

Programme Specification

BSc Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Science with Foundation
For students entering Foundation year in September 2027

UCAS Code: F122
UFCOSPMSEFY

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	4 years
Accreditation	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	N/A

Programme information and content

The BSc Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Science offers a dynamic and future-focused education that blends the core principles of biology, chemistry, and formulation science with real-world applications in the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries.

From Part 1, you will build a strong scientific foundation, progressing from essential chemical and biological concepts to more applied topics in Part 2, including formulation design, sustainability, and commercial strategy. In Part 3, the focus shifts to advanced product development, research, and innovation, with opportunities to specialise in areas such as cosmetic science, pharmaceutical chemistry, or personal care formulation.

This programme also integrates key professional skills such as project management, product development, and an awareness of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence in business and R&D contexts.

You will be supported throughout your journey to develop a global outlook and enhance your employability by applying interdisciplinary knowledge across practical, research, and team-based projects. Whether working independently or collaboratively, you will engage in hands-on experiments, oral presentations, and group challenges that reflect real industry scenarios.

You will be taught by a multidisciplinary team of experts from Chemistry, Pharmacy, and the Cosmetic Industry, bringing relevant insights and professional experience directly into the classroom.

The Foundation Year forms Part 0 of this course, which provides you with the basic knowledge and essential foundations to succeed on this programme. Furthermore, the programme takes you on an exciting journey of exploration through Biology Chemistry. It is supportive, yet appropriately challenging and enables you to synthesise the skills and knowledge gained, so you can confidently access more advanced topics.

Foundation year:	The Foundation Year provides you with the scientific background required to succeed on the subsequent years of the course. You will acquire a broad foundation in Biology, Chemistry, scientific calculations, plus another subject (to be selected from a list of optional modules). Additionally, our Academic Skills module gives you the skills necessary to excel at University. The goal of Part 0 is to provide you with basic core knowledge suitable for your chosen pathway and the confidence of transitioning to Higher Education.
Part 1:	The first year of the Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Sciences programme provides a broad, integrated foundation in the biological, chemical, and formulation sciences essential to the development of pharmaceutical and cosmetic products.
Part 2:	The second year of the programme aims to strengthen your scientific understanding of pharmaceutical and cosmetic ingredients and formulation, while introducing key considerations in product development, sustainability, and commercial practice. Through integrated study of formulation biology, pharmaceutical chemistry, cosmetic ingredients, and the fundamentals of marketing and business, you will gain the knowledge and skills needed to design, evaluate, and position products that are both effective and commercially viable.
Part 3:	The final year focuses on applying advanced scientific knowledge to real-world challenges through research, innovation, and product development. You will pursue specialist pathways to deepen your expertise in pharmaceutical chemistry, personal care formulation and/or consumer-focused cosmetic science, while undertaking an independent research project that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and professional readiness.

Programme Learning Outcomes - BSc Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Science with Foundation

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Integrate advanced concepts in biological, chemical, and formulation sciences to explain the design, function, and performance of pharmaceutical and cosmetic products.
2	Analyse the biological, chemical, and physical factors affecting the stability, efficacy, and safety of topical and pharmaceutical products.
3	Communicate scientific concepts, research findings, and product strategies clearly and appropriately to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
4	Critically evaluate sustainability principles into the selection of materials, formulation strategies, and product lifecycle considerations.
5	Apply business principles of formulation science and product development to address sustainability, regulatory compliance, ethical considerations, and commercial viability within the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.

