



**UNIVERSITY OF  
PLYMOUTH**  
Faculty of Health

**School of Biomedical Sciences**

## **Programme Specification**

MSc / PGDip / PG Cert Biomedical Science

**Academic Year 2022/23**

Date of Approval: 2014, re-approved 2019  
Date of Implementation: 2014  
Year of first award: 2015

<b>Internal Programme Code</b>	<b>Award Title</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Mode of Study</b>
4797	MSc Biomedical Science (FT)	Ply	FT
5768	MSc Biomedical Science (PT)	Ply	PT
4653	MSc Biomedical Science (Exchange)	Ply	FT
5236	PgDip Biomedical Science	Ply	FT

<b>Reviewed</b>	<b>Amended following review (Y/N)</b>	<b>Sections amended</b>

## **Contents**

1. MSc / PGDip / PGCert Biomedical Science	3
2. Awarding Institution:	3
3. Accrediting body(ies)	3
4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience	4
5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)	4
6. Programme Structure	5
7. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes	10
8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes	11
9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements	13
10. Criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards	14
11. Exceptions to Regulations	15
12. Transitional Arrangements	15
13. Appendices:	15

## 1. MSc / PGDip / PGCert Biomedical Science

### Final award title:

- **MSc Biomedical Science (Cancer Biology)**
- **MSc Biomedical Science (Clinical Neuroscience)**
- **MSc Biomedical Science (Infection & Immunity)**
- **MSc Biomedical Science**

Masters of Science in Biomedical Science awarded on completion of 180 credits. A bracketed title award requires completion of both pathway modules plus a related 60 credit dissertation project

### Level 7 Intermediate award title(s):

- **PGDip Biomedical Science (Cancer Biology)**
- **PGDip Biomedical Science (Clinical Neuroscience)**
- **PGDip Biomedical Science (Infection & Immunity)**
- **PGDip Biomedical Science**

Post-Graduate Diploma on completion of 120 credits. A bracketed title award requires completion of both pathway modules

- **PGCert Biomedical Science (Cancer Biology)**
- **PGCert Biomedical Science (Clinical Neuroscience)**
- **PGCert Biomedical Science (Infection & Immunity)**
- **PGCert Biomedical Science**

Post-Graduate Certificate on completion of 60 credits. A bracketed award requires completion of both pathway modules

- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>2. Awarding Institution:</b> | University of Plymouth          |
| <b>Teaching institution(s):</b> | University of Plymouth          |
| <b>3. Accrediting body(ies)</b> | Institute of Biomedical Science |
| Date of re-accreditation        | 2023                            |

**UCAS code : N/A**

**HECOS code: 100260**

**Date of Final Approval: February 2014**

#### **4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience**

- MSc Biomedical Science suite of programmes builds on the strength of our IBMS accredited Biomedical Science undergraduate programme providing an in-depth understanding of principal techniques employed in biomedical research.
- Enhanced by the contemporary research activities within the School's Biomedical Research Group (BRG) and the Faculty's flagship Plymouth Institute of Health and Care Research (PIHR).
- Strong international reputation in translational research with significant financial investment in laboratory infrastructure.
- Pathways aligned to our core research themes of Cancer, and Infection, Immunity, Inflammation.
- Project aligned to their specialism undertaken within BRG and the University's Systems Biology Centre.
- Learning and teaching enriched by our research-active staff within the Faculty of Health, and our NHS links.

#### **5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)**

- "SEEC Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education", Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SEEC), 2010 accessible from: <https://www.seec.org.uk/resources/>
- "Master's Degree characteristics" The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), September 2015 accessible from: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2977#.Wo7QR7xl-DI>
- There are no Subject Benchmarks for postgraduate awards in Biomedical Science but in preparing the documentation the programme team have consulted the "Criteria and Requirements for the Accreditation and Re-accreditation of MSc degrees in Biomedical Science", Institute of Biomedical Sciences, version 2.2i, October 2016. This document refers to the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement which defines the subject area of biomedical science relating to BSc Honours degrees. Accessible from <https://www.ibms.org/education/university-information/>.

## **6. Programme Structure**

### **6.1 MSc Biomedical Science – Full Time**

Students are recruited to one of the following MSc Biomedical Science pathway awards but may only exit with the bracketed award on completion of a dissertation project that relates to the pathway studied.

- MSc Biomedical Science (Cancer Biology)
- MSc Biomedical Science (Clinical Neuroscience)
- MSc Biomedical Science (Infection & Immunity)

Students may opt to undertake a dissertation project unrelated to their chosen pathway but may only graduate with the following unbracketed award title.

