Chemistry

Postgraduate Taught Student Handbook

2022-2023
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Staff and Key Contacts
Head of Department:
Prof Abbie McLaughlin, Room Meston G23, e-mail a.c.mclaughlin@abdn.ac.uk

Analytical Chemistry Programme Directors:
Dr Rainer Ebel, Room Meston G32, r.ebel@abdn.ac.uk

Advanced Energy Materials Programme Director:
Dr Alan McCue, Room Meston 158, a.mccue@abdn.ac.uk

School Office: Meston Building G05d, ncspgt@abdn.ac.uk

The department’s webpage, which includes a list of staff, can be found at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/ncs/departments/chemistry/

Institutional Policy
Students are asked to make themselves familiar with the information on key education policies, available here. These policies are relevant to all students and will be useful to you throughout your studies.

Communication
Assessment
Absence
Student Monitoring/Class Certificates
Appeals and Complaints
Student Discipline
Graduate Attributes
MyAberdeen
Avoiding Plagiarism
Student Learning Service (SLS)
The co-curriculum

These University wide education policies should be read in conjunction with this handbook, in which School specific policies are detailed. These policies are effective immediately, for the 2022/23 academic year. Further information can be found on the University’s Infohub webpage or by visiting the Infohub.

Catalogue of Courses
The Catalogue of Courses can be found at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/courses/ and contains the following information, and more, for each course:

Course Overview and Description; Course Co-ordinator; Assessment and Feedback

Teaching Timetable
Once you have registered, your timetable can be found at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/mytimetable/courses/index

Attendance and Monitoring Progress
You should attend classes regularly and do the work of the course. The University operates a monitoring system throughout the academic year to identify students who may be experiencing difficulties with their studies and to ensure that students remain on track for their degree and satisfy the minimum attendance requirements.
If you miss two classes without good reason or fail to complete a continuous assessment you will be entered as C6 At Risk. Please read https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-monitoring.php for full information.

Absence from Class
You should submit an absence report (via any MyAberdeen course page) every time you miss a class for good reason. You will need to provide supporting evidence if you are absent for more than 7 consecutive days.

Satisfactory attendance at laboratory classes and tutorials is an essential learning outcome of all Chemistry courses, and any attendance record that falls below 50%, even with medical certificates, means that this learning outcome cannot be achieved. However, the Department will do its utmost to ensure that students with genuine medical problems are given an opportunity to catch up with missed work, or if necessary, to perform alternative equivalent activities. We urge any student with prolonged medical problems to contact the Department (the relevant Course Co-ordinator or the School Office G05d) at the earliest possible opportunity with details, so that appropriate arrangements can be discussed and agreed in advance.

Absence from Exams/Impaired Performance
If you believe that illness and/or other personal circumstances may have affected your performance in an examination, or you have been unable to attend an examination, you must submit details through MyAberdeen Absence Reporting on the day of the exam and certainly no later than three days following the date on which you were expected to appear for the exam concerned. This is as per the University’s Policy and Procedure of Student Absence. The policy, linked below, contains information on when supporting evidence (e.g. medical certificates) is required.

Absence policy and further information on Impaired Performance
https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/academic-life/assessment-exams-3377.php#panel1957

Communication with Students
The University will normally use e-mail to communicate with you during term-time. All messages will be sent to your University e-mail account.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you can log into your University computer accounts and to check your e-mail on a regular (daily) basis and to tidy the contents of your e-mail in-box to ensure that it does not become full. You should note that failure to promptly seek help from DIT re login problems and/or failure to check your e-mail and/or failure to receive an e-mail because your e-mail in-box is full and/or non-delivery of an e-mail forwarded to a non-University e-mail account will not be accepted as a ground for academic appeal.

In Chemistry, we will make extensive use of e-mail to communicate with the class, including vital information on labs and on-line test deadlines, so please make sure that you check your University e-mail every day. We are not able to add non-University addresses to our class e-mail lists and we do not recommend that you set up forwarding of your University e-mail.

We are under no obligation to read or respond to messages sent from non-University e-mail addresses and if e-mails sent from non-University addresses are blocked or deleted as “spam,” their non arrival will not be accepted as a ground for academic appeal.

MyAberdeen
MyAberdeen is the University’s Virtual Learning Environment where you can access learning materials and resources associated with your courses. Access at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/myaberdeen
A number of resources have been developed to help you make effective use of MyAberdeen. See https://www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/systems/myaberdeen-students/

Each course will have its own MyAberdeen page containing information you need for the course. It’s important you check MyAberdeen regularly.

