

Department Of  
Animal &  
Plant  
Sciences.

The  
Diversity  
Of  
Life.



Level 4

Undergraduate

Handbook

2017-2018

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## SECTION 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1.1 LINKS TO USEFUL INFORMATION

**APS Level 4 undergraduate home page**

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/aps/currentug/level4>

**Level 4 List of Important dates**

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/aps/currentug/level4/l4importantdates>

**APS modules**

Level 4

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/aps/currentug/level4>

**APS Staff**

A full list of academic staff, research fellows and support staff, their contact details and research interests can be found at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/aps/staff-and-students>  
There is a board on the D-floor that has room numbers for all members of staff.

**Level 4 timetable can be found at  
Student-staff committee**

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/aps/currentug/level4>  
<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/aps/currentug/staffstucom>

**If you are ill then read section 4.5**

**If you have any queries please email [animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk)**

**Check your University email account every day.**

**You will find information general to all APS Students and Specific to each Level on the APS Student Information and Resources organisation on MOLE**

## 1.2 Introduction

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with all the information we think you need to know about the courses that we teach, the staff that teach them, the methods of teaching and assessment used, and the administration of the Department. In addition there is information on student support services and health and safety.

This handbook is designed to complement the University and Animal and Plant Sciences web pages where we provide additional information and resources for both students and staff. This means that if you have queries about finding things, how to go about doing something, who to contact, etc. in the University, then the University web site, or the web pages for Animal and Plant Sciences are a good place to start looking.

As a registered member of the University you will also be provided with access to MUSE (My University of Sheffield Environment) that acts as an electronic gateway (or portal) to a number of other resources. The most important of these is MOLE (my Online Learning Environment). We will place course specific material (such as handouts, self-assessment exercises, data files and places for submitting coursework electronically) on MOLE. You should have information about MUSE and how to use it in the introductory information you receive from CICS.

We are a large department within the School of Biological Sciences, which itself is one of the largest groupings of biologists in the UK. This makes our task of liaising with you all the more important. We are also one of the most highly ranked departments in the UK for both teaching and research. The Department and its members thus have a lot to offer you and we hope that you will continue to enjoy your studies here.

The staff of the Department have a good reputation for helpfulness and we have several mechanisms for consultation about matters of concern to you. It is in your interests that you take full advantage of these mechanisms and we will always do our best to respond positively to any suggestions or complaints that you have.

In return we do ask that you help us by reading this document, monitoring the web and checking your **University** email account daily to ensure that you have the information you need and by providing us with information when this is required. Please read carefully the section dealing with illness, as this could affect your examination results. Please also read the Student Information Noticeboard on B1 floor, opposite the lifts, regularly and carefully.

We hope that you will find all the information you will require in the following pages. We would welcome your comments on the handbook as we seek to improve it for future years.

## 1.3 Administration

### The Department of Animal & Plant Sciences

The Department is one of the largest in the University. The Head of the Department is **Professor Mike Siva-Jothy**

The staff who hold responsibilities that are of most relevance to you are as follows:

<b>Dr Fiona Hunter</b>	-	<b>Director of Teaching</b>
<b>Dr Penny Watt</b>	-	<b>Level 1 Year Tutor and Student Disability Officer</b>
<b>Dr Jonathan Graves</b>	-	<b>Level 2 Year Tutor</b>
<b>Dr Charles Wellman</b>	-	<b>Level 3 Year Tutor</b>
<b>Professor Ben Hatchwell</b>	-	<b>Level 4 Year Tutor</b>
<b>Dr Penny Watt</b>	-	<b>Examinations Officer</b>
<b>Dr Kai Zeng</b>	-	<b>Deputy Examinations Officer</b>
<b>Dr Beth Dyson</b>	-	<b>Coordinator for the Environmental Science Degree</b>
<b>Professor Jonathan Leake</b>	-	<b>Biology with a Year Abroad Degree Tutor</b>
<b>Dr Gareth Fraser</b>	-	<b>Erasmus/Biology with a Modern Language Degree Tutor</b>
<b>Dr Millie Mockford</b>	-	<b>Careers and Employment Liaison</b>
<b>Dr David Edwards</b>	-	<b>Field Course Coordinator</b>

A large part of the administration in the Department is centred on the Departmental Office. The office is situated on D-floor of the Alfred Denny Building. The office is open 9am – 5pm Monday – Friday, all general enquiries can be made here.

**If you have any queries concerning undergraduate matters you should email [animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk). This will then be passed on to the appropriate member of staff.**

**It is vital that you check your University e-mail regularly.**

All official notices concerning teaching and examinations are posted on the notice-boards on B1-Floor (next to the lifts).

#### 1.4 **The Faculty of Science**

The Faculty of Science oversees all the arrangements that Departments and Schools make concerning admissions, teaching, examinations and the award of degrees. The Faculty is responsible for ensuring that the University Regulations concerning teaching and examining are upheld and that standards are maintained.



## SECTION 2 AIMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL & PLANT SCIENCES

### 2.1 Mission Statement of the University

The mission of the University is to maintain the highest standards of excellence as a research-led institution, whose staff work at the frontiers of academic enquiry and educate students in a research environment.

You can find it online at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan>

### 2.2 Mission Statement of the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences

- to undertake research at the highest level of international standing directed towards an understanding of the integration of whole organisms and the interactions of organisms with each other and with their environment.
- to educate undergraduate students in a research environment, and to produce graduates who will compete successfully in the graduate job market or be well qualified to undertake postgraduate training.
- to provide research training of the highest quality, and to produce post-doctoral research workers who are capable of becoming successful research biologists.

The Department of Animal & Plant Sciences implements its mission statement through its strong commitment to teaching and research.

### 2.3 Teaching aims of the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences

- provide teaching that is informed and invigorated by the research and scholarship of its staff and is stimulating to and enjoyable by students.
- provide a curriculum for each of our degree course subjects that develops a broad understanding of the subject together with a more detailed and critical understanding of selected areas.
- provide a supportive environment for students with effective mechanisms for referral to specialist services when required.
- develop in students an independence of thought, intellectual curiosity and a critical approach to evidence, theories and concepts.
- develop in students a range of subject-specific and generic skills appropriate to employment both within and outside of biology.
- enable students to maximise their academic potential in all aspects of their chosen course.
- assess students over a range of skills and identify, support and encourage academic excellence.
- impart to students an awareness of the importance of commitment to and skills relevant to life-long learning.
- widen access to our degree programmes to the extent permitted by the intellectual aptitudes demanded by the programmes.
- prepare students for postgraduate work and a professional career in biology.

## 2.4 Degree Course Objectives

Arising from these aims are general objectives for all our degree courses. Objectives are what you as a student should achieve and so by the time you graduate you should:

- be able to demonstrate a broad understanding of your degree subject(s).
- be able to demonstrate a detailed knowledge in selected areas of your degree subject(s).
- have obtained experience in the laboratory and, where appropriate, the field.
- be able to demonstrate skills in the acquisition, use and critical evaluation of subject-related information.
- be able to demonstrate effective skills in communicating scientific results, ideas and arguments both orally and in writing.
- be able to demonstrate quantitative and computing skills sufficient to aid data generation and analysis and report presentation.
- have applied the skills you have acquired in research-related project work.
- have acquired effective study habits and the ability to work effectively both as an individual and as a member of a team.
- be well qualified for employment in the graduate job market.
- be able to assess whether or not you have the ability, motivation and interest to pursue postgraduate training.

All our degree courses are designed with these objectives in mind, and teaching methods in the Department are designed to help you achieve the objectives set for

all our degree courses. What we aim to provide is a progression from year to year that builds up the overall degree course objectives.

## 2.5 Aims of the first year course (Level 1):

- to provide a modular course that covers a wide range of biology.
- to enable students to choose modules within their degree course structure that are appropriate to their interests.
- to enable students to acquire basic laboratory experience in biology.
- to provide a personal and academic tutorial system that develops the communication and data interpretation skills of students.
- to allow flexibility within Level 1 such that students have an opportunity to change degree course within the School of Biological Sciences provided they have chosen appropriate modules.
- to provide students with a sound academic base for progression to Level 2.
- to provide students with the opportunity to assess their progress by formative feedback in tutorials and by summative feedback from modular assessments.

## 2.6 Aims of the second year course (Level 2):

- to enable students to develop further their knowledge and understanding of specific areas of biology.
- to expand students' laboratory experience in specific areas of biology in terms of the diversity of organisms, the design and execution of experiments and, where appropriate, field work.

- to develop students' skills in the analysis and interpretation of biological data.
- to develop students' skills in the use of information technology.
- to develop students' skills in the presentation of biological data.
- to provide experience of collaborative team work.
- to provide a personal and academic tutorial system that further develops students' communication and data interpretation skills.
- to provide students with the opportunity to assess their progress by formative assessment in tutorials and by summative assessment in modular examinations.

### 2.7 **Aims of the third year course (Level 3):**

- to enable students to study selected areas of biology in depth.
- to expose students to the most recent advances in selected areas of biology.
- to further enhance students' ability to analyse, criticise and evaluate biological data and alternative viewpoints.
- to enable students to carry out a research project under supervision.
- to enable students to write a dissertation on a topic of their choice.
- to develop students' self-reliance and time-management skills by their organisation of work for projects, dissertations and examinations.
- to provide students with the opportunity to obtain formative feedback from their supervisors and summative feedback from modular assessments.

### 2.8 **Aims of the fourth year course (Level 4):**

- to enable students to analyse, criticise and evaluate biological data and alternative viewpoints at an advanced level.
- to enable students to research an area of biology in depth by means of a dissertation and research project under supervision.
- to develop advanced research-specific laboratory and/or field skills.
- to develop communication skills and to enable students to communicate science to professional and public audiences.
- to expand students' understanding of how research is funded and published.
- to develop an understanding of entrepreneurship and the commercial utilization of biological systems.
- to provide students with the opportunity to obtain formative feedback from their supervisors.
- to further develop students' self-reliance and time management skills by their organisation of work for projects and dissertations.
- to provide advanced training in generic skills necessary to become a career biologist.

### 2.9 **Module Objectives**

The modules that you will take during your degree course will cover all of these aims and help you to achieve your overall degree course objectives; clearly not all objectives will be relevant to each module, some will develop specific skills, others will cover a broader range.

You will receive, at the start of every module, a set of aims and objectives for that module. These objectives will indicate what you are meant to achieve.

## SECTION 3 TEACHING METHODS

The teaching methods throughout your degree are in the form of practicals, tutorials, lectures, self-directed learning and, at Levels 2, 3 and 4, will include project work, dissertation work, workshops, seminars and field courses.

### 3.1 Lectures

You should always attend lectures and take your own notes. Do not rely on other people's notes (unless you are ill and cannot attend a lecture). Strike a balance between making notes and listening carefully. Try to understand the main points of the lecture and make sufficient notes to enable you to recall each of these points afterwards. Do not attempt to write down every word the lecturer says.

Good notes often include headings and subheadings, underlining or highlighting, and a clear layout on the page. It is very useful to leave a wide margin at one side, so that you can add extra points later – details from textbooks, references, clarifications. Use abbreviations in note-making, but make sure that you know what they mean. It is essential that you should read through your notes as soon as possible after a lecture to make sure they make sense and you understand them. If you do not understand your notes either seek help immediately or consult textbooks to clarify the situation. This is best done while the topic is still fresh in your mind. Talking to your classmates may help clarify things.

All lectures are scheduled to last for fifty minutes, although not all lecturers choose to use the full time. Lecture times are standardised throughout the University. They start on the hour and are 50 min long (e.g. 9:00 – 9:50 am).

You should always arrive at a lecture at least a few minutes before it is due to start. You might need to pick up a hand-out and you will certainly need to organise yourself to take notes. Late arrival at lectures is discourteous and disruptive for the lecturer and other students. It also shows an inability to organise your time effectively. You will also find it difficult to understand a lecture if you miss the beginning. Lecturers have the right to refuse admission to latecomers.

### 3.2 Policy on use of electronic equipment in lecture theatres

- Only to be used for the purposes of taking notes – you will be asked to switch them off if used for other purposes
- If distracting other students you will be asked to switch them off.
- We recommend paper and pen – write up afterwards as you'll learn more.

### 3.3 Attendance Monitoring

As a student, it is most important that you attend regularly all the lectures, tutorials, laboratory sessions etc. that are listed in your timetable or that are communicated to you as the semester proceeds. It is only by attending all of the scheduled sessions you will be able to learn effectively, and it is for this reason that the Student Charter notes that students are expected "*to attend throughout each semester, including the full examination period. This means turning up on time to all designated teaching sessions, tutorials, laboratory sessions and all assessment*". To help ensure that you make full use of the learning opportunities that are available, the department will be monitoring the attendance of students at twelve or more

sessions throughout the year. The monitoring will be carried out using systems that have been developed by the University specifically to help departments identify and support students who are having difficulty with their study programme.

Within this department, attendance will be monitored at introductory level meetings, tutorials, practicals, project and dissertation supervisory meetings, by completion of key elements of coursework and attendance at examinations.

### 3.4 **Groupwork**

For some modules you may be required to take part in assessed group work. So that all students can be assessed fairly for their contribution, you will be required to submit evidence of your participation in the group. You will be informed of what this consists and the marking criteria that will be used.

### 3.5 **Self-Directed Learning**

In the broadest sense self-directed learning is all the work you do when you are not in lectures, seminars, workshops or meetings. Self-directed learning will thus occupy more than half your working week. Some of this work will be clearly defined, for example the work you have to do for tutorials, lectures, projects and dissertations. For this work you will have to organise your time effectively and meet deadlines for the completion of work. Some modules will also include student-centred learning which involves reading and preparing material for assessment. Other aspects of self-directed learning are less clearly defined. For example, ensuring that your lecture notes are clear, comprehensible and comprehensive.

It is also expected that you will read books and papers that are recommended for each module. At level 1 each taught lecture module has two research papers that you must read. At level 2 this directed reading increases to 5-6 research papers for each taught lecture module. This directed reading is the **minimum** that is required for the course. You are also expected to read additional material to consolidate the material covered in lectures and increase the depth of your knowledge and understanding. You should organise your time to allow for some general subject-related reading each week. At levels 3 and 4 you are expected to read widely using both resources provided to you and those that you find yourself.

### 3.6 **Careers and Employability**

Our careers programme will help you gain the most from your time at University in order to improve your employability. If you have a firm career objective, it will help you develop the portfolio of skills and experience required to achieve your aim. If you are uncertain as to your career ambitions it will help you explore your career options.

Employers not only want candidates to have a good degree but also to have developed and documented their skills and experience relevant to the job they are applying for. Therefore an important output from the programme is the development of a Personal Development Record (PDR). The PDR can be in the form of an effective CV that is kept under constant review and development throughout your degree. All students will be required to do this. In addition the PDR can be enhanced by participation in the Skills for Work Certificate or the Sheffield Graduate Award both accredited programmes run by the University. Being able to

evaluate your own progress in this way can help you to set your own personal goals and plan for the future. This will help you to become a more effective, independent and confident learner, both during your undergraduate studies and throughout your future career.

At level 1 the focus is on familiarising students with the facilities offered by the career service, enabling engagement with appropriate experience. At level 2 the 10 credit module Careers for Biologists offers a more in depth appraisal of the careers available to APS students and how to prepare for them. Your personal tutor will play an active role in assisting you with progression of your personal development.

### 3.7 Life-Long Learning

During your time at University you will develop skills that will be essential to your employment prospects over a long period. You will spend your working life in a society in which knowledge develops rapidly and working practices change accordingly. To be successful you will need to continue learning throughout your life; you will also need to be flexible and adaptable. It is essential you realise that your time at university is not an interlude between school or college (or previous employment) and the world of work, but part of a continuous process. The skills that you develop in finding, analysing and presenting information, in organising your time effectively and in using information technology will form a basis for a life-long process of learning. The development and use of these skills during your time at university will ensure that you will be able to use them throughout your working life to enhance your employability.

### 3.8 Organising Your Studies

One of the most efficient routes to being successful in your studies is effective use of your time. As a student you need to find the right balance between relaxation and study. An indication of the minimum amount of time you should spend each week on your academic work is given in Section 4.3. Part of this time is fixed with regular lectures and project work. You will also have deadlines for handing in project reports, dissertations and other course work. [Examination dates](#) will also be announced well in advance. These fixed times form a framework for the whole academic year, within which you can organise your time. You should make a note of all the fixed dates, in your diary or on a wall planner, so that you can plan your tasks for the semester or for the year in perspective.

Weekly study plans are also an important way of using your time efficiently. Each week you could make a chart, and enter details for that week, starting with the times of your lectures, seminars and meetings with project/dissertation supervisors. Mark in any other commitments you have for the week. You should then allocate blocks of time sufficient to prepare for events such as discussion groups and meetings with project/dissertation supervisors. Allocate blocks of time for project or dissertation work, report writing, coursework and preparation for examinations. You may need to plan over a longer time span than a week for some of these. Your weekly plan should include reasonable amounts of time for eating, sleeping, travelling, exercising and relaxing. Allocate some time at the end of each day to review your progress.

You should aim to plan other study time during periods when you know you can study most effectively. It is important to select the best time of day and this is a wholly individual matter. Try, as far as possible, to devote at least part of your “best” time each day to serious study.

Your weekly study plan is only meant to be a guide and so it needs to be both flexible and realistic.

### 3.9 Using Your Study Periods Effectively

Everyone works and studies in their own way. There is no one way of studying which can be guaranteed to work for all students. To be successful in your studies you must develop your own study skills - try out different techniques, select the ones which work for you and stick with them.

Effective study requires a comfortable place to work, minimal distraction and accessible books and notes. Length of study periods is important but again this is an individual matter. Long sessions are not always advisable and should certainly contain a few short breaks. Make sure you have a short break between each study session. You need to set yourself a realistic goal within the time limit of your study session. You may wish to use it to check and expand lecture notes, to prepare coursework, to read a chapter in a textbook or read a scientific paper. Whatever your goal, do not try to do too much in one session.

Try to concentrate while you are studying. Concentration involves actively processing the material being presented. The length of time for which you can concentrate fully will vary, of course, but, unless you can concentrate, your study sessions will not be productive. If you are finding it hard to concentrate, then try

switching to another subject. A short break may also restore your concentration. If you find you cannot concentrate any longer, then take it as a signal to stop studying and relax.

### 3.10 Reading Effectively

Effective reading varies according to the material you are reading. In general, however, you can get the “gist” of a text without having to process every single word. With practice, you can increase your word span to five or six words, and increase your reading rate to several hundred words per minute. With course materials it is almost certain that you will need to read them more than once to understand them. To gain an understanding of what you are reading you might, for example, first scan the text quickly to get a broad overview of what it contains. Then read it again more slowly, picking out the main facts and ideas and how they are developed. Finally read it again in detail.

You should aim to read with attention and comprehension, making sure you understand all the important concepts and, at the same time, carefully evaluating the material in the light of what you already know. This is the stage when you might find it helpful to make notes of the more important ideas and facts in the text and a summary of the key points.

### 3.11 Field Courses

Degree courses in the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences may include either a compulsory or an optional field course. Field courses may be based in Sheffield or at other locations. Where field courses are based away from Sheffield



accommodation will be arranged by the Department. In such cases you will be expected to make a contribution to the costs of accommodation and travel to and from the course. For students starting level 1 in Sept 2012 costs of compulsory field courses will be met by the Department but you may still need to make a contribution towards costs for optional field courses. You will be told the costs associated with a field course at the Field Course Meeting. Where field courses are based in Sheffield you will be expected to provide your own accommodation. Wherever possible Sheffield-based field courses will be held in the first week or last week of a vacation. The degree course regulations for individual degree courses state whether a field course is compulsory or optional.