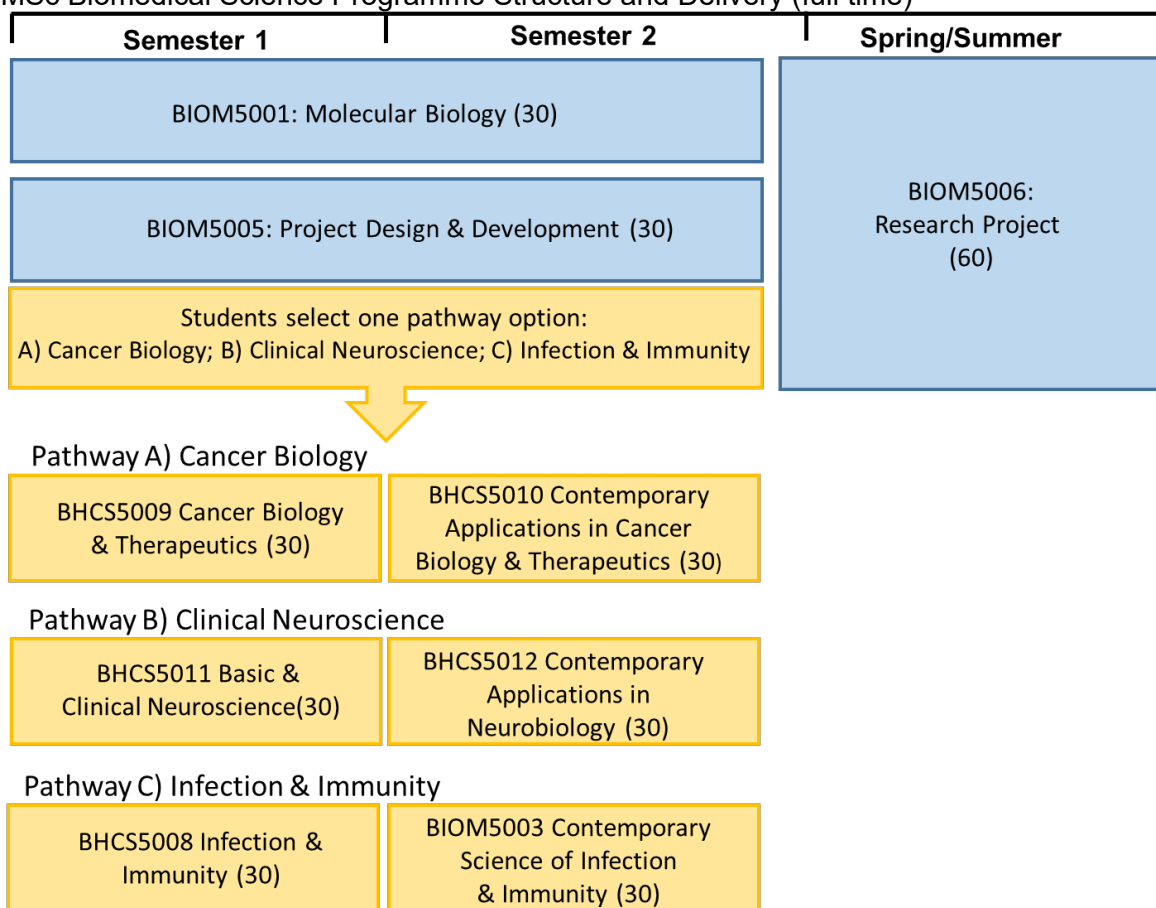
- MSc Biomedical Science

Semester 1: 2 x 30-credit modules (comprising 2 x 0.5 core modules and one pathway module)

Semester 2: 2 x 30-credit modules (comprising 2 x 0.5 core modules and one pathway module)

Summer: 60-credit dissertation

## MSc Biomedical Science Programme Structure and Delivery (full time)



All students undertake the compulsory modules in blue (BIOM5001, BIOM5005 and BIOM5006) and only one of the three pathway options in orange (either Pathway A: Cancer Biology, Pathway B: Clinical Neuroscience or Pathway C: Infection & Immunity). BIOM5005 is a pre-requisite module that must be completed for progression on the BIOM5006. (30) and (60) equals the credit amount for each module

