compare, Explain, Discuss should include evidence of reading. Even 'Define' or 'State'-type questions could give evidence of reading by, for example, quoting the author of a definition. In Year 1 this 'evidence of reading' may be text books, but in Year 2 and the final year more extensive reading is required. Reviews and specialist texts form the bulk of the Year 2 reading. In the final year students are expected to read selected original papers as well as reviews.



## Exam stress

[Exams create stress](#) for most people, but there is a lot that you can do to prepare for them and help manage the levels of stress associated with exams. The University's Skills for Success Team offers a series of [Exam Workshops](#) which are run by specialist staff. These sessions cover revision planning and techniques, as well as sessions on relaxation and how to cope with stress. Staff in the [Student Services Hub](#) can also provide sessions on stress management if required.

## Access to your exam script

If you want to see your script for an invigilated exam, you should make the request to the department responsible for the module within four weeks of the exam. The department should either: let you see the script in the presence of one of the staff responsible for teaching the module or give you a copy or summary of the examiners' comments on your performance. If you need to undertake an exam as part of reassessment on a module, your department will provide you with written feedback on any elements being reassessed.

**Feedback on your exam script will not include a discussion of the mark. The marks will have been approved by External Examiners and ratified by the Board of Examiners.**

## Moderation and marking

The [University's Marking Policy](#) can be found online and includes our policy and procedure on the moderation of work.

### Marking

All student work is marked in line with the University's Marking Policy. If your assessment is worth up to and including 40% of your module mark, it will be marked by one member of academic staff. If it is worth more than 40%, then it will also be moderated. If the assessment is worth 30 credits or more, it will be marked by two members of academic staff. The full procedure and assessment marking requirements can be found in the [Marking Policy](#) – there is a useful flowchart in Appendix C to visually represent the requirements, and detailed definitions of marking and moderation within the policy itself.

### Moderation

Moderation is a process separate from that of marking and provides additional assurance that the assessment criteria has been applied appropriately. When work is moderated, it means that a second member of academic staff takes a random sample of the work for a particular assessment and reviews the marks given.

### External Examiners

External Examiners are academics from other universities, but may also be from industry, business or the relevant profession depending on the requirements of the course. They give an impartial view of the course and independent advice to ensure that modules and courses at the University meet the academic standards expected across UK higher education

### Re-marking of coursework

You may, under certain circumstances, have the right to [request a re-mark](#) of your coursework. Should you feel that your work needs to be reviewed and potentially re-marked, you should first contact your department to advise you accordingly and assess whether you meet the criteria to be able to submit a request for re-marking.

If a request for a re-mark is accepted, your marks are **not guaranteed** to increase, however, **the mark awarded after re-marking will override your original mark**. Therefore, please be aware that in all incidences where coursework is re-marked, it is possible that your marks could go down, as well as up.

## Appeals

[Appeals on academic grounds](#) can be made following the meeting of the Board of Examiners and the publication of your results. There are limited grounds available to appeal on and strict deadlines to adhere to. As such, we strongly advise all students thinking about making an appeal to contact the [SU Advice Centre](#).

## Feedback

A very important part of our teaching and your learning is the feedback that we give you on all assessed coursework; this may be comments written directly on your work, or on marks criteria grids, or it may be more general feedback included when the work is returned. You should review carefully and learn from all these sources of feedback. Whilst staff may give general feedback on the MCQ exams, you will not receive feedback on the summer exams, unless you specifically request it.

If you need to undertake any reassessment on a module, your department will provide you with written feedback on any elements being reassessed.

## The Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners meet at the end of the Summer Term and use the Rules of Assessment to determine whether:

- you have passed the modules you have studied and can be awarded credit
- you have met the requirements to progress to the next year of your course
- you have met the requirements to pass your course and what classification you will receive for each module
- how your module marks are used to calculate your degree classification
- you are eligible to receive a merit or distinction

If it determined that you have not passed sufficient credits to progress to the next stage of study, or, for final year students, to graduate, the Board of Examiners will also determine:

- what reassessment you could be offered and when you can take it<sup>1</sup>
- whether you must withdraw from your course, with or without an exit award

## Publication of results

The publication schedule for results can be [found on the website](#). You will receive an email to your Essex email account as soon as your results are published online.

## Reassessment

You may only undertake reassessment if the Board of Examiners says that you may do so.

If you have to take compulsory reassessment, whether coursework or examination, it is really important that you do this. If you do not, it is likely that you will be unable to progress with your studies at the University. The Board of Examiners will not consider permitting you to proceed carrying fails if you have not undertaken the required reassessment offered.

Reassessed modules are normally capped at the pass mark of 40% unless you have extenuating circumstances which are accepted by the Exam Board. Please be aware that reassessment in examinations and coursework carries a fee.

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<sup>1</sup> The Board of Examiners will not be aware of any student's immigration status. As a result, some reassessment options may be offered that are not compatible with individual Tier 4 visa rules. All options should be considered in conjunction with applicable visa restrictions.