### 3.12 Academic and transferable skills development

As well as learning about your subject, throughout your degree you will have opportunities to develop academic and transferable skills. These skills are likely to include how to: write academic essays or reports, do presentations, work in teams, plan and manage your time, find, evaluate and accurately cite and reference material from diverse sources such as books, journals and the internet, and how to make the best use of IT. They are part of a broader set of skills and attributes that the University would like you to have achieved by the time you graduate (see the [Sheffield Graduate](#)). [Achieve More](#), which is part of all undergraduate courses, provides you with another opportunity to develop these skills.

As well as being essential to help you do well in your degree and any further study, we know that employers value these skills, so by gaining them you should also be better prepared for employment.

### Additional Support

[301: Student Skills and Development Centre](#) offers a range of services for all students:

- Maths and Statistics Help
- Academic Skills workshops
- Study Skills Sessions
- Specialist Dyslexia / SpLD tutorial Service
- Languages for All programme
- Writing Advisory Service

301 also offers an [Academic Skills Certificate](#) which can be included in your Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

### 3.13 Making your experience more international

The University of Sheffield is home to students and staff from more than 125 countries. This diverse learning environment gives you the opportunity to make your study experience more international. This can be done in a number of ways.

In the classroom, you may be with students from different countries. You may, for example, be asked to work on group projects which include a mix of students from the UK and abroad or your class projects may include international comparisons, or you may have an international guest speaker. This can help you think about how your subject or discipline translates to the global context.

You could decide to learn another language or be a language buddy. You might decide to study or work abroad as part of your degree, where you will have the chance to learn new skills, including possibly studying in another language.

There are lots of ways outside the classroom to make your experience more global. You might decide to be a mentor or part of the Sheffield Host Scheme or join social activities such as the *Global Café*. The Students' Union also provides many international opportunities such as student societies, volunteering, or World Week.

All of these opportunities will help you expand your horizons. Making yourself more culturally capable will also make you more employable across the globe.

Have a look at some of the opportunities on the [Experience Sheffield website](#).

## SECTION 4 RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

### 4.1 The Students' Charter.

University students are expected to take a large part of the responsibility for their own learning. This is a two-way process, however, and the University and its academic staff also have responsibilities. These responsibilities are listed in detail in the 'Our Commitment' web site. You should read this information and note your responsibilities. See <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/ourcommitment>.

### 4.2 Summary of Responsibilities.

The section below summarises the responsibilities of staff and students.

#### The Provision of Teaching.

You can expect us to:

- provide teaching that is authoritative, up-to-date, student-centred, well-planned and supported by appropriate materials.
- give you aims and objectives for modules and degree courses that will clearly indicate what is expected of you.
- use fair and efficient methods of assessment.
- provide accommodation and facilities that are fit for the purpose and in accordance with Health and Safety requirements.
- give you accurate information about courses, assessments and timetables.
- treat all students equally regardless of sex or ethnic background.

#### Your Responsibilities.

You will be expected to:

- attend all lectures, meetings with your project and dissertation supervisors, field courses and examinations that are a part of your degree course.
- arrive at all lectures and meetings punctually; late arrival not only indicates an inability on your part to organise your life, but is also disruptive and you might be turned away if you arrive late.
- hand in all course work on or before the specified deadline.
- read and note the information and guidance provided for you, and act on it accordingly.
- check carefully your registration details and report any errors or discrepancies immediately.
- ensure that proper procedures are followed when you wish to change registration details, e.g. address, module or degree course.
- do enough work to meet the requirements of your degree course.

### 4.3 How Much Work Is Enough?

During the course of an academic year you will take 120 credits of modules. According to University-wide guidelines, one credit is equivalent to ten hours work. A ten credit half-module would thus require a total of one hundred hours work. In total you are expected to undertake a minimum of 1,200 hours of study each academic year.

These workloads include all the work associated with a module, including time spent in preparing for examinations or other assessments. This is intended to be a general guide not a rigid prescription. If you are taking 60 credits in a semester you should expect to spend a minimum of thirty-six hours each week on your academic studies. Depending on your year of study and module choices the time that you will spend in lectures, workshops, seminars and meetings each week will vary but a typical average is about eight hours. This means that you should expect to spend at least an additional twenty eight hours each week on upgrading your lecture notes, working on your project or dissertation, reading appropriate books and scientific papers, completing course work and preparing for meetings with your project/dissertation supervisor.

Remember that thirty six hours each week is a **minimum**; you will need to do more than this sometimes especially in the period before examinations.

#### 4.4 What Happens If You Do Not Do Enough Work?

The most obvious consequence of not doing enough work is that you are likely to fail the assessment for one or more modules. Read SECTION 12 on Examinations for more information about this.

Before you reach this stage, however, you might find yourself subject to the Progress of Students Regulations of the University.

These Regulations **require** you

- a) to attend punctually and regularly lectures and classes;
- b) to complete all written assignments, practical or other coursework;

- c) to attend all examinations.

In the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences attendance at lectures is not monitored. You would be foolish, however, to miss any lecture as the work involved in catching up is more than is involved in attending in the first place. Also you cannot expect to receive information about modules and courses that is given out at lectures if you do not attend. You are expected to attend all lectures.

It is **compulsory** for you to attend tutorials (your tutor will keep an attendance register). Failure to attend tutorials and complete the work associated with it will result in you being interviewed by the Year Tutor or Director of Teaching and may result in you being reported to Faculty for unsatisfactory performance. If you do not attend tutorials then you cannot pass the tutorial module – this will prevent you from proceeding to the next level of academic study.

It is also **compulsory** for you to attend practicals (an attendance register will be kept). Again, failure to attend practicals and complete the associated work will prevent you from proceeding to the next level of academic study. If you have not signed the attendance register then you will be recorded as absent. Work will **not** be accepted from students who have not signed the attendance register.

It is **compulsory** for you to perform project and dissertation work at levels 3 and 4. This work is assessed and used in the determination of your degree classification. If you do not complete and hand in this work you will receive a zero grade assessment.

The University Regulations allow a student to be reported to the Faculty for:

- a) failure to attend the programme of study for which the student has registered.
- b) failure to perform adequately the work of the course.
- c) failure to present at the times appointed such written work as may have been required.
- d) failure to pass an examination.

You can be reported to the Faculty at any time for unsatisfactory progress and the Faculty has the authority to expel you from the University.

#### 4.5 What If You Are Ill or Need To Be Absent For Any Reason?

The University has two forms that are used to report illness or other factors that may influence your studies or attendance. These are the **Student Self-Certification Form** and the **Extenuating Circumstances Form**. (These have replaced the Special Circumstances form).

Please read the following sections carefully so that you know what to do. If you have any queries then please email your Year Tutor (or [animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk)). We cannot cover all eventualities here – there is additional information available at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/forms/circs>.

##### **No form needed**

- If you are unable to attend a lecture (or two) due to a minor, short-lived illness. You should catch up notes from other students and look at any hand-outs available online. These minor illnesses will occur to everyone throughout the year and you should be able to manage them yourself.

##### **Student Self-Certification Form**

You need to fill in this form if:

- you have been ill for less than 7 calendar days and you have not missed any assessments
- you have missed a practical or a tutorial (or any other activity where an attendance register is kept) providing there is no assessment scheduled for that session. If you were meant to give a presentation in the tutorial, you can still use this form but you should contact your tutor to arrange a new date.

Medical documentation is not usually required. However, if you have repeated absences we may ask you to provide medical evidence and fill in an Extenuating Circumstances Form.

You should hand this form into the APS Departmental Office.

##### **Extenuating Circumstances Form**

Extenuating circumstances are defined as *“Exceptional, short-term events which are outside of a student’s control and have a negative impact upon their ability to prepare for or take (sit) an assessment”*. You should read the notes at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/forms/circsnotes> about what is, or is not, considered to be an extenuating circumstance.

Extenuating circumstances might include bereavement, serious short-term illnesses/accidents or hospitalisation, deterioration or fluctuation in a long –term medical condition, significant adverse personal or family circumstances. We will

require evidence to support medical circumstances and bereavement. Further information about extenuating circumstance is available at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/forms/circsnotes>

You need to fill in this form if:

- You have been ill for longer than 7 calendar days or you missed an assessment. Medical evidence will be required. If you are registered with the University Health Service you will need to use the online form at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/health>.
- If the circumstances are going to affect a submission deadline for a piece of coursework then you must contact your **Year Tutor**. If you are granted an extension then you must complete an **Extension to Deadline** form with your Year Tutor. Only the Year Tutor or the Director of Teaching can grant an extension to a deadline.

Section 1 of this form will be filled in by the **Year Tutor** (or, in their absence, the Director of Teaching) **NOT** your personal tutor. Once we receive the form the APS Departmental Office will acknowledge its receipt via email. If there is a problem (such as incomplete information or circumstances which we do not consider exceptional) we will contact you.

When you have been away for a substantial length of time you should always contact the member of staff responsible for work you have missed to see whether you need to catch up on any work. You should also inform your personal Tutor and Year Tutor.

If your illness or an emergency will result in a long absence you should contact **your relevant year tutor** to discuss this issue.

The golden rule is that if you are absent make sure that the appropriate members of staff know about it. For longer absences or any problems affecting examinations or assessment you should always email [animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk) as soon as possible so that the department is aware of the problem.

#### 4.6 Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 - Submission of Coursework

All coursework deadlines will usually be set at **12 noon on Wednesdays**.

Late penalties will be applied for work that is submitted after this deadline (see section 4.7). Penalties will be applied for work that is over-long (see section 4.8).

To submit coursework you should follow this series of steps.

- Complete your coursework and check it thoroughly.
- Calculate the word count (excluding the final reference list but including everything else).
- Make sure that you include page numbers – it helps you and the marker spot pages that might be missing.
- Download a copy of the appropriate coursework coversheet from <https://sciencecoversheet.group.shef.ac.uk/>
- Look at the module description to see what should be submitted to the TurnItIn plagiarism detection system. Submit an electronic copy of your coursework to TurnItIn via MOLE. You should keep a copy of the electronic

receipt and enter the **paper ID** provided as part of this receipt onto the coversheet.

- Complete the coversheet for the appropriate Module, ensuring you include your TurnItIn ID Number and word count, print off and attach to your coursework (Please ensure a coversheet is attached to Lab books, etc.)
- Post your coursework and completed coversheet into the black metal box in the Alfred Denny Building Foyer before the deadline.

**Notes:**

Work will not be accepted without a completed coversheet. This means that you must have submitted an electronic copy to TurnItIn before handing in the paper copy. Work submitted without the TurnItIn receipt number and word count on the coversheet will not be accepted and will be considered as a late submission.

The electronic copy must be identical to the paper copy (except for posters where only text is required). If your document exceeds the allowable size that can be accepted by the TurnItIn system then either remove the figures or convert the document to a PDF. If the electronic copy differs significantly from the paper copy this may be considered as the use of unfair means.

The word count must be accurate. You should use the word count feature in Word (or other word processor software) to provide the word count. If the actual word count is significantly longer than that entered on the cover sheet (and would be penalised as an overlong submission) then this may be considered as the use of unfair means.

#### 4.7 Penalties for late submission of work

Where work has to be handed in for assessment, clear deadlines will be issued in either the Student Handbook or course handouts. Deadlines for submission of work will normally be set at mid-day on a Wednesday. Work should be handed in along with a front cover sheet (these can be printed off on the web page <https://sciencecoversheet.group.shef.ac.uk/> ) to the metal box in the Alfred Denny Building Foyer.

Late submission will result in a deduction of 5% of the total mark awarded for each working day<sup>i</sup> after the submission date.

Day late	Mark reduced by 5%	Mark Awarded When Reduced by 5% <sup>ii</sup>	
	Multiply by	Original 60	Original 50
1	0.95	57	48
2	0.90	54	45
3	0.85	51	43
4	0.80	48	40
5	0.75	45	38

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<sup>i</sup> Working days includes working days within standard vacation times. For example, if a submission date falls on the last day before the start of the Easter vacation, penalties would start to be applied from the following working day and not from the first day following the vacation.

<sup>ii</sup> Standard mathematical rounding rules are applied – e.g. 50.4 is rounded to 50, 50.5 is rounded to 51

If you submit your work more than 5 days late, your work will not be marked and it will be given a module outcome of NC (not completed).

It is recognised that there could be circumstances, such as illness, where work cannot be handed in on time. Permission to hand work in late must be agreed in advance with the **year tutor** or, if they are not available, the Director of Teaching, **Dr Fiona Hunter**. No other member of staff can give permission for the late handing in of work. You must complete an **Application for an Extension to the Deadline for Assessed Work** form which is available from the Departmental Office on D-floor. **If you need to contact the department urgently concerning late submission of work and are unable (for good reason) to come into the department then email [animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk) immediately.**

Please note that only Exceptional Circumstances will be accepted as a reason for the late handing in of work. See section 4.5 for details

The inability to organise workloads, long printer queues or failure to back up data files and subsequent data loss will not be accepted as legitimate reasons to meet deadlines.

#### 4.8 Penalties for overlong work

When a word limit has been given (e.g. 1500 words) then work will be considered over-long that exceeds this limit. The word count includes (1) all text in Figure, Table and Box captions, (2) tables where these are largely text (tables that are largely numbers don't count) (3) text included in boxes and (4) references cited in the main body of the text. You do not include the reference list at the end of the piece of work. To calculate the word count in Microsoft Word, simply select the

text and use the 'Word Count' feature (found under the Review). Work that exceeds the word limit will have a penalty of 5% of the awarded mark deducted for every 10% that the word limit is exceeded. You should note that not all coursework has a word limit of 1500 words. Read the instructions given to you carefully.

You are required to write the word count on the coversheet that is submitted with the printed copy of the document. This must be accurate, within reason. However, if this word count is very inaccurate (e.g. someone enters 1500 words as the word count and has really submitted 2000 words) then this would be considered use of unfair means.

#### 4.9 TurnItIn Submission

All coursework must be submitted electronically to the JISC TurnItIn system (accessed via MOLE) prior to the handing in deadline. Work which is not submitted to this system will be penalised according to the late submission penalties. The material that must be submitted to TurnItIn varies between modules and details are given under each module descriptions at the end of this handbook. If you have any problems with a submission to TurnItIn contact Dr Penny Watt.

##### What is JISC?

JISC stands for the Joint Information Systems Committee. It is a national body funded by all the UK higher education councils. JISC runs an electronic submission system called 'TurnItIn' which provides a repository for student work which is used by many Universities in the UK. The JISC system provides an electronic system for the detection of plagiarism and collusion.



All tutorial essays at levels 1 and 2 and all coursework at level 3 and 4 must be submitted via JISC. The JISC site at [http://www.submit.ac.uk/en\\_gb/support-services/](http://www.submit.ac.uk/en_gb/support-services/) provides training videos and user manuals. The key information you need is described below but look at this site if you have any further questions (e.g. concerning copyright ownership etc.).

### **To submit a document**

Make sure that your work is completed and checked thoroughly. The version submitted to TurnItIn must be identical to the hard copy submitted to the office. Make sure you know where the file has been saved and that you are submitting the right version to the correct module. Check the size of the document. TurnItIn will not accept files larger than 20 Mb which can be exceeded if you have incorporated many graphics (convert the file to a PDF and submit this if this is the case).



Log into MOLE and click on the relevant module. A TurnItIn tool should be present where you can submit your work. Follow the instructions onscreen.

You will learn how to use this in APS133 Skills for Biologists 1. Make sure that you keep a note of the digital receipt.

### **What will the electronic version be used for?**

- The JISC TurnItIn system produces an originality report by comparing the work submitted to the system against a database of other written work which have been submitted and information available via the Internet.
- The originality reports will be reviewed by the Examinations Officer

- The bibliography and reference lists will be excluded from the analysis
- If there are concerns, the Examinations Officer will investigate and discuss with the relevant member of staff.
- If there is a problem, you will be interviewed so that you can put forward your views.

**It is important to note that, at all stages, decisions about student work will be made by the Department of Animal and Plant Sciences in accordance with the University of Sheffield guidelines.**

### **How can I avoid plagiarism?**

Your personal tutor will explain this to you in level 1 and 2 tutorials. Our aim is to help you to reference material correctly and avoid plagiarism (collusion is copying from someone else - you should already know not to do this!). The penalties for plagiarism and collusion are severe.

The library has produced an excellent online guide available at

[https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/info\\_skills/Plagiarism/contents.html](https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/info_skills/Plagiarism/contents.html)

### **Read, Learn, Assimilate And Understand**

Most cases of plagiarism occur because a student has not really understood what they have read. If you have not understood something, it is impossible to write it in your own words. It also means that you cannot combine information from different sources - this synthetic element is an essential component of the assessment.

## Cite Your Sources Of Information

Proper referencing is essential. When you are reading a paper, make notes in your own words. If you copy out sections of a paper directly, you may inadvertently use the text unaltered in your work. Keep a note of where the information came from so that you can cite it properly.

You can place text in quotation marks (and cite it) if you wish to quote a small amount of text directly (perhaps the conclusions from a report or a key phrase from a landmark paper).

The library has an excellent online guide specifically for scientific writing at:

[http://www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/referencing/aps\\_harvard.html](http://www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/referencing/aps_harvard.html)

## Frequently Asked Questions

**How is the originality report used?** The originality report is used as a tool to detect plagiarism and collusion. However the system is not automatic. All originality reports will be reviewed by the examinations team. If a potential problem is identified, this will be discussed with the relevant member of staff. At level 1 and 2, if you have plagiarised work accidentally, your tutor will discuss this with you and ask you to repeat the assessment (to use a football analogy – this is a yellow card). If you plagiarise work again then you will fail the module (red card) and be reported to the year tutor. At level 3/4 there is no warning system and plagiarised work will automatically be awarded a 0. For repeat offences students will be referred to the University Disciplinary Panel who may award a fail grade for the entire module or expel students from the University.

**Can I see the originality report?** No, not normally, but if there is a problem your tutor/examinations officer will show it to you and discuss it with you.

**I quoted a paragraph from a report in my essay. Will this be classed as plagiarism?** No. The Originality report will indicate that this section has been copied verbatim, but if it is placed in quotation marks and referenced, this is not plagiarism. All decisions are made by academic members of staff - it is not an automatic system.

**What format should I use for uploading my coursework?** Microsoft Word is the most sensible format (although many other formats are also recognised). For large pieces of work use PDF.

**My essay has pictures which I have hand-drawn or photocopied into the printed version. How do I deal with this in the electronic submission?** The TurnItIn system only looks at text. You don't need to remove images from your uploaded file, but these will be ignored. The printed version that you hand in to the departmental office is the definitive version that will be marked. If the document is too large because of embedded images, use the PDF format.

**I uploaded the wrong file and cannot delete it from the system. What do I do?** Simply re-submit the piece of work again to the same slot (providing this is before the submission deadline). If after the deadline, contact Dr Penny Watt.

**My file is too large to upload.** Either remove a couple of images or convert the file to a PDF document. The managed desktop system has software which enables you to do this and Word 2007 onwards can save a file directly as a PDF.

**My tutor has asked me to submit a draft of the essay first. Where should I submit this, and the final copy?** Both the draft, and the final copy, should be submitted in the same assignment. It is highly likely that text in the draft version will appear in the final version.

**What about other tutorial work (e.g. abstracts, data interpretation exercises etc.)?** You only need to submit tutorial essays and coursework to the TurnItIn system. Check the module descriptions to see what is required.

#### 4.10 Feedback

You will receive feedback on your performance at numerous times throughout your studies. However, it is your responsibility to take advantage of the opportunities available to you and to act on the advice given. Details of feedback for each module are provided in the module descriptions.

At levels 1 and 2 you will receive feedback from your *personal tutor* on work that you undertake as part of the tutorial modules. You can also write practice examination questions using past papers (available online) and ask your tutor to provide feedback on these. At levels 3 and 4 you will receive feedback from your *project/dissertation supervisor*. This feedback may be verbal (e.g. a discussion of an experimental plan that you have proposed) or written (comments on work that you have submitted for feedback). However, you can only receive feedback on work that you have submitted! For project/dissertation work there are deadlines after which your supervisor can no longer provide feedback and limits (25%) of the amount that they can review. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have submitted work for comment at intervals and well in advance of these deadlines.

