

Programme Information		
Programme Title	Programme Code	HECoS Code
Systems and Synthetic Biology	C1U1	For Registry Use Only

Award	Length of Study	Mode of Study	Entry Point(s)	Total Credits	
				ECTS	CATS
MRes	1 Calendar Year (12 months)	Full-Time	Annually in October	90	180

Ownership			
Awarding Institution	Imperial College London	Faculty	Faculty of Natural Sciences
Teaching Institution	Imperial College London	Department	Life Sciences
Associateship	Diploma of Imperial College (DIC)	Main Location(s) of Study	South Kensington Campus

External Reference	
Relevant QAA Benchmark Statement(s) and/or other external reference points	NA
FHEQ Level	7
EHEA Level	2nd Cycle

External Accreditor(s) (if applicable)			
External Accreditor 1:	N/A		
Accreditation received:	N/A	Accreditation renewal:	N/A

Collaborative Provision			
Collaborative partner	Collaboration type	Agreement effective date	Agreement expiry date
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Specification Details	
Programme Lead	Dr. James Murray
Deputy Programme Lead	Professor Nikolai Windbichler
Student cohorts covered by specification	2026-27 entry
Date of introduction of programme	October 08

Date of programme specification/revision	August 23
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Programme Overview

The course provides graduate students from life sciences, engineering and physical sciences with a platform to overcome traditional barriers to work collaboratively on the 'big problems' and applications in synthetic and systems biology. You will gain intensive hands-on experience in a combination of experimental biology and modelling in order to understand, predict and redesign biological pathways. The taught elements of the course include introductory lectures and practicals that cover essentials for both life and physical scientists, as well as material on experimental systems biology, theoretical systems biology, synthetic biology, and advanced technologies. This material will be taught in the context of Responsible research and innovation (RRI). In addition to conventional lectures, the course requires active engagement by students through activities including practicals, bench work, case studies, proposal writing, and an eight-month interdisciplinary research project. It may be possible for projects to be carried out partly or wholly at an external organisation and requests will be considered on a case by case basis. There are no exams, the course is assessed through coursework and project work.

Learning Outcomes

As a graduate of this course you will be able to:

1. Explain, interpret and evaluate information on core and specialised concepts in theoretical and experimental systems and synthetic biology.
2. Learn independently and evaluate the scientific literature.
3. Communicate effectively through oral presentations and written reports.
5. Apply an industry standard programming language (e.g. Python) to scientific problems
6. Formulate and test hypotheses using appropriate experimental design and statistical analysis of data.
7. Plan and execute safely a series of experiments or computations.
8. Use laboratory methods or computer-based tools to generate data;
9. Integrate and evaluate scientific results.
10. Write a scientific report on your own programme of original research
11. Manage resources and time for a research project.

The Imperial Graduate Attributes are a set of core competencies which we expect students to achieve through completion of any Imperial degree programme. The Graduate Attributes are available at:
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/education/our-graduates/>

Entry Requirements

Academic Requirement

Normally a 2.1 UK Bachelor's Degree with Honours in a Physical, Engineering, Mathematical, or Life/Biomedical sciences-based subject (or a comparable qualification recognised by the university).

A-level mathematics or equivalent is also normally required.

For further information on entry requirements, please go to
www.imperial.ac.uk/study/apply/postgraduate-taught/entry-requirements/accepted-qualifications/

Non-academic Requirements	N/A
English Language Requirement	Higher requirement (PG) Please check for other Accepted English Qualifications
Admissions Test/Interview	We may interview some applicants. We will usually ask the applicant to talk about a project they have worked on, and discuss a paper in systems & synthetic biology which they will have been able to study in advance. No admissions tests. For candidates who are not interviewed decisions are made on the basis of CV, references and personal statement.
The programme's competency standards document can be found at: www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/faculty-of-natural-sciences/departments-of-life-sciences/public/postgraduate/masters/Life-Sciences-Competence-standards-PG.pdf	
Learning & Teaching Approach	
The MRes in Systems & Synthetic Biology comprises two modules on Systems Biology and Synthetic Biology in the Autumn Term, and an extended research project for the final two terms. Over the course of the year you will experience a range of learning and teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, group work exercises, workshops, and computer and laboratory practicals. The maximum class size is expected to be around 35 students. Laboratory practicals will be in pairs or small groups. The projects are individual. Overall Workload Your overall workload consists of face-to-face sessions and independent learning. While your actual contact hours may vary according to the optional modules you choose to study, the following gives an indication of how much time you will need to allocate to different activities at each level of the programme. At Imperial, each ECTS credit taken equates to an expected total study time of 25 hours. Therefore, the expected total study time is 2250 hours per year, subject to reasonable adjustments. In the first term you will spend around 20% of your time in lectures, seminars and similar, and around 10% of the time on practicals. The remainder of the time will be spent doing group work or individual study. The second and third terms are spent on an individual research project.	
Assessment Strategy	
Assessment Methods	
The modules (term one) are assessed through coursework, including practical write-ups, essays and presentations. The project (terms two and three) is assessed on the performance in the lab, the written report and mock grant proposal, and the oral examination. See individual Module specification documents for details.	
Academic Feedback Policy	
Coursework is marked and comments by the marker will be annotated directly on the papers (electronically for submissions on Canvas). A summary of the feedback (with tick boxes indicating relative attainment on key dimensions) will be completed, and an indicative grade will be given (actual marks will not be communicated to the students). These papers will then be returned to the students as soon as possible and within two weeks of submission. Staff-student meetings are held termly to communicate general feedback between student representatives and the course directors. Additional meetings are held to provide general feedback and guidance e.g. on mock grant proposal and project selection. Dissertations are usually marked by the primary supervisor and secondary supervisor and an independent assessor, who provide feedback electronically that is returned to students after the final examiners meeting. Imperial's Policy on Academic Feedback and guidance on issuing provisional marks to students is available at:	

