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Accreditation of the Master of Science (MSci) in Biochemistry

Section 1: Letter of Intent

We are submitting our 4 year **Master of Science (MSci) degree in Biochemistry**, offered by the School of Biosciences at the [REDACTED] for accreditation by the Society of Biology. All students undertaking either the 3 year BSc degree or the 4 year MSci degree, follow a common programme in their first 3 years. As such students are able to make their final decision to pursue the MSci programme when they are in their 3rd year. We only accept transfers from the BSc to the MSci programme for the most able students who consistently achieve above 60% in their end of year examinations.

Students first enrolled on this programme in the academic year 2006/7 and the group of three MSci students successfully graduated in 2010. The number of students enrolling on the MSci programme has steadily increased so that seven students graduated in 2011 and eleven students will complete the 4th year of the Biochemistry MSci in 2011/2012. Last year eight students entered directly into the 1st year of the MSci Biochemistry with the anticipation that a number of the more able students will convert onto the MSci programme in their 3rd year.

We believe that the Biochemistry degree programme from the [REDACTED] fulfills all the major requirements as outlined within the Society of Biology Accreditation Handbook.

Recognised Excellence

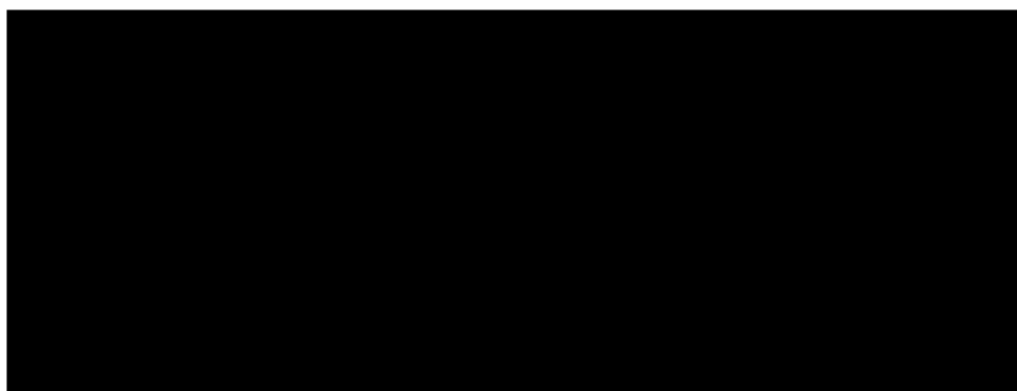
Graduates in Biochemistry from the [REDACTED] have long been highly regarded. Employers (especially those that have taken on our students on professional placements) recognize that our students are well trained in laboratory skills and to

have good background knowledge of the molecular bioscience field. In addition, over 70% of our graduates either have graduate level job or are pursuing graduate entry training within 6 months after their degree with more than 90% in employment or training overall (*see section 8 of the guidance document for more details on employment*).

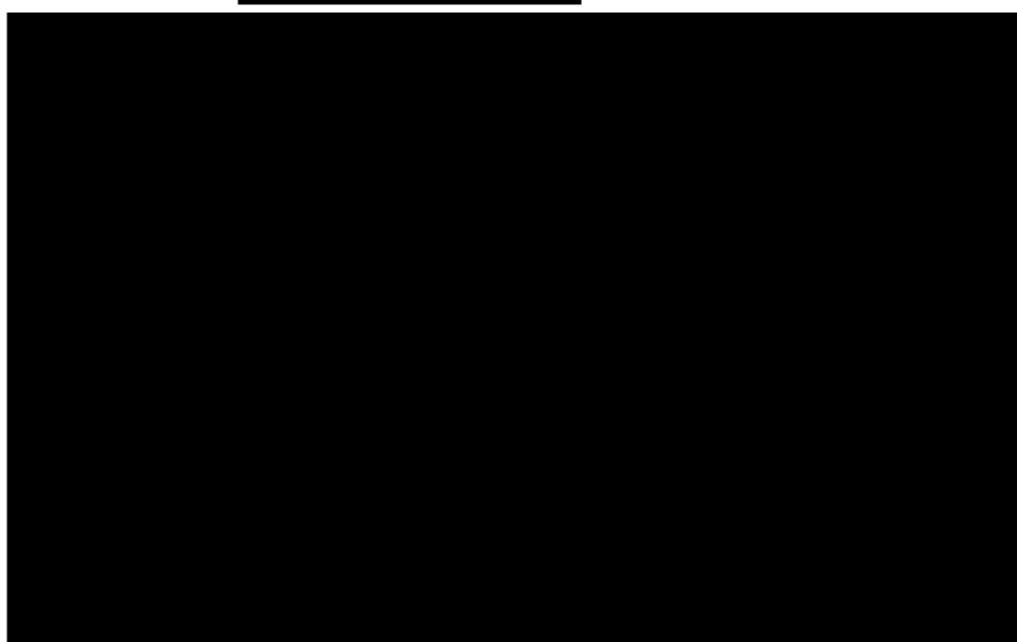
In the most recent comprehensive programme review (CPR) for biochemistry carried out in 2010/2011 the external assessor stated in his report that **“The biochemistry programmes [redacted] provides a very rigorous training in biochemistry and allied subjects. Notable is the prominence given to the chemistry that underpins the discipline”**. In the last QAA assessment where the Biochemistry degree programme was considered in isolation within the School, it scored 23 out of 24 overall for all assessments (*see section 5 of Guidance document for details*).


Leadership and Innovation

Over the years many graduates of Biochemistry from the [redacted] have gone on to become internationally recognised scientists both in academia and in industry. Listed below are a few notable examples:



Many current academics and principal investigator scientists are graduates of Biochemistry from the [redacted] Listed below are a few examples:





Quality Control and Benchmarking

Our biochemistry programme is assessed annually at both the module and programme level. In addition, every 5 years the biochemistry programme, is assessed through a comprehensive programme review (CPR) and School quality review (SQR). These reviews have external inputs and assessors. Both these 5 year reviews were undertaken within the last year. The outcomes from both these reviews were very positive. *(see section 5 of the guidance document for more details).*

Increased Competence (Research Experience)

All biochemistry undergraduates are introduced to a range of experimental techniques and methodologies during practical classes throughout their first 3 years *(see sections 2 and 3 of the guidance document for more details of the types of experimental methods undertaken)*. The classes enable the students to develop practical laboratory skills and are structured to become more challenging in year 3 where practicals undertaken are open-ended mini research projects in which students are required to consider key aspects such as experimental design, data recording, appropriate controls and statistical analysis. This provides a sound basis for students who then go on to complete extended projects in both their 3rd and 4th years. The project in the 3rd year is taken across both semesters. For students taking a laboratory based project, engaging in original research, they typically spending 9 weeks 'at the bench'. Alternatively, some students undertake a computer based project involving aspects of bioinformatics or systems biology, whilst others students who wish to focus on scientific data analysis, undertake a detailed analytical based literature project. In their 4th year all MSci students must undertake a laboratory or bioinformatics research project. This, 6-7 month project requires MSci students to become more proficient in key analytical bioscience skills and analysis. *(For more details about research projects and training please refer to sections 2 and 3 of the guidance document).*

Included with this application is a **guidance document** which covers all the sections outlined in **Appendix D** for Stage One of the assessment. Each part comes with a brief outline and a folder containing key documentation.

If the assessors require additional information or documentation that we have not included within this application, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will do our best to provide it.

Regards



(Biochemistry Programme leader)



(Head of Education)