**Deadlines**

Deadlines for continuous assessment will be listed in the Course Guide or your Course Co-ordinator will notify you of them at the beginning of the course.

**Extensions**

If you require an extension for your coursework you should submit an Absence Report with supporting evidence via StudentHub and email your Course Co-ordinator.

Appendix B is a flowchart of the Extension Process.

**Late Submission of Work**

Late submission refers to submission of work after the published deadline without an agreed extension, and in the absence of exceptional circumstances.

Any assessed coursework that is submitted beyond the deadline, without an agreed extension, will be recorded as late and a penalty will be applied as follows:

- Up to 24 hours late, the grade will be deducted by 2 Common Grading Scale (CGS) points;
- For each subsequent day, up to a maximum of seven days total, the grade will be deducted by a further CGS point for each day, or part of a day, up to a maximum of seven days late;
- Over seven days late, a grade of G3 will be awarded.

Further details can be found at Policy on Late Submission of Work

**Marking**

The University Common Grading Scale, CGS, provides a common marking scale which is used across the University. You can find full information at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/CAS.php

Some courses are marked in percentage or “marks out of”. Please see appendix 1 for the Percentage to CGS conversion table used in the School.

**Exams**

First half session course exams are held in December and second half session course exams are held in May.

**Resits**

Resits will be held immediately after each half session ends. Failure to pass the course at resit will likely result in you not being able to progress to the next stage.

**Progression and Award**

Information on progression requirements and how your degree will be classified can be found at PGT Award and Classification | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk)
**Student Support**
If you have a problem related to the course, please speak to the lecturer or course co-ordinator in the first instance. If you feel unable to discuss the problem with them, and it affects the whole class, you can raise the issue with the Class Rep. Otherwise, you can arrange to meet with the Head of Department.

If you have personal problems please talk to your Programme Director or the member of staff you feel most comfortable with. If you would prefer to talk to a non-academic member of staff you can contact the Advice and Support Office.

**Advice and Support Office**
Based in the Students’ Union Building, the Student Advice and Support team offers impartial and confidential advice and support on a range of issues, including finance, disability information and more. Further information at https://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support/advice.php

**Academic Language and Skills Support**
For students whose first language is not English, the Language Centre offers support with Academic Writing and Communication Skills.

**Academic Writing** (classes start on 26 September and then again 31 October)
- Responding to a writing task: Focusing on the question
- Using sources to support your writing (citing & referencing)
- Organising your writing, proofreading & editing (workshop 1)
- Writing fluently, proofreading & editing (workshop 2)
- Critical Thinking
- Academic writing styles, proofreading & editing

**Academic Communication Skills** (classes start on 28 September and then 2 November)
- Introductory discussion activities, introduction to academic cultures, and mini discussions.
- Problems & solutions: language & discussion.
- Analysis and evaluation from different perspectives: language & discussion. Mini presentations.
- Comparing & contrasting, drawing conclusions, and evaluating: language & discussion.
- To be confirmed (participants will be contacted nearer the time to confirm content).

And **Fluency & Communication** which is more relaxed and focused on social communication.

More information and how to book a place can be found [here](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support/advice.php).

**Academic Integrity (Plagiarism/Collusion/Contract Cheating)**
Institutional Policy: [Key Education Policies for Students](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support/advice.php)

Academic Integrity is covered by the [University Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic)](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support/advice.php).

You are responsible for making yourself familiar with this code.

**Library Workshops**
The Library provide many resources on Information Skills and Academic Integrity which must be watched/read at the start of your course. There is a compulsory Avoiding Plagiarism Quiz that all PGT students must take.
All resources can be found in the MyAberdeen Organisation Natural and Computing Sciences Student Information for Taught Postgraduates.

Class Representatives
Class representatives are elected on an annual basis. Any students registered within a course/year or programme that wishes to represent a given group of students can stand for election as a class representative. You will be informed when the elections for class representative will take place.

You can ask your class rep at any time to bring up matters of concern with any member of staff.

What will it involve?
It will involve speaking to your fellow students about the course/year you represent. This can include any comments that they may have. You will attend a Staff-Student Liaison Committee and you should represent the views and concerns of the students within this meeting. As a representative you will also be able to contribute to the agenda. You then feed back to the students after this meeting with any actions that are being taken.

Class reps are encouraged to meet with course co-ordinators early in each half-session to introduce themselves and to ensure an effective channel of communication is established between the class and the teaching staff.