Most level 1 APS lecture modules have compulsory self-assessment tests that you must complete online (via MOLE). These will provide feedback on your understanding of the course. In addition you will receive a summary of your performance in level 1 multiple choice examinations after the Autumn examination results are available. Other modules (e.g. APS135 Skills for Biologists 1) have additional assessments that will provide feedback. You will also receive feedback on practical classes.

At levels 2 and 3 you will be given the grades you obtained for field course work at an early stage to enable you to judge your progress. You will also receive feedback on your performance in coursework submitted in semester 1A and semester 2A before the end of the teaching semester whenever possible.

The grades you obtain in examinations will give you the clearest idea of your progress. You will obtain the results of your Autumn Semester examinations in February and after the results are published you will have the opportunity to discuss these with your personal Tutor. This will include the opportunity to see your marked examination answers. However, it is your responsibility to arrange these meetings after the results have been released (you will receive an email telling you when the scripts are available).

It must be emphasised that most methods of giving feedback on your progress depend on your input. If you are not willing to make an effort, then you will not be able to get feedback. Adequate methods exist to give you feedback. It is your responsibility to use them.

#### 4.11 Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

The University is providing all undergraduates who commence their studies at Sheffield in/after September 2012 with a Higher Education Achievement Report or 'HEAR' – a nationally recognised degree transcript that contains a comprehensive record of students' university learning and experience. You will be able to use your HEAR to provide evidence of the knowledge and experience you gain at Sheffield, e.g. to help you demonstrate your skills when applying for jobs/further study.

The HEAR includes:

- Module grades
- Degree information
- Dissertation Titles
- Study Abroad
- University Placements
- University Prizes
- Verifiable Extra-Curricular Activities and Awards

To find out which extra-curricular activities can be verified for Section 6.1 of the HEAR, and what you have to do to qualify for HEAR recognition in each case, go to [www.sheffield.ac.uk/hear-search](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hear-search).

You can access your HEAR electronically from Day 1 of your studies, by logging in to MUSE and clicking on My services > View all services > HEAR.

This means that you can use your HEAR to help you review your progress and plan what you want to achieve at university. Your personal tutor and staff in the Careers Service, 301 and the Students' Union will be able to support you in this process. You are encouraged to refer to your HEAR in discussions with these members of staff, using it as a basis for identifying the full range learning and experience you are acquiring, and reflecting on how you can develop further to help you achieve your future goals.

Consider taking advantage of opportunities to gain recognition for activities you undertake outside the curriculum. This will help you to demonstrate how you have made the most of your time at university, and gained valuable skills and experience that will enhance your employability and help you achieve your potential.

However, do not feel under pressure to undertake extra-curricular activities if it is not beneficial or feasible to do so. You will not be disadvantaged if you do not have any activities in Section 6.1. Employers are just as interested in the academic information in Section 4 of your HEAR, so you should focus on your studies first and foremost. Employers also understand that universities cannot verify all of the activities in which their students are involved. They will therefore be equally interested in how you present yourself in CVs, personal statements, portfolios and interviews. So use your HEAR more generally to help you think about where you want to go, and how all of your skills and experiences (regardless of whether they are included in your HEAR itself) prepare you for this. If you do this, you will be well set to impress!

You will be issued with official snapshots of your HEAR at regular intervals during your studies, to enable you to use your HEAR as evidence of your university achievements. Official HEARs will be issued via the Sheffield Authorised Records (ShARe) system (see [www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/record/share](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/record/share)). You will be issued with a final version of your official HEAR via ShARe when you complete your course, and will retain access to ShARe after you leave the University so that you can continue to make use of your HEAR.

For more information about the HEAR, visit [www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/hear](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/hear).

#### 4.12 The Sheffield Graduate

You can gain an impressive range of knowledge and skills through your studies and through the additional activities you undertake. We have identified this range of skills and knowledge for you so that you know what you should be aiming to achieve.

- The Sheffield Graduate is:
- knowledgeable in their subject area
- competent in applying their knowledge and skills
- information literate
- a skilled and ethical researcher
- a critical, analytical and creative thinker
- an entrepreneurial problem solver
- someone who sees the big picture and understands the importance of context

- experienced in working with clients, communicates and partners outside the University
- an active citizen who respects diversity and has the cultural agility to work in multinational settings
- a flexible team worker
- an independent learner
- an efficient planner and time manager
- an accomplished communicator
- skilled in the use of IT
- professional and adaptable
- a well rounded individual, reflective, self aware and self-motivated

#### The Sheffield Graduate Development Programme

The Sheffield Graduate Development Programme aims to support you in acquiring these skills and attributes. It is a process which helps you to reflect upon your learning, performance and/or achievement both within your academic studies and through extra curricula activities, and to identify what else you need to do to achieve your goals.

Opportunities to develop your skills are provided through course work in, for example, completing assignments, presentations, field trips or group working and in activities such as volunteering, work experience, being a student representative or taking part in clubs or societies.

We strongly advise you to make time to reflect on your progress and identify what else you need to do to achieve your goals. It will make you better equipped to

achieve your full potential in your studies whilst also enhancing your employability as you will be better prepared to demonstrate your achievements and skills to potential employers.

Further information is available on [www.sheffield.ac.uk/sheffieldgraduate](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/sheffieldgraduate), including links to resources and further guidance on developing the Sheffield Graduate skills.

Guidance is available to support the process in your department through tutors, peers and support services such as the careers service, but the ultimate responsibility for deriving benefit from the process rests with you as a learner in the University.

### **The *Sheffield Graduate Award***

The *Sheffield Graduate Award* is open to all students and has been developed with the purpose of recognising and rewarding your extra curricula activities that help you to gain the Sheffield Skills. The Award is endorsed by a number of employers who recognise that students who have achieved the Award will stand out from the crowd.

By taking part in the Award, you can bring together all your different experiences, for example, volunteering, mentoring, organising clubs and societies, part time work, sporting activities and course representation, which will help employers take note of all your achievements that go beyond the academic. After successful completion of your Award portfolio in your final year, you will receive a certificate upon graduation, and a reference to the Award will be added to your transcript.

Further information and on line registration for the Award can be found on:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/thesheffieldgraduateaward](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/thesheffieldgraduateaward)

## SECTION 5 THE ACADEMIC YEAR, MODULES AND CREDITS

### 5.1 The Academic Year

The academic year consists of thirty weeks divided into two semesters each of fifteen weeks. The Autumn Semester starts in late September and consists of twelve teaching weeks before Christmas and a three-week examination period after the Christmas Vacation when the modules taken during the semester are assessed. The Spring Semester starts immediately after this examination period and consists of twelve teaching weeks broken into two blocks one before and one after the Easter Vacation. The second Semester concludes with a three-week assessment period when the modules taken in this semester are assessed.

#### Session 2017-18

Autumn Semester: 25 September to 16 December 2017  
15 January to 3 February 2018  
(Christmas Vacation: 16 December to 13 January)

Spring Semester: 5 February to 24 March 2018  
16 April to 9 June 2018  
(Easter Vacation: 24 March to 14 April 2018)

### 5.2 Modular Degree Structures and Credits

All degree courses in the University have a common modular structure (except Medical and Dental degrees). A module is a unit in a degree course that is contained within one semester and is assigned a value of 20 credits. In the

Department of Animal and Plant Sciences most lecture-course units are half-modules assigned a value of 10 credits and run within either the first or the second six weeks of a semester. Tutorial modules run throughout the academic year whilst project and dissertation modules (which are assigned a value of 20 credits) extend over the whole semester. The Undergraduate Ambassador Scheme (20 credits) runs over the whole year through both semesters.

To obtain a degree you must take modules or half-modules to a value of not fewer than 120 credits in each academic year. In each semester, modules to a value of at least 40 credits must be taken. **However, unless there are exceptional circumstances, you will be required to take a minimum of 50 credits in a semester to ensure that your work load is balanced.**

Each degree course has a structure prescribed by University Regulations. Details of the structure of each degree course in the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences is given in Section **Error! Reference source not found..** In each year you will be required to take certain modules or half-modules - these are called **compulsory modules**. Other modules or half-modules you will choose from a list specific to your degree course - these are called **approved modules**. Some of our degree courses also have some **unrestricted modules** - these you can choose from anywhere in the University, subject to timetable compatibility and departmental approval.

You must pass all compulsory modules and sufficient approved modules to fulfil the requirements of your degree course before you can proceed to the next level of study.

Some modules have prerequisites. This means that you must have taken another module before you will be allowed to take the module in question. Prerequisites usually consist of module(s) at a lower level, but can be at the same level.

### 5.3 Years and Levels

You will find in University Regulations that "first, second, third and fourth years" are terms no longer used. Rather the terms Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 are used. This reflects the fact that a modular degree structure is flexible, and it is possible for part-time students to take longer than one academic year to gain 120 credits. For full-time students a Level is identical to an academic year.

Each half-module or module is identified by a prefix that indicates the academic department providing the teaching, and a three number suffix that indicates its level and identification. APS 119 is thus a Level 1 half-module taught by the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences. BMS 307 is a Level 3 half-module taught by the Department of Biomedical Science, and so on. The credit value will indicate whether a unit is a module (20 credits) or a half-module (10 credits).

### 5.4 Registration for Modules

Between levels 1 & 2 and levels 2 & 3 you will undertake Online Module Registration during semester 2 to register for your modules for the following year.

### 5.5 Changing Your Module Registration

Students may add or drop modules in the first two weeks of each semester. In addition, students may add or drop APS modules only in the first week of the

second half of each semester (i.e. at the start of semester 1B and 2B). **Modules may not be dropped retrospectively.** You should see your Year Tutor if you wish to change your registration in any way. It must be stressed that if you do not follow the correct procedure for changing your registration you will not be allowed to attend or be assessed in any module or half module for which you are not correctly registered. **It is your responsibility to check your record to ensure that you are registered for the correct modules.**

### 5.6 Further Information

The full text of the General Regulations of the University and the University Examination Regulations can be found in the University Undergraduate Student Handbook or on the web. For information on the web go to the University Home Page, then click on [Current Students](#). This will give you the home page of the [Student Services Information Desk](#) where you will find a number of headings. Click on any of these headings for full information.



## SECTION 6 HOW YOU CAN INFLUENCE THINGS

A two-way flow of information is essential if the Department is to run effectively. We shall do our best to ensure that you receive all the information you need, but we also need to know what you are thinking. There are several channels of communication within the Department of varying degrees of formality.

### 6.1 The Staff-Student Committee

The Staff-Student Committee is an integral part of the formal management of the Department. It ensures a channel of communication between undergraduate students and the departmental committee structure. It is a joint Committee of students and academic staff. Student members are elected at the beginning of each academic year. Student members do not represent particular degree courses, but the student body as a whole in each year. The number of student representatives is not rigidly fixed; usually there are about eight to ten student members. A staff member who is a member of the Teaching Committee is appointed by the Head of the Department.

The terms of reference of the Staff-Student Committee are:

- To consider the form and timing of student evaluation of courses, together with the results from previous years (and any necessary action arising from these) at the end and beginning of each session.
- To consider any changes to courses and assessments.

- To consider issues raised by students and/or the Department relating to course content, design and delivery; assessment; tutorials; projects and dissertations; field courses; library, IT and other facilities.
- To be involved in departmental quality assurance procedures, receiving reports from (and reporting to) other relevant department committees as appropriate.

The student members of the Committee elect one of their members to attend Departmental Staff Meetings.

Matters that require further discussion within the Department are referred to the Teaching Committee or a Staff Meeting.

### 6.2 Student Questionnaires

The Department of Animal & Plant Sciences has a system of student evaluation of courses by questionnaire. This operates at three levels: the module, the course year and the degree course. This information is gathered electronically and you will receive a link to a personalised questionnaire via email twice each semester. It is vital that you complete these questionnaires as it provides essential feedback enabling the Department to improve your experience and that of future students. Your responses will be anonymous but the system will inform us whether you have completed the questionnaire or not.

Although specific questions are asked, there is also ample opportunity on the questionnaire to express your opinions on matters not covered by the questions.

The results of questionnaires are presented to the Staff-Student Committee, The Teaching Committee and to a Departmental Staff Meeting. Module co-ordinators also receive the results of the questionnaire for their own module. Action taken as a result of the questionnaires is monitored by the Teaching Committee and the Head of the Department.

### 6.3 Tutorials

Tutorials provide an excellent informal opportunity to give feedback on teaching. It is always helpful to hear of the good things that happen as well as the problems!

### 6.4 Individual Lecturers

Individual lecturers will always be happy to hear comments from you directly, particularly if you can provide constructive criticism.

### 6.5 Director of Teaching/Examinations Officer

The Director of Teaching (**Dr Fiona Hunter**) or the Examinations Officer (**Dr Penny Watt or Dr Kai Zeng**) will always see you to discuss any aspect of teaching or assessment.

We hope that these varied channels of communication will ensure a complete two-way flow of information and ideas.

### 6.6 Union Links

There is one student in every department different to the rest! They are a Union Link. Union Links are students hired and paid by the Students' Union to

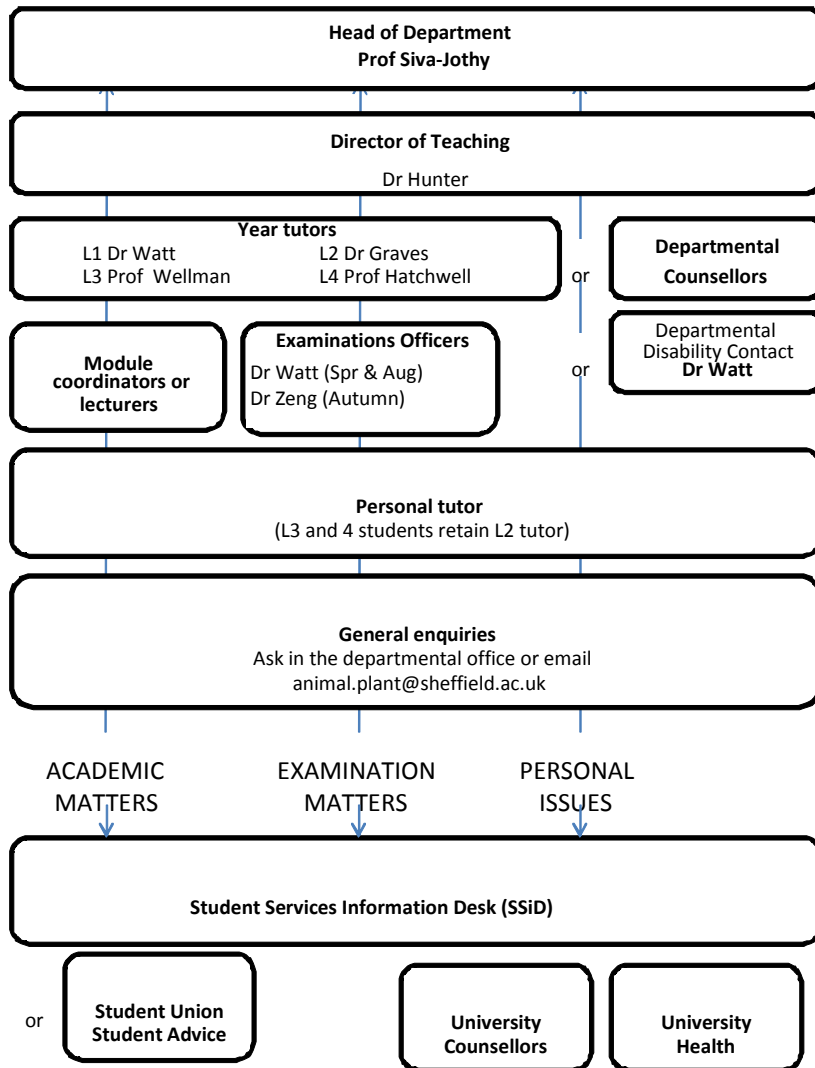
communicate issues between your department and the Union. There is one Union Link in each department.

Union Links are working behind the scenes to make sure that student representation is effective in your department. For example, Union Links support Course Reps by making sure they get a copy of the Union produced 'Course Rep Handbook' and are invited to Union-led Course Rep training sessions.

Union Links sit in your departments Staff-student Committee and relate important academic and welfare issues back to the Union and vice-versa. They make sure that you and your course mates in your department are represented at the Union.

For more information on what a Union Link is, or details on how you could be a Union Link, contact [unionlinks@shef.ac.uk](mailto:unionlinks@shef.ac.uk).

## SECTION 7 SEEKING HELP



During your undergraduate course you might need help with either academic or personal matters. The Department of Animal & Plant Sciences and the University have a variety of mechanisms to help you. In addition to the section below you should also consult the Undergraduate Student Handbook which was given to you when you first registered in the University.

This diagram should help you decide who to approach for help.

It is not possible to account for all eventualities but the most important thing is to talk to someone if you are having problems. The department is here to help, but generally you need to make the first move. Please make sure that you have consulted the handbook and the APS web pages first if your question is a simple one. All general enquiries should be made via the APS Departmental Office (on D floor) or via email to [animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk).

It is better to send your email to this address as individual staff may be away at any particular time and your request can be directed to the most appropriate individual. Obviously this route is not appropriate for personal issues where you may wish to approach a specific member of staff directly.

### 7.1 Academic Matters

If you have problems with the work concerned with a particular module you should speak to the member of staff concerned. Academic staff will always help with academic problems. You can also speak to your tutor, but you should remember that your tutor will not be an expert in all the areas of your degree course. If you

have problems about the organisation of teaching or assessments you should see **the relevant year tutor (See section 1.2).**

## 7.2 Educational Support Requirement

If you have a disability, medical condition, or specific learning difficulty, we strongly encourage you to contact the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service (DDSS). DDSS offers support to students with varying disabilities. This could include dyslexia, mental health, Crohn's disease, epilepsy and mobility impairment etc. If you feel you would benefit from this extra support you should complete the Educational Support Requirement form. You can also talk to **Dr Penny Watt** (Departmental Disability Contact) or contact the Student Services Information Desk ([SSiD](#)) or Disability and Dyslexia Support Service ([DDSS](#)) direct.

The DDSS is a confidential and friendly service which offers a range of support, including:

- Liaising with academic staff and central services about disabled students' support needs
- Helping students to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances
- Organising support workers, e.g. note takers, readers, library support, scribes, interpreters
- Advising on specialist equipment and technology
- Referring dyslexic students for study skills support, at the English Language Teaching Centre
- Referring students who think that they might be dyslexic for diagnostic assessments with an Educational Psychologist

- Putting students in contact with local and national external agencies who offer support and advice to disabled people on specific issues
- Formalising alternative arrangements for examinations and assessments, e.g. extra time in examinations; reasonable adjustments to assessment tasks; or alternative assessment formats.

**For further information, please contact the contact the DDSS:**

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/disability/>

**If you require alternative exam arrangements, please make sure that you contact the DDSS at the earliest opportunity.**

## 7.3 The sticker system

The University tries hard to ensure that exams and assessments do not discriminate against disabled and dyslexic students. The University operates a scheme where all students with written communication difficulties, such as specific learning difficulties, hearing impairments and Asperger syndrome, should be given the option to affix a sticker to each piece of their assessed work. If you would like to opt into the sticker system, please discuss this with your Disability Adviser (Dr Penny Watt) or call in to the Hillsborough Centre.

**What are the stickers for?** You will be provided with stickers to put on your work, to let the marker know that it was produced by a student with written communication difficulties. Your work will not be marked differently because of the sticker. The stickers alert markers to your difficulty and help them to provide you with useful feedback.

**What do the stickers look like?** The yellow and black stickers contain your registration number, and a link to information for markers on accessible assessment and feedback. You will be provided with a sheet of 12 stickers which you can use for your work.

