

## Food Microbiology

Code: 103259  
ECTS Credits: 6

**2025/2026**

| Degree                      | Type | Year |
|-----------------------------|------|------|
| Food Science and Technology | OB   | 3    |
| Veterinary Medicine         | OT   | 5    |

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## Teaching groups languages

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

## Prerequisites

There are no official prerequisites, but students are advised to review the basic concepts of Microbiology.

## Objectives and Contextualisation

This is a compulsory third-year subject in Food Science and Technology (CTA) degree and a non-compulsory fifth-year subject in Veterinary Medicine (VET) degree. Students will acquire the knowledge and practical skills of Food Microbiology. Topics covered include the concept and significance of Microbiology related to foods, conditions that influence the development of microorganisms, microorganisms associated with food, techniques and basic methods for studying microorganisms, and analytical techniques used in food microbiology.

The training offered by the subject is based on previous knowledge acquired in compulsory subjects as Microbiology and Parasitology (CTA) and Microbiology (VET). It is also oriented to its applications in other subjects as Food Safety and Public Health.

The specific training objectives are:

- To introduce the student to the basic concepts of Food Microbiology.
- To provide knowledge of microbiological techniques and methods in foods.
- To recognize and understand the role of microorganisms associated with foods across many aspects (normal microbiota, causative agents of disease, spoilage, and those of industrial, biotechnological and ecological use) and the control of microorganisms.

## Competences

### Food Science and Technology

- Analyse, summarise, resolve problems and make professional decisions.
- Apply the principles of processing techniques and evaluate their effects on the quality and safety of the product.
- Apply the scientific method to resolving problems.
- Communicate effectively with both professional and non-professional audiences, orally and in writing, in the first language and/or in English.
- Identify food hazards, their nature (physical, chemical, biological and nutritional), their origin or causes, their effects, and suitable methods for controlling them throughout the food supply chain so as to reduce risks to consumers.
- Identify pathogenic, spoilage, and industrially-useful microorganisms, along with the conditions that are favourable or unfavourable to their growth in foods and in industrial and biotechnological processes.
- Select the appropriate analytical procedures (chemical, physical, biological and sensory) in accordance with the objectives of the study, the characteristics of the analytes and the fundamental principles of the technique.
- Show understanding of the mechanisms by which raw materials deteriorate and the reactions and changes that take place during storage and processing, and apply the methods for controlling this.

### Veterinary Medicine

- Analyse, synthesise and resolve problems and make decisions.
- Apply scientific method to professional practice, including medicine
- Collect, preserve and issue all types of samples with the corresponding report.
- Comunicar la informació obtinguda durant l'exercici professional de manera fluïda, oralment i per escrit, amb altres col·legues, autoritats i la societat en general.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the rights and duties of the veterinarian, with a special focus on ethical principles
- Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and differentiation of the main biological agents of veterinary interest.
- Draft and present satisfactory professional reports, always maintaining the required confidentiality.
- Perform basic analytical techniques and interpret the clinical, biological and chemical results, and interpret the results of tests generated by other laboratories.
- Perform risk analyses, including those of environmental and biosafety, and evaluate and manage them.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse, summarise, resolve problems and make professional decisions.
2. Analyse, synthesise and resolve problems and make decisions.
3. Analyse the importance of microorganisms in the field of food and understand the biotic and abiotic factors that affect development in these substrates.
4. Apply different microbiological, chemical or physical/chemical analysis techniques and know how to interpret the results obtained.
5. Apply scientific method to professional practice, including medicine
6. Apply the scientific method to resolving problems.
7. Characterise the principal biotic agents of food-transmitted diseases.