In the School of Life Sciences, where a module is assessed by coursework and exam, reassessment will be offered as follows:

- Coursework aggregate <40 and exam 40 or above and module aggregate failed – reassessment in coursework to be re-aggregated with exam mark to create a new module aggregate
- Coursework aggregate 40 or above and exam < 40 and module aggregate failed – reassessment in exam to be re-aggregated with coursework mark to create a new module aggregate
- Both coursework and exam aggregates <40 – reassessment in coursework and exam to be aggregated to create a new module aggregate

**If a student requires reassessment in the exam element of a module which is assessed by both MCQ and summer exam, they will be offered reassessment in whichever (or both) elements they have failed. If they have only failed one element (e.g. the MCQ), the new mark will be integrated with the other exam element to form the new exam aggregate.**

Where a module is assessed exclusively by exam, it will be reassessed exclusively by exam.

Where a module is assessed exclusively by coursework, it will be reassessed exclusively by coursework.

#### **Coursework resubmission:**

- For the majority of modules the coursework element reassessment opportunity will comprise of one item of work equivalent to the entire coursework component of each module. This new coursework mark will be re-aggregated with the existing exam marks for a new module aggregate. However, for some modules reassessment will be offered in the relevant area(s) of failure according to the individual item(s) failed. The new mark(s) will be re-aggregated with the existing coursework marks for a new module aggregate.

#### **Resit exams**

[Resit exams](#) are usually scheduled in early September or 'out of residence' in the summer of the following year. A considerable amount of useful revision material for each module is available on Moodle. Students can contact staff, particularly Module Supervisors for the modules they are resitting if they need help with revision or specific queries (do not leave this until the last minute as staff availability will be reduced throughout the summer). Staff can give individual feedback on summer exam performance, if requested.

#### **Exit Awards**

If you decide to withdraw from your course before you finish, or you fail too many credits to be awarded a Bachelor's degree, you may be awarded a qualification at a lower level, if appropriate.

#### **Extenuating Circumstances**

[Extenuating circumstances](#) are circumstances beyond your control which cause you to perform less well in your assessment than you might have expected, or in some instances, may prevent you from submitting coursework or attending an exam entirely. In general, valid extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affect you for any significant period of time and/or during assessment.

If you do need to make an extenuating circumstances claim, you should first read the guidance very carefully and seek advice from [SU Advice](#) or the [Student Services Hub](#). Please be prepared that you

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may need to include supporting evidence with your claim. Extenuating circumstance claims must be submitted via MyEssex by the [appropriate deadline](#).

Your department will review your claim at an Extenuating Circumstances Committee and determine whether it will be accepted or rejected. The [Board of Examiners](#) will determine an appropriate course of action, such as permitting further reassessment opportunities for uncapped marks. Please note that extra marks **cannot** be given in light of extenuating circumstances.

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# Computers, Learning Technologies and your Information

## Computers

### Using a campus computer

If you [need to use a computer on campus](#) our computer labs are the perfect place to study or work. We also have group study pods which are ideal for group projects. Many labs stay open until late and some are open 24/7. Labs may be booked for teaching, and so it is best to check availability first.

### IT Help and Guidance

You can search the [Student Directory](#) for more IT information, including [software available](#) to students, how-to guides, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to video screencasts.

If you can't find what you're looking for, or if you need to talk to someone, then the [IT Helpdesk team](#) are here to assist you further.

## Learning Technologies and Systems

### Learner Engagement Activity Portal (LEAP)

[LEAP](#) is our student centred, personalised engagement tool. LEAP displays your engagement with university resources and an algorithm within LEAP combines your use of these resources and activities to produce an overall engagement indicator. There are 5 engagement indicators (high, good, partial, low and very low) which will help you map and better understand your engagement pattern over time. Full details on the resources included in LEAP, the engagement ratings and how LEAP uses your data can be found on the [LEAP webpage](#).

By providing you with a more holistic view of your studying experience, LEAP offers you the opportunity to take control of your own learning and make more informed choices about your studies, enabling you to:

- Reflect on your academic activities and overall engagement to make informed decisions about your academic studies
- Review the notes created in LEAP from meetings with Tutors or other university staff
- Check your attendance and ensure the information is correct

Tutors and other university staff may use the information in LEAP to:

- Suggest ways you could achieve better outcomes
- Check that all is well and offer information, advice and guidance
- Help you in areas of your studies that you are finding a challenge

### Moodle

We use [Moodle](#) as our online learning environment. It holds key course and module materials, discussion forums, chat facilities, quizzes, surveys, glossaries and wikis.

### FASER

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

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## Online reading lists

Reading lists can be accessed [online](#). Use this service to find out the details of each week's reading and to access resources through the library.

## Listen Again

Did you miss something? Our [Listen Again](#) digital recording service lets you listen again to lectures, so you grasp every detail. It's available in teaching rooms or lecture theatres where you see the sign.

## Zoom

You can use Zoom to join online lectures delivered by the University or attend online meetings and tutorials. If your lecture or class is going to be online, we will let you know in advance and the link to join will be in your timetable or emails.

This [quick start guide](#) gives you an introduction to the essentials of joining and participating in a Zoom webinar or meeting.

## Your information

### Changes to your information

During your period of study at Essex, you may wish to be known by a preferred name or update your legal name on our student record database (ESIS) if your circumstances change. It is important you keep your information up to date, which you can [manage and update online](#).

### Your personal information

We collect and hold lots of information about you, your course, and your progress so that we know who you are, what you're doing, and how you are getting on. This means we can support you and also improve our services to reflect the need of our students.

All information about you is kept securely, and access to your information is only given to staff who need it in order to do their job. Where possible, we will ask you for your permission to share.