### Award Requirements:-

**MSc Biomedical Science** 180 credits at level 7

**PGDip** where any 120 credits achieved at level 7

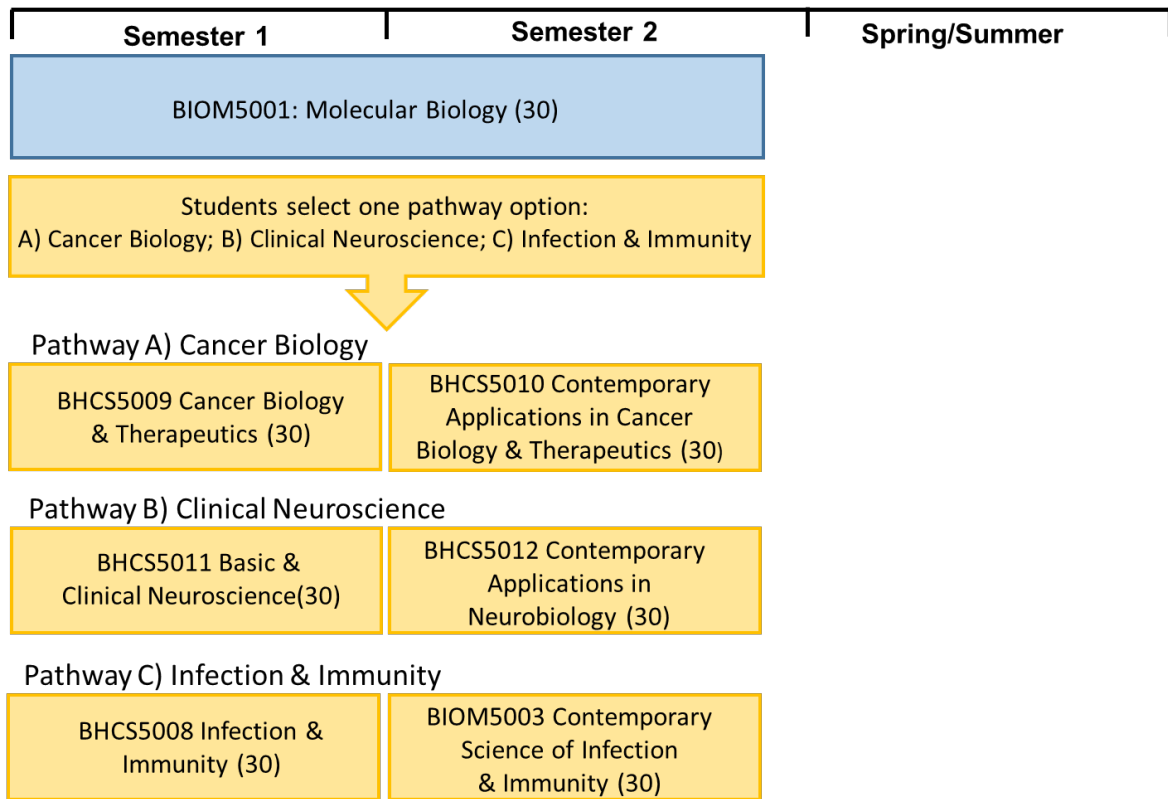
**PGCert** where any 60 credits achieved at level 7

(Any bracketed award is dependent on completion of the named pathway and a pathway-related dissertation project)

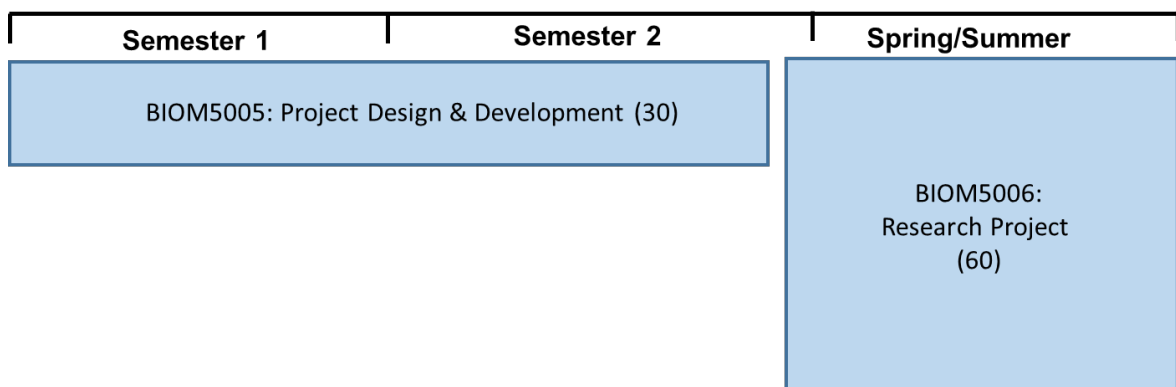
## 6.2 MSc Biomedical Science – Part time

Students are recruited to one of the MSc Biomedical Science pathway awards, undertaking 90 credits per year over two years.

