

Programme Specification

BSc Biochemistry

For students entering Part 1 in September 2026

UCAS Code: C700

UFBIOCH

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This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

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| Awarding Institution | University of Reading |
| Teaching Institution | University of Reading |
| Length of Programme | 3 years |
| Length of Programme with placement/year abroad | BSc Biochemistry with Professional Experience - 4 years (UCAS Code: C702) |
| Accreditation | Royal Society of Biology |
| QAA Subject Benchmarking Group | QAA Subject Benchmark Statement - Biosciences |

Programme information and content

The BSc Biochemistry degree programme will enable you to explore the fundamental processes of life at the cellular and molecular level. You will discover how practical advances in biochemistry provide the basis for human and veterinary medicine, , environmental biochemistry, forensics and biotechnological innovation. The programme integrates significant practical experience including individual and collaborative projects. Through hands-on laboratory practicals, a solid working knowledge of core biochemical approaches, including their interpretation and analysis, will be developed throughout the programme. As you progress, you will explore advanced technologies in subjects including cellular and molecular biology, immunology, human genetics, protein structure and function, cardiovascular biology and neurosciences. A structured progression through the Biochemistry programme will build on your understanding of Biochemistry and its application from Part 1 and will allow you to explore more specialist areas of interest in Part 2 and 3 of the programme. Overall, the programme will allow you to develop and apply discipline and transferable skills which will prepare you for a wide variety of future careers or postgraduate study.

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| Part 1: | You will gain a broad introduction to biochemistry in your first year. This will be delivered in the form of core modules, covering the fundamental aspects of biochemistry, including molecular biology, cell biology, physiology and microbiology. You will also be taught essential laboratory skills, data handling/interpretation and other key transferable skills (e.g., communication, academic integrity, teamwork). The goal of the first year is to give you a strong foundation on which to develop your interests and build your future studies. |
| Part 2: | The second year will offer you the opportunity to pursue biochemistry in greater depth, using a combination of lectures and laboratory practicals. |

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| | The modules will provide advanced knowledge in various areas, including cell and molecular biology, applied biochemistry, genetics, bioinformatics and computational biology. There will be a strong emphasis on the enhancement of practical and transferrable skills, including creativity, enterprise and commercial awareness. |
| Placement/Study abroad year: | You will have the opportunity to undertake a placement year and discover what it is like to work in a professional setting. This will allow you to develop your skills further, expand your network and enhance your career prospects. The school has numerous contacts within and beyond the UK, ranging from the pharmaceutical sector to governmental organisations. Students can express their interest to the school and receive guidance and support throughout the placement application process. |
| Part 3: | The third year of the programme places a strong emphasis on the application of knowledge and skills. Alongside chosen modules from across the breadth of biochemistry, the highlight of the final year is the opportunity to work alongside an expert in the field on a unique biochemical research project. This capstone experience will allow you to develop an advanced understanding of your chosen topic and apply the skills that you have acquired from your first and second year. |

Programme Learning Outcomes - BSc Biochemistry

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

| | Learning outcomes |
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| 1 | Describe and explain the fundamental concepts of biochemistry and apply biochemical principles to medical and environmental problems. |
| 2 | Apply an integrated view of biochemical concepts to biological and molecular events. |
| 3 | Contribute to debates in contemporary biochemistry and related fields. |
| 4 | Analyse and propose evidence-based solutions to biochemistry-based problems. |
| 5 | Effectively communicate subject-specific knowledge, concepts and research outputs to technical and non-technical audiences using a range of multimedia formats |
| 6 | Organize and manage workload to complete tasks and projects effectively, both independently and collaboratively as part of a team |
| 7 | Analyse experimental and observational biological data using relevant statistical tests/analytical tools and interpret the results, recognising the limitations of data collection and statistical methodology |
| 8 | Search for, critically analyse, integrate, synthesise and evaluate scientific literature to draw conclusions, make hypotheses and suggest solutions. |

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| 9 | Safely and competently use a range of practical laboratory skills and techniques to generate accurate records and robust datasets. |
| 10 | Use an evidence-based approach to propose realistic solutions for complex biological problems, recognising the nature of scientific knowledge and its development in light of continued scientific advances. |

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

| Additional Learning outcomes | |
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| Placement | |
| By the end of the Placement Year Programme, students will have explored and developed their professional experience, skills and knowledge, contributing significantly towards their continuous learning and career prospects as graduates. | |

| Module information | | | |
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| Each part comprises 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed. | | | |
| Part 1 Modules: | | | |
| Module | Name | Credits | Level |
| BI1AP3 | Anatomy and Physiology | 20 | 4 |
| BI1CMP1 | Cellular and Molecular Principles of Life | 20 | 4 |
| BI1FB2 | Fundamentals of Biochemistry | 20 | 4 |
| BI1FM1 | Fundamentals of Microbiology | 20 | 4 |
| CH1GCB | General Chemistry B | 20 | 4 |
| The remaining 20 credits will be made up of an optional module from selected modules from the School of Biological Sciences or modules from an approved list, subject to timetabling constraints. | | | |
| Part 2 Modules: | | | |
| Module | Name | Credits | Level |
| BI2AB1 | Applied Biochemistry: from Disease to Diagnostics | 20 | 5 |
| BI2BCB2 | Bioinformatics and Computational Biology | 20 | 5 |
| BI2CM1 | Advanced Studies in Cellular and Molecular Biology | 20 | 5 |
| BI2MG2 | Medical Genetics | 20 | 5 |

