

Degree	Type	Year
4313794 Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biomedicine	OB	0

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

Graduates in Biochemistry, Biotechnology, Biology, Biomedical Sciences, Genetics, Microbiology, Medicine, Chemistry, Pharmacy, Computing Sciences, Physics, or Veterinary Medicine.

English is the only language used in the course. That includes class explanations by the instructors, tutorials, discussions in the classroom, materials, oral presentations by the students, and evaluated assignments. Therefore, an upper-intermediate level (B2, Cambridge First, TOEFL 87-109) is highly recommended.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The global objective of the course is for the student to acquire fundamental competencies in Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Biomedical research, to gain a solid grounding as a biomolecular scientist. Specific objectives are detailed in the Content section.

Competences

- Analyse and correctly interpret the molecular mechanisms operating in living beings and identify their applications.
- Apply techniques for modifying living beings or parts of these in order to improve pharmaceutical and biotechnological processes and products or develop new products.
- Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Conceive, design, develop and synthesise scientific and/or biotechnological projects within biochemistry, molecular biology or biomedicine.
- Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
- Develop critical reasoning within the subject area and in relation to the scientific or business context.
- Identify and propose scientific solutions to problems in molecular-level biological research and show understanding of the biochemical complexity of living beings.
- Identify and use bioinformatic tools to solve problems in biochemistry, molecular biology and biomedicine.
- Integrate contents in biochemistry, molecular biology, biotechnology and biomedicine from a molecular perspective.
- Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
- Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
- Use acquired knowledge as a basis for originality in the application of ideas, often in a research context.
- Use and manage bibliography and IT resources related to biochemistry, molecular biology or biomedicine.
- Use scientific terminology to account for research results and present these orally and in writing.
- Work individually and in teams in a multidisciplinary context.

Learning Outcomes

1. Acknowledge the contribution of technical innovations to progress on the frontiers of knowledge.
2. Analyse and correctly interpret the molecular mechanisms operating in living beings.
3. Analyse the state of the art in a particular area in order to formulate a relevant research question.
4. Apply knowledge of methods that are of use in solving problems in biochemistry, molecular biology and biomedicine.
5. Apply knowledge of molecular mechanisms operating in living beings to identify experimental applications, whether basic, translational or of economic interest.
6. Assess the social and economic importance of research in biochemistry, molecular biology and biomedicine.
7. Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
8. Conceive, design, develop and synthesise scientific and/or biotechnological projects to test a hypothesis.
9. Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
10. Develop critical reasoning within the subject area and in relation to the scientific or business context.
11. Formulate correct conclusions.

12. Identify available emerging methods within biomolecular research.
13. Identify emerging fields in research into biochemistry, molecular biology and biomedicine.
14. Identify the most appropriate organism for tackling a particular experimental problem.
15. Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
16. Make an appropriate choice in the context of an experimental study.
17. Propose, based on findings, new experiments to take the research further .
18. Recognise molecular mechanisms in a research context.
19. Show mastery of the different methodologies used to modify living organisms in research and their uses.
20. Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
21. Use acquired knowledge as a basis for originality in the application of ideas, often in a research context.
22. Use and manage bibliography and IT resources related to biochemistry, molecular biology or biomedicine.
23. Use bioinformatic resources and databases as research tools.
24. Use inductive reasoning and deductive methods to test a hypothesis and predict results.
25. Use scientific terminology to account for research results and present these orally and in writing.
26. Work individually and in teams in a multidisciplinary context.

Content

1- At the bench

1.1- Experimental Design

Instructor

David G. Quintana

Objectives

To equip students with a deep understanding of planning, designing, conducting, analyzing, and interpreting scientific experiments in biomolecular sciences.

Contents

- Brief overview of scientific epistemology.
- Defining the research question:
 - Background research and inductive reasoning.
 - Identifying a researchable question and approach.
 - Formulating the research objective.
- Research paradigms:
 - Hypothesis-driven research.
 - Crafting a testable, falsifiable hypothesis.
 - Recognizing and mitigating bias.
 - Emerging paradigms: Question-driven research; non-hypothesis-driven research.
- Designing the experiment: from theory to practice:

- Selecting the optimal experimental system.
- Outlining the experiment: formulation of a testable prediction through deductive reasoning.
- Defining the variables, constants, controls.
- Defining the *a priori* positive and negative outcomes.
- Determining the appropriate sample sizes, replicas, replicates, time course.
- Data analysis and interpretation:
 - Understanding statistical significance and confidence level.
 - Causal inference: distinguishing correlation from causation.
 - Identifying and addressing sources of error, hidden and confounding variables.
 - Reproducibility.
 - Further model validation: by testable predictions; by replication; iterative refinement of the experimental design.

1.2- Lab Life Basics

Instructors

Oscar Zaragoza, Jaume Farres, David G. Quintana.

Objective

An overview of general biolab organization and procedures.

Blocks

- Organization of Biolabs.
- Handling of typical equipment and instruments.
- Your bench.
- Types of storage.
- The lab notebook.
- Lab safety. Good laboratory practices. Disposal of lab waste. How to react when facing spills and other accidents. Working with radioisotopes. Biosafety.

1.3- Scientific Integrity

Instructor

Oscar Zaragoza

Objective

For the student to become aware of the conflicts, tensions and uncertainties encountered in scientific research.