You have a [right to ask for copies of information](#) we hold about you. To find out more about what information we collect, what we do with it, who gets to see it, and your rights under the data Protection Act 2018, read our [Privacy Notice for students](#).

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## Student Voice

At the University of Essex, the views, ideas and feedback of our students are at the heart of what the University does. The time students take to offer feedback is hugely appreciated and this feedback, both positive and developmental, is used to help make short and longer-term improvements, both to the experience of current students, but also for Essex students of the future. You can do this in a number of ways at Essex through your [Student Voice](#).

## Student Representatives

You can contact or volunteer to be a [student representative](#) who represent the voice of fellow students in departmental Student Voice Groups (SVG) and other University level committees.

## Student Voice Groups

[Student Voice Groups](#) (SVGs) are made up of **student representatives** and members of staff. SVGs typically meet once per term and provide an accessible arena for students to discuss with staff issues connected to teaching, learning and student support. They also provide an opportunity for the department or school to consult with students and receive feedback on new proposals.

## Student Surveys

[Student satisfaction surveys](#) enable the University to gauge overall satisfaction amongst students. When the results have been reviewed and analysed, the University can then enhance your experience of learning at Essex.

## National Student Survey

The [National Student Survey \(NSS\)](#) is an independent survey commissioned by the Office for Students aimed mainly at final-year undergraduate students. The survey provides students the opportunity to provide feedback on their University course and experience. The feedback you provide will be used to help shape the future for your fellow students and published on the Discover Uni website to help prospective students make informed decisions about where and what they want to study.

## UK Engagement Survey (UKES)

The [UK Engagement Survey \(UKES\)](#) is a national survey for undergraduate students. It invites you to reflect on your time at University so far in relation to your course and wider learning experience. The survey is run each spring term and is open to first, second and some third/final year students.

We're keen to make sure students have the best possible experience while studying at the University. To do that we need to know what we are doing well and what we can do better. The survey is a chance to reflect on how you study and what might help your studies in future. The results also help the University and Students Union to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to make sure we keep doing the things that are of value to students.

If you're eligible to complete the survey, we will contact you in the Spring Term to invite you to take part.

## Student Module Feedback

Every year, we will ask you to complete [Student Module Feedback](#) (previously known as Student Assessment of Module and Teaching, or SAMT). This survey allows you to feedback on each of the modules you have studied. Receiving feedback at this level is critical for the University to understand what works well, and what could be improved, from the perspective of students. All feedback will be summarised and discussed by SVGs and will inform reports written for central University committees as part of our quality assurance processes.

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There are also many [other satisfaction surveys](#) taking place, to ensure students are happy with the services the University of Essex provides. From time to time you will be invited to participate via an email.

If you have some feedback but don't know who to tell, email: [studentvoice@essex.ac.uk](mailto:studentvoice@essex.ac.uk)



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## You Matter

We know university life can throw up all kinds of concerns and questions. Everyone has [mental health](#) – sometimes your mental health may be good, other times it may be not so good. It could be stress related to deadlines, general worries or concerns about friends and family members. Whatever is worrying you, if you need some information, advice or support, the University offer a wide range of services and support to help you.

## Student Services Hub

If you need practical advice, a confidential conversation, or general information and guidance on University life, no matter what the issue is, the [Student Services Hub](#) can help. You can find out about health and wellbeing, accommodation, careers services, money matters and much more. Your questions matter and you'll get answers from our team of experts.

**To Contact the Student Services Hub please use this link to access our web pages and talk to us on Live Chat: [Ask the Hub](#)**

## Support for disabilities and conditions

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

## Funding opportunities

UK students may be eligible for a [Disabled Students' Allowance grant](#). If you are not a UK student, you may be eligible for [other grants and funding](#). We would recommend you [contacting the Student Services Hub](#) to discuss all the options that may be available to you, as well as for general advice, support and information on health and wellbeing issues.

## Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

If you have a permanent or temporary disability that may mean you have difficulty in evacuating one or more areas, you can arrange for a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(PEEP\)](#).

## Seeing a Doctor

If you're studying on a course for more than six months, you're required to register with a local doctor. Our Colchester Campus has its own [health centre](#) or you can use the [NHS Choices postcode](#) finder to find your nearest doctor. If you require emergency medical or mental health services, there are a [number of options available](#) both through the NHS and also the University, regardless which campus you are studying at.

## Counselling services

Our University offers a wide [range of services and resources](#) to support all of our students. with a variety of counselling opportunities.

If you feel you would benefit from support, including counselling, please [contact your Student Services Hub](#). [You can find more information, including the full range of counselling services available to you.](#)

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## UK Immigration Advice and Guidance

[Immigration advice and guidance](#) is regulated in the UK by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) and can only be given by those that are authorised to do so. We publish lots of information and guidance on our website for students and you can contact one of our authorised advice services via the 'ask us a question section' for further advice about the UK's student immigration rules.

## Money management

If you get into financial difficulty you should get help and talk to someone as soon as possible. The sooner your problem is identified, the sooner it can be solved. You may be eligible to apply for financial support to assist you with short-term unexpected and unforeseen costs. Advisers in our [Student Services Hub](#) and our independent [Students' Union Advice](#) can listen and talk you through the issues you are experiencing.