**What pieces of work can I put my stickers on?** You can put your stickers on both coursework and exams. It is your responsibility to remember to bring stickers with you when you hand in coursework or sit an exam. Spare stickers will not be made available if you forget yours when handing in coursework or sitting exams.

**Exams:** You will need to fix your sticker to the front of your written script, where you have folded over the corner of the paper which contains your name. Invigilators should be able to advise you about the correct place to put the sticker if you are unsure.

**Coursework:** Place your stickers on the coversheet of the hard copy submitted to the departmental office.

**How do I get my stickers?** You will need to come to the Disability & Dyslexia Support Service at the Hillsborough Centre in the Alfred Denny Building to pick up your stickers. You do not need to make an appointment. Please make sure you bring your Ucard with you when you collect them.

**Who can use my stickers?** The stickers contain your Ucard number and can only be used by you. When you hand in your coursework or sit an exam, your Ucard number will be checked against the number on your sticker. Any misuse or defacing of stickers will be treated as a serious matter.

**What if I do not want to use stickers?** It is up to you whether you want to identify your work with a sticker. If you do not wish to take part in the sticker system, simply do not put them on your work.

**What if I run out of stickers?** You should contact the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service either in person or via email ([disability.info@shef.ac.uk](mailto:disability.info@shef.ac.uk)) to request more stickers.

#### 7.4 University policy on fair assessment

The University's approach to fair assessments requires that the department

- design assessment tasks to ensure that they are as accessible as possible;
- use a range of assessment methods (e.g. coursework, exams, and presentations), wherever appropriate;
- provide feedback on assessments, to assist you in developing your academic skills and abilities;
- consider requests from students for reasonable adjustments or alternative assessments, in cases where students feel that the standard assessment method may unfairly disadvantage them.

Please contact Dr Penny Watt or the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service if you have any questions about the stickers.

#### 7.5 Personal Matters

If you have personal problems you can seek help in a variety of ways. First, if you just want to talk over your problems you might do this with your tutor. This will, of course, depend on how well you think you know your tutor. Other members of

staff in the Department who have particular expertise in helping students with personal problems are **Professor Lorraine Maltby**, **Professor Julie Scholes** and **Dr Penny Watt**. These members of staff will talk to you on an informal and confidential basis.

Second, if you feel you need professional help the University Counselling Service is available. The Counselling Service is situated on Wilkinson Street (telephone 222 4134, or internal extension 24134). You will need to make an appointment to see one of the counsellors. It is important to stress that counsellors are bound by the rules of confidentiality. Information about what has been confided in a counselling session cannot be divulged except with your freely given permission.

Third, personal problems sometimes require medical help. If this is so you should not hesitate to contact the University Health Service at 53 Gell Street (telephone 222 2100 or internal extension 22100) if you are registered with them, or your General Medical Practitioner. Again the rules of confidentiality apply and information will not be divulged without your consent.

Fourth, if you have problems concerning money, rights and welfare or housing the Students' Advice Centre in the Students' Union has a team of professional advisors who are available to help on an individual basis. The Centre also produces a variety of leaflets.

Students Services have a section which deals specifically with critical support providing help and support for students and their families affected by serious incidents. All student services support sections can be accessed via the web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/welfare/signposts>.

## 7.6 Complaints

The University has formulated procedures for making complaints; whether about the delivery and quality of services received, or about the delivery and quality of teaching, tutorial/supervisory provision or any other matters relating to a programme of study. Please note that there are separate procedures for dealing with complaints of personal harassment. These are set out in a leaflet 'Harassment: Policy and Procedures'. There are also separate procedures for appeals against decisions of examiners or Faculty Boards (see section 12.19). Special procedures may also apply for handling other specific complaints, for example, statutory NHS complaints procedures, and Housing Services procedures relating to housing contracts.

Most difficulties can be resolved at an early stage by talking with the individual(s) most concerned with the issue at the local level.

If you believe that you have cause to make a complaint about the way a matter has been handled, or about the delivery or provision of service received from a department or service, you may wish to raise the matter with your personal tutor or **relevant year tutor**, or with the Head of the Department, **Professor Mike Siva-Jothy** or the Head of the Service concerned.

If you are still not satisfied with the way that the matter has been resolved, then you may seek to take it further. In that case, you should make a written complaint to the Head of the Department or Service concerned, giving clear details of the nature of the continuing problem. This written complaint will then be considered formally by the appropriate Head. After consultation as necessary, the Head of

Department or Service will provide a written response to the complaint, indicating action to be taken, where appropriate.

You can expect a written response to a formal complaint within 10 working days of it being submitted. Where this is not possible, you will be informed in writing of progress in consideration of the complaint.

You can expect to be given the reason, if the complaint is not upheld. If the problem remains unresolved to your satisfaction, or your complaint relates to the Head of Department or Service personally, then you should write formally to the Registrar and Secretary. If the complaint concerns an academic matter, the Registrar and Secretary will refer it to the Head of the appropriate faculty: other matters will be dealt with by the Registrar and Secretary himself. A final written response will normally be given within 28 days of receipt of your formal letter of complaint.

Without breaching confidentiality, complaints and responses given to the issues involved will be monitored by the Head of the appropriate Department or Service.

Note: These procedures do not affect your legal rights in any way, nor the statutory power of the University Council to entertain grievances.

### 7.7 Personal Harassment

The University has defined personal harassment as any form of behaviour which is unacceptable to the recipient and which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for employment, study or social life. It may consist of behaviour taking place over a period of time or a single incident, but in all cases it

involves an unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited act which makes the recipient feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, unsafe or frightened.

The most common forms of harassment are sexual, which involves unwanted sexual attention, and racial, which is a form of racial discrimination. Harassment can also involve a variety of other aspects including sexual orientation, religious or political convictions, age, disability or real or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS.

### 7.8 What You Should Do if You Are The Victim of Personal Harassment

Any student who suffers from harassment from any other individual will have the support of the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences and the University.

If you feel that you are suffering from harassment you should first of all adopt an informal procedure by if at all possible making it clear to the person causing offence that such behaviour is unacceptable to you. Sometimes this will immediately stop harassment because the person against whom you have a complaint may be unaware that his/her behaviour is unacceptable, or it may happen that his/her words or actions have been misinterpreted. In such cases the misinterpretation needs to be cleared up quickly. You may wish to seek help or advice from a friend or from the Students' Union. You can also always seek help and advice from **Professor Lorraine Maltby**, **Professor Julie Scholes** or **Dr Penny Watt**.

If the harassment continues or is of a more serious nature you should then institute a formal procedure by seeking a confidential interview with the Head of the Department, **Professor Mike Siva-Jothy**. They will listen to you in confidence and give you advice on how to proceed in implementing the University's grievance

procedure. You may wish to be accompanied at such an interview by a friend or a representative from the Students' Union.

### 7.9 **Employability and University Careers Advice**

This University is nationally recognised to have one of the best Careers Services in the country. It is located at 388 Glossop Road, close to the Students' Union Building and has several advisers who will be able to discuss any aspect of your career, from helping you make a start on considering career options and work experience through to practical tips on job hunting, applications and interviews. Appointments with advisers can be made via CareerConnect in MUSE (for more information see [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/careerconnect](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/careerconnect)). Alison Clay is one of the advisers and has a special interest in biological and environmental sciences. For students unable to access the Careers Service in person, there's a facility to send an electronic enquiry via Career Connect.

The Careers Service has a comprehensive website, [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students), which is a good starting point if you want to find out more about how the Careers Service can help you.

Talk to a member of the Careers Service Placements Team for advice on improving your future job prospects through work experience [www.shef.ac.uk/placements](http://www.shef.ac.uk/placements) or, for help finding part-time or vacation work, visit the StudentJobshop in the

Students' Union. Also investigate the Skills for Work Certificate and Sheffield Graduate Award [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/advice](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/advice)

The Careers Service runs an extensive programme of events to bring employers onto campus, including presentations, seminars and workshops run by employers to help students find out more about occupations and jobs on offer along with plus recruitment and information fairs. Full details of events open to APS students are publicised on CareerConnect.

You can find out about current and forthcoming vacancies for graduate jobs, work experience and student jobs via CareerConnect. For those wishing to explore opportunities in another country the website has a comprehensive section on 'myInternational career' ([www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/inter](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/inter)).

### 7.10 **APS Careers and Advice**

All 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year APS students will participate in dedicated careers talks and workshops during their course. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students are strongly encouraged to visit the Careers Service if they feel they need help. The department maintains a careers noticeboard on C-floor of the Alfred Denny building that displays current Careers Service notices. **The Department Careers Liaison Officer** is responsible for departmental liaison with the Careers Service and can be consulted for advice. Advice on careers in research can be sought from your tutor.



### 7.11 **Nightline.**

Nightline is the University of Sheffield's confidential listening and information telephone service. It is run by trained student volunteers, and operates from 8pm until 8am every night during term time. It offers students everything from the phone number of a twenty-four hour taxi company, to exam dates, times and locations, and information about every issue that can be encountered within student life. It provides a vital support network for all students, so whatever you need to say, Nightline is listening, and our service can be called free from phones in Halls of Residence. If you think you would like to volunteer for Nightline, contact [nightline@shef.ac.uk](mailto:nightline@shef.ac.uk) for more information.

### 7.12 **Developing your writing skills**

During the academic year 2017-18 the Department of Animal and Plant Sciences will be hosting two writers in residence, **Gareth Creer** and **Jo Bell** whose role is to help members of the Department (undergraduates through to staff) develop and enhance their writing skills.

Gareth Creer and Jo Bell are available during term-time to advise, on a one-to-one basis, students and staff in the Plant and Animal Sciences Department on any aspects of their writing, whether it be essays, reports, dissertations or other written work.

They offer constructive tutorials of up to an hour about any aspect of your writing that you want to discuss.

Gareth and Jo can be found in Room C202A. This is on C Floor of the Alfred Denny Building. Gareth will be available in Mondays and Tuesdays and Jo Bell will be available on Thursdays and Friday.

To book an appointment: Email: [g.creer@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:g.creer@sheffield.ac.uk), or telephone: 0114 2220133. The sessions are confidential, independent of the university, and designed to help. All students are welcome. Frances's residency is supported by the Royal Literary Fund.

Essay Writing Guide for Undergraduates: The Royal Literary Fund's online guide: [www.rlf.org.uk/fellowshipscheme/writing](http://www.rlf.org.uk/fellowshipscheme/writing).

### 7.13 **Intellectual Property**

University regulations on Intellectual Property can be found under the University Calendar <http://www.shef.ac.uk/calendar>. If you would like to discuss this, please contact a member of staff.

## SECTION 8 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Departmental Code of Practice for Health and Safety outlines the procedures appropriate to the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences. In order to ensure a safe environment for all who work in the Department, please familiarise yourself with this Code. Copies are available from the Departmental Office, if you have not already received one. The Departmental Safety Officer is **Professor Richard Leegood**.

### 8.1 The Individual Role

By law, everyone has a safety responsibility. It is important that all persons appreciate the extent of this responsibility. Every person has the responsibility for the health and safety of himself/herself and of all other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions.

### 8.2 Laboratories

All laboratories are potentially dangerous. It is essential that you follow the safety instructions given to you. You must always wear a laboratory coat and other protective clothing where necessary. You will be refused entry to any teaching laboratory if you are not wearing a laboratory coat. Eating and drinking in laboratory areas is strictly forbidden at all times.

### 8.3 Fire Drills and Evacuation Procedures

Fire drills are held throughout the University during the first part of the first semester, so that you may become aware of the evacuation procedures in the

event of an emergency. The fire alarm consists of a distinctive high-pitched sound. Please note that the fire alarms are tested at 11.00am on every Tuesday; but on these occasions the alarm sounds intermittently and no action is required, if the alarm is less than 1 minute, this will be a test, but if the alarm lasts longer then this is a real Fire Alarm, and the procedure below must be followed.

A CONTINUOUS SOUNDING ALARM WARNS YOU TO LEAVE THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY

EVACUATE THE BUILDING BY THE NEAREST EXIT.

GET WELL AWAY FROM THE BUILDING, WINDOWS MAY BLOW OUT CAUSING INJURY TO ANYONE IN THE VICINITY.

DO NOT OBSTRUCT ENTRANCES.

ASSEMBLE ON THE CONCOURSE.

Anyone discovering a fire must:

- call the Fire Service by telephoning **4444** on a University internal telephone.
- warn others by shouting "Fire".
- only if it is safe to do so, should the fire be tackled with an appropriate extinguisher.
- if the fire is to be left, all doors must be closed to prevent its spread.

#### 8.4 **Accident Procedures**

In the event of illness or injury where medical attention is required arrangements should be made for the injured person to be sent directly to a hospital Accident and Emergency Department. This can be done by dialling **4444** on any internal telephone (24 hour service). Do **not** dial 999. Where possible, a qualified First Aider should be called to take charge of the situation and give appropriate treatment until the person receives medical help. A list of qualified First Aiders can be found in each First Aid Box in the Teaching Laboratories.

The Northern General Hospital Accident and Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Minor injuries can be treated in the Royal Hallamshire Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm.

#### 8.5 **First Aid**

For minor injuries where first aid is all that is required, First Aid Boxes are situated in Teaching Laboratories and appointed first aiders can be contacted for assistance. These people are **Maggi Killion** (ex. 20045), Will Hentley (ex. 24372), **Shi-Yuen Li** (ex. 24773), Celine Pagnier (ex 24314), Nichola White (200142/20058).

#### 8.6 **Working Hours**

The normal working hours of the Department are Monday-Friday 8.00 am - 6.00 pm. The doors to the building are locked at other times. Work outside normal working hours is not permitted except in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances and by prior arrangement with an academic staff supervisor and the agreement of the Head of

Department. The supervisor must also be present in the area when out of hours work is being carried out.

#### 8.7 **Smoking**

THE UNIVERSITY IS A NO SMOKING AREA. SMOKING IS PROHIBITED IN ALL UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.

## SECTION 9 GOOD LABORATORY PRACTICE FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

The following instructions apply to all practicals and project work, including field courses.

### 9.1 General Conduct in Laboratories

- No smoking, eating or drinking (including bottled water). If you need a drink of water please leave the laboratory first
- Laboratory coats are to be worn at all times in the laboratory but must **not** be worn in common rooms etc. where food and drink are consumed.
- Avoid cluttering up laboratories (especially research labs and any benches.) with coats and bags.
- Use fume cupboards or personal protective equipment (gloves, goggles etc.) when advised to do so by a supervisor, or as specified on the COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessment which will be provided if the work involves the use of hazardous chemicals.
- If unsure how to use unfamiliar equipment ask your supervisor, postgraduate demonstrator or a technician; observe notices carrying instructions or warnings.
- Project students should plan their work so that it can be carried out during normal working hours. Avoid working alone at any time.
- Keep your work within the bench area allotted. Do not leave equipment such as pH meters, laminar flow cabinets, fume cupboards etc. in an untidy state: **CLEAN ALL EQUIPMENT - INCLUDING BALANCES - IMMEDIATELY AFTER USE.**
- Remember: you are responsible for clearing up after yourself.

### 9.2 Use of Apparatus

- No mouth pipetting: use filling devices (rubber bulbs, Pi-pumps) or transfer pipettes (e.g. Gilson, Oxford).

- Empty and rinse glassware as soon as possible after use and remove to the designated location for collection for washing.
- Pay particular attention to removal of corrosive or toxic chemicals, plant material, soil, agar etc. (see "Disposal" below).
- Make sure all chemicals and media are clearly and unambiguously labelled. COSHH pictograms should be used where appropriate (refer to COSHH assessment).
- Do not attempt to modify or repair any electrical items. Do not use electrical items near water (e.g. in greenhouses or field sites) unless these have been explicitly approved for use by your supervisor.

### 9.3 Spillages

Clean up spillages immediately using the appropriate procedure e.g.

- Non-toxic liquids: mop with cloth or paper towel: do not try to suck them up using pipettes etc.
- strong acids and alkalis: contact a member of the Technical staff urgently.
- solid chemicals: wipe with damp cloth or paper towel. (Balance pans can in most cases be removed for cleaning).

Do not deal with spills of dusts or other solid chemicals by brushing or blowing: this increases the risk from hazardous materials.

N.B. Do not put paper towels used for cleaning up chemical spillages into waste paper bins where cleaning staff could come into contact with harmful substances: use the yellow/black waste sacks or yellow bins provided.

## 9.4 **Disposal**

Please discuss any Waste Disposal (other than 'domestic' waste) with a member of the technical staff.

## SECTION 10 THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY FACILITIES

**The University Library** provides 24-hour access to study space, a huge range of books and online journals, ebooks and databases, as well as advice to help you find and use Library resources effectively.

You'll find all the information you need to get started on [the library webpages](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/services/new) (<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/services/new>)

### 10.1 Library sites

There are different library sites on campus – you can use any of them and they all have: study space; computers and laptops, printing & photocopying facilities, areas for quiet and silent study, rooms that can be booked for group work & helpful staff. A valid UCard is needed to gain entry to all Library sites and to borrow books. You will also need your UCard to use photocopying, printing and scanning facilities.

[The Information Commons \(IC\)](#) is open 24 hours a day throughout the year. Undergraduate and Masters students should find most of their recommended books here. Visit the Information Desk on level 1 for help using the library, finding materials for your course, or for help with your computer or laptop.

[The Diamond](#) is also open 24 hours a day, and has a wide range of study space.

Library Connect on the ground floor (near the café) has extra copies of the most popular books. Visit Level 4 to speak to Library and CiCS staff at the Information Desk, or to use the reference books.

[Western Bank Library](#) has specialist books and print journals on all science subjects, and a large silent study reading room, and may be of particular interest to researchers.

The [Health Sciences Library](#), based in the Medical School at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital has books and print journals covering medicine, dentistry and health.

### 10.2 StarPlus

**StarPlus** is the Library's online search tool. Use it to find books, online journals, articles, ebooks and much more. You can get to StarPlus by logging into MUSE and going to the My Services menu. Use StarPlus to: request material that is out on loan and we'll notify you when it's ready for collection view details of your Library account, including a list of your current loans save the details of useful books, journals and articles to your eShelf so you can refer to them later (useful when referencing)

if you're looking for something we don't have, use the [book recommendation form](#) or contact your librarian (Oliver Allchin: [o.allchin@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:o.allchin@sheffield.ac.uk))

The [Science subject guide](#) (<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/subjects/sci>) gives more information about online resources for your subject.

Visit our [Information Skills Page \(https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/skills\)](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/skills) to explore workshops and online tutorials designed to help you develop your study and research skills.

### 10.3 Help and support

For general enquiries, contact the **Library Help Desk** ([library@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:library@sheffield.ac.uk), 0114 222 720, <http://libraryhelp.shef.ac.uk/>)

**Oliver Allchin** is the librarian for science – contact him for advice on finding library materials, to recommend a book or journal, or any other questions you have relating to your subject ([o.allchin@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:o.allchin@sheffield.ac.uk), 0114 222 7333, Twitter: [@Sci\\_Librarian](https://twitter.com/Sci_Librarian))

## SECTION 11 INFORMATION SERVICES

### 11.1 Information Commons

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/infocommons](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/infocommons)

Email [infocommons@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:infocommons@sheffield.ac.uk)

The Information Commons is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week but is not staffed continuously.

Staffing times can be found at:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/libsites/icopen.html](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/libsites/icopen.html)

The Information Commons, run jointly by CICS and the Library, is a state of the art building which houses 100,000 books, over 500 PC's and more than 1300 study spaces for individual, group and classroom learning.

Flexispace on Level 4 can be configured in a variety of different layouts. There are silent study spaces on levels 2, 3, 5 and 6. Fifteen group rooms are available, equipped with various collaborative technologies such as plasma screens. Media recording and editing facilities are available on Level 1. Group rooms and some PCs can be booked in advance by students.