### Year 1: MSc Biomedical Science Programme Structure and Delivery (Part-time)



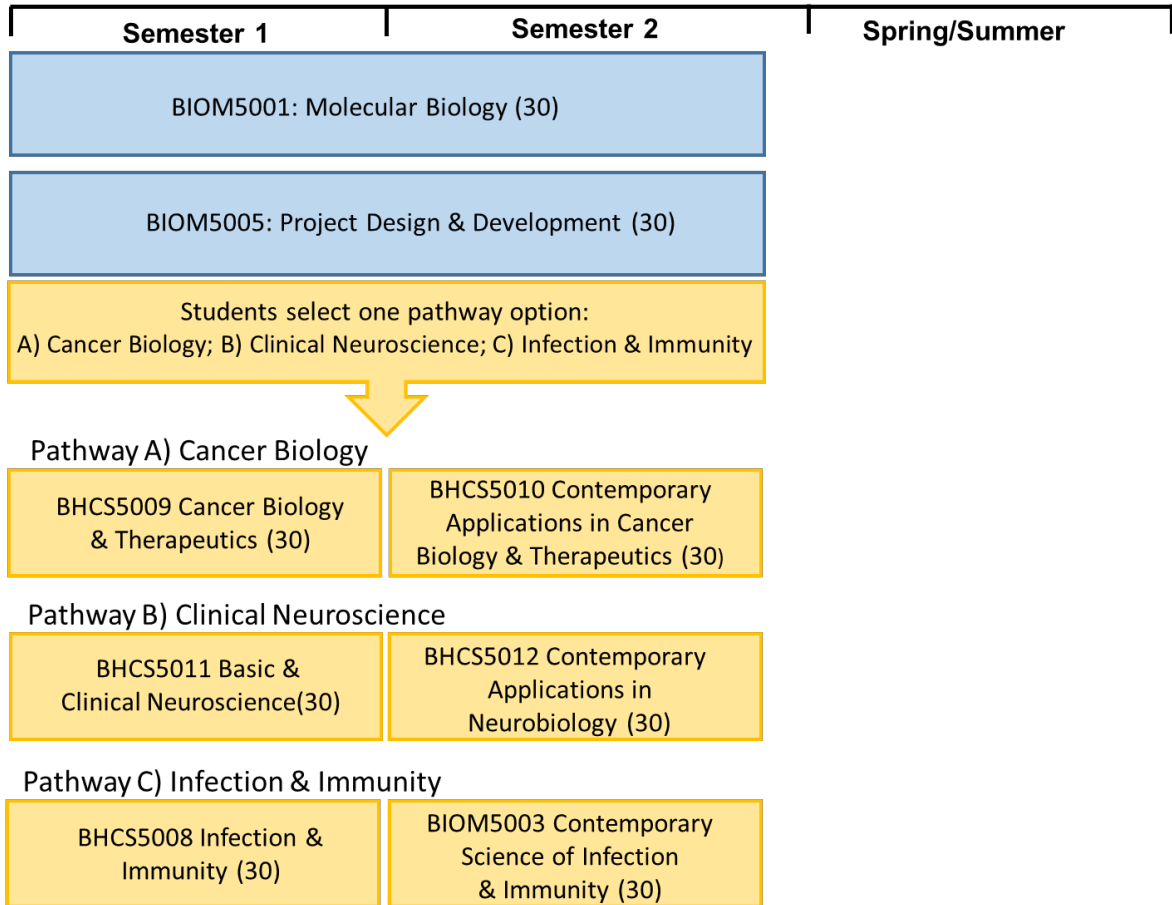
### Year 2: MSc Biomedical Science Programme Structure and Delivery (Part-time)



### 6.3 PGDip Biomedical Science

Students are recruited to one of the PGDip Biomedical Science pathway awards undertaking 120 credits.