## Students' Union Advice

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

**Colchester students** – [suadvice@essex.ac.uk](mailto:suadvice@essex.ac.uk); 01206 874034

**Southend students** – [suacsou@essex.ac.uk](mailto:suacsou@essex.ac.uk); 01702 328235 (term time only)

**Loughton students** – [suaclou@essex.ac.uk](mailto:suaclou@essex.ac.uk); 01206 874034

## Residence Life

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

## Religion, faith and beliefs

We're proud of our vibrant and diverse [multicultural community](#) and welcome everyone, of all faiths and none. The calm, friendly and supportive atmosphere in our Faith Centre is a welcoming place for staff, students and the wider community to meet, interact and engage with each other.

## Harassment support

We are Essex. We pride ourselves on being a [welcoming and inclusive student community](#). We offer a wide [range of support](#) to individuals and groups of student members who may have specific requirements, interests or responsibilities – to help you fulfil your potential.

We encourage a culture of dignity and respect. We're committed to upholding an environment that's free from any form of harassment or bullying. Though rare, these incidents can occur and if they do our [Harassment Report and Support Service](#) of trained Harassment Support Workers are on hand to help.

## COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

The health and wellbeing of our students is our priority. This means we are constantly monitoring advice from the UK Government, Public Health England, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the World Health Organisation, and updating our guidance on students in line with their advice.

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Our [guidance to students on protecting yourself and others from COVID-19](#) is updated regularly. It is advisable to check the page frequently to be sure you are up to date with the latest guidance and information from the University.

## **Health and safety on campus**

Our campuses are generally very [safe environments](#). We want to ensure that things stay this way. In order to achieve this, we work closely with local agencies including the police and borough councils. Take a look at our website for [general information and advice](#).

Please familiarise yourself with [fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures](#) for your accommodation, work or study location. If you have a permanent or temporary disability that may mean you have difficulty in evacuating one or more areas, you can arrange for a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(PEEP\)](#).

Please take note of our [advice on the safe use of electrical items and prohibited electrical items](#) in residential and non-residential areas.

All students residing on campus should complete the Moodle [Fire Safety Course for Residents training](#).

If you have any health and safety concerns or need to report an incident, please use the [University's reporting service](#) to notify us.

## **Making a Complaint**

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

The University aims to resolve complaints quickly and informally in accordance with the [Student concerns and complaints procedure](#) which can be found on our website.

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## Student Development

### Careers Services

The Career Services team offer a programme of information, advice, guidance and support through various events, workshops and one- to- one sessions. We also have teams dedicated to Work Based Learning, Placements and Internships that can provide information and support as needed. Find out more about the Career Services available to you here: <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/careers/>

### CareerHub

Find hundreds of part-time jobs, internships and graduate vacancies, book on to careers events and workshops, take career assessments, practice your interview skills, build your CV, and connect with employers on **CareerHub**, the online Essex careers and jobs portal. Login with your Essex username and password.

[careerhub.essex.ac.uk/students/login](https://careerhub.essex.ac.uk/students/login)

### Big Essex Award

The Big Essex Award is a way to get recognition for the extra-curricular and voluntary activities that you complete during your time at Essex, both on and off campus. All verified activities will be included on your university digital transcript, the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

### Chart Your Path

New for 20-21! Discover the range of amazing opportunities available to you at Essex. Use Chart Your Path to find activities, resources and support that are right for you. Build your Essex Strengths and track your development journey as you go. Activate your Gradintelligence account to get started: <https://gradintel.com/index.php/en/account-support/recover/students>

### Volunteering

Join the vTeam and be the difference. There are plenty of opportunities to **volunteer** during your time at Essex. The vTeam, run by the Students Union, is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, make friends, give something to the local community, and gain valuable skills.

[www.essex.su/vteam](https://www.essex.su/vteam)

### Essex Interns

Essex interns create paid internships exclusively for you as an Essex student. They're flexible too; part time during term time or full time in vacations. You can even take part up to three years after you graduate, as part of our Essex graduates support package. Sign up for Essex Interns to kick-start your career.

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

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## You Are Essex

### Year and Degree Marks

Once your exam board has met, it can take between 7-10 working days for your results to be confirmed and published. The University's [exam board and publication of results schedule](#) is updated in the summer term, and you will be notified once this information is available online. As soon as your results are ready, you will be sent an email and directed to a password protected web page. You will be able to see your marks obtained and any decisions that you must make in order to progress to the next stage of study.

When in your final year of study, graduating students will receive a [degree certificate](#) at Graduation and will also be able to access your electronic [Higher Education Achievement Record \(HEAR\)](#); which gives details of all marks obtained during your studies.

### Graduation

The culmination of all your hard work! [Graduation](#) ceremonies for undergraduate students take place at our Colchester Campus each July in the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall. All eligible students studying at our Colchester, Loughton and Southend Campuses will be invited to attend.

Students with exam boards held in Autumn term will be invited to attend our Winter Graduation ceremony where these are held; students with exam boards held in Spring or Summer term will be invited to attend our Summer Graduation ceremony.

### HEAR

When you study at Essex, you graduate with far more than just a degree. We have replaced the traditional hard-copy transcript with the [Higher Education Achievement Report \(HEAR\)](#) which not only showcases a full record of your academic achievements, but also any activities you have undertaken and logged through the Big Essex Award, and any other awards and prizes that you may have received.

When you graduate, you will have full electronic access to your HEAR for free for life. You will be able to share this with employers and other universities by providing them with a University-certified record of your achievements. You will receive an e-mail from GradIntelligence to enable you to activate your account log-in. As soon as you do this you can start accessing your HEAR!