During service hours, CiCS and Library Staff can offer advice and support. Outside of these hours, students can still access computing and library facilities via self-service equipment and web-based services. You can only get into the building by swiping your UCard at the turnstile. During self-service hours you need a UCard to open the

external doors. You also need a UCard to use many of the services available within the Information Commons.

The entire building is wireless-enabled so that laptop users can connect to the network anywhere. Kiosk computers located in the café area and around the building allow students quick access through MUSE to services such as Star, the library catalogue and electronic resources.

Printing and photocopying facilities are available on every floor, located in the Business Units, along with value loaders where printing and photocopying accounts can be credited. Self-service book issue machines are also located on levels 0, 1, 2 and 4, and scanners can be found on level 1. The IC also offers a 24/7 collection for reserved books.

### 11.2 Computing Facilities

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/cics/>

All students have access to a wide range of computing facilities. Corporate Information and Computing Services (CiCS) provides secure computers in rooms across campus, with a large choice of software including comprehensive internet access, email, word processing, spreadsheets, database management, CAD, statistical and other specialist software.

All computers are connected to the campus network, which is maintained by CiCS and provides access to available software and services, and to the internet.



### 11.3 Computer Rooms

In addition to the Information Commons there are 35 additional unstaffed computer rooms around the campus, including the Hicks building, the Mappin Building, Perak Laboratories, Bartolome House and most libraries. The locations of these facilities are indicated on a map available from the Information Commons.

The most convenient computers for you to use are those situated in the IT Centre in the Perak Laboratories building (A-floor) or room B56 of the Alfred Denny Building. The Perak IT Centre is open between 8.30am and 5.45pm (Mondays to Fridays). Computers in this location are subject to block booking for classes, so please check if you wish to use a computer at a particular time.

There is a full list of rooms available on the CiCS website. <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/computers>

### 11.4 Computer Account and Email Address

You will be provided with a computer account that gives you secure access to the computing facilities and the campus network,

You will also receive a University of Sheffield email address, which you must use for University Business. **You must check your University email regularly.** University mail will only be sent to this address.

### 11.5 Connecting your own Computer

You can connect your own computer to the internet from most rooms in University Residences.

You can also connect your laptop and most mobile devices, including smartphones and iPads, to the wireless network on campus in the Information Commons, student computer rooms and many other rooms around campus including lecture theatres and cafes. For wireless network locations, view a full list at [www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/wireless](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/wireless).

### 11.6 MUSE: Access to online University Services

MUSE gives secure access to your email, your online courseware, your library resources, your student record, your timetables and electronic journals. You can use the tools within MUSE to arrange the loan of a laptop, book a group study room, reserve a library book, download lecture notes and manage your printing account.

In addition, MUSE provides access to this same set of services and online resources from home or from any computer with internet access. For information on MUSE, see [www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/muse](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/muse)

Your email and calendar are available from within MUSE. The University works with Google to deliver these services as part of the Google Apps for Education provision. Through MUSE you can also access additional Google Apps including Docs, Blogger and Picasa. For details see <http://www.shef.ac.uk/cics/googleapps>

### 11.7 Information and Help

At the Information Commons staff are available to assist you with any computing problems.

You can contact the CiCS helpdesk, which will provide answers to any computer-related queries. You can call the helpdesk from a University phone on **21111**. Such phones are provided in many unstaffed computer rooms. From outside the University, you can reach the Helpdesk by calling **0114 222 1111**.

You can also email the Helpdesk ([helpdesk@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:helpdesk@sheffield.ac.uk)), or visit the Computing Centre on Hounsfield Road (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm).

You can find answers to common questions 24/7 using the CiCS knowledgebase, in the, “CiCS Helpdesk Self Service” channel in MUSE.

### 11.8 **Regulations and IT Code of Practice**

Your computer account is provided to enable you to fulfil the requirements of your course or research and to meet your other needs as far as possible. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the Code of Practice for the Use of University Computing Facilities and the Regulations on the Use of Computing Facilities.

Both are available on the web at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/cics/codeofpractice>

## SECTION 12 EXAMINATIONS AND DEGREE CLASSIFICATIONS

### 12.1 The Form and Timing of Examinations

All modules are examined at the end of the semester in which they are taught. The University Regulations define "examination" as a process of assessment (whether by written examination papers, written or practical assignments, continuous assessment of coursework, or other means) which enables the Examiners to return a grade. You will find that different methods of examination may be used in different modules or half-modules.

**At levels 1-3 there will be a meeting in late October/early November with the Examination Officer to explain examinations matters in more detail and which you can ask questions. Attendance at this meeting is compulsory.**

### 12.2 Dyslexia

The University has gradually been phasing in a sticker scheme (see section 7.3 for more information). If you are dyslexic or have other written communication difficulties then you can opt to attach a sticker to your work indicating this. The stickers alert markers to your difficulty and help them to provide you with useful feedback. The same criteria as described above will still be applied.

### 12.3 Multiple-Choice Examinations (Level 1 and level 2)

At Level 1 in the School of Biological Sciences lecture-course modules are examined by means of a multiple-choice examination paper. Multiple choice questions may also form a component of level 2 examinations. Multiple-choice examinations test

both knowledge and understanding. These examinations will be computer marked and the format of the top part of the computer sheet used for these examinations is shown below.

**UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD**  
SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Examination Press Number and Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**CANDIDATE NUMBER**

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

**Instructions:**

- This form will be read by a machine. ● Please use an HB pencil.
- Mark like this
- If you make a mistake erase it completely.
- Please do NOT mark with ticks, crosses or circles.
- Do not forget to enter your name, the Examination Press Number and Title, and your Candidate Number.

At the top of the sheet you must enter your name, the examination press number and title (for example, APS119 Comparative Physiology) and the date. On the right hand side of the sheet you will enter your candidate number in the box. Your candidate number is the **Registration number** on your U-card (not the U-card number). Below the box is a grid and you will also enter your registration number in the grid by marking the appropriate numbers in pencil. Make sure that you enter 9 digits i.e. include leading zeroes in your candidate number.

You will be required to answer the questions by filling in the appropriate box on the computer sheet. There will always be a single correct answer to a question, so only

one box should be filled in for each question. If you fill in more than one box your answer will be counted as 'Don't know'. You must use an HB pencil that you should bring to each examination. If you make any mark on the paper other than the box you intend to fill in, the computer will not read it. Therefore, you are strongly advised to note your answers on the question paper, and only when you are sure of the answers that you want to give should you then carefully fill in the boxes on the computer sheet.

**A guessing correction** will be applied during the marking of the examination. One third of a mark will be deducted for each incorrect answer. Thus, if you guess all the answers and got 25% of them right (as you could well do by chance) the correction procedure would deduct one third of a mark for each of the 75% incorrect answers and your net score would be zero. If you do not know the answer to a question you do not have to guess. If you fill in box E this will be marked as "do not know" and no guessing correction will be applied. The effect of filling in box E will thus be neutral.

#### **Self Assessment Tests at level 1.**

Many Level 1 APS modules employ an online multiple-choice self-assessment test which is available at the end of the period in which the module is taught. If you are registered for a module, you are required to take this self assessment test. It will provide you with examples of the multiple choice questions used in the main examination so that you are familiar with the format of the question paper.

#### **12.4 Coursework and examinations at levels 2-4**

All examination answers and practical class and field course reports are marked by the staff who provide the teaching. All marking is moderated by a second member of staff who checks a sample of the work to ensure that the marking is at an appropriate level. The criteria used for assessment differ between levels and also between coursework and examinations and are provided to you. If a module has multiple components, the weightings of each will be provided to you.

If you fail to follow the instructions on in an examination, you may receive a score of 0. For example, if an examination requires you to answer two questions, one from section A and section B and you answer two questions from the same section, only the first answer that you give will be marked, the second answer will be scored as 0. If you are required to answer only one question and you provide two answers, only the first answer will be marked (i.e. not the best answer).

#### **12.5 Policy on Legible Handwriting for Assessed Work**

- It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all work submitted for assessment is legible.
- It is the responsibility of the marker/examiner to determine whether work submitted for assessment is illegible.
- The policy does not apply in cases where alternative examination arrangements are in place for a student, or where special considerations apply which relate to a student's ability to write legibly. For example, in the case of temporary disability or injury.

- If an examination script is illegible, the student should be required to transcribe or dictate for transcription by a scribe, the script prior to marking. This should be conducted under supervision.
- The student must be clearly advised in writing that the purpose of attendance is to transcribe the existing script and that any addition or omission of material will constitute a breach of University regulations.
- If the student refuses to attend they may be awarded a mark of zero.
- The student should be formally warned in writing by Departmental Examinations Officers that it is their responsibility to submit work in a legible form and that any subsequent illegible work will not be marked and that they may be awarded a mark of zero.
- Any costs associated with transcribing will be the responsibility of the academic department.

## 12.6 Practical Work Reports

You will be given instructions on how to write up practical reports and the deadlines for handing in work in the practical booklets that you will receive.

## 12.7 Award of Credits

Candidates are required to complete units to a total value of 120 credits at levels 1, 2, 3 and (where applicable) 4. A distinction is made between completing a unit and passing it. A completed unit is one for which a candidate has obtained

- a Pass grade (or Pass outcome)
- a Fail grade

or

- where formal exemption as a result of previous study has been approved.

On the other hand, where for example, work is not submitted at all with no good reason or where credit is refused/denied (e.g. by a Discipline Committee on grounds of use of unfair means) then the unit/module may not be awarded a grade and would therefore clearly not be classed as completed and progression/award would not be possible. This will appear as NC (Not Completed) on your University record.

To pass a module or half-module you must achieve at least a pass grade, that is at least grade 40, in the examination. If you do not achieve at least a pass grade you will not be awarded the credits for that module or half-module and this might affect your academic progress (see 12.16).

## 12.8 Examination Results

Examination results are available **only on MUSE**. You should check the [SSID](#) web pages for information about release dates. Students should receive an email in March (following Autumn Exams) and again in the summer – giving details of release dates for each Faculty. If you need to re-take any examinations, you need to make sure that you have the correct information. You will need to go to <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/exams/reassessment.html> and follow the instructions given there.

**IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION YOU NEED.**

Examinations results will also be posted in the department after the external examiners visit in March and June. These results will be listed by anonymous candidate number and will be subject to ratification by the Faculty of Pure Science.

If you do not wish your examination results to be posted in this way, please contact the APS Departmental Office. Please note that staff are not allowed to release results via e-mail or telephone.

### 12.9 Re-sit Examinations

Re-sit examinations (or examinations for students who were Not Assessed (NA) or Not Completed (NC) in the Autumn/Spring examination period) for level 1 and level 2 students will take place in the Supplementary Examination period (see timetable in the front of this booklet). If you fail the re-sit examination you will not be able to proceed to the next level of study and will have to delay your studies by a year. No more than two re-sit attempts are allowed at a module. Please note that there is no formal re-sit examination period for level 3 or level 4. If you are required to re-take an examination in order to pass your BSc or MBIolSci degree this may only be possible in January or May in the next academic year – please contact **Dr Watt**.

### 12.10 Grades Awarded in Re-sit Examinations

If you re-sit a failed examination and pass you will be awarded a bare pass mark, that is grade 40, for that examination. (Please note that the University regulations were changed in the summer of 2012 so that results at all levels are capped).

### 12.11 Religious Holidays and Examinations

If you are not able for religious reasons (e.g. Sabbath, Festival, Friday Prayers etc.) to take examinations on any day on which examinations may be set during the year (including Saturdays but not Sundays), you should complete a '[Request for Religious Observance Form](#)' at the beginning of the year. Please note that once examination timetables have been set it is difficult for alterations to be made.

### 12.12 Illness and Examinations

If you are prevented by illness from taking an examination in January then you will be able to take the examination during May-June period as a first attempt. If you are prevented from taking an examination in May-June by illness you will be able to take the examination in August as a first attempt. Your University record will show NA (Not Assessed) for these examinations until you have taken them. Evidence of illness will be taken into account when determining degree classifications at the end of the third year. In all cases where illness is a factor, full medical evidence will be required.

If you are ill before, or during, an examination you should ensure that **Dr Watt** or the year tutor is aware of this and you should provide a medical certificate as soon as possible. If you claim to have been ill during an examination a substantial time after the event, it will not be possible to take this into account. If in doubt email [animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:animal.plant@sheffield.ac.uk).

If you are going to be absent from the university for any length of time due to illness or other circumstances you **MUST** complete an Exceptional Circumstances form. See section 4.5 for details.

If you fail to turn up for an examination your record will show Not Completed (NC). You may not proceed to the next level of study with NC on your record.

### 12.13 **Unfair means: Cheating, Plagiarism and Collusion**

During invigilated examinations a candidate shall not use or attempt to use any unfair means and shall not communicate with or attempt to communicate with any other candidates. Answers must be the candidate's own work. Where other material is quoted, the candidate shall state the source(s) from which it is derived. A candidate shall not use any answer book, writing paper or blotting paper other than that supplied in the examination hall. All unauthorised material (such as revision notes, books and data tables) and electronic devices (such as electronic dictionaries, mobile phones, radios and personal audio equipment) shall be left outside the examination hall or surrendered to an invigilator before entering the hall. Any material required for any particular examination will be provided in the hall. (If candidates are permitted to introduce books, notes or other material into an examination hall, they will be informed by the Department, and the nature and extent of the authorised material will be stated on the question paper.)

When preparing essays, projects or other work, you will read widely and become familiar with the work of others. You should ensure that the materials you prepare for submission would be accepted as your own original work. A lecturer or tutor who is assessing your work is interested in your understanding of an idea and you should use your own words to demonstrate your understanding.

The selective quoting of material from books and articles is permissible, but the material must always be attributed to its sources by means of quotation marks. In

assessed essays, a footnote or brackets naming the author and the title of the text plus the dates of publication would be required, as would a bibliography that provides full references of all the material consulted or used. In scientific essays, the use of extended quotations is unusual. When referring to the scientific literature you should read the article, make sure that you understand it, and then write in your own words. You should reference the source of the work at the end of the section using standard scientific notation e.g. (Smith & Jones, 1997) with a complete reference provided in the reference section at the end of the document.

The basic principle underlying the preparation of any piece of academic work is that **the work submitted must be your own original work**. Plagiarism and collusion are not allowed because they go against this principle. Please note that the rules about plagiarism and collusion apply to all assessed and non-assessed work, including essays, experimental results and computer code. Cutting and pasting from web sites would also be considered unacceptable. The departmental policy on plagiarism can be found at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/aps/currentug/infoall.html>. All coursework submitted outside of examination conditions will require a departmental coversheet which requires you to sign that you have read the document. In addition, coursework will be submitted to the TurnItIn system. Failure to submit coursework to the TurnItIn system will result in a score of 0 being awarded.

**Plagiarism** (either intentional or unintentional) is using the ideas or work of another person (including experts and fellow or former students) and submitting them as your own. It is considered dishonest and unprofessional. Plagiarism may take the form of cutting and pasting, taking or closely paraphrasing ideas, passages,

sections, sentences, paragraphs, drawings, graphs and other graphical material from books, articles, internet sites or any other source and submitting them for assessment without appropriate acknowledgement.

An online tutorial has been provided at

[https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/info\\_skills/Plagiarism/contents.html](https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/info_skills/Plagiarism/contents.html)

to help you understand plagiarism and how to avoid it.

- If a student submits a piece of work produced by others, or copied from another source, this is **plagiarism**.
- If a student produces a piece of work which includes sections taken from other authors without attribution, this is **plagiarism**. The length of the copied section is not relevant, since any act of plagiarism offends against the general principle set out above. When copying sections from other authors it is not sufficient simply to list the source in the bibliography.
- The selective quoting of material from books and articles is permissible, but the material must always be attributed to its sources, both within the text and within a bibliography. However, in general, extensive use would not be acceptable, even if acknowledged.
- If a student paraphrases from another source without the appropriate attribution, this is **plagiarism**. Paraphrasing should use a student's own words to demonstrate an understanding and accurately convey the meaning of the original work, and should not merely reorder or change a few words or phrases of the existing text.

- **Double submission** (or **self-plagiarism**) is resubmitting previously submitted work on one or more occasions (without proper acknowledgement). This may take the form of copying either the whole piece of work or part of it. Normally credit will already have been given for this work.
- Submitting **bought** or **commissioned work** (for example from internet sites, essay "banks" or "mills") is an extremely serious form of plagiarism. This may take the form of buying or commissioning either the whole piece of work or part of it and implies a clear intention to deceive the examiners. The University also takes an extremely serious view of any student who sells, offers to sell or passes on their own assessed work to other students.
- **Collusion** is a form of plagiarism where two or more people work together to produce a piece of work all or part of which is then submitted by each of them as their own individual work.
- If a student gets someone else to compose the whole or part of any piece of work, this is **collusion**.
  - If a student copies the whole or part of someone else's piece of work with the knowledge and consent of the latter, then this is **collusion**.
  - If a student allows another student to copy material, knowing that it will subsequently be presented as that student's own work, then this is **collusion**.
  - If two or more students work on an assignment together, produce an agreed piece of work and then copy it up for individual submission, then this is **collusion**. When producing a piece of work arising out of group work,



students should seek the advice of the tutor setting the assigned work regarding the acceptable limits of collaboration.

Both plagiarism and collusion are strictly forbidden. Students are warned that the piece of work affected may be given a grade of zero, which in some cases will entail failure in the examination for the relevant unit or research degree. The student may also be referred to the Discipline Committee.

You should follow any guidance on the preparation of material given by the member of staff setting the assignment. If in doubt, consult with them. There is unlikely to be any objection to you discussing the subject of an essay or project with fellow students in general terms, or to quoting from various sources in the work submitted. However, if you have any problems with an assignment you should always consult your tutor, who will give general advice and help.

There may be instances when collusion is required! For example, where you work as a member of a team. It will be made obvious when collusion is required and when it is forbidden.

- **Fabrication** is submitting work (for example, practical or laboratory work) any part of which is untrue, made up, falsified or fabricated in any way. This is regarded as fraudulent and dishonest.

#### 12.14 What happens if I use unfair means?

Any form of unfair means is treated as a serious academic offence and action may be taken under the Discipline Regulations. For a student registered on a professionally accredited programme of study, action may also be taken under the

Fitness to Practise Regulations. Where unfair means is found to have been used, the University may impose penalties ranging from awarding no grade for the piece of work or failure in a PhD examination through to expulsion from the University in extremely serious cases.

#### 12.15 Anonymous Marking

To avoid the possibility of any bias in marking all examination answers are anonymously marked. You are thus required to enter your registration number on examination answers. Your university registration number can be found on your U-Card. You should take your U-Card to all examinations to ensure that you enter the registration number on **your examination answers**.

In some cases anonymity is difficult to achieve (e.g. Level 3 Project Reports). You should still only use your Registration number on the report. An independent second marker will ensure that there is no bias in the assessment of Project Reports.

#### 12.16 Progression

##### **From level 1 to level 2**

Students must pass 120 credits to proceed to level 2 and complete the Level 1 Faculty Challenge.

The Examiners may, at their discretion, allow a student who has been awarded at least 100 credits to proceed to level 2 providing:

- all core modules have been passed

- a score of at least 30 has been achieved in failed module(s).

Permission to proceed in these circumstances is not automatic, and in reaching their decision the Examiners will take into account:

- whether satisfactory progress has been made across Level 1 as a whole;
- whether the student's performance in those modules which have been passed provides compensation for the failed module(s);
- whether the student has made a demonstrable effort to succeed in the failed module(s), evidenced by adequate attendance and participation and completion of the relevant assessed work and examinations.

### **From level 2 to level 3**

If you are awarded 120 credits in the second year examinations you will proceed into the third year. You may also be able to proceed into the third year if you are awarded at least 100 credits, providing you have passed all compulsory modules. Permission to proceed in these circumstances is not automatic, and does not imply the waiver of prerequisite requirements, where modules to be taken at Level 3 require a pass in a related module at Level 2.