8. Communicate effectively with both professional and non-professional audiences, orally and in writing, in the first language and/or in English.
9. Communicate information obtained during professional exercise in a fluid manner, orally and in writing, with other colleagues, authorities and society in general.
10. Describe the role of microorganisms as agents of food spoilage.
11. Draft and present satisfactory professional reports, always maintaining the required confidentiality.
12. Evaluate the effect of technological treatments applied to biological agents and toxic compounds, and ways to control this effect.
13. Evaluate the effect of the intrinsic, extrinsic and implicit properties of foods on the survival and growth capacity of biological agents.
14. Identify and apply suitable microbiological methods to the study of bacteria, fungi and viruses in foods.
15. Identify and describe the properties of the principal biotic hazards in foods and determine their origin and the factors that determine their presence.
16. Recognise and distinguish between pathogenic, spoilage, and industrially-useful microorganisms.
17. Recognise the changes, alterations and adulterations suffered by milk, meat, fishing products, eggs, plants and derived products, as well as products made in collective catering establishments.
18. Recognise the dangers to milk, meat, fishing products, eggs, plants and derived products, as well as products made in collective catering establishments, and evaluate the risk involved for different consumers.
19. Recognise the role of microorganisms as causal agents of foodborne disease and appreciate their role in industrial processes.
20. Recognise the specific mechanisms for controlling microorganisms in each food.
21. Relate food toxoinfections caused by consuming milk, meat, fish products, eggs, vegetables, or products deriving from all these, and foods made in group catering establishments, to the ethiological agents responsible.
22. Relate the problem of foodborne diseases caused by the consumption of milk, meat, fishing products, eggs, vegetables and derived products of all of those, as well as collective catering establishments, with the responsible etiologic agents.
23. Select, collect and send samples for microbiological and toxicological analysis, and write the corresponding report for the receiving laboratory.
24. Select suitable microbiological analysis procedures in keeping with the objectives of the study.
25. Use the basic preparatory and analytic techniques of a toxicology and microbiology laboratory, always applying the basic safety regulations, and write the corresponding expert report.

## Content

The subject is structured into the following sections:

Section a. Introduction to Food Microbiology: concept and evolution. Factors affecting the growth of microorganisms in food: intrinsic and extrinsic factors (chemical, physical and biological factors).

Section b. Microorganisms associated with foods: bacteria, fungi, viruses, other organisms. Sources of food contamination. Spoilage microorganisms. Indicator microorganisms. Foodborne pathogenic microorganisms: Infections, toxi-infections, foodborne intoxications. Useful microorganisms.

Section c. Analytical methods in food microbiology: essential and conventional methods, immunological methods, molecular methods, rapid and automated methods, physical methods.

Section d. Foods: Introduction, initial microbiota, effects of processing, spoilage microorganisms, Foodborne pathogenic microorganisms and its control

- Meat and meat products
- Fish, seafood and fish food
- Milk and dairy foods

- Eggs and egg products

- Other foodstuffs: vegetables, fruits, cereals and derivatives, prepared foods, canned foods, water for human consumption, beverages.

The laboratory practical contents are:

- Aseptic technique and culture methods. Observation of microorganisms and main staining methods.

- Techniques for enumeration and isolation of microorganisms.

- Methods for bacterial identification.

- Microbiological analysis of food products (traditional and molecular methods)

## Activities and Methodology

| Title                 | Hours | ECTS | Learning Outcomes                                       |
|-----------------------|-------|------|---|
| Type: Directed        |       |      |   |
| Laboratory sessions   | 19    | 0.76 | 1, 6, 7, 25, 14, 16, 24, 23                             |
| Lectures              | 29    | 1.16 | 1, 6, 7, 10, 25, 14, 15, 20, 16, 22, 21, 24, 23, 13, 12 |
| Seminar               | 3     | 0.12 | 1, 6, 8, 20, 16, 22, 21, 24, 13                         |
| Type: Supervised      |       |      |   |
| Tutorials             | 2     | 0.08 | 7, 10, 25, 14, 15, 20, 16, 24, 23, 13, 12               |
| Type: Autonomous      |       |      |   |
| Cases/problem solving | 15    | 0.6  | 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 20, 16, 21, 22, 24, 23, 13, 12      |
| Study                 | 79    | 3.16 | 7, 10, 14, 15, 20, 16, 22, 21, 24, 13, 12               |

This subject applies the following methodology:

- Lectures: These lectures allow the acquisition of the basic scientific-technical knowledge of the subject; this knowledge must be complemented with a fuller study of the topics covered. Attendance and participation will be assessed.
- Laboratory sessions: practical sessions in the laboratory aim to enhance and apply the theoretical and conceptual knowledge acquired in the lectures. These sessions encourage students to improve technical skills, and reinforce theory with practice. Students will be issued with a Manual of Laboratory-Practical Sessions at the beginning of the course. To ensure satisfactory performance and acquire the skills corresponding to this subject, it is essential that students read this manual in detail, familiarizing themselves with the practical work to be carried out in each session, as well as with the methodology that should be applied in the various sessions. Students will work individually or in pairs.
- Small group work and seminar presentation: this activity aims to encourage group work, as well as to enhance the ability to synthesize, communicate and argue for a case o scientific problem. All necessary material for this activity (real cases) will be provided in advance. Students will prepare a presentation in the classroom. An open discussion and an assessment of the acquired knowledge will be held in the seminar room. In this activity, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is allowed as an integral

part of the development of the work, provided that the final result reflects a significant contribution from the student in terms of analysis and personal reflection. The student must clearly identify which parts have been generated using this technology, specify the tools used, and include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and the final outcome of the activity. Lack of transparency in the use of AI will be considered academic dishonesty and may result in a penalty on the activity grade, or more serious sanctions in severe cases.