### References

#### Requesting references from members of staff

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

For example, final year project supervisors, year organisers, and core course supervisors are likely to be more suitable than lecturers that have taught you on a first-year option course. Every reasonable effort will be made to meet a request for reference for a student who has undertaken study within our Department. Requests received from students who have graduated from the University within the last three years will be prioritised. Requests received outside of this period may, of course, be met if a member of staff is equipped with the necessary information and is willing to provide a reference.

It is always helpful if you can provide the member of staff with details about the course or job you have applied for and, if relevant, a CV or other summary of your qualifications and experience. Please

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try to ask for references in good time – it is not always possible for a member of staff to write a reference immediately.

### **Copies of references**

A copy of any reference provided will be retained within our department for no longer than three years for taught students.

### **Alumni**

Essex is forever and although your time here will fly by, you'll be part of the Essex family for life. When you graduate, you'll get an alumni card and join a community of over 100,000 fellow graduates around the world. We'd love to keep in touch and invite you to our alumni events, networking and volunteering opportunities, as well as offer you special alumni benefits. Want to know more? Visit [our website!](#)

### **What comes next?**

The world is your oyster! The options and opportunities open to you as a graduate can be overwhelming. You may know the exact path and next steps that you wish to take, or you might not, and this is okay. Our Careers Services can offer information, guidance and advice on your different options after graduation and you can return to Essex for these services at any time. Whether it is discussing different career paths, bringing your CV or LinkedIn profile up to date, or prepping for that interview you have worked all year for, the Student Development Team are here to support you.

Spread your wings graduand; but you can always come back! As an alumnus of Essex, you can take advantage of [generous discounts](#) on [postgraduate qualifications and degrees](#) if you chose to return to study at Essex as a postgraduate student.

We are proud of our world-class research at Essex and your invitation to contribute is lifelong. If you do decide to stay on for further study with us, you'll develop extensive knowledge in your chosen area and learn from some of the top academics in the field. You can explore our [incredible range of courses](#) online.

Whatever you choose to do, please stay in touch! Keep us up to date with your achievements and explore the variety of ways through which you can give back to Essex too.

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## Appendix 1: Guide for First Year Students

The first year of a degree course is an important time of adjustment to the demands of University study and forms the foundation for your remaining years of study. Careful management of your time is critical to a successful year. If you keep on top of your work you should have a very enjoyable time. You are expected to spend 1.5 hours of time in private study for every hour attending taught components (lectures, practicals, tutorials, classes) with academic staff. You should therefore expect to spend approximately 40 hours a week on taught work with academic staff and your private study.

Some students feel that as they only have to pass all modules in the first year, they do not need to try to get good marks. This is completely wrong: good performance in the first year lays the foundation to good achievements in the second and final year and therefore to a good degree classification. There are also minimum thresholds for Placement and Year Abroad courses. Remember that while Year 1 marks do not contribute to your degree classification, they will appear on your transcript.

During term-time the Year Organiser, Dr Gareth D. Jones, will advertise his office hours (currently TBC). Students may email for an appointment at other times, but if you need to speak to him urgently ask the Undergraduate Office. Other members of staff that may be able to help you are your Personal Tutor, the Senior Tutor and Course Directors.

### Important Information about Year 1

Each module consists of 24 lectures, up to 2 or 3 × 3 hour practical sessions (or equivalent), 1 hour of directed learning based on 1 or 2 module objectives, and 2 revision sessions, one at the end of the module and one early in the summer term. Generally, Year 1 modules are assessed by 33% coursework and 67% exam. The exceptions to this are BS141 which is assessed by coursework (50%) and MCQ (50%) and BS114 and BS143 which are assessed purely by coursework. Details of the assessments for these modules are in the Module Handbooks. To proceed to the second year, you must obtain a pass (40%) in all modules (there are additional requirements on some degree courses – see the according Rules of Assessment).

### Exams

For most modules, the exam mark is derived from the summer exam mark (worth 50%) and the MCQ (multiple choice question) mark (worth 50%). MCQs are 50 minute exams, held in weeks 15 and 30. Each MCQ will comprise questions covering all the material of the module. These are designed to assess your retention of module material and your grasp of fundamental concepts. They also give you and staff a rapid assessment of your performance during the term. Each correct answer will be worth one mark. Incorrect or unanswered questions score zero. These MCQs will be carried out online. At the end of the summer term all modules except BS114, BS143 and BS141 will be examined by a series of formal one hour exams, composed of a series of compulsory short questions and a single long-answer (essay) section.

### Lectures

Lectures will provide you with the basic information but you should not expect your lecture notes always to provide you with a complete, understandable account of the subject. You should be prepared to supplement them by reading recommended textbooks and scientific articles and working this information into the framework that the lecturer has given. Evidence of additional reading will help you to obtain high exam marks. Lecturers do not necessarily follow textbooks closely, so it is only by going to lectures that you can obtain the framework for the course. Lectures give a framework of material and of explanations of a topic and should stimulate your interest. They are not expected to include all material or to give complete understanding. Material needs to be consolidated by additional reading/additional notes (this is part of what we call 'student managed learning'). Exam answers require factual recall and understanding and evidence of reading.

