

# Student Handbook:

## School of Biological Sciences

### MRes Evolution: From the Galapagos to the 21st Century

2019-20

**Disclaimer:**

The information contained within your programme handbook is designed to provide key information applicable to you and your programme during the 2018/19 academic year. It is designed to complement the University's Student Portal. You can access the Portal by logging on to [SUSSED](#), using your user name and password, and clicking on the Students tab in the top navigation bar. It is important that you make use of these resources as they support the regulations relating to your obligations and that of the University while you are a student at the University of Southampton. It also provides helpful information on matters such as housing, finance, leisure, healthcare and support facilities.

This information is issued on the condition that it does not form part of any contract between the University of Southampton and any student. The information given has been made as accurate as possible at the time of publication, but the University reserves the right to modify or alter, without any prior notice, any of the contents advertised. It should therefore be noted that it may not be possible to offer all modules or components of a programme in each academic session. This handbook is available in alternative formats on request.

*The information contained in this booklet is available, upon request, in large print, Braille, on audio tape and on disc, as well as other languages. For further information please contact: Faculty Student Office via e-mail [sobs-studentoffice.soton.ac.uk](mailto:sobs-studentoffice.soton.ac.uk)*

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## **1.0 WELCOME**

We welcome you to Biological Sciences in the Faculty of Environmental & Life Sciences here at the University of Southampton. Biological Sciences aims to provide students with a stimulating environment in which to learn and acquire skills relevant to a scientific career. We are here to support you during your MRes and we will work hard to ensure that you achieve to the very best of your abilities. The work at times will be hard, but the rewards will be great, including employability and your own personal development.

This handbook is intended to provide a convenient source of information for MRes students enrolled within Biological Sciences. Please take the time to read it carefully and consult it as required during the year. We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the overall content of this handbook.

Once again, we extend you a warm welcome and hope that you will find your time with us rewarding.

## **2.0 CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **2.1 Important Contact Information**

#### **Programme Director**

Dr Neil Gostling                      Phone: 023 8059 8141      email: [N.J.Gostling@soton.ac.uk](mailto:N.J.Gostling@soton.ac.uk)

#### **Senior Programme Administrator**

Mrs Katie Tucker                      Phone: 023 8059 8624 email: [sobs-studentoffice@soton.ac.uk](mailto:sobs-studentoffice@soton.ac.uk)

**Your first point of call should always be your supervisor.** You can contact them by e-mail or ring their extension number. If there is no reply and you also cannot make contact through e-mail, please contact the Administrator Senior Programme in the Faculty Student Office (see above). When using e-mail, the suffix after initials should be @soton.ac.uk. The telephone extension numbers listed can be reached from internal University phones; to reach the same numbers from an external phone, please use the prefix "023 8059" plus the last four digits of the extension number.

### **2.2 Academic Staff**

Head of Biological Sciences

Professor Lindy Holden-Dye Phone 023 8059 9006, email [L.M.Holden-Dye@soton.ac.uk](mailto:L.M.Holden-Dye@soton.ac.uk)

Deputy Head of School Education

Dr Mark Coldwell                      Phone 023 8059 4324, email [M.Coldwell@soton.ac.uk](mailto:M.Coldwell@soton.ac.uk)

Director of Programmes

Dr Alan Marchant                      Phone 023 8059 4363, email [A.Marchant@soton.ac.uk](mailto:A.Marchant@soton.ac.uk)

Faculty Academic Registrar

Jenny Atkins                              Phone 023 8059 5069, email [J.C.Atkins@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.C.Atkins@soton.ac.uk)

Team Leader Biological Sciences

(Administration, Assessment)

Claire Morgans                              Phone 023 8059 3466, email [cll@soton.ac.uk](mailto:cll@soton.ac.uk)

### 2.3 Other Useful Contact Numbers

The telephone extension numbers listed below can be reached from internal University phones; to reach the same numbers from an external phone, please use the prefix "023 8059" plus the last four digits of the extension number.