#### PGDip Biomedical Science Programme Structure and Delivery (full time)

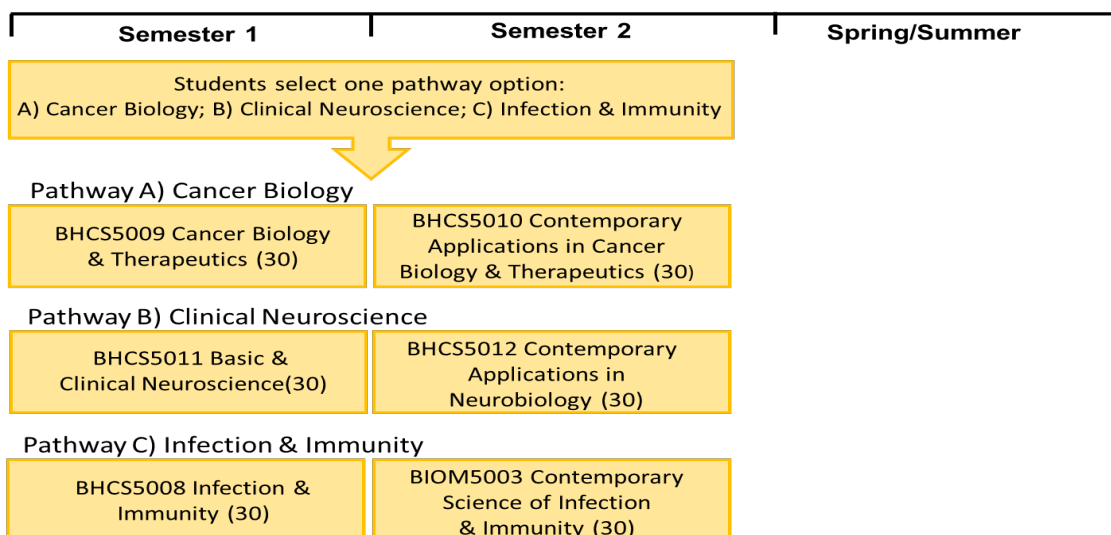




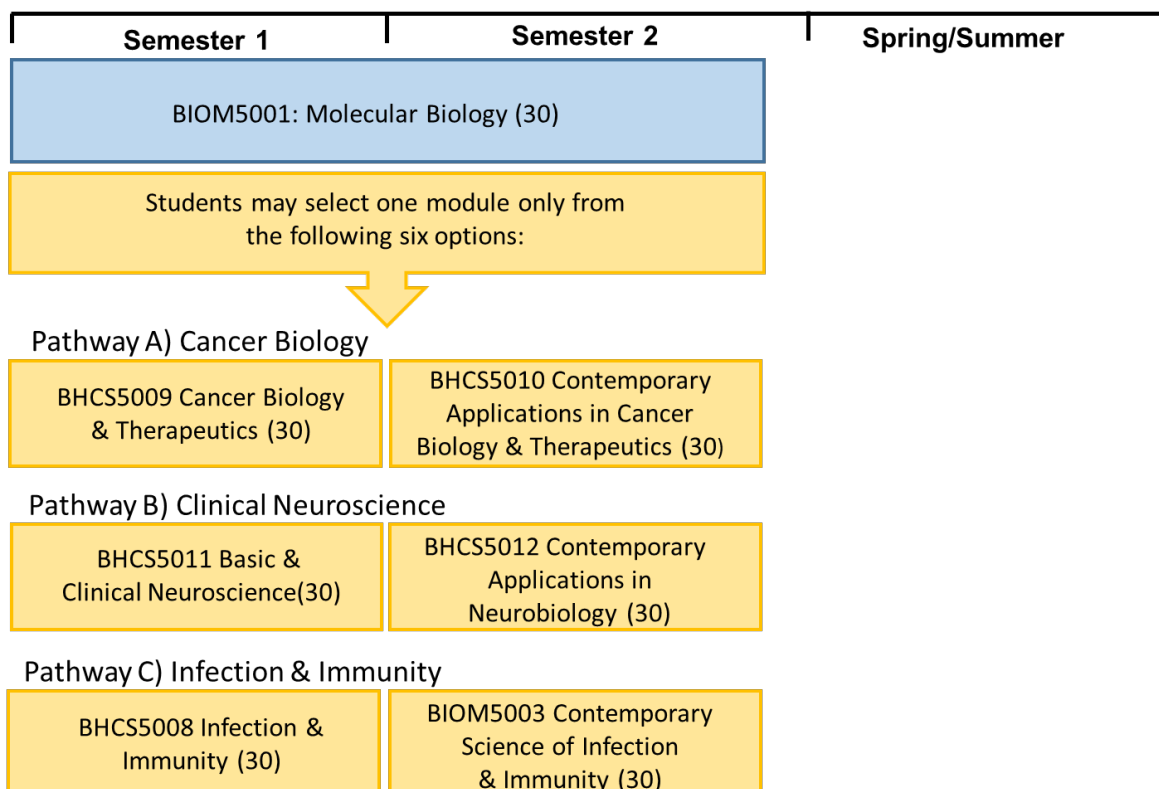
## 6.4 PGCert Biomedical Science

Students are recruited to PGCert Biomedical Science undertaking 60 credits. For a bracketed award, students must complete both pathway modules (pathway option). For a non-bracketed award, students may undertake one core module and one module from the pathways (non-pathway option).