### Requirements of a Good Set of Notes

Lecture notes should provide a comprehensive, comprehensible and inviting guide for future private study/revision. In conjunction with module objectives they should tell you: what you need to know, what level of detail is required, what particular themes, comparisons, connections are important, where you have particular difficulties/weaknesses and where you may need to concentrate your study. Your notes should be sufficiently well organised that you can find your way round them/understand them at some later date. So, in lectures take NOTE (i.e. listen, be selective, think) as well as taking notes. Concentrate on points being emphasised, principles/themes being described/explored and on following the thread of arguments. Factual details are easily obtained later.

Make the process as active as possible; put your stamp on the material. Use headings, so you can see how the lecture is constructed and so it is easy to find your way around material. Use colour, use abbreviations. Develop system of shorthand signs to mark material e.g. ?? don't understand; + told to read about this; λ missed something; → to indicate connections; and underline to indicate something stressed as important. Write on one side of the page only so there is a blank page opposite to add in relevant extra material. The key to efficient use of lecture notes is to get actively involved with them on several different time scales. Stashing them away until two weeks before the exam is not a good strategy and neither is a passive copying up of your notes in neat form.

As soon as possible after a lecture:

- 1) Read through notes while still fresh in your mind e.g. the same day.
- 2) Add headings, define abbreviations, insert symbols as above to clarify your notes.
- 3) What did I learn from this lecture? Summarise in writing at the end the key points covered, use a list of key words or a flow diagram which shows the structure of the lecture.
- 4) Try and sort out which objectives have been covered and note them down at the start or end of your notes. This need only take 5-10 mins but actively involves you in the information which helps your memory and gives you an overview of where this lecture was going, how it relates to the last and to the next lecture.

Before the next lecture:

- 1) Try to sort out (at least in outline) any major points you have not understood in the previous lecture. The next lecture may assume an understanding/knowledge of the previous one.
- 2) Read a simple account in the textbook of the point(s) involved, possibly adding useful key points to your notes in the correct place on the blank sheet opposite.
- 3) Take your last lecture notes to the next lecture and read your summary before the lecture starts.
- 4) Compose any questions that you might have to the lecturer teaching the course.

Sometime later e.g. during weekends/vacations:

- 1) Systematically work through your notes consolidating material and adding to or expanding on notes on the blank sheet opposite. Use the textbook to fill in details or for alternative ways of explaining points/expressing ideas.
- 2) Make summaries of topics in words or flow diagrams. Make mind-maps (spider diagrams) to show connections and to highlight themes, comparisons etc. Add these to your notes. Insert any relevant ideas, facts from practical work.
- 3) Cross reference lecture material to course objectives, checking off whether you think you can meet the objectives.



- 4) Explore connections between modules. Modules are not stand alone and are integrated at various different levels.

#### Practicals

For practicals where you are sub-divided into groups please ensure that you stay within the group number that you are allocated and check the timetable to ensure that you attend the correct practical sessions. Practical sessions are designed to complement and supplement the lectures. They may be used to illustrate or explore a topic covered in a lecture, to familiarise you with a particular practical technique, or both. They are also used to develop your skills in accurate observation, clear recording of data, presentation of results in an appropriate fashion and the interpretation of these results in the form of a written report. The problems of the design of experiments and of sampling programmes will be introduced and there will be considerable emphasis on the use of statistics in the analysis of data. Statistical analysis of data can be carried out in computer labs on the University campus.

In most module handbooks there is a schedule of instructions for each practical within that module. Read it before the session so that you know what you are doing and why you are doing it. A clear idea of the basic rationale can save a great deal of time and reduce errors during the actual practical.

You will be expected to produce a report of your practical work and/or complete a worksheet either during/after the practical. Also, completion of the assessment associated with a practical may require completion of a set of questions using poll software or logging onto a Moodle 'quiz' test where you complete a set of questions using data and information relevant to that practical. The schedule should make it clear how the coursework associated with each practical is assessed. Briefly, you should write up the practical as it proceeds with all data, drawings and observations recorded in their final form during the practical. Do not make 'rough' notes, sketches, etc., to be copied up later; you may find that you cannot understand them or have forgotten essential details and that there is no one around to ask. For reports in 'scientific paper format' the written interpretation and discussion of your results can be done after the practical although it makes sense to think about it during the practical, when help is available. Once again, complete this part of each practical while the details are still fresh in your mind.

#### Tutorials

A tutorial consists of a small group of students with a member of staff. The aim of the tutorial programme is to develop intellectual, study and transferable skills using biological or biochemical material as a context. Tutorials provide valuable instruction and are a critical part of your preparation for the second and third years. Details of the tutorial programme are given in the BS143 Module Handbook. Tutorials enable students to develop a relationship with their personal tutor which will be maintained during their years of study and allow personalised advice, support and academic references to be provided. Do not waste this opportunity by failing to attend.

#### Text Books

All recommended books are available from the University Library and multiple copies of the essential texts are held in both the short loan and open sections of the library. Remember that you may not get immediate access to these books at times when there is great demand for them, such as just before a deadline for handing in work or at exam time.

**You will be given electronic access to Campbell BIOLOGY 10<sup>th</sup> edition by Reece JB, Urry LA, Cain ML, Wasserman SA, Minorsky PV, Jackson RB, Campbell NA. (2015) Pearson, USA,**

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**Biomedical Science students will be given electronic access to Fundamentals of Anatomy and Physiology 10th Ed (global) with Mastering A&P, Martini FH, Nath JL and Bartholomew EF**

Further essential general texts will be needed, depending on your degree course.