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| BI2RPS3 | Research and Professional Skills | 20 | 5 |
| The remaining 20 credits will be made up of an optional module from selected modules from the School of Biological Sciences or modules from an approved list, subject to timetabling constraints. | | | |
| Modules during a placement year or study year (if applicable): | | | |
| Module | Name | Credits | Level |
| BI2PEX | Professional Experience | 120 | 5 |
| Students may be permitted to undertake a placement year between Part 2 and Part 3 of the programme. In such cases students will transfer to a 4-year programme. The placement year should not normally be shorter than nine months full-time. | | | |
| If you take a year-long placement or study abroad, Part 3 as described below may be subject to variation. | | | |
| Part 3 Modules: | | | |
| Module | Name | Credits | Level |
| BI3ART1 | Advanced Research Techniques | 20 | 6 |
| BI3IB2 | Integrated Biochemistry | 20 | 6 |
| BI3RP3 | Research Project | 40 | 6 |
| The remaining 40 credits will be made up of optional modules from selected modules from the School of Biological Sciences or modules from an approved list, subject to timetabling constraints. | | | |

Placement opportunities

Placements:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a credit-bearing placement as part of your Programme. This will form all or part of an optional module. You will be required to find and secure a placement opportunity, with the support of the University

Study Abroad:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a Study Abroad placement during your Programme. This is subject to you meeting academic conditions detailed in the Programme Handbook, including obtaining the relevant permissions from your School, and the availability of a suitable Study Abroad placement. If you undertake a Study Abroad placement, further arrangements will be discussed and agreed with you.

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery:

You will be taught through lectures, seminars/tutorials, laboratory-based practical sessions and supervised project work, depending on the modules you choose.

The contact hours for your Programme are dependent on module choice. Information about module contact hours can be located in the relevant module description.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

This programme is accredited by the Royal Society of Biology

Assessment

The programme will be assessed through a combination of written examinations, coursework (including class tests) and oral examinations. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

Progression*Part 1*

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1;
- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and

(iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Students are able to transfer from a Joint or Major/Minor Honours programme to a Single Honours programme in one of their joint subject areas at the end of Part 1, subject to:

- Meeting the University Threshold Standard at the end of Part 1; and
- Achieving marks of at least 40% in at least 40 credits of modules (e.g., 2 x 20 credit modules) in the subject to which they wish to transfer; and
- Meeting any programme-specific progression rules for the Part 1 Single Honours Programme to which they wish to transfer.

NB Students taking a Major/Minor programme may only transfer to a Single Honours programme in the Major subject and must meet the above requirements.

Students should seek advice about the titles of programmes they may be eligible to transfer to.

Students who transfer from a Joint or Major/Minor Honours programme to a Single Honours programme may not have taken all of the Part 1 modules listed in the Single Honours Programme Specification. The modules which they have taken will be shown on their Diploma Supplement.

Part 2

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 2 qualifies a student for a Diploma of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Professional/placement year

Students are required to pass the professional placement year/study abroad year in order to progress on the programme which incorporates the professional placement year/study abroad year. Students who fail the professional placement year/study abroad year transfer to the non-placement year version of the programme.

Classification

Bachelors' degrees

The University's honours classification scheme is based on the following:

Mark Interpretation

70% - 100% First class

60% - 69% Upper Second class

50% - 59% Lower Second class

40% - 49% Third class

35% - 39% Below Honours Standard

0% - 34% Fail

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Three year programmes:

Part 2: one-third

Part 3: two-thirds

Four year programmes, including study abroad

Part 2: one-third

Study abroad: Year abroad not included in the classification

Part 3: two-thirds

Supplementary Conventions

In order to be eligible for the BSc Biochemistry, students must meet the requirements described in the appropriate section of the Assessment Handbook please see link below for further details; and

(i) must gain a mark of at least 40% in BI3RP3.

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the [Assessment Handbook](#) under:

- Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's), or
- Section 18: Awards (Integrated Master's programmes). Students who do not progress to Part 4 of the Integrated Master's will normally be subject to the method detailed under Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's)

Please note that there may be a specific version of the above for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

Participation in any residential field based optional modules offered, is subject to fees payable by the student.

If you undertake a Placement Year, associated costs will vary according to the nature and location of the placement and/or the study abroad host institution, and individual travel and subsistence arrangements.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2025.

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

BSc Biochemistry for students entering Part 1 in session 2026/27

21 August 2025

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