- Tutorials: these are informative sessions on the content, development and objectives of the different activities. In tutorials, students have the opportunity to clarify any doubts about the course.

All teaching materials used during the course will be posted on the Campus Virtual platform. Before each session, students will find the presentations (in pdf format) used in class by the teacher, as a support for taking notes. Students must inform themselves of the news and information published on the Campus Virtual.

\*The proposed teaching methodology may experience some modifications depending on the restrictions to face-to-face activities enforced by health authorities.

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   |
|----------------------|-----------|-------|------|---|
| Laboratory sessions  | 20%       | 0     | 0    | 2, 1, 6, 4, 7, 25, 14, 11, 24   |
| Seminar presentation | 20%       | 0     | 0    | 3, 2, 1, 5, 6, 4, 9, 8, 10, 15, 19, 20, 16, 11, 22, 21, 24, 13, 12          |
| Written tests        | 60%       | 3     | 0.12 | 3, 2, 1, 6, 7, 9, 8, 10, 14, 15, 19, 17, 20, 18, 16, 21, 22, 24, 23, 13, 12 |

Assessment is individual and continuous through different activities:

- Laboratory sessions (20% of the overall grade): a continuous assessment will be carried out during the laboratory sessions. Maximum score: 20 points.

- Small group work and seminar presentation (20% of the overall grade): a small group work will be done, one in the classroom in a seminar format. Maximum score: 20 points.

- Written exams (60% of the overall grade): Midterm exam 1: sections a, b and c (30% of the overall grade). Maximum score: 30 points. Midterm exam 2: section d (30% of the overall grade). Maximum score: 30 points. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is not permitted in this assessment activity. Including fragments generated with AI will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and may result in a partial or total penalty on the activity grade, or more serious sanctions in severe cases. For an average grade for assessment activities to be applicable, the minimum grade from the scores obtained in each written exam should be 14 points.

- To pass the subject, a global score of at least 50 points/100 is required.
- Students who do not meet the minimum-grade requirements for the written exams will be able to retake them on the date scheduled for subject reassessment.

- If students do not submit any of the written exams, they will be graded as Non-assessable.

## SINGLE ASSESEMENT

For students who decide to take a single assessment, it may be assessed for all the scheduled activities they do (laboratory practices, group work) and for the twopartial exams on the day the last continuous assessment test will be held (second partial exam). The assessment, and weight on the final grade of these activities and the minimum value to be achieved in each of the partials will be the same as in the continuous assessment. The same method of reassessment, non-assessable criteria and the same procedure for reviewing the grades will be applied as in the continuous assessment.

## REPEATER STUDENTS

Students who are retaking the subject will not need to do the practice and group work again and will be able to take a single and final exam. With this option, the scores obtained in the previous course or in other courses will not be considered. The final grade will be the one you get in the exam and you must achieve a score of 5 out of 10 to pass the subject.

\*Student's assessment may experience some modifications depending on the restrictions to face-to-face activities enforced by health authorities.

## Bibliography

### Textbooks

- Adams, MR; Moss, MO; McClure, PJ. 2016 (4a ed.). Food Microbiology. *Royal Society of Chemistry*.

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- Batt, CA; Tortorello, ML (eds.). 2014 (2a ed.). Encyclopedia of Food Microbiology. *Academic Press*.

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- Doyle, MP; Diez-Gonzalez, F; Hill, C. (eds.). 2019 (5ª ed.). Food Microbiology: Fundamentals and Frontiers. *American Society for Microbiology (ASM)*.

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- Liu, D. 2009. Molecular detection of foodborne pathogens. *CRC Press*.

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#### Websites

- <http://www.aesan.msc.es>
- <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en.html>
- <http://www.foodhaccp.com>
- <http://www.gencat.cat/salut/acsa/>

#### Software

NONE

#### Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

| Name                          | Group | Language | Semester       | Turn          |
|-------------------------------|-------|----------|----------------|---------------|
| (PAUL) Classroom practices    | 1     | Catalan  | first semester | morning-mixed |
| (PAUL) Classroom practices    | 2     | Catalan  | first semester | morning-mixed |
| (PLAB) Practical laboratories | 1     | Catalan  | first semester | morning-mixed |
| (PLAB) Practical laboratories | 2     | Catalan  | first semester | morning-mixed |
| (PLAB) Practical laboratories | 3     | Catalan  | first semester | morning-mixed |
| (TE) Theory                   | 1     | Catalan  | first semester | morning-mixed |