Module-Specific texts:

Each module handbook contains details of key module-specific texts, all of which are available in the University Library. Generally essential module-specific texts are of value to more than one module and will be used in the second year. You do not need to buy the additional texts, but you should refer to them and you may want to buy the ones that are relevant for your chosen second year degree course.

If you are considering buying additional or alternative textbooks, especially if they are costly, we advise you to speak to your module lecturer first; some texts are unsuitable, unreliable or outdated. Second-hand copies of textbooks can sometimes be purchased from Second and Third-Year students. However, if you are buying second-hand books, check that they are not old editions – some subjects progress quickly and information soon becomes out of date. A syndicate of students can often buy an expensive text, sharing the cost.

Year one structure

For detailed information on the structure of your course in year one please refer to the structure charts found on Moodle under the Information for Current Students page.

<https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=7107>

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## Appendix 2: Guide for Second Year Students

### General Information

This year is important not only because the marks count towards your final degree class but also because the knowledge and understanding of the subject material which you gain will form an essential basis for your third year modules. In addition, developing and improving your key skills and study skills this year will yield great benefits in your final year and future career.

In the second year you will find that you have fewer contact hours in lectures and practicals. This is because you are expected to spend more time in private study to complement your lectures and in completing the coursework for each module. You will not be able to do this work to an acceptable standard if you spend less than 40 hours per week on your studies.

Private study comprises the student managed learning which you will find referred to in module handbooks. It includes reading to consolidate, understand and extend lecture material in preparation for the summer exams, directed learning, preparing and producing assessed coursework, reading through practical details before the practical, writing up practical work, preparing for classes and revision for exams. Evidence of additional reading as directed by your Module Supervisor is essential if you wish to obtain good marks in essays and exams.

To be successful this year you will need to organise, plan and prioritise your work. Deadlines for all practical and other coursework associated with each module will be found in each module handbook. In allocating your time to different components of your work you should bear in mind their assessment value (see individual modules' handbooks) and plan to use your time in the most efficient way. An important point here relates to the end of year exams, which, for the majority of modules are the single most important component in terms of assessment. A common fault is to spend too much time on preparing assessed coursework and practical reports during the year and thus leaving preparation for the exams until it is too late. Staff regularly complain that exam answers show evidence of patchy revision and lack of detail!

### Professional Skills and Career Development

All students undertake practical work to develop their subject-related skills (for example laboratory or field work) which is completed at the end of the spring or summer term of Year 1 or during the summer vacation. Additional career development and professional skills learning will be undertaken either as part of the same module, or a separate module during Year 2. These modules are assessed by coursework only.

### Subject Modules

Just as in your first year, lectures in second year are an important place for you to learn about the subject. You should note that there is a strong, positive correlation between lecture attendance and exam performance, so you should make sure that you attend lectures. However lecture notes alone will not be enough to enable you to do well in coursework and exams because, in second year, there is an increased emphasis on independent learning by you. One of the aims of the second year is to encourage you to develop the ability to study and learn on your own. To achieve this, each module will have some material designated for directed learning, that is, material which you have to seek out, study and learn.

### Directed learning

Details will be given in the module handbook and part of a lecture may be given over to explaining what you have to do. You should be provided with a list of the relevant objectives and an outline of the

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topic(s) to be studied, along with guidance which should include sources of relevant information. The directed learning component of each module should be supported by a one hour class in one of the timetabled slots; this class can be used to resolve any problems with the material that you have encountered. This directed learning component is a vital preparation for your third year, where there is even more emphasis on independent learning; there, lectures tend to give the outline of the topic and you will be expected to read widely and research the detail. In the context of exams, material dealt with in the directed learning component is treated in exactly the same way as normal lecture material.

#### Data analysis and interpretation

The ability to analyse and interpret scientific data, especially in a quantitative manner, is an essential part of your scientific training and there is a compulsory question involving these skills in all second year exams. To prepare you for this all modules will include data analysis examples; these may form part of the formal lectures, the directed learning or the assessed coursework. There may also be classes to discuss these examples. As well as preparing you for the examination questions, working through these examples will give you a deeper understanding of the underlying theoretical basis of the subject.

#### Practical sessions

Practical sessions are an integral part of each module and aim to provide you with training in a range of techniques relevant to that module. Practicals also serve to illustrate or to elaborate on important biological ideas and to develop a range of key skills in, for example, data presentation, analysis and interpretation, numeracy, and communication. Practicals are assessed as part of the module coursework.

When in the lab you should keep a record of your lab work (i.e. what you did, modifications to schedule, results, etc.) in a lab book. It is good laboratory practice to do this and an important training for your final year project.

#### Coursework

Most subject modules (except BS211, BS214, BS221, BS231, BS256, BS257 and BS281) have assessed practical work and coursework, which combined constitute 50% of the mark for the module, while the remaining 50% are awarded by the exam mark. This work should encourage you to study course material during the course, enable you to monitor your progress throughout the year (particularly in relation to your understanding and grasp of the module material). The marks count towards your overall year mark. The details of what is involved should be made clear to you in the module handbook but clearly, the exact mix of the different types of coursework which you will do depends on your course and your choice of modules. You should study the Objectives Assessed, Assessment Criteria and Marks Classification on the coversheet to understand and implement the requirements for the desired mark.