6	Design safe, stable, and effective formulations for pharmaceutical and cosmetic applications, considering ingredient interactions, delivery systems, and user needs.
7	Reflect critically on personal and academic development, identifying strengths and areas for improvement to support future career progression in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.
8	Conduct independent research, synthesising scientific literature and experimental data to produce a coherent dissertation or report that demonstrates awareness of the wider scientific context and developments in the field.
9	Demonstrate autonomy, initiative, and professional responsibility in managing independent and group research or development projects.
10	Demonstrate advanced laboratory and analytical skills to characterise and evaluate pharmaceutical and cosmetic formulations.
11	Solve complex, real-world problems in pharmaceutical and cosmetic science by integrating scientific knowledge, creativity, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

Additional Learning outcomes	
N/A	

Module information			
Each part comprises 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.			
Foundation modules:			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
BI0BF1	Foundation Programme: Biology	40	0
BI0MF1	Mathematics Foundation	20	0
CH0CHE	Chemistry	40	0
IF0RAS	Foundation in Academic Skills	20	0
Part 1 Modules:			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
CH1FCS	Molecules in Action: Fundamentals of Chemical Structure and Reactivity	20	4
CH1KPC	Practical Skills for Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Science	20	4
CH1OC2	Shape, Structure and Reactivity in Organic Chemistry	20	4

PM1CMF	Introduction to Cosmetics and Medicine Formulation	20	4
PM1PY2	Fundamentals of Cell Biology	20	4
PM1PY5	Introduction to Microbiology, Immunology and Physiology	20	4

Part 2 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
CH2AMF	Analytical Methodologies in Formulation	20	5
CH2SPD	Strategic Product Development and Project Management in Cosmetics and Pharmaceuticals	20	5
PM2PDT	Sustainable Product Development and Testing	20	5

The remaining Part 2 credits are made up of optional modules from the Departments of Chemistry and Pharmacy.

If you take a year-long placement or study abroad, Part 3 as described below may be subject to variation.

Part 3 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
CH3DHO	Dermal, Hair and Oral Care Formulation	20	6
CH3PRO	BSc Chemistry Project	40	6
PM3IPD1	Innovation and Product Development	20	6

The remaining Part 3 credits are made up of optional modules from the Departments of Chemistry and Pharmacy.

For Students transferring to this programme from Part 2 MPharm:

CH2AMF (Analytical methodologies in formulation) (20 credits) will replace CH3DHO as compulsory.

Placement opportunities

N/A

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery:

You will be taught primarily through a mixture of lectures, tutorials and seminars and laboratory sessions, depending on the modules you choose. Some modules may include group work.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

N/A

Assessment

The programme will be assessed through a combination of written examinations, coursework (including class tests) and oral examinations. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

Progression

Foundation Year

To achieve a threshold performance at part 0, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall weighted average of 50% over all modules taken in Part 0; and
- (ii) obtain a mark of at least 40% in all individual modules.

In order to progress from Part 0 to Part 1 and be eligible for transfer to BSc Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Sciences a student must achieve a threshold performance; and

- (iv) achieve a module mark of at least 50% in Chemistry (CHOCHE).

Part 1

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Students who have completed Part 1 of the MPharm or MPharm with Preparatory Year and who have achieved a Part 1 threshold performance may transfer to Part 2 of the BSc Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Science.

Students considering transferring to another programme should seek guidance from their designated Support Centre in the first instance.

Part 2

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree).

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 2 qualifies a student for a Diploma of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Students who have completed Part 2 of the MPharm or MPharm with Preparatory Year and who have achieved a Part 2 threshold performance may transfer to Part 3 of the BSc Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Science.

Professional/placement year

Students are required to pass the professional placement year/study abroad year in order to progress on the programme which incorporates the professional placement year/study abroad year. Students who fail the professional placement year/study abroad year transfer to the non-placement year version of the programme.

Classification

Bachelors' degrees

The University's honours classification scheme is based on the following:

Mark Interpretation

70% - 100% First class

60% - 69% Upper Second class

50% - 59% Lower Second class

40% - 49% Third class

35% - 39% Below Honours Standard
0% - 34% Fail

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Three year programmes:

Part 2: one-third

Part 3: two-thirds

Four year programmes, including Study abroad/Placement year

Part 2: one-third

Study abroad/Placement year: Year abroad/Placement year not included in the classification

Part 3: two-thirds

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the [Assessment Handbook](#) under:

- Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's), or
- Section 18: Awards (Integrated Master's programmes). Students who do not progress