This means that you might be able to fail one or two half-modules in second year and still proceed into the third year, but this will have consequences for your degree classification (see below). You will need to seek advice concerning your situation if you are in this position. It will always be advantageous for you to re-sit the examinations in the modules or half-modules you have failed. If you are awarded fewer than 100 credits you will be required to re-take the examinations in the failed modules or half-modules and obtain sufficient credits to satisfy the

requirements stated above. Failure in a module or half-module that is a pre-requisite for a third year core module or half-module will also mean that you must retake and pass the examination before you may proceed to Level 3. **Successful completion of APS222, compulsory and Practical modules is a pre-requisite for progression to Level 3.**

If you are registered for an MBiolSci degree you must achieve a minimum mean grade of 60 at Level 2 to remain registered. If you fail to achieve this grade you will be required to change study to a BSc degree at this point.

Students who achieve fewer than 120 credits, but who are allowed to proceed to Level 3 may choose to re-sit some or all of the failed modules in order to improve their level of performance. Candidates who choose to do this must notify the relevant academic department/s of their intentions and register for the August resit examination/s by the published re-examination entry deadline in July. Students who do not resit their failed modules in August will not normally be permitted to do so at a later date, except where the agreement of the department and the relevant Faculty Officer has been obtained prior to the August examination. In these cases, it is important that Departments make students aware of the resulting increased workload during the following year. No more than a bare pass (i.e. 40) may be obtained in a Level 2 resit examination; where such students obtain a lower grade in the resit examination, the permission to proceed to Level 3 will stand, and the grade achieved on the first attempt will supersede that achieved in the re-sit.

### From level 3 to level 4 (for students registered on MBiolSci)

If you are awarded 120 credits in the third year examinations, have an overall weighted mean grade of 60 or above at Level 2, together with a minimum grade of 65 in the Level 3 project (APS330), you will be able to proceed to Level 4 of the MBiolSci degree.

You may be able to proceed to Level 4 with 100 credits or more providing the other criteria for progression are fulfilled. You will need to seek advice concerning your situation if you are in this position. If you are awarded fewer than 100 credits you will be required to re-take examinations in the failed modules or half-modules and obtain sufficient credits to satisfy the requirements stated above. If you fail to satisfy the requirements for progression to Level 4 of the MBiolSci degree you will be required to change status to a BSc degree at this point. All students wishing to proceed to Level 4 will be interviewed in the spring semester of their Level 3 studies.

### 12.17 Award of a Degree

Your degree classification will be awarded anonymously to avoid any possible bias. It is important therefore that if you have any special circumstances such as serious illness which has affected your performance you report these to your department in good time so that they can be considered before the final anonymous degree classification board meeting. The extenuating circumstances form can be found at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/forms/circs>. See section 4.5 for details.

To be awarded a degree you must satisfy two conditions. a) You must have been awarded at least 200 credits in your second and third year examinations (320

credits in second, third and fourth year examinations for MBiolSci degrees). b) You must have a weighted average grade of not less than 40 in the second and third year (and fourth year for MBiolSci degrees) examinations as a whole.

This means that you can fail up to two modules or four half-modules in the second and third years (and fourth years) and still be awarded a degree provided your weighted average grade is above the pass mark.

### 12.18 Determination of Degree Classifications

Degrees are classified as follows:

Honours	Class I
	Class II Division 1
	Class II Division 2
	Class III
Pass	

The BSc degree classification is determined by the grades awarded for **all second and third year modules and half-modules**. (The MBiolSci degree classification is determined by grades awarded for all second, third and fourth year modules and half-modules). Because the 100 point scale is not linear (i.e. each class is not represented by the same range of grade points) the arithmetic mean is not the most appropriate indicator of a student's degree class.

At the end of your programme of study, your degree will be classified on the basis of a calculation which takes account of both the weighted average of the grades you obtain in modules at Levels 2 and above and the class within which the best 50% of these weighted module grades fall. In the calculation, grades are weighted both according to the credit value of each module (e.g. grades for 20 credit

modules are worth twice as much as 10 credit modules in the calculation) and according to the Level at which the module was studied (i.e. your Level 3, and 4 where applicable, grades are counted twice relative to those obtained at Level 2).

First the weighted average grade is calculated and converted to a preliminary degree classification according to the following scheme:

Weighted average grade	Preliminary Degree classification
69.5 or higher	First
59.5 or higher	2.1
49.5 or higher	2.2
44.5 or higher	Third
39.5 or higher	Pass

If your weighted average grade falls within the ranges indicated below, this results in a preliminary borderline classification:

Weighted average grade	Preliminary Borderline Degree classification
68.0 - 69.4	First
58.0 - 59.4	2.1
48.0 - 49.4	2.2
43.5 - 44.4	Third
38.0 - 39.4	Pass

Next the class within which the best 50% of your weighted module grades fall is calculated and converted to a second preliminary degree classification according to the following scheme:

Classification threshold exceeded by best 50% of weighted module grades	Preliminary Degree classification
69.5 or higher	First
59.5 or higher	2.1
49.5 or higher	2.2
44.5 or higher	Third
39.5 or higher	Pass

If 5/12 of your weighted grades correspond to a classification higher than that indicated by the grades of the best 50%, you would, for the purposes of this preliminary classification, be placed in the borderline category for the higher classification. The scheme by which the preliminary classifications based on (1) the weighted average grade and (2) the best 50% of your weighted modules contribute to a final degree classification is detailed on the following page.

Preliminary classification based on weighted average	Preliminary classification based on threshold exceeded by best 50% of weighted module grades	Final classification
First	First	First
First	Borderline first	First
First	2i	Borderline first
Borderline first	First	First
Borderline first	Borderline first	Borderline first
Borderline first	2i	2i
2i	First	Borderline first
2i	Borderline first	2i
2i	2i	2i
2i	Borderline 2i	2i
2i	2ii	Borderline 2i
Borderline 2i	2i	2i
Borderline 2i	Borderline 2i	Borderline 2i
Borderline 2i	2ii	2ii
2ii	2i	Borderline 2i
2ii	Borderline 2i	2ii
2ii	2ii	2ii
2ii	Borderline 2ii	2ii
2ii	3rd	Borderline 2ii
Borderline 2ii	2ii	2ii
Borderline 2ii	Borderline 2ii	Borderline 2ii
Borderline 2ii	3rd	3rd
3rd	2ii	Borderline 2ii
3rd	Borderline 2ii	3rd
3rd	3rd	3rd
3rd	Borderline 3rd	3rd
3rd	Pass	Borderline 3rd
Borderline 3rd	3rd	3rd
Borderline 3rd	Borderline 3rd	Borderline 3rd
Borderline 3rd	Pass	Pass
Pass	3rd	Borderline 3rd
Pass	Borderline 3rd	Pass

Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Borderline Pass	Pass
Pass	Fail	Borderline Pass
Borderline Pass	Pass	Pass
Borderline Pass	Borderline Pass	Borderline Pass
Borderline Pass	Fail	Fail
Fail	Pass	Borderline Pass
Fail	Borderline Pass	Fail
Fail	Fail	Fail

Where the final classification is in the borderline category, your classification will be made at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, who will take into account the weighted average grade you obtained at the final Level of your studies.

For further details including an animated tutorial of a worked example of how a degree class is calculated, see

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/exams/classification.html>.

#### **Note for Biology with a Year Abroad Students**

The University requires that the results for Biology with a Year Abroad students are returned as a single module worth 120 credits during their 2<sup>nd</sup> year. However, this large block of identical scores skews the classification based on threshold exceeded by best 50% of weighted module grades and may unfairly advantage or disadvantage these students.

Therefore the marks from modules that are taken during the year abroad will be retained by the department and a classification based on these separate scores made available to the External Examiners (e.g. if a student took 8 x 15 credit modules at level 2, these scores would be used in the degree classification

calculation). The External Examiners will also examine the student portfolio, the content of the courses taken and the scores obtained, to ensure that the scores used in the calculation are appropriate. The department will use the external examiners discretion to make sure that these cases are dealt with fairly.

### 12.19 Academic Appeals Procedure

If you wish to appeal against a degree classification, you should first discuss the matter with **Professor Mike Siva-Jothy or Dr Fiona Hunter**. If the matter cannot be resolved at departmental level there is a formal appeals procedure.

#### The Regulations Relating to Academic Appeals

A student may apply under these Regulations for a recommended grade for any module or degree classification or examination result to be re-considered in the light of new evidence.

#### Grounds for appeal

For these purposes, 'new evidence' is defined as:

1. procedural error either by the Examiners or during the recording, transcription and reporting of the examination results;
2. extenuating circumstances which the student was unable to place, or for valid reasons did not place, before the Examiners;
3. evidence of a failure of supervision which significantly affected the candidate's performance and which could not reasonably be expected to have been the subject of complaint by the student to the Head of

Department or the Pro Vice Chancellor of the Faculty before the examination.

These are the only grounds on which representations can be made. Appeals will not be considered against the academic judgement of the Examiners. Representations may, however, be made in cases where the Examiners have recommended, in response to a candidate using unfair means in an examination, that a credit or examination result be refused or a grade reduced.

#### Procedure

Reference in these Regulations to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor means the Pro Vice Chancellor of Science and includes any person authorised to act on their behalf.

A student who wishes to place such new evidence before the Faculty will apply in writing, setting out clearly the facts which the student wishes the Faculty to consider and showing how those facts constitute new evidence as here defined. The application must be made to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor within 15 working days of the publication of the examination result.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor may extend the time limit imposed by this Regulation.

For the purposes of these Regulations, the date of publication of examination results means the date upon which the examination results are first made available to students in the relevant Department, even though the results are still subject to confirmation by the Faculty and the Senate.

After consulting the Head of Department, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor may

- determine that the appeal be upheld; or

- convene an Academic Appeals Committee of the Board of the Faculty to hear the case;
- refer a case to the Discipline Committee for action under the regulations as to the Discipline of Students where representations have been made by a student using unfair means (or alleged to have used unfair means) in an examination;

or

- determine that there is no substantive case for appeal.

### **Academic Appeals Committee**

The Academic Appeals Committee shall comprise

(a) the Pro-Vice-Chancellor or nominated representative;

and

(b) not less than two and not more than four other members of the Faculty.

The student may opt either (a) for the appeal to be dealt with on written submissions; or (b) for an oral hearing (at which the student may choose to be accompanied by a friend or adviser).

Where the appeal is to be dealt with on written submissions, the Committee shall receive:

- a) the material submitted by the student;

b) any written comments made on that material by or on behalf of the Head of Department and, where appropriate, by the supervisor; and

c) any written comments made by the student on the material submitted under (b) above.

Where there is an oral hearing, the Committee will hear oral submissions by or on behalf of the student, the Head or other representative of the Department, and where appropriate the supervisor. The student may comment on the submissions made by others. In any case in which factual matters are in dispute, the Committee will investigate the facts, and may invite appropriate persons to attend to assist; during this process the student may be present and may ask questions, make comment, and produce other persons who can provide information or testimony.

At no stage during the appeal process does the student have the right to see any examination script

The Committee will reconsider the grade, classification, result or other subject of the appeal in the light of the material available to it. Except as provided above, no person other than members of the Committee and its Secretary will be present during its deliberations.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor or the Committee will report to the Faculty and may make any recommendation as to the subject matter of the appeal as could, under the relevant Regulations, have been made by the Examiners.

Where the substance of the appeal concerns acts or omissions of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, and in any other case where it is inappropriate for the Pro-Vice-

Chancellor to act under these Regulations, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall appoint a Deputy.

Where a student is not satisfied with the decision taken in respect of the academic appeal they may request a case review in writing within 10 working days of the letter of notification and in accordance with the Student complaints procedure at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/procedures/complaints>, stating their grounds for the request.

#### **12.20 Undergraduate Degree Examination Conventions**

The Student Services Department publishes a detailed set of conventions that govern the way in which Departments deal with examination matters. The full text of these conventions can be viewed on the web at [www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/exams/ugexams](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/exams/ugexams).

#### **12.21 Prizes and Student Bursaries**

The Department of Animal and Plant Sciences has a number of prizes which students are eligible to receive. In addition, there are a number of student bursaries for which students may apply.

Details of all prizes and bursaries can be found at

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/aps/currentug/prizes-bursaries>



## SECTION 13 INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO LEVEL 4

### 13.1 PRIZES

The following prizes may be awarded to undergraduate students in the Department of Animal & Plant Sciences.

1. **Chancellor's Medal.** One medal is awarded annually and all students in the University are eligible. The medal is awarded for outstanding contributions made by an individual student to the reputation or well being of the University. The medal winner is chosen by the Chancellor of the University following recommendations by the Dean of the Faculty.

2. **J.G. Boswell Memorial Prize in Botany.** One prize is awarded annually and consists of £100 in books to be chosen by the successful candidate. The Prize is awarded on performance at final year in Plant Sciences.

The Prize was founded in 1965 in memory of Dr J G Boswell, a member of staff of the University from 1934-1965.

3. **A.R. Clapham Prize in Ecology.** One prize is awarded annually and consists of books chosen by the successful candidate. The Prize is awarded on performance in ecological project work during the final year.

The Prize was established in 1993 by the New Phytologist Trust in memory of Professor A R Clapham the Head of the Department of Botany from 1944-1969.

4. **J.D. Jones Prize in Zoology.** One prize is awarded annually and consists of a cheque for £150. The Prize is awarded on performance during final year in Zoology.

The Prize was established in 1980 in memory of Dr J D Jones, a member of staff of the University from 1949-1980.

5. **The Thomas Woodcock Prize.** One prize is awarded annually in one of the following areas: Plant Sciences, Physiology and Zoology. The areas rotate on an annual basis. The Prize is awarded for performance during final year.

The General University Regulations for Prizes state that a prize may be divided between candidates of equal merit and a prize may be withheld if there is no candidate of sufficient merit.

8. **The Sheffield Graduate Award.** The *Sheffield Graduate Award* is open to all students and has been developed with the purpose of recognising and rewarding your extra curricula activities that help you to gain the Sheffield Skills. The Award is endorsed by a number of employers who recognise that students who have achieved the Award will stand out from the crowd.

By taking part in the Award, you can bring together all your different experiences, for example, volunteering, mentoring, organising clubs and societies, part time work, sporting activities and course representation, which will help employers take note of all your achievements that go beyond the academic. After successful completion of your Award portfolio in your final year, you will receive a certificate upon graduation, and a reference to the Award will be added to your transcript.

Further information and on line registration for the Award can be found on:

[www.sheffield.ac.uk/thesheffieldgraduateaward](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/thesheffieldgraduateaward)

## SECTION 14 TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT METHODS AT LEVEL 4

### 14.1 Criteria for Assessing Answers.

Level 4 modules are assessed by a variety of methods including coursework, presentations, projects, dissertations and performance in the lab or field. The assessment criteria will differ between these different methods but will be made known to you. Level 4 modules are not assessed by examination under invigilation so most work can be considered as coursework.

Staff are provided with the following criteria that are used in assessing work at Level 3. The text originally referred primarily to assessment of answers to essay questions based on lecture modules (which do not form part of the assessment at Level 4), but it has been modified here and, of course, the general principles underlying the criteria (including breadth of knowledge and understanding, relevance, critical analysis, synthesis and successful communication) also apply to assessments at Level 4, so they are included here as a reminder. The phrases are used for guidance by staff but the mark awarded will reflect their judgement on the whole piece of work.

It is important to remember that the primary determinant of the mark is your ability to communicate your understanding of the topic being addressed. Work that fails to demonstrate that understanding will receive a very low score (potentially 0) however well written it may be. It is **vital** that you read widely and understand the topic being addressed. If you are aiming to evaluate two contrasting theories, work that simply

describes one or both of these has failed to achieve that aim. Likewise, inclusion of lots of irrelevant material will reduce your mark – it is far better to write a shorter, more focussed answer. The criteria are intended as guidelines. They are meant to illustrate the general qualities in answers that examiners will be looking for. Not all criteria can be applied rigidly to every type of assignment. The first and perhaps most essential feature in any assignment is to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

Answers are assessed on the basis of

- understanding
- breadth of reading
- synthesis and critical analysis
- relevance of the writing
- use of examples
- style

Always be sure to identify your aim in a particular piece of work. In general, your work will require some synthesis of material from multiple sources – either material presented to you, discussed and required reading. In these questions the ability to analyse and synthesise material is paramount. Synthesis means to make a whole out of parts, to combine separate elements of thought into a whole, to reason from principles to a conclusion. Other tasks may demand a more descriptive or factually based answer with more detailed knowledge. Selection of material from different sources may be necessary for tasks of this sort.

The following criteria are provided to markers:

**Exceptional: (80+).**

*Understanding:* Extremely insightful. Exceptional width and breadth of knowledge. *External reading:* Very extensive, adding a novel dimension to the piece of work. Has gone well beyond the obvious reviews and research papers. *Synthesis and critical analysis:* Clever ideas or novel combinations of ideas. Critical analysis of the evidence or views of others. Conclusions drawn where possible or gaps in current knowledge identified. *Relevance of the answer:* Takes a highly innovative approach to addressing a task or question. All material presented is relevant and forms a tightly focussed piece of work. *Examples:* Numerous examples that illustrate many of the different points that are being made drawn from material other than lecture/course material. *Style:* Beautifully written; includes relevant figures and/or tables, and may have included own diagrams of very high quality.

**Class 1: (70-80).**

*Understanding:* Thorough and extensive. *External reading:* Based extensively on research literature with a good balance of research papers and reviews. *Synthesis and critical analysis:* Synthesises lecture/course material and external reading into an excellent answer. Has critically analysed evidence presented. *Relevance of the answer:* Totally focussed on the task. No irrelevant material. *Examples:* Relevant examples given throughout and well integrated. *Style:* Well written in unambiguous English with a logical series of ideas and subdivision of subject matter. Good use of diagrams/tables, well integrated with the text.

**Class 2.1: (60-69).**

*Understanding:* Good, covers the relevant material accurately with a few minor errors at most. *External reading:* A reasonable coverage of the literature although may rely more on reviews than original research papers. *Synthesis and critical analysis:* Synthesises material into a well-organised whole. Some, but limited, critical analysis of evidence presented. *Relevance of the answer:* Addresses the task directly with little irrelevant information. *Examples:* Good use of examples to illustrate some major points. *Style:* Clearly written with ideas well presented, but sentence structure/phrasing could be improved. Diagrams present and referred to in text.

**Class 2.2: (50-59).**

*Understanding:* Basic (but adequate). Lacks some important information or misunderstands a component of the material. *External reading:* Based upon a few reviews with little evidence of having examined the primary research papers. Over-reliance on limited material. *Synthesis and critical analysis:* Reasonably accurate writing but tends to rely on recall rather than synthesising information. *Relevance of the answer:* May not address the task directly or contains significant amounts of irrelevant material. *Examples:* Limited use of examples and does not link these well with the points being made. *Style:* Adequately written but deficiencies in organisation. Diagrams are poor or not well integrated with text.

**Fail: (45-49).**

*Understanding:* Incomplete. Some information presented but key information is missing or misunderstood. *External reading:* Based on very limited papers with extensive (inappropriate) use of web resources. *Synthesis and critical analysis:* Very

little synthesis of material. A set of limited or incomplete notes. *Relevance of the answer:* Some information is relevant but most is not. *Examples:* Very few examples given, with no real integration into the answer. *Style:* Style is poor. Grammar and syntax poor. No diagrams of any use.

**Fail: (40-44).**

*Understanding:* The most basic level of understanding that could be considered satisfactory. *External reading:* Extensive use of web resources with little reference to primary sources. *Synthesis and critical analysis:* No synthesis or critical evaluation. *Relevance of the answer:* A few sections of the answer are relevant but these are poorly structured. Largely irrelevant/incorrect. *Examples:* minimal, not linked to the text in a sensible manner. *Style:* Style is poor. Makes understanding the meaning a challenge. No diagrams.