### PGCert Biomedical Science Programme Structure and Delivery (Pathway option)



### PGCert Biomedical Science Programme Structure and Delivery (Example non-pathway option)



For the non-pathway option, applicants must first discuss their choice and experience with the programme leader.

## **7. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes**

### **Overall aims of Postgraduate Taught Programmes in the School of Biomedical Sciences**

- provide opportunities for postgraduate students from a range of biomedical, biological, biochemical or biological backgrounds to develop and realise their potential in a supportive and responsive environment;
- provide modular programmes which are vocationally specific, intellectually challenging and relevant to careers in biomedical and healthcare science
- equip students with advanced scientific and technical knowledge and understanding of the subject area together with the cognitive, practical and specialist skills needed in employment or courses of further study;
- further develop students' ability to operate professionally, ethically, innovatively and autonomously within complex specialised contexts in biomedical sciences.

### **Educational aims of the MSc Biomedical Sciences programme**

To provide students with:

- advanced knowledge, understanding and skills required for the systematic study of their chosen discipline of biomedical science through the application of contemporary methodologies and technologies
- ability to analyse complex situations and apply critical, analytical and problem solving skills to synthesise innovative responses in unpredictable environments
- advanced skills in information gathering, interpretation, critical analysis and evaluation and the formulation of recommendations in a professional scientific context;
- practical and technological expertise appropriate to contemporary practice in their chosen discipline(s) of biomedical science;
- professional communication and interpersonal skills;
- ability to design and self-manage a research project (MSc only)
- ability to recognise the significance and contribution of their research to existing published work (MSc only).
- skills of planning and management of learning which will enable their continual professional development after the completion of the course.

## 8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

### 8.1 Knowledge and understanding

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate (subject specific) **Knowledge and Understanding** as follows:

- 1) **Knowledge base:** has depth and systematic understanding of knowledge in specialised/applied areas and/across areas and can work with theoretical/research-based knowledge at the forefront of their academic discipline
- 2) **Disciplinary methodologies:** has a comprehensive understanding of techniques/methodologies applicable to their own work (theory or research-based)

### 8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate generic **cognitive/intellectual** skills as follows:

- 1) **Analysis:** with critical awareness can undertake analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge communicating the outcome effectively
- 2) **Synthesis:** with critical awareness, can synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of their discipline/practice
- 3) **Evaluation:** has a level of conceptual understanding that will allow her/him critically to evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and argue alternative approaches
- 4) **Application:** can demonstrate initiative and originality in problem solving. Can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level, making decisions in complex and unpredictable situations (MSc)

### 8.3. Key and transferable skills

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate (generic) **Key/transferable skills** as follows:

- 1) **Learning resources:** is able to use full range of learning resources
- 2) **Management of information:** can competently undertake research tasks with minimum guidance (MSc)
- 3) **Autonomy:** is an independent and self-critical learner, guiding the learning of others and managing own requirements for continuing professional development
- 4) **Communications:** can engage confidently in academic and professional communication with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently

#### 8.4. Employment related skills

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate (generic) **Employment related skills** as follows:

- 1) **Self-evaluation:** is reflective on own functioning and has the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

#### 8.5. Practical skills

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate (generic) **Practical skills** as follows:

- 1) **Application of skills:** can operate in complex and unpredictable, possibly specialised contexts, and has an overview of the issues governing good scientific practice.
- 2) **Autonomy in skill use:** is able to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in professional practice within a biomedical science context.
- 3) **Technical expertise:** has technical expertise, performs smoothly with precision and effectiveness; can adapt skills and design or develop new skills or procedures for new situations (MSc)

## **9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements**

### **1.1 Entry Requirements**

Admissions criteria:

- Applicants require a minimum of an upper second-class UK honours degree in biomedical sciences, life sciences or related subject with a genetics component, or an overseas qualification of an equivalent standard. Intercalating or graduate medical/dental/veterinarian applicants or those with substantial relevant work-based experience are encouraged to apply and will be considered on an individual basis. University of Plymouth alumni who do not meet this requirement can contact the programme lead in the first instance. Please list the pathway you are applying for in your application. A short interview may be undertaken as part of the applications process.
- Applicants with overseas qualifications can check their comparability with the UK equivalent through UK NARIC, who provide an advisory service.