	Extension
Accommodation Office	29599
Money Matters	29599
Alumni Relations Office	22747
Bicycle Storage	25981
Campus Bookshop (John Smiths)	023 8058 6730
Career Destinations	23501
Counselling Service	23719
Day Nursery	23465
Disability Support	27726 / 26831
Dyslexia Support	22759
Emergency (24/7) (fire, police, etc.)	(Internal) 23311 (External) 91-999
Emergency (24/7) Central Control Unit	22811 / 22822 / 02380 558477
Enrolment Helpline	28888
Erasmus	22473
Examinations Office	22823 / 22383
Equal Opportunities	22945 / 24054
Highfield Health	25545
ISS Helpline	Highfield: 25656 NOCS: 26197
Library (Hartley)	Hartley: 22189 NOCS: 26116
Lost Property	22778
Nightline (2000-0800 hrs)	25236
Operator	02380 595000
Security	22828
Jubilee Sports Centre	22119
Students' Union Advice & Information Centre	22085
Student Services Centre	29599
Student Fees Office	29599
Student Funds Office	23287
University Health Service	27531/23539
University Reception Office	23000
Uni-link	25974

Security	22828
Jubilee Sports Centre	22119

## 2.4 The Hub

Hosted on Blackboard, students can now access The Hub, our new online resource and one-stop-shop to help you make the most of your time studying with us.

The sites signpost undergraduate and postgraduate taught students to lots of helpful information including: student support, academic help, careers information, 'how to' guides (such as 'How do I find out more about a module'), and much more.

The Hub was previously available within two faculties and now, due to positive student feedback, the service has been made available for students across all faculties.

The sites, championed by student representatives and last academic year's Sabbatical Officers, have been developed alongside feedback from the Students' Union, as well as a number of other departments across the University.

Five sites have been set up, one for each faculty and students within the Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences can access their Hub via Blackboard at <http://go.soton.ac.uk/environmentalandlifesciences>.

### 3.0 DATES

Master degrees involves one year of full time study, we therefore expect you to be available for some additional activities if necessary (e.g skills training, workshops). Your project will run throughout the whole year and so the three extended vacation dates are not applicable to the project module. Full list of details of additional activities are provided as your programme progresses.

In addition to the regular public holidays, the University will also be closed on the following days:

Monday 26 August 2019 (PH)

Wednesday 25 December 2019 (PH)

Thursday 26 December 2019 (PH)

Wednesday 1 January 2020 (PH)

Thursday 9 April 2020 (CD)

Friday 10 April 2020 (PH)

Monday 13 April 2020 (PH)

Tuesday 14 April 2020 (CD)

Friday 8 May 2020 (PH)

Monday 25 May 2020 (PH)

Monday 31 August 2020 (PH)

Friday 25 December 2020 (PH)

Saturday 26 December 2020 (PH)

Monday 28 December 2020 (PH)

Friday 1 January 2021 (PH)

Friday 2 April 2021 (PH)

Monday 5 April 2021 (PH)

Monday 3 May 2021 (PH)

Monday 31 May 2021 (PH)

Monday 30 August 2021 (PH)

CD = University closure day; PH = Bank/public holiday.

## **4.0 PROGRAMME INFORMATION**

### **4.1 Programme Specification**

The structure and modular content provided within the programme specification is specific to your own programme. Descriptions relating to your programme can be found via the programme pages on the web, and on Blackboard.

Your programme structure (i.e. which modules make up your programme) is available via the on-line programme catalogue which is accessible via [Banner Self Service](#).

To find links to broad generic descriptions of the programmes and modules, follow links to your programme starting from the [School web pages](#).

#### **Principles Governing Assessment**

The examination and assessment procedures at all universities in the UK are designed to allow you to demonstrate how well you understand the subject and how well you can deploy relevant information. Examiners are not interested in seeing whether they can catch you out or make life difficult for you. They want the various assessment and examination procedures to produce fair and objective evidence of your abilities. Our procedures are designed to provide as fair an evaluation of your work as is possible. In accordance with standard University practice your scripts are anonymous when we mark them. In your final year, a proportion of examination scripts are double-marked or moderated by two internal examiners.

We take considerable pains to try to ensure that the assessment process is fair, but it is also expected that students approach assessment in the same spirit. In particular, there is the expectation that all assessed work will be the unaided work of the candidate concerned and that the candidate will have respected not only the regulations governing examinations but also the spirit of the examination process. Examining is something that requires trust between examiner and examinee: trust on the part of the examinee that the exams themselves are fair and that the process of evaluation is fair and unprejudiced; trust on the part of the examiners that the examinee has not attempted to secure unfair advantage or to misrepresent his or her work. In consequence, any breach of such trust is treated with extreme seriousness and may result in the Board of Examiners recommending that penalties be imposed on offenders.

#### **Feedback on Examinations**

General feedback on results and how to improve your examination technique can be obtained from your supervisor. For more specific feedback on individual module marks you should make an appointment with the appropriate module co-ordinator who may disclose the marks for individual questions on a paper and also pass on any relevant comments made on a script by the marker.

## **5.0 ADVICE, SUPPORT AND RESOURCES**

### **5.1 School Student Office**

The Graduate School is located in the Faculty Student Office in Building 85, Room 2043. Our aim is to make life easier for both students and staff by providing support in the administration of our teaching programmes. Throughout your time as a student, the Faculty Student Office will be your first port of call for much of the information you need. However, you will find that much of the information you need is readily available in the Student Handbooks.

Academic staff are happy to meet students to discuss modules and other academic matters, or otherwise. However, you should be aware that they have contractual obligations to engage in research, as well as teach, and therefore may not be immediately available. The Biological Sciences at the University of Southampton has an excellent research profile and this means that staff will be involved in supervising their research students/staff, running research programmes, and collaborating with national and international colleagues. In addition, the academic staff are required to assist in the administration of the Centre and the University. Many are also involved with national and international organisations.



## **5.2 What to do if you are ill**

If you are ill and have to miss a taught day you should let the module lead know about your absence. If you experience a longer term illness which could impact your progress on a module or programme a discussion with your personal tutor (or programme lead) will help you to decide on the best course of action for your circumstances. If you experience illness which impacts your ability to submit an assignment you should complete and submit a Special considerations and extension form to [sobs-studentoffice@soton.ac.uk](mailto:sobs-studentoffice@soton.ac.uk) supporting evidence for your request. More information can be found in the [General Regulations - Attendance and Completion of Programme Requirements](#).

## **5.3 External factors affecting your attendance or performance in your studies**

We expect you to take responsibility for your studies to ensure that your full academic potential can be realised. However, sometimes difficulties can arise that can affect you.

Whilst we recognise that students can sometimes be reluctant to discuss cultural, sensitive or personal issues, it is essential that you bring problems affecting you to our attention immediately so that we can determine how best to help you. If you experience difficult circumstances you should discuss with your Tutor for advice on how best to proceed.

If you are not able to attend an examination or submit your work on time, or within five days of the deadline, you can apply for an extension to submission. You will need to indicate then you expect to be able to submit, and provide independent evidence of the impact of the circumstances.

If you can submit your assessment on time, or within a few days of the deadline, and you can provide evidence of exceptional and unexpected circumstances that may have affected this, you can ask for 'Special Consideration' of the outcome.

Suspending your studies is an option to be used if you will be unable to study for an extended period of time.

Discussion with your personal academic tutor will enable you to know which option is best for you. You will need to provide third party evidence of the reason for your request. We aim to respond to applications within five working days, except for applications for Special Consideration where the Board meets every month.

## **5.4 Special considerations**

If you miss an assessment or believe that illness or other circumstances may have adversely affected your performance you have the facility to apply for [Special Considerations](#). If you wish for these to be considered by the School you must complete a [Special Considerations form](#). **You must apply for Special Considerations within five days of the assessment, not wait until you receive the result.** All claims must be substantiated by written documentary evidence, for example a medical certificate or GP/consultant letter, self-certification or a statement from your Personal Academic Tutor. The purpose of asking for supporting documentation is for the Board to understand how the circumstances may have had an impact on you.

All claims will be reviewed by the Special Considerations Board which meets regularly throughout the year. The Student Office will contact you via your University email account to let you know whether approval has been made.

## **5.5 Student Support Review**

The [Student Support Review Regulations](#) are in place to support students if concerns are raised about their health, wellbeing or behaviour which may be impacting on their academic progress and/or general management of life at University or on placement. The regulations seek to be both supportive and to actively engage with students prior to decisions made about their fitness to study. The regulations and supporting documents identify the procedure and support available to both students and staff when a student becomes unwell and/or presents a risk to self and/or others.

## **5.6 Suspending your studies**

Should you feel that you need to take some time out from your studies, known as [suspending your studies](#), you should first discuss this with your Programme Lead and then contact [sobs-studentoffice@soton.ac.uk](mailto:sobs-studentoffice@soton.ac.uk). You will need to clarify how long the suspension needs to be, and a brief reason for this.

## **5.7 Withdrawing from your studies**

If you no longer wish to continue with your studies, a Withdrawal Notification form should be obtained, completed and returned to the Student Office. Further information can be found in the [General Regulations - Transfer, Suspension, Withdrawal and Termination](#)

The Students' Union Advice Centre has developed a [Guide](#) for students.

## **5.8 Enabling Services**

[Enabling Services](#) provides a wide variety of support for students who have disabilities, mental health problems or specific learning difficulties. The expert team can provide advice and support relating to your studies, both while you are preparing for University and throughout your time here. You will need to register with Enabling Services if you wish to access any support or have special arrangements for your course and assessment.

## **6.0 LINKS TO UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS & INFORMATION SOURCES**

<http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/progression-regs-standalonemasters.html>

### **6.1 Student Services Centre (SSC)**

The Student Services Centre <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/studentadmin> is located centrally on the Highfield Campus opposite the Jubilee Sports Centre. The Student Advisory Team is staffed by trained advisors who are able to offer information, support and advice on any student related subjects. As well as providing information and advice face to face, the Student Advisors can also be contacted by e-mail, telephone, voicemail, and fax.

Staff working in the Accommodation Service, <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/accommodation/> ] Financial Information and Assistance [ <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/sais/sfo/index.shtml> ], Fees Department, and Graduation [ <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/graduation/> ] are also located in the Student Services Centre, providing specialist back up to the Student Advisors.

### **6.2 SUSSED**

The SUSSED is your gateway to all the help and support you need as a student at the University of Southampton. To access log into SUSSED at [www.sussed.soton.ac.uk](http://www.sussed.soton.ac.uk)

### **6.3 University Calendar**

The University Calendar [ <http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/sectIV-index.html> ] contains all the formal information you sign up to when you enrol at the University.

## **7.0 Staff/Student Liaison: getting your voice heard**

### **7.1 Module Survey**

The School aims to consult with and to provide opportunities for all students and staff to make their views known. You are encouraged to offer your comments/suggestions to members of staff and feedback is requested for each module undertaken. These surveys are conducted electronically and anonymously

following the completion of each module and the comments received are used to shape and improve the way that modules are taught.

## **7.2 Staff Student Liaison Committees and Student Representation**

Staff-Student liaison committees have representatives from across each programme. These committees have the role of monitoring the organisation and management of the student programmes, to note any difficulties that students may be encountering, and to take advice about ways of improving the programmes.

## **8.0 Regulatory Issues**

We hope that you will be satisfied with your experience during your time as a student at the University of Southampton but we do recognise that, on occasion, things can go wrong. If you have a concern about any aspect of your experience at the University we encourage you to raise it as soon as the concern arises. It is always better to let us know that you feel there is a problem as soon as possible so that the matter may be resolved quickly. You may alternatively wish to consult with your student academic president if it is an issue in common with other students. Please be reassured that you will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of raising a genuine concern, student complaint or academic appeal.

### **8.1 Academic appeals**

Provided you have grounds, you may appeal against any academic decision made by the University. There are some exceptions and you should note you cannot appeal against a decision that has been made in the proper exercise of academic judgment. The [Regulations Governing Academic Appeals by Students](#) outlines the regulations and procedure that should be followed when making an academic appeal.

### **8.2 Student complaints**

The [Regulations Governing Student Complaints](#) sets out the process that should be followed should you wish to raise a complaint about a matter relating to either the facilities and services provided by the University, its academic programmes, and the conduct of University staff, and which has materially affected you.

### **8.3 Dignity at work and study**

The [University's Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#) applies to the conduct of staff and students, in the context of their University work of study, or which otherwise affects the working, learning or social environment of the University. Fair criticism of staff or student performance or conduct will not be considered to be bullying or harassment provided that those involved are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. Any allegation of harassment, bullying or victimisation will be treated seriously, regardless of the seniority of those involved, and anyone found to have behaved unacceptably may be the subject of disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or expulsion.

### **8.4 Student Non-academic Misconduct**

As members of the University community, all students are expected to conduct themselves with due regard for its good name and reputation and are required to comply with the University's Regulations at all times. Any allegation of misconduct will be considered within the [Student Non-academic Misconduct Regulations](#), in accordance with the evidence and circumstances presented. Information for students on non-academic misconduct is available from the [Student and Academic Administration web pages](#)

## 9.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

### 9.1 Highfield Campus

Internal Emergency number        999 or 3311  
Public Emergency Services        91-999 or 91-112

**Biological Sciences H&S Manager Mark Jones:** [M.S.Jones@soton.ac.uk](mailto:M.S.Jones@soton.ac.uk)

Although the Head of Biological Sciences is ultimately responsible for Health and Safety within the Centre, **the person immediately responsible for your safety is YOU!**

#### Fire Safety

- Weekly fire bell test every Monday between 11.15 - 11.45
- Building fire alarm is a continuous sounder
- At all other times, evacuate immediately if fire alarm sounds via the nearest fire escape
- Walk, do not run, do not use lifts
- Meet at assembly point - location Library Square
- Await further instruction - do not re-enter the building or leave assembly point until told to do so by either the senior fire wardens or Hampshire Fire and Rescue

#### Access to Building 85

As a general rule, students only have access to levels 1, 2 and the meeting rooms on level 6 for tutorials in Building 85.

#### Trained First-Aiders in Building 85

Name	Location	Telephone
Mark Dixon	Level 2	023 8059 4459
Christian Bell	Goods In	023 8059 4318
Beatrice Murphy	Level 3	023 8059 3349
Rodolphe Herve	Level 4	023 8059 4301
Mike Cotton	Level 5 & 7	023 8059 8145

#### Safety in the Laboratory

*Special personal consideration:* If you suffer any medical condition that may affect your own safety or that of others in the laboratory then it is your duty to inform the Student Office. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be divulged to others with your agreement.

*Talks on H&S:* New students will be given an introductory talk on Health and Safety during your Induction day. .

*H&S in Practicals:* All Biological Sciences (BIOL) modules are risk-assessed and every module booklet has general safety advice. The person taking a particular class is responsible for the safety of the class content and emergency actions. You will be given advice about any precautions, which have to be taken for any particular procedure at the beginning of the practical class. Practical classes are carried out using good laboratory practice (GLP) as a guide. This requires laboratory coats for all practical work and very strictly NO EATING OR DRINKING in the laboratory. Your particular class could be a paper exercise involving measurements and calculations BUT you will not know what the laboratory has been used for previously and so to reiterate EATING OR DRINKING IS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN. Offenders will be asked to leave the class. The following rules must also be observed:

- Open-toed sandals must not be worn during a practical class;
- Personal music players must not be used in the laboratory.
- If you suffer an injury or recognise any hazard, PLEASE report it.
- If you are uncertain about any procedure, ASK!

You are responsible for the safety of all equipment that you bring to the University. In particular you should ensure that all electrical items, e.g. computers, laptops, mobile phone chargers etc., are safe to use in the UK. You should regularly check electrical equipment for any obvious sign of damage, and not use it if it is damaged. Obvious examples of damage are cracked cases/plug tops and cuts to electrical leads. If you need further advice on the safety of your equipment, please contact the Faculty Safety Officer, Mark Jones in the first instance.

Full details are contained in the Biological Sciences Safety Policy available in the teaching laboratories.

Like all public spaces and workplaces the University has a [Health and Safety Policy](#) which describes how the wellbeing of students, staff and the general public are protected while using University facilities. You will come across guidelines applying to your Halls, the Library, open space on campus, transport around campus, the Sport Centres and the facilities in the Student Union.

## **9.2 Your Personal Safety**

The Students' Union has many [safety tips](#), including a section especially for international students. Night buses are also organised to take students home safely after a night out on campus. The University is covered by the [Portswood Sector](#) of Hampshire Constabulary.

## **9.3 Working Extended hours**

See building 85 Local Health & Safety arrangements. If unsure contact H&S Manager Mark Jones Jones Mark S. [M.S.Jones@soton.ac.uk](mailto:M.S.Jones@soton.ac.uk)

Please note that there are strict rules for out-of-hours working at the university (before 8 am and after 6 pm Monday-Friday and at any time on weekends or University closure days).