Your marked coursework is stored safely on FASER. Use it to:

- (a) Improve your performance by giving careful attention to the feedback provided
- (b) check, when you are e-mailed your marks by the Undergraduate Office, that these have been correctly entered into the University system.
- (c) help with revision.
- (d) University regulations state you should keep your work until six months after you graduate, in case you want to appeal against your final degree result.

### External Examiners

One of the roles of the External Examiners is to comment generally on the standards of marking and performance. To facilitate their work, coursework will be scrutinised on FASER.

### Exam Paper Format

The paper for each module will be a 2 hour paper consisting of two sections each carrying equal marks:

- Section A (weight: 50%). Short questions, which may cover the breadth of the module, and may involve description, explanation, calculation or the analysis and interpretation of data. Short questions are not required to carry equal weight and will not exceed five in number BUT AT LEAST 20% of this section will be allocated to questions involving the analysis and interpretation of data.
- Section B (weight: 50%). Essays: Choice of one question out of three.

A limited number of modules may have a slightly modified exam format. Further information and sample papers will be made available during the year for those students affected.

### Importance of Year 2 Marks

Your performance in your Year 2 modules counts towards your degree. The overall second year mark you obtain (usually weighted at 40%) is combined with your overall third year mark (weighted at 60%) to give a degree mark. It is therefore essential that you do not become complacent in Year 2 and that you appreciate the importance of doing well in all your Year 2 modules in order to give yourself the best opportunity to obtain a good degree. For a full explanation of how award classifications are calculated you should refer to the Rules of Assessment.

### Field courses

Students doing a degree in Marine Biology have a compulsory field course (BS303, optional for Biological Science students). In addition there is an optional field course, BS256, in the Easter vacation of year 2 (TBC). Details of the organisation and timetabling of these modules will be made available nearer the time. **Please do not book any holidays or trips away from campus until you have been told the exact dates of these courses.**

### Final Year Projects (BS832 only)

Students on BSc Marine Biology or Biological Science courses may be allowed to undertake part or all of their final year research project practical work during the summer between second and final year. To do this you would need to show that (a) the project involves field work (or work at an external organisation) that needs to be undertaken over the summer (b) you have a member of University of Essex academic staff willing to act as a supervisor (c) you have a clear plan and timetable of how and when the work will be undertaken, and the required risk assessments, all of which have been approved by the project supervisor. All of these issues have to be addressed by week 29, so if you wish to do project work over the summer then you will need to think about it well in advance. A meeting will be scheduled in week 16 to go through some of the logistics relating to arranging to undertake summer project work. For further information contact the BS832 Module Supervisor, Dr Alex Dumbrell.

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### Year Two structure

For detailed information on the structure of your course in year two please refer to the structure charts found on Moodle under the Information for Current Students page.

<https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=7107>

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## Appendix 3: Guide for Final Year Students

Final year makes the largest contribution to your degree class and it is important to perform well to achieve the outcome that reflects your ability. Some students will aim to maintain the high standards they achieved in second year while others may be attempting to improve on their results. In some cases a strong performance in final year may be able to raise your outcome to a higher degree class. You may want to familiarise yourself with the Rules of Assessment to calculate your likely result.

### Research Project

Crucial to your success will be your individual research project. Because your research project does not appear on your timetable (with the exception of compulsory seminars through the year) it may appear that you have a lot of 'free time'. Clearly this is not the case, and you are expected to take more personal responsibility to organise your reading and study for all modules, as well as spend time planning your project work, analysing data and writing your report. Ensure you prepare well for every meeting with your supervisor and before each session of lab work so you can get the maximum out of these opportunities. Remember you may be asking your supervisor to write references for you so you will want to demonstrate qualities that employers value.

### Issues, Field Course and Coursework Only Modules

These coursework only modules require you to organise other work around your research project commitments. Remember that final year assessments demand a greater level of independent research, originality and critical analysis than was expected in previous years. The assessments are highly weighted and you must spend sufficient time researching, planning, drafting and rewriting to do well.

### Lecture Modules

Final year lecture modules are usually assessed by examination only. However, there are a few exceptions. Final year examination papers are sat in the summer exam period. Three questions must be answered, including a compulsory data analysis and interpretation question and two essay-style questions (from a choice of four in total). The three questions have equal weighting. In final year examinations students are expected to show a greater depth of knowledge and understanding than in previous years. To achieve the highest marks complete answers showing accuracy, detail and evidence of additional reading are expected. This cannot be left until after your project work is completed! You need to keep up with background reading and study throughout the year.

Students would not normally take more than one lecture module assessed by coursework only during final year. It is challenging to complete the assessments during the year while also giving sufficient attention and time to research project work. Planning and organisation are key to balancing these commitments without compromising your results. Students should be aware that these modules are designed to be as challenging as other lecture modules and should not have unrealistic expectations of their likely results based on coursework marks achieved in second year.

Modules based in other Departments may have additional types of assessment.

### Planning for your Future

At the start of your final year you should take time to reflect on your plans for further study, training or employment when you graduate. Set yourself targets during this year to help you to achieve your goals for the next stage of your career. For example, you might need to incorporate deadlines for applications to graduate training programmes, or closing dates for PhD studentship applications. Make good use of the advice offered by your supervisor and the Employability and Careers Centre.

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### Final Year structure

For detailed information on the structure of your course in the final year please refer to the structure charts found on Moodle under the Information for Current Students page.

<https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=7107>