**Fail: (25-39).**

*Understanding:* Little understanding of even the basic elements. Many errors, key information missing. *External reading:* Inappropriate web resources only. Uses extremely limited source material with little input themselves. *Synthesis and critical analysis:* Inability to form a coherent scientific argument. *Relevance of the answer:* Extensive amounts of irrelevant/incorrect information. *Examples:* None. *Style:* Style is very poor so that large parts of the answer cannot be understood or are contradictory. No diagrams

**Bad fail: (0-24).**

*Understanding:* Profound ignorance of the subject. *External reading:* No attempt at external reading (or a few web links). *Synthesis and critical analysis:* Incoherent - a jumbled mess. *Relevance of the answer:* Nothing relevant or massive digression from the task at hand. *Examples:* None. *Style:* Riddled with errors in syntax and grammar. A random assortment of partial sentences.

The ability to communicate in writing is of fundamental importance. If submitted assignments contains writing that is mis-spelt, ungrammatical or ambiguously phrased then a lower mark is inevitable.

## 14.2 Level 4 Dissertation Work (APS402)

### Aims

The aim of a dissertation is to provide a critical review of a specific topic that is closely aligned with the Level 4 research project that you plan to undertake. This will involve more than a factual description of a topic. It should allow a reader to obtain an overall view of the current state of knowledge and understanding in the selected field. This will involve a critical analysis of hypotheses in the field and the quality of the evidence used to support them. Where controversies exist you should be prepared to indicate which side has the stronger case. You should also identify gaps in our current knowledge and understanding and make suggestions for the future development of the field. The preparation of a dissertation will thus involve extensive reading of original research papers, reviews and books, perhaps also

including information extracted from other media. The key processes in preparing a dissertation are thus: identification, selection, interpretation, imagination, integration and presentation.

The Level 4 dissertation is not an iteration of the Level 3 dissertation. A more thorough critique, involving a greater degree of critical thinking skills will be required compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Additionally, a superior level of writing skills will be necessary compared to expectations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Substantial independence in idea development will be required.

The exact nature of the student's dissertation will be decided in consultation with the supervisor. The general topic area for the dissertation and project was decided when students selected their preferred topics and supervisors and when the place in the 4<sup>th</sup> year was offered and accepted.

#### **Deadlines for Submission of Dissertations.**

You must hand in your Dissertation to the Departmental Office no later than 2.00 pm on **Wednesday 17 January 2018**.

When submitting your work you must ensure that you complete a coversheet for each piece of work (i.e. report, lab book etc). Coversheets can be downloaded from <https://sciencecoversheet.group.shef.ac.uk/>, please complete the coversheet, ensure all details are entered correctly. Take the coursework and completed coversheet to the APS Department before the deadline and post into the metal box in the Alfred Denny Building Foyer

Please consult section 4.7 for information concerning late handing in of dissertation reports. At the same time as you submit a printed copy, you should also submit an electronic copy of your dissertation through the TurnItIn system via MOLE.

#### **14.3 The Role of the Dissertation Supervisor**

- Discuss and consult with the student on the exact nature of the student's dissertation.
- Discuss the broad outline of the topic and provide guidance on how to gather the appropriate information.
- Discuss the student's developing ideas on the chosen topic.
- Discuss content and structure of the dissertation.
- Examine up to 25% of the written work to provide general comments on the quality of the writing.
- Meet with the student at least once every fortnight, if necessary.

#### **14.4 The Role of the Dissertation Student**

- Attend all scheduled meetings regarding your dissertation and take responsibility for motivating the content of these meetings.
- Formulate ideas about dissertation topics prior to meeting with your supervisor.
- Discuss and refine these ideas in consultation with your supervisor.
- Provide an outline of the topic.
- Identify and gather appropriate reading material; your supervisor will not provide a reading list.
- Develop the content and structure of your dissertation.
- Write and produce the dissertation with guidance from your supervisor.

#### 14.5 How to Write Up a Dissertation – format and length.

The report will be prepared with the general style of a 'Trends' article (See Section 4 Appendix 1). The word limit is 5000 words. The word count includes (1) all text in Figure, Table and Box captions, (2) tables where these are largely text (tables that are largely numbers don't count), (3) text included in boxes, and (4) references cited in the main body of the text. You do not include the reference list at the end of the piece of work (maximum 100 references). A penalty for overlong work will be applied as described in section 4.8.

The report should be submitted both electronically through the TurnItIn system via MOLE and a hard copy to the Departmental Office, via the black box in the foyer. Detailed guidelines on formatting the dissertation are provided in SECTION 17 Appendix 1.

#### 14.6 Assessment of Dissertation.

This section tells you the criteria the examiners will use when they assess your dissertation report. Your dissertation will be independently assessed by your supervisor and one other member of academic staff. Particular attention will be paid to:

- Understanding and exposition of relevant issues.
- Structure and development of argument.
- Presentation of relevant data.
- Relevance and design of figures and diagrams.
- Evidence of wide and relevant reading.

- Evaluation and synthesis of material.
- Standard of critical analysis including ability to analyse hypotheses and identify gaps in current knowledge and understanding.
- Citation of references.
- Quality of written English.
- Style, grammar and syntax.
- Overall design and presentation.

**Class 1** Excellent understanding and exposition of relevant issues. Clear structure and logically developed arguments. Relevant data clearly presented. Figures and diagrams, if used, are relevant and well-designed. Substantial evidence of wide and relevant reading. Excellent evaluation and synthesis of material. High standard of critical analysis. References properly cited in text and in reference list. Clearly written in unambiguous, readable English. Style, grammar and syntax good. Overall design and presentation of dissertation good.

**Class 2.1** Good understanding and exposition of relevant issues. Clearly structured and logically developed arguments. Relevant data clearly presented. Figures and diagrams, if used, are relevant and well designed. Evidence of relevant reading. Good evaluation and synthesis of material. Good standard of critical analysis. References properly cited in text and in reference list. Clearly written with acceptable style, grammar and syntax. Overall design and presentation of dissertation good.

**Class 2.2** Adequate understanding and exposition of relevant issues. Arguments reasonably clear but not fully developed. Limited presentation of relevant data. Figures and diagrams, if used, are not used to best advantage. Limited amount

of relevant reading or reliance on limited number of review papers. Limited evaluation and synthesis of material. References mainly properly cited in text and in reference list. Writing not consistently clear and style, grammar and syntax may be variable. Overall design and presentation of dissertation adequate.

**Fail (45-48)** Poor understanding and exposition of relevant issues. Arguments not very clear. Relevant data often lacking. Figures and diagrams inadequately used. Little relevant reading. Superficial evaluation and synthesis of material. References poorly cited in text and an inadequate reference list. Errors and omissions in the text. Writing inconsistent or poor. Style, syntax and grammar poor. Overall design and presentation of dissertation adequate.

**Fail (40)** Very weak understanding and exposition of relevant issues. Very weak analysis and arguments. No presentation of relevant data. Figures and diagrams either not used or badly used. Text contains errors and omissions. No evidence of relevant reading. References inadequate. Poorly written. Overall design and presentation of dissertation adequate.

**Fail (25-35)** Little or no understanding of relevant issues. No analysis or argument. Many errors and omissions. No presentation of relevant data. No use of diagrams and figures. No evidence of relevant reading. Limited or no references. Overall design and presentation of dissertation inadequate.

**Bad Fail** Profound ignorance of the subject. No effective structure and no attempt at critical analysis. No external reading and nothing relevant or massive digression from the topic. Riddled with grammatical errors and terrible presentation.

Exceptional marks may be awarded for dissertations that meet the criteria for a 1<sup>st</sup> class mark, and are also extremely insightful and knowledgeable, beautifully structured and written, innovative and contain clever ideas, and that demonstrate outstanding critical analysis. See criteria for exceptional marks in section 3.1.

**You will receive feedback on your marked dissertation from your supervisor in Semester 2, but the marked copies will not be returned to you to keep. It is your responsibility to retain your own copy.**

#### 14.7 Level 4 Project Work (APS406)

##### Aims

The aim of a project is to provide an opportunity for you to undertake an original investigation. Any investigation must start with a problem, that is, some aspect of the living world that requires an explanation. Once you have a clearly defined problem you can begin to think about possible explanations. A possible explanation, stated in a logically consistent form and which does not contravene any established facts, is a hypothesis. The essence of project work is the testing of hypotheses. A hypothesis is only useful if it can be supported or not by some measurement or observation. A hypothesis should thus allow predictions to be made about what might be true, which can then be tested. This testing of hypotheses is done by experiment, which is a designed intervention in nature, or by careful observation of natural events. The results of experiments or observations usually require some sort



of analysis before they can be interpreted and a decision made whether they support or deny the hypothesis.

The Level 4 project is not an iteration of the Level 3 project. The Level 4 project will require substantial development of clearly defined problems and hypotheses that are tested in a more sophisticated and rigorous fashion, usually involving more extensive data analysis skills compared with Level 3. Additionally, a superior level of writing and computer skills will be necessary compared to expectations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Considerable independence in idea development will be required.

The exact nature of the student's project will be decided in consultation with the supervisor. The general topic area for the project was decided when students selected their preferred topics and supervisors, and when the place in the 4<sup>th</sup> year was offered and accepted.

#### **Deadlines for Submission of Project Reports, Lab Notebook and Oral Presentation.**

You must hand in your Project Report and Lab Notebook to the Departmental Office not later than 12.00 Noon on **Wednesday 30 May 2018**.

When submitting your work you must ensure that you complete a coversheet for each piece of work (i.e. report, lab book etc). Coversheets can be downloaded from <https://sciencecoversheet.group.shef.ac.uk/>, please complete the coversheet, ensure all details are entered correctly. Take the coursework and completed coversheet to the APS Department before the deadline and post into the metal box in the Alfred Denny Building Foyer

Please consult section 4.7 for information concerning late handing in of project reports. At the same time as you submit a printed copy, you should also submit an electronic copy of your project [through](#) the TurnItIn system via MOLE. Your oral presentations will take place on **3 and 4 May 2018**.

#### **14.8 The Role of the Project Supervisor.**

- Discuss and consult with the student on the exact nature of the student's project.
- Discuss the details of the experimental and/or observational work required.
- Provide guidance on formulating clear hypotheses, but will not formulate these hypotheses or design the experiments.
- Discuss keeping a lab notebook.
- Provide guidance on data analysis and interpretation.
- Provide guidance on writing the report.
- Will meet with the student at least one every fortnight to provide guidance and training.
- Examine up to 1500 words of the written work in advance of submission to provide general comments on the quality of the writing.

#### **14.9 The Role of the Project Student**

- Attend all scheduled meetings regarding your project and take responsibility for motivating the content of these meetings.
- Formulate your own hypotheses, and design observations and experiments to test your hypotheses.
- Perform your own data analysis and interpretation of results.
- Write and produce the project report with only guidance from your supervisor.

- Read and comprehend the background information necessary to understand your project.
- Obtain and keep a laboratory notebook, as described in the handbook.
- Be responsible for data collection.
- Display active ownership of the project.

#### 14.10 Oral Presentations

For your **Oral Presentation** you are being tested on your ability to communicate your work.

- Your supervisor can provide some materials (photographs and diagrams, for example) and can comment on a draft of the presentation, suggest adding new material, or suggest rearrangement of the existing material.
- **Your supervisor will NOT be able to listen to a rehearsal of the final version and make comments on it, but members of your lab can.**
- **Your supervisor will NOT help directly with the writing or production of the presentation.** Do not expect your supervisor to provide detailed ideas or instructions. You will discuss with your supervisor how your results should be analysed and interpreted, but you will be expected to make your own analysis and interpretation.

#### 14.11 How to Write Up a Project Report

Your project report should take the form of a scientific article. The precise format is up to you but you have been given guidelines (SECTION 18 Appendix 2) that are consistent with the format used by a majority of journals. The most important thing to remember when following these guidelines is to be consistent in your style of presentation.

#### Length of Project Report.

There is no limit to the length of your project report (but see Section 5 Appendix 2 for further advice on the length of your report).

#### Assessment of Projects.

Four aspects of your project will be assessed: (i) your project report (70% of total mark), (ii) an oral presentation of your research project (15%), (iii) your laboratory notebook (7.5%), and (iv) your performance in the laboratory (7.5%). Your project report and oral presentation will be independently assessed by your supervisor and a second marker or moderator.

#### Assessment of laboratory notebook (7.5%) and performance in the laboratory (7.5%).

Throughout your project you should write up your experimental work and results in a laboratory notebook. Guidelines for keeping a laboratory notebook can be found below. Your laboratory notebook will be assessed for comprehensive and well-organized notes, and for consistent and informative record keeping (see later in section 15.3 for guidelines) The following factors will be taken into account in assessing your performance in the laboratory or field: 1. Your enthusiasm. 2. Attendance - how much work did you put in? 3. Organisational ability - how well did you organise your work? 4. Laboratory/Field skills - how competent were you in performing experiments/observations. You must hand in your Lab Notebook twice.

First, hand it to your supervisor for feedback (you will receive it back<sup>3</sup>) **not later than 2.00 pm on Wednesday 17 January 2018**. Second, hand it in to the Department by **Wednesday 30 May 2018 not later than 12.00 pm** (it will then be kept by the department for formal assessment). When submitting your work you must ensure that you complete a coversheet for each piece of work (i.e. report, lab book etc).

Coversheets can be downloaded from <https://sciencecoversheet.group.shef.ac.uk/>.

Please complete the coversheet, ensure all details are entered correctly. Take the coursework and completed coversheet to the APS Department before the deadline and post into the metal box in the Alfred Denny Building Foyer

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<sup>3</sup> You are responsible for coordinating the first evaluation of your notebook by your supervisor. You will be provided with the evaluation sheet the **week commencing 11 December 2017** and it will be your responsibility to turn in your lab book to your supervisor and have your supervisor fill in the evaluation sheet and provide oral feedback. The evaluation sheet should be returned to the office by **Wednesday 7 February 2018 not later than 12.00 pm**. Note that you may not receive your lab notebook immediately back from your supervisor, therefore you should be prepared to continue your work without it as a reference. This may require you to photocopy sections of the lab book before you hand the book to your supervisor. It is highly recommended that you give your supervisor sufficient time to properly evaluate your lab book so plan ahead and do not wait until the last minute. You should also ensure that there is enough data and/or notes in your lab book for your supervisor to evaluate. In exceptional circumstances, students may request flexibility in this timetable for preliminary evaluation and feedback from their supervisors if the timetable described here is not consistent with the progress of their project.

The first hand-in will be commented on by supervisors and you will receive feedback from them; the last hand-in will be formally assessed by your supervisor.

#### 14.12 Oral Presentations.

You will give your oral presentations, using PowerPoint, during the Level 4 Symposium that will take place **3 and 4 May 2018**. The presentation should be of 12 minutes duration. There will be an additional 3 minutes for questions. The reason that these presentations are given earlier than the written report is for you to have an opportunity for feedback from your supervisor and other staff and students. If you have not quite finished all your observations, experiments or analysis at the time of the presentation, this will not prejudice your assessment.

#### 14.13 Assessment of Oral Presentations.

This section tells you the criteria that the examiners will be using to assess the oral presentation of your project. The examiners will assess your presentation under the headings listed below. The weighting that will be given to each section is shown as a percentage.

##### (a) Content and Organization (50%)

- An introduction that provides adequate background, historical context and justification for the study.
- A clear statement of the hypothesis.
- Logical development and integration of the presentation, showing clear progression of the results relating to the hypothesis tested.
- Provision of sufficient evidence.

- Logical formulation and expression of conclusions and interpretation.
- Effective transitions between key points.
- Is the presentation comprehensible by members of the audience outside the particular speciality?
- Adherence to time limit (12 minutes, plus 3 minutes for questions).

(b) Delivery (40%)

- Effective use of PowerPoint – visibility, simplicity, comprehensibility and relevance.
- Good vocal delivery and enthusiasm.
- Clarity.

(c) Questions (10%)

- Effective handling of questions.

#### 14.14 Assessment of written report

This section tells you the sorts of question the examiners will be asking when they assess your project report. You should use these questions as the objectives you are aiming to achieve in your project report. Assessment of the project report will pay particular attention to the students' skills in generating and testing hypotheses and in the design of appropriate experiments and the utilisation of a range of laboratory or field techniques appropriate to the project.

The examiners will assess your project report under the headings below and the weighting that will be given to each section is shown as a percentage.

(a) Abstract (maximum 250 words) (10%)

- Is the aim/rationale of the project clearly stated?
- Have the results been summarised accurately?

- Are the main conclusions summarised concisely?

(b) Introduction (10%)

- Does the text give an adequate introduction to the research topic?
- Are the aims and rationale clearly stated?

(c) Methods (10%)

- Have the methods been described clearly and in adequate detail?

(d) Results (30%)

- Does the text contain a clear description of the results?
- Are the results presented relevant to the stated aims of the project?
- Are data recorded within the limits of accuracy of the measurements and have appropriate units been used?
- Have the data been correctly and critically analysed?
- Have sources of error been acknowledged?
- Have tables and figures been used to present the results in the most appropriate and concise manner?

(e) Discussion (30%)

- Are valid conclusions drawn?
- Do the results mean anything? If not has this been acknowledged?
- Is interpretation of the results reasonable and not unduly speculative?
- Have appropriate references to the literature been made?
- Has the relevance of the literature to the work performed been recognised?

(f) Presentation of report (10%)

- Does the paper conform to the standard format of a scientific paper in terms of general style, format and citing of references, etc (see Appendix 2).

**Your project will not be returned to you. If you wish to have your own copy you should make one before handing it in.**

#### 14.15 Keeping a laboratory notebook

One of the most important aspects of scientific work, both in the laboratory and field, is the keeping of comprehensive and accurate records of investigations. These are needed for your own use and, particularly when you are working as a group, for others. There is sometimes a temptation not to keep detailed records, on the assumption that you will remember relevant details later when you need them, but experience shows that this is not the case. Even critical information can be forgotten easily. Moreover, even trivial details and pieces of information are sometimes important when interpreting results, writing a report or answering questions for assessment. It is therefore important to get into the habit of making proper records of your work *in full and at the time and into a designated laboratory notebook*.

Records should be made directly into a book or file at the time of the work. It is not acceptable to make sketchy notes on scraps of paper with a view to writing them up at some later time. Not only does this waste time, but it can introduce errors and lead to the omission of important information. Moreover, it is no longer a record of what you did, or observed, at the time.

You may choose to keep a laboratory notebook in a specialised hardbound A4 notebook (useful for laboratory based projects) or in a loose-leaf folder (particularly if you are doing field work). In either case, it is important not to lose it! Write your name and contact details on the front. If you use a loose-leaf folder write the date

and number each page in case pages fall out. Many hardbound notebooks already have the pages numbered, but you still need to write the date on each entry that you make. It can be very helpful to keep an index at the front or back of the notebook so that you can find your results quickly.

What you enter into the notebook will vary depending on the type of work that you are doing. The following notes provide some general guidelines.

1. Record the date of the investigation.
2. Record details of the procedure. You can refer to standard protocols but include a copy in your notebook the first time that you use it. It is particularly important to make a note of any deviations from specified procedures.
3. Where appropriate include any calculations used when setting up, or carrying out procedures.

For example you may be using a nutrient medium which contains 50 mM glucose which you have added from a 2 M stock solution. A typical notebook entry might read:

A 2 M stock of glucose was prepared (dissolved 18 g glucose in a total volume of 50 ml distilled water).

20 ml of 2 M glucose was added to 800 ml of nutrient medium to produce a final concentration of 50 mM glucose.

This provides enough information to allow you (or someone else) to check what you actually did without adding extraneous detail. We don't include information on how

the balance works (although for more specialised pieces of equipment you may need to note settings, methods etc).

Similarly, you may be required to adjust the pH of a solution to 5.8. In practice it is very difficult to adjust the pH this precisely, so write down the actual pH that you measured (e.g. pH 5.82).

4. Include the raw data of results and any calculations performed on these. If you have used a spreadsheet to make calculations, print out a copy of the results and put them in your lab book. Make sure that you know what units you are using.