OR

- Other qualifications and experience deemed equivalent by the Programme Manager in subject content and level of attainment to any of the above.

In addition

- Applicants who have not had their secondary or tertiary education through the medium of English should have attained the equivalent of an IELTS score of at least 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component.

### **1.2 Intercalation**

The MSc Biomedical Science degree is a one-year full-time programme. Medical, Dental and Veterinary students are therefore able to complete the standard programme as an intercalating year.

Students on the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (BMBS) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) at University of Plymouth Faculty of Health have the opportunity to explore another discipline at degree or MSc level and can take advantage of the University of Plymouth's degree programmes. Metrics based upon performance since admission to the BMBS and BDS programmes will be used to calculate the highest performing students in each year and selection into the MSc Biomedical Science programme will be based upon these.

Due to the structure of the medical and dental programmes, students on the BMBS take their intercalated year between years 4 and 5 of their medical studies whilst the intercalating year for dental students will be between year 3 and 4 of the BDS degree.

Applications from students on other Medical, Dental and Veterinary programmes will be considered, but they will need to demonstrate they have the relevant

academic knowledge in biomedical, biological or biochemical sciences and may need to seek academic leave of absence from their host institution.

### **1.3 Equality of Opportunity**

The University aims to ensure that all applicants receive fair treatment. In line with its Strategic Plan, the University has strategies to promote equality of opportunity, widen participation and encourage access.

Further information on equality, diversity and inclusion can be found at:

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/about-us/university-structure/service-areas/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>.

We welcome and support students with disabilities, and we endeavour to meet specific needs. Disability Services, based on the Plymouth Campus, supports disabled students across the University. Further information about the advice and support before, during and after application can be found at:

[Welcome to Disability Services - University of Plymouth](#)

The nature of certain projects requires you to be compliant and able to operate in a laboratory setting. It is important for us to consider any individual requirements sufficiently far in advance to enable us to advise you on the range of options available and to put in place appropriate arrangements. Students will be advised to tell us about any disability upon application.

### **1.4 Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)**

The University's regulations for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) are set out in the 'Academic Regulations'. <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations>.

We may also consider admission on the basis of work or life experience.

We welcome evidence of prior learning and experience from applicants. Due to the range and mixture of prior qualification and experience applications presenting such evidence will be considered on an individual basis by the Admissions Tutor in consultation with the programmes team.

Students with relevant postgraduate awards from other institutes may be able to apply for advanced entry subject to the Faculty's accreditation of prior learning procedures.

## **10. Criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards**

The MSc Programme encompasses three possible award levels; the target award (that is the award on which students enrol) of MSc and the two interim award levels (that the student can accept if they do not complete the full MSc). For the

MSc, the named specialist pathway will be applied in brackets upon completion of both pathway modules and a related dissertation project. The PGCert is awarded to individuals who have successfully completed 60 M-level credits from within the available diet of modules. The PGDip will mark the achievement of completing 120 M-level credits.

The PGDip Biomedical Science recognises that individuals may wish to gain masters level credit to update their knowledge and enhance their career prospects, but do not necessarily need to undertake a research project. The PGDip Biomedical Science will be awarded upon successful completion of the 120 credits the students enrol on, as detailed in Section 7, Programme Structure. The bracketed award will apply upon completion of both pathway modules.

A PGCert is awarded upon successful completion of 60 M level credits from within the available diet of modules. This award also recognises that individuals may wish to gain masters level knowledge by undertaking one of the pathway specialist topics as part of continued profession development to enhance their career. The bracketed award will apply upon completion of both pathway modules.

Awards (including those of MSc with Merit or Distinction) will be made in line with the academic regulations (<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations>)