Contents

Case-based learning. Sources of pressure. Misconduct, fabrication, falsification, suppression, plagiarism. Misinterpretation, a priori convictions, insufficient reproducibility. Criteria for authorship.

2- Communication skills in Science

Instructors

Enrique Claro, Joaquin Arino.

Objectives

- For the student to acquire fundamental skills in written and oral communication of research results, in a concise, clear, honest manner.
- For the student to develop the ability to integrate knowledge and formulate reasonable conclusions from available information.

Blocks

- Oral skills.
- The research article.
- The MSc and PhD thesis.
- Posters.

3- Journal Clubbing

Instructors

(In alphabetical order): Marti Aldea, Jose R. Bayascas, Ester Boix, Javier Garcia-Pardo, Irantzu Pallares, Jordi Pujols, Natalia Sanchez de Groot, Enea Sancho, Carles Saura, Nathalia Varejao.

Objectives

An initiation to journal club as an essential, standard tool to:

- Develop the ability to analyze, reason, and discuss (defend and criticize) scientific results.
- Get acquainted with and understand advanced research work.
- Keep up with constant, fast progress in biomolecular sciences.
- Integrate MSc/PhD students' knowledge in Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, and Biomedicine.
- Practice preparing and delivering oral presentation and discussion/defense of experimental results.
- Serve as a way of identifying some of the current frontiers in biomolecular research, including emerging methods and techniques.

Blocks

- How to critically dissect a research article.
- Relevant articles will be proposed by the different tutors for the students to work on at home, and then present and discuss them in small groups.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Full group classes (TE, double helix) and split group seminars (SEM, Crick / Franklin)	30	1.2	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26
Type: Supervised			
Presentation of Journal clubs	8	0.32	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26
Supervised work in the classroom in collaborative work teams	19.5	0.78	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26
Tutorials	4	0.16	3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25
Type: Autonomous			
Work on assignments and on Journal Club	147.5	5.9	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26

This is a highly practical course, as it is aimed at developing research competencies and self-confidence in future biomolecular researcher. Consequently, all sessions are based on hands-on, experiential learning, with the student at the center of their learning process. Due to this approach, the workload (which is evaluated) is substantial.

In general, TE and SEM sessions will follow the structure described below, though the instructors may adjust this as needed:

- Session 1:
 - Introductory presentation.
 - Supervised teamwork (*peer instruction*), to develop relevant competencies, such as:
 - Experimental design
 - Resolving safety issues and scientific integrity conflicts related to lab work
 - Oral and written communication tasks
 - Independent coursework, related to the supervised work initiated in the classroom.
- Session 2:
 - Presentation of homework assignments, followed by discussion-based learning.
 - Synthesis of key points.

In addition to TE and SEM sessions, students must prepare 4 Journal Club sessions. They are required to prepare and defend the presentations of 4 research articles of their choice from a selection of 10 offered.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Presentation and defence of assignments	80%	8	0.32	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26
Presentation and discussion of Journal Clubs	20%	8	0.32	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26

Continuous evaluation:

Specific details of the different assignments will be provided by the different instructors. The contribution of each block to the final grade is proportional to the workload.

- Experimental design (DGQ 25%)
- Scientific communication (EC 25%, JA 10%)
- Scientific integrity, safety, good laboratory practices, biosafety (JF 10%, OZ 10%)
- Presentation and discussion of the Journal Clubs (20%)

Class attendance:

Instructors in Module 1 consider that hands-on, experiential learning is the most powerful learning strategy. For such reason, all face-to-face sessions involve in-class work, which cannot be recovered. Consequently, absences without a documented force majeure reason will average zero proportionally to the missed number of hours.

Late submission of coursework:

Coursework submitted after the deadline without a documented extenuating circumstance will incur a penalty. For each working day past the submission date, 10% of the total mark will be deducted. This penalty applies until the solutions are released. Once solutions are made available, no further assignments will be accepted, and a zero mark will be awarded.

Referral evaluation:

Since the evaluation of the module is based on continuous work, much of it in the classroom, there is no referral evaluation option.

Single evaluation:

This module does not offer a single evaluation option.

Non-assessable:

A student who hands in pieces of evidence that account for less than 2/3 of the total mark will be qualified as "Non-assessable".

Misconduct:

Written works and presentation documents will be scanned with plagiarism detection software. Detection of a single plagiarism event will lead to failing the module with no option for referral evaluation.

Bibliography

The recommended textbooks are available at the UAB libraries.

- At the Bench. A laboratory Navigator. Kathy Barker. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 2005.
- Experimental Design for Biologists. David J. Glass. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 2007.
- Statistics at the Bench. A Step-by-Step Handbook for Biologists. Martina Bremer. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 2009.
- How to Present at Meetings. George M. Hall, Neville Robinson. BMJ Books, London, 2011.
- University of Manchester Academic Phrasebank <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>

Software

None.

Language list

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PLABm) Practical laboratories (master)	1	English	annual	morning-mixed
(PLABm) Practical laboratories (master)	2	English	annual	morning-mixed
(SEMm) Seminars (master)	1	English	annual	morning-mixed
(SEMm) Seminars (master)	2	English	annual	morning-mixed
(TEm) Theory (master)	1	English	annual	morning-mixed