With the increasing use of electronic means of gathering information, recording data directly in the lab book might be impractical.

In this case:

- Make notes of how the data was gathered in your notebook.
- Keep the data well organised on the computer with sensible file names and folder names. Write the file names etc in your lab book.
- **KEEP A BACKUP OF YOUR DATA** (the importance of this cannot be over-emphasised)
- Print out a summary of the results and place them in your notebook.
- You should include printouts of any statistical tests you perform in R (or any other statistical package).

**The key point here is that someone else should be able to go to your notebook, see what you did, and examine how you have analysed the results.**

5. Make a note of any incidental observations that you observed (e.g. were some individuals of strikingly different sizes to others, did some treatments appear to be diseased etc).

6. If in doubt, write it down!

#### 14.16 Ethics

If your research involves animals or human participants, data or tissue, your work needs to be approved by an ethics review committee. The procedures you will need to follow for research involving (a) animals; and (b) human participant, data, or tissue, are outlined below. The procedures apply to all members of the University, (staff and students) and whether research activities are within or outside the University premises or facilities. They also apply to individuals who are not members of the University but undertake research activities with University premises or facilities (e.g. collaborative research project involving non-university staff or student).

**The ethics administrator for the department is:** Mrs S Carter, email [s.a.carter@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.carter@sheffield.ac.uk) ext 24376. Please contact her for details of the departmental review procedures.

## SECTION 15 DEGREE COURSE STRUCTURES AND MODULES AT LEVEL 4

In the fourth year you are required to take five prescribed modules

<b>Module Number</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<a href="#"><u>APS402</u></a>	Research Dissertation	1	20
<a href="#"><u>APS404</u></a>	Advanced Trends in Biology	1	10
<a href="#"><u>APS405</u></a>	Advanced Biological Analysis	2	10
<a href="#"><u>APS406</u></a>	Research Project	1 & 2	70
<a href="#"><u>APS407</u></a>	Research and Study Skills in Biology	1 & 2	10

## SECTION 16 APPENDIX 1

### 16.1 Guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation (APS402)

You should follow the general format of the 'Trends' series of journals. For example, you can access the current version of Trends in Ecology and Evolution (*TREE*) here:

<http://www.cell.com/trends/ecology-evolution/>

**Formatting guidelines are exactly that - guidelines. The focus of your dissertation should be on the content, rather than the formatting. The firm guidelines are**

- **do not exceed 5000 words** The word count includes (1) all text in Figure, Table and Box captions, (2) tables where these are largely text (tables that are largely numbers don't count) (3) text included in boxes and (4) references cited in the main body of the text. You do not include the reference list at the end of the piece of work. **A penalty will be applied for overlong work.**
- **Your report should contain up to 100 references – see further guidelines on referencing below.**

Refer to recently published papers in *TREE* to get a feel for what the project report should contain. The information below has been taken from *TREE* and modified.

### 16.2 Overview

Your dissertation should provide a critical review of a specific topic. It goes beyond a factual description of a topic but should allow a reader to obtain an overall view of the current state of knowledge and understanding in the selected field. You should briefly state the background to the topic and then concentrate on setting recent findings in context. This will involve a critical analysis of hypotheses in the field and the quality of the evidence used to support them. You may include quantitative analysis of previous studies to support your argument. Where controversies exist you should be prepared to indicate which side has the stronger case. You should also identify gaps in our current knowledge and understanding and make suggestions for the future development of the field. The language should be understandable for an audience ranging from an undergraduate student to a professor and so must be accessible to a wide readership. Avoid jargon, but do not oversimplify. Be accurate and precise throughout. There is room for some speculation and debate, but it should be made clear where your own opinions are being presented.

### 16.3 Structure

Your dissertation should be organised under a series of headings and subheadings that relate to the title. This defines the structure of your review and is something to which you should give a lot of thought.



For example the review below has the following structure

Bullock et al. (2011) Trends in Ecology and Evolution 26: 541-547

### **Restoration of ecosystem services and biodiversity: conflicts and opportunities**

Environmental degradation and the role of restoration

Restoration of ecosystem services and biodiversity

*The evidence for biodiversity effects on ecosystem services*

*Impacts of restoration on biodiversity and ecosystem services*

*Limitations on the restoration of biodiversity and ecosystem services*

Do the benefits from ecosystem restoration outweigh the costs?

*Accounting for restoration benefits to people*

Paying for restoration through ecosystem services

*Funding restoration through Payment for Ecosystem Services schemes*

*Limitations of PES for restoration*

Concluding remarks

*New approaches to restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services*

*Restoration success and future benefits*

*Payments for ecosystem services and restoration goals*

This clearly sets out a logical flow of ideas and helps break up the review into a series of logical subdivisions. Within each subdivision there are then a series of paragraphs exploring the topic.

In order to aid understanding this review also contains a **Glossary, Diagrams, Boxes** that elaborate on specific ideas and **case studies**.

Remember, this is your review and one of the best ways that you can show that you have critically reviewed the literature and synthesised information is for you to prepare your own diagrams and boxes. These may include elements from other papers (that should be referenced) but the overall structure should be your own.

### 16.4 **Formatting**

Part of the requirement for submitting a paper for publication is that you follow the formatting instructions provided. Here we provide some general guidelines for formatting. You should aim to make your paper read like an article in *TREE*, although you do not have to format the text in the style used in the printed version. Manuscripts that are submitted to journals are generally in the form of text followed by references, tables and figures, but for ease of marking, you should embed any boxes, tables or figures in appropriate places within the text, finishing with the list of references.

The font size for the main text should normally be 10-12pt (depending on the font used) and text should 1.5 spaced and justified. The first paragraph of each section of text following a heading or sub-heading should not be indented. The first line of all following paragraphs should be indented by 0.5 cm.

**Header:** Each page should have a header with a page number at the left, APS 402 Dissertation in the centre and Candidate number XXXXXXXX at the right.

**Title:** Try to keep this short but informative. It should not exceed about 100 characters, and does not include numbers, acronyms or abbreviations. The title

should include sufficient detail for indexing purposes but be general enough for readers outside the field to appreciate what the paper is about.

**Author:** You should type your name on the next line, followed by your institutional affiliation (APS) on the next line.

**Summary:** Your paper should have a summary, separate from the main text, of up to 200 words, which does not have references, and does not contain numbers, unexplained abbreviations or acronyms. It is concise and informative and should be aimed at readers outside the discipline. This summary contains a brief account of the background and the main features of the review.

**References:** To make assessment of your dissertations more straightforward for markers, you should use the Harvard style of referencing, including the title of any papers that you cite in the reference list. You can find an online tutorial about Harvard referencing at:

[http://www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/referencing/aps\\_harvard.html](http://www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/referencing/aps_harvard.html)

It is important that you cite references accurately and in a uniform manner.

There is no need to give doi for references in your report because these are used by publishers to provide a direct link from the paper being read to the abstract of the paper concerned – this is not relevant for your reports.

## Boxes

These are a useful way in which to elaborate on a topic. They are useful for case studies, glossaries or developing a specific idea. A box should have a title but generally a legend isn't necessary.

## Figures

Figures may be used to illustrate key points or examples. They may have several components and include text. A figure legend (below the figure) should describe what is shown (with the sources, if appropriate) and be understandable on its own i.e. without having to read the main body of the text.

## Tables

Tables may be used to summarise or synthesise studies or ideas in an efficient manner. The table legend (above the table) should describe what is shown and you may also use footnotes to the table to explain details of what is presented. Use horizontal lines, but not vertical lines when preparing tables. Remember to include any references to cited studies in your reference list.

**Overall, your dissertation should look good, have a uniform style and be clear and easy to read. The scientific content is the most important factor, but care in presentation makes your work look professional. Refer to recently published papers in *TREE* to get a feel for what the project report should contain, but don't**

slavishly copy every element of the style – this would not be a productive use of your time.

## SECTION 17 APPENDIX 2

### 17.1 Guidelines for preparation of project reports in format suitable for submission for publication in scientific journals

**NB: FORMATTING GUIDELINES ARE EXACTLY THAT - GUIDELINES. THE FOCUS OF YOUR PROJECT REPORT SHOULD BE ON THE CONTENT, RATHER THAN THE FORMATTING, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW THE CONVENTIONS OF SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION. IN RECOGNITION OF THE DIVERSE NATURE OF LEVEL 4 PROJECTS (AND IN COMMON WITH MOST JOURNAL FORMATS) THERE IS NO WORD LIMIT ON YOUR REPORTS**

#### Overview

Your project report should be prepared in accordance with the following guidelines. When writing your report you should be aware of the target audience. In the case of your reports you should be thinking of a readership such as that of *Proceedings of the Royal Society, Series B*, which is an international journal covering all of the biological sciences. Reports should therefore be written clearly and simply so that they are accessible to readers in other biological disciplines and to readers for whom English is not their first language.

Your paper should have an abstract, separate from the main text, of up to **250 words**. Articles begin with an introductory, referenced text presenting the background to the work, before proceeding to a concise, focused account of your objectives. This is followed by a methods section, in which you describe what you did in sufficient detail that the reader can understand the methods sufficiently well to judge the validity and quality of the results. Results and Discussion sections are normally separate (the format you are probably more familiar with), although in some articles there is a combined 'results and discussion' section. Whether you combine these two sections or keep them separate is up to you, but separate results and discussion sections are the norm and should be the default structure. The length of your report is up to you. This is typical practice for scientific journals and it recognises the fact that the nature of Level 4 projects varies considerably. This is not a licence to produce an excessively long and rambling report. Whilst journals do not necessarily specify a limit on article length, space is at a premium in journals and any article considered longer than necessary for its scientific content will be sent back to authors for editing, or rejected altogether by the journal. You should aim for a concise, economic writing style that describes the rationale for your study, describes what you did and what you found, and then discusses your results in the context of previous studies. You should avoid undue speculation and long discussion of the shortcomings of your study and future directions. Your paper should typically have about 5 or 6 figures and/or tables, but there is no strict limit

on their number. Again, you should judge whether a table or figure is an effective use of space.

## 17.2 Detailed Formatting Instructions for Reports

Part of the requirement for submitting a paper for publication is that you follow the formatting instructions provided. Here we provide some general guidelines for formatting. The aim is to encourage you to prepare your paper in a form similar to that in which manuscripts are usually submitted (with slight modifications for ease of marking).

**Text:** The font for the main text should normally be 10-12pt and of a standard font, such as Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri, 1.5-spaced. Leave a minimum margin of 2cm around the text. All pages must be numbered. The first paragraph of each section of text following a heading or sub-heading should not be indented. The first line of all following paragraphs should either be indented by c. 1 cm or have >1.5 spacing from the previous paragraph. Headings and sub-headings should be in appropriate fonts (e.g. bold, regular text, 14 pt for main headings; bold, italics, 12pt for sub-headings). The text should be continuous, i.e. without page breaks between main sections of the paper.

Your paper should be organized in the sequence: title page, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, acknowledgments and references.

**Header:** Each page should have a header with a page number at the left, APS 406 research project in the centre and Candidate number XXXXXXXX at the right.

**Title page:** The title page of your report should contain the title, author and institutional affiliation only. Try to keep the title short but informative. It should not normally exceed about 150 characters, and does not include numbers, acronyms or abbreviations. The title should include sufficient detail for indexing purposes but be general enough for readers outside the field to appreciate what the paper is about. Next, give your name, followed by your institutional affiliation (APS) in italics on the next line.

**Abstract:** On the next page, your paper should have an abstract, separate from the main text, of up to 250 words, which does not have references, and does not contain numbers, unexplained abbreviations or acronyms. It should be concise and informative, should be accessible to readers outside the discipline and should make sense when read in isolation from the rest of the report. This summary contains a brief account of the rationale for the work, its objective(s) and approach, followed by a statement of the main results and conclusions.

**Keywords:** The abstract should be followed by 3-6 keywords - these are used for indexing purposes. Use words that are not already in the title.

**Introduction:** The main article starts on the next page with the introduction. This referenced text should give an account of the background to the work and set out the rationale for your study. Towards the end of the introduction, often at the start of the final paragraph you state explicitly what the aim of the work is, often introduced by the phrase 'Here, I investigate...', or 'In this study, I examined...', or equivalent.

**Methods:** These should be described in a 'Methods' section, which is often subdivided by short sub-headings. These might be used to differentiate sections on the study species, field observations, experimental procedures and statistical analysis, for example. The general rule is that methods should be described in sufficient detail that the reader can understand what you did and why. Ask yourself: (a) how can I say this as concisely and accurately as possible? (b) what information is necessary for someone to understand and judge the validity of the results?

**Results:** This section should include a focused account of your findings, supported by data and statistics presented in the text, in tables or in figures. The text may contain a few short sub-headings, preferably of no more than 50 characters each

(and certainly less than one line of text in length). Sub-headings should be in bold italics (do not use underlining in headings). A typical paper may contain roughly four to six display items (figures and/or tables) with brief, informative legends, but there is no strict limit on their number. Legends should describe what information is presented in the figure or table and often include statistics, but should not contain interpretation of those results. When referring to tables and figures, avoid phrases such as "Figure 1 shows that..." or "...as shown in Table 3". Simply state the figure or table number in parentheses at the end of the text describing the results, e.g. "Drought reduced growth of seedlings by 46% (Fig. 1)."

**Discussion** This should include interpretation of your results, with explicit reference to the broader context of your study, requiring reference to the primary literature. It is often useful to start the discussion with a paragraph describing your main findings. Avoid undue speculation in the discussion and try to remain focused on the findings of your study and their interpretation. You should also avoid undue criticism of your own study and lengthy discussion of future directions. The discussion should end with a paragraph of conclusions.

**References:** You can find an online tutorial about Harvard referencing at:

[http://www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/referencing/aps\\_harvard.html](http://www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/referencing/aps_harvard.html)

It is important that you cite references accurately and in a uniform manner. In brief, when cited in the text, references are given as surname and date for single-

authored publications, surnames and date for two-authored publications, and first author *et al.* and date for publications by three or more authors. Only articles that have been published or submitted to a named publication should be in the reference list; papers in preparation should be mentioned in the text as 'unpublished data' with a list of authors (or initials if any of the authors are co-authors of the present contribution). If multiple references are cited together in the text, they are usually cited chronologically, separated by semi-colons. In the reference list they are ordered alphabetically by the first author's surname. All authors should be included in reference lists unless there are more than 10, above which 'et al.' should be used. Do not use bullet points or numbers in the reference list. Please follow the style below in preparing reference lists. The precise format (e.g. whether you place brackets around the year, where you insert commas, full stops, etc) is up to you, but you should follow the format described below and the conventions that you use MUST be consistent.

Authors should be listed surname first, followed by the initials of given names. The year of publication follows the authors. Titles of all cited articles are required. Titles of articles cited in reference lists should be in upright, not italic text; the first letter of the first word of the title is capitalized, but not subsequent words, and the title should be written exactly as it appears in the work cited, ending with a full stop. Remember to italicise any scientific names. Book titles are in italics with initial letter of all main words capitalized; then give the publisher's name and location of publication. In the case of chapters in edited books, cite the chapter author(s),

followed by the year and chapter title, then give the name of editor(s) and the title of the book (in italics with initial letters of main words capitalized), the page numbers for the chapter, and finally the publisher and city of publication.

Journal titles are italic and may be given EITHER in full OR abbreviated (but not both) according to preference; refer to the Index Medicus or the American Institute of Physics style manual for details on abbreviation. Volume numbers are usually bold, followed by a comma or colon, a space and then page numbers. You should not give issue numbers of journals in brackets after the volume number, the page numbers are sufficient. References to web-only journals should give author(s), year, article title and journal name as above, followed by url in full - or doi if known. References to websites should give authors if known, title of cited page, url in full, and year of posting in parentheses.

**Tables and Figures:** These should either be embedded within the text or they may be on separate pages to the main text and interleaved with the pages of the main text so that they follow in correct sequence the page on which they are first referred to.

**Tables:** Tables have a title in the normal font, above the table, and the table text itself should be in normal font. The title would normally provide a complete account of the table's contents. Use horizontal lines only in tables. Column

headings should be in lower case where possible, with units contained within parentheses. Symbols and abbreviations are defined in the table legend. Refer to published papers for details.

**Figures:** Articles should not have too many display items (figures and tables), and their size should be compatible with clarity. The purpose of figures is to assist the reader in their understanding of the paper. Unnecessary figures and parts (panels) of figures should be avoided; data presented in small tables or histograms, for instance, can often be stated briefly in the text instead. Keep figures as simple as possible for clarity; avoid unnecessary complexity, colouring and excessive detail. Figures may contain more than one panel if the parts are logically connected. If figures with multiple panels are used they should have a single figure legend, each panel being labelled (a), (b), etc. which are referred to in the figure legend.

Unless there is a very good reason for doing so, you should not present the same information in both figures and tables (e.g. if means and standard errors are presented in a bar graph, then you should not present the same information in a table as well).

***Some brief guidance for figure preparation:***

Use a consistent style in your figures (font, use of capitals, etc).

Units should have a single space between the number and the unit, and follow SI nomenclature or the nomenclature common to a particular field. Thousands should be separated by commas (1,000). Unusual units or abbreviations are defined in the legend.

Ensure that axis label fonts and symbols are large enough so that they can be read easily in the finished report. Where size needs to be indicated, scale bars should be used rather than magnification factors. Layering type directly over shaded or textured areas and using reversed type (white lettering on a coloured background) should be avoided where possible.

**Figure legends:** Each figure legend should be placed below the figure and begin with a brief title for the whole figure and continue with a short description of each panel and the symbols used. Figure legends should have the figure number in normal text e.g. 'Figure 1. Relationship between.....'

**Scientific names:** Give the scientific name (italicised) of all species mentioned in the text the first time they are mentioned. Thereafter you may use just the English name, or the abbreviated scientific name. In this respect, the abstract/summary should be treated as a separate entity from the main text and your study species' scientific name should be given in both the abstract and at first mention in the introduction. The English name (if there is one) or scientific name can be used thereafter, but make sure you are consistent in use of upper or lower case for



initial letters of English names (e.g. house sparrow or House Sparrow, but not House sparrow). When species from the same genus are given or the same binomial name is repeated, you may abbreviate the generic name (e.g. house sparrow *Passer domesticus* and tree sparrow *P. montana*).

**Statistical results and mathematical formulae:** In general mathematical formulae, such as equations from models, or formulae for important calculations (unless very simple) are presented on a separate line from the text they occur in, and have their own label (e.g. 'Eq 1' or 'Equation 1') at the end of the line on which they occur. When presenting statistics be consistent in your use of spaces in the results. In general, it is usually clearer to leave single spaces between number and symbols (e.g.  $t = 2.63$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $2.43 \pm 0.74$ ). It is customary to use italics for  $n$  when reporting sample sizes ( $n = 27$ ),  $p$  when reporting  $p$ -values ( $p = 0.023$ ), and the test statistic when reporting statistical values ( $r = 0.843$ ). When using statistics software the limitations of the keyboard characters mean that you have to use symbols such as \* or ^ to denote operations such as multiplication and raising to a power, but you should not use these symbols when presenting formulae and calculations in your report.

### Final remarks

You should follow these guidelines, but please refer to recently published papers in journals with conventional formats, e.g. *Proceedings of the Royal Society, Series B*,

*Behavioural Ecology*, or any of the British Ecological Society journals (*Journal of Animal Ecology*, *Functional Ecology*, *Journal of Ecology*, etc), to get a feel for what the project report should contain.

These notes have outlined the conventions for presenting various aspects of a report. Once you have decided exactly how to present particular aspects, the key thing is to be consistent in your presentation at every level of the report. For example, be consistent in your use of line spaces before and after headings, consistent in the way in which you present statistics, species names, style of figures, etc...

These guidelines may all sound rather pedantic, but it is important to follow the conventions of scientific publication because they are there for the very good reason of removing ambiguities and ensuring transparency.