www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/exams-and-assessment/
Re-sit Policy
Imperial's Policy on Re-sits is available at: www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/exams-and-assessment/
Mitigating Circumstances Policy
Imperial's Policy on Mitigating Circumstances is available at: www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/exams-and-assessment/

Additional Programme Costs		
This section should outline any additional costs relevant to this programme which are not included in students' tuition fees.		
Description	Mandatory/Optional	Approximate cost
N/A	N/A	N/A

Important notice: The Programme Specifications are the result of a large curriculum and pedagogy reform implemented by the Department and supported by the Learning and Teaching Strategy of Imperial College London. The modules, structure and assessments presented in this Programme Specification are correct at time of publication but might change as a result of student and staff feedback and the introduction of new or innovative approaches to teaching and learning. You will be consulted and notified in a timely manner of any changes to this document.

Programme Structure ¹					
Year 1 – FHEQ Level 7 You will study all core modules.					
Code	Module Title	Core/ Elective	Group	Term	Credits
LIFE70038	Systems Biology	Core		Autumn	15
LIFE70039	Synthetic Biology	Core		Autumn	15
LIFE70040	Research Project in Systems and Synthetic Biology	Core		Spring-Summer	60
Credit Total					90

¹ **Core** modules are those which serve a fundamental role within the curriculum, and for which achievement of the credits for that module is essential for the achievement of the target award. Core modules must therefore be taken and passed in order to achieve that named award. **Compulsory** modules are those which are designated as necessary to be taken as part of the programme syllabus. Compulsory modules can be compensated. **Elective** modules are those which are in the same subject area as the field of study and are offered to students in order to offer an element of choice in the curriculum and from which students are able to select. Elective modules can be compensated.

Progression and Classification

Award of a Masters Degree (including MRes)

To qualify for the award of a postgraduate degree you must have:

1. accumulated credit to the value of no fewer than 90 credits at level 7 or above of which no more than 15 credits may be from credit level 6;
2. and no more than 15 credits as a Compensated Pass;
3. met any specific requirements for an award as outlined in the approved programme specification for that award.

Classification of Postgraduate Taught Awards

The university sets the class of Degree that may be awarded as follows:

1. Distinction: 70.00% or above.
2. Merit: 60.00% or above but less than 70.00%.
3. Pass: 50.00% or above but less than 60.00%.

Your classification is determined through the Programme Overall Weighted Average and the designated dissertation or final major project module meeting the threshold for the relevant classification band.

Your degree algorithm provides an appropriate and reliable summary of your performance against the programme learning outcomes. It reflects the design, delivery, and structure of your programme without unduly over-emphasising particular aspects.

Programme Specific Regulations

N/A

Supporting Information

The Programme Handbook is available at: www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/life-sciences/systems-synthetic-biology-mres/

The Module Handbook is available at: www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/life-sciences/systems-synthetic-biology-mres/

Imperial's entry requirements for postgraduate programmes can be found at: www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/apply/requirements

Imperial's Quality & Enhancement Framework is available at: www.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance

Imperial's Academic and Examination Regulations can be found at: www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/regulations

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www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/secretariat/university-governance-structure/charters/

Imperial College London is regulated by the Office for Students (OfS)
www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/

This document provides a definitive record of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that you may reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. This programme specification is primarily intended as a reference point for prospective and current students, academic and support staff involved in delivering the programme and enabling student development and achievement, for its assessment by internal and external examiners, and in subsequent monitoring and review.