## **11. Exceptions to Regulations**

None

## **12. Transitional Arrangements**

None

## **13. Appendices:**

13.1 Programme Specification Mapping (PGT): module contribution to the meeting of Award Learning Outcomes.

Module	Credits	C core E Elective pathways (I&I) infection and immunity (CB) cancer biology (NS) clinical neuroscience	Award Learning Outcomes contributed to (for more information see Section 8)														Compensation Y/N	Assessment element(s) and weightings [use KIS definition] E1 - exam E2 - clinical exam T1 - test C1 - coursework A1 - generic assessment P1 - practical
			Knowledge & understanding		Cognitive & intellectual skills				Key & transferable skills				Employment related skills	Practical skills				
			1	2	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	1	2	3		
BIOM5001	30	C	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X		X	X	X	N	C1 70%; P1 30%
BIOM5005	30	C	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	N	C1 100%; A1 P/F
BIOM5006	60	C		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	N	C1 80%; P1 20%
<b>Learning Outcomes 120 credits</b>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
BIOM5003	30	E (I&I)	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	N	T1 70%; P1 30%
BHCS5008	30	E (I&I)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X					N	C1 50%; P1 50%
BHCS5009	30	E (CB)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				N	C1 50%; P1 50%
BHCS5010	30	E (CB)	X	X	X	X		X	X		X			X	X	X	N	C1 70%; P1 30%
BHCS5011	30	E (CN)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X				N	C1 50%; P1 50%
BHCS5012	30	E (CN)	X	X	X	X		X	X		X			X	X	X	N	C1 70%; P1 30%
<b>Learning Outcomes 180 credits</b>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
<b>Confirmed Award LOs</b>			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		



### 13.2 Assessed Learning Outcomes vs Assessment Strategies

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOME	ALL STUDENTS			PATHWAYS					
				CANCER BIOLOGY		CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE		INFECTION & IMMUNITY	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	BIOM5001	BIOM5005	BIOM5006	BHCS5009	BHCS5010	BHCS5011	BHCS5012	BHCS5008	BIOM5003
<b>Knowledge base:</b> has depth and systematic understanding of knowledge in specialised/applied areas and/across areas and can work with theoretical/research-based knowledge at the forefront of their academic discipline	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	T1 P1
<b>Disciplinary methodologies:</b> has a comprehensive understanding of techniques/methodologies applicable to their own work (theory or research-based)	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	P1

<b>COGNITIVE AND INTELLECTUAL SKILLS</b>	BIOM5001	BIOM5005	BIOM5006	BHCS5009	BHCS5010	BHCS5011	BHCS5012	BHCS5008	BIOM5003
<b>Analysis:</b> with critical awareness can undertake analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge communicating the outcome effectively	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	T1 P1
<b>Synthesis:</b> with critical awareness, can synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of their discipline/practice	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	T1 P1
<b>Evaluation:</b> has a level of conceptual understanding that will allow her/him critically to evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and argue alternative approaches	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	T1 P1
<b>Application:</b> can demonstrate initiative and originality in problem solving. Can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level, making decisions in complex and unpredictable situations		C1	C1 P1						

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOME	ALL STUDENTS			PATHWAY SPECIFIC MODULES					
				CANCER BIOLOGY		CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE		INFECTION & IMMUNITY	
KEY AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS	BIOM5001	BIOM5005	BIOM5006	BHCS5009	BHCS5010	BHCS5011	BHCS5012	BHCS5008	BIOM5003
<b>Learning resources:</b> is able to use full range of learning resources	C1	C1 A1	C1	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	T1 P1
<b>Management of information:</b> can competently undertake research tasks with minimum guidance		C1 A1	C1 P1						
<b>Autonomy:</b> is an independent and self-critical learner, guiding the learning of others and managing own requirements for continuing professional development	C1	C1 A1		C1	C1	C1	C1	C1	P1
<b>Communications:</b> can engage confidently in academic and professional communication with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently	P1	C1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1	C1 P1	C1 P1	C1 P1	P1

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOME	ALL STUDENTS			PATHWAY SPECIFIC MODULES					
				CANCER BIOLOGY		CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE		INFECTION & IMMUNITY	
EMPLOYMENT RELATED SKILLS	BIOM5001	BIOM5005	BIOM5006	BHCS5010	BHCS5009	BHCS5011	BHCS5012	BHCS5008	BIOM5003
Self-evaluation: is reflective on own functioning and has the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development			C1 A1						

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOME	ALL STUDENTS			PATHWAY SPECIFIC MODULES					
				CANCER BIOLOGY	CLINICAL NEUROSCIENCE		INFECTION & IMMUNITY		
PRACTICAL SKILLS	BIOM5001	BIOM5005	BIOM5006	BHCS5009	BHCS5010	BHCS5011	BHCS5012	BHCS5008	BIOM5003
<b>Application of skills:</b> can operate in complex and unpredictable, possibly specialised contexts, and has an overview of the issues governing good scientific practice	C1	C1	C1		C1		C1		P1
<b>Autonomy in skill use:</b> is able to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in professional practice within a biomedical science context		C1 A1	C1 A1						
<b>Technical expertise:</b> has technical expertise, performs smoothly with precision and effectiveness; can adapt skills and design or develop new skills or procedures for new situations	C1	C1	C1		C1		C1		P1