Training
Training for class representatives will be run by the Students Association. Training will take place in the fourth or fifth week of teaching each semester.

For more information about the class representative system visit http://www.ausa.org.uk.

Staff-Student Liaison Committees
These meet twice a year to discuss matters of joint concern. If there are any matters that you would like discussed, take the initiative and see your class rep. Minutes of the meetings are available in MyAberdeen.

Course Feedback
Towards the end of each course, you will be invited to complete an online Course Feedback Form. Once completed, Course Feedback Forms are considered by the relevant course co-ordinator, Programme Director as well as the School Director of Education. Ultimately, the University will consider the points raised in all Course Feedback Forms to ensure teaching is of a high quality. The University greatly values your comments and they do help when we are working on ways to improve what we are able to offer.

Course Review
Each year, the staff teaching a course have a formal Course Review meeting, which considers feedback from the course evaluation exercise and from the Staff–Student Liaison Committee, along with examination pass rates and any other information about the success of the course. This meeting may decide to make changes to the course, but it may also decide that it is not possible to act upon suggestions made by students.

External Examiners
The External Examiners are:

MSc Analytical Chemistry: Dr Christine Davidson, University of Strathclyde
MSc Advanced Energy Materials: Dr Emma Kendrick, University of Birmingham
You should note that this is for information only and under no circumstances are students allowed to contact external examiners directly.

**Safety**

Chemists and other scientists must learn to work safely as a very important part of their professional training.

All users of University premises and property must comply with the regulations of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Act (1989). The Department’s advice for compliance with these acts is given in the Departmental Safety Handbook.

- Before commencing work in any laboratory, you must identify the location of safety equipment, fire escapes and exits.
- **Safety glasses or goggles must be worn at all times in the laboratories.** Even if you are doing some safe operation, someone else might do something that could affect you. Ordinary spectacles are not acceptable.
- All equipment and materials should be treated as potentially hazardous.
- Laboratory coats must be worn in all laboratories.
- Long hair must be tied back. Open cuts and grazes should be covered; if necessary, gloves will be provided.
- All accidents must be reported at once to a demonstrator.
- There must be no eating, drinking, chewing or smoking in laboratories.
- All chemicals must be treated with caution. More detailed information about hazards is provided by wall charts and the Department Safety booklet, both available in all laboratories. The Department webpage also has links to safety data.
- Always place coats and bags under the bench where they will not be tripped over. Move about the laboratory with care. Never run. Do not obstruct the aisles with lab stools.
- No unauthorized experiments are permitted

All teaching laboratories contain first aid kits and the First Aid room is 037 on the lower ground floor. The Department Safety Adviser is Dr. Rainer Ebel (G32) to whom any other safety matters should be reported.

**IF THE FIRE-BELL RINGS:**
- Switch off any Bunsen burners or electric heaters (if in the teaching lab).
- Leave by the nearest exit or fire escape. Do not use the lift. Leave calmly; do not return for coats, bags, etc.
- Assemble in the academic square, at the front of the Sir Duncan Rice Library.
- Do not re-enter the building until a fire marshal declares it to be safe, even if the fire alarm has stopped ringing.

**Pregnancy**

For general information about pregnancy including help and support, please refer to the information published by Student Support which can be found under https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/health-3628.php#panel3632

In certain circumstances, where there could be a potential risk to your unborn child (for example from exposure to certain pathogens, chemicals or radiation in the laboratory), it will be important that your School is informed as soon as possible to enable them to carry out a review of your study programme and, where necessary, ensure that measures are taken for your health and safety and that of your
child. The Student Advice & Support Office will contact the School on your behalf to ask that a specific risk assessment be undertaken.

The University provides guidance to Schools on health and safety issues for new and expectant mothers.

Once your School has been informed, they will arrange to carry out a risk assessment with you to identify any relevant risks associated with your study programme and to manage these risks for your protection.
### Appendix 1 - Percentage to Common Grade Scale Conversion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>% To</th>
<th>CGS</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
If you require an extension and have good reason for receiving one you should upload your supporting evidence via the Absence Reporting in StudentHub and email your Course Co-ordinator) at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline. Please use “Extension Request” as the subject and make sure to include the course code.

Yes. Extension given.

Submit by new deadline.

No. Extension not given
No Good Cause.

Do not submit by new deadline.

Unauthorised late submission policy applies.

Pass course.

Fail course.

Register for the resit – result will be capped at RP.

Register for the resit – result will not be capped.

Resit Diet Dates: Resits will take place after each half session. Exact dates to be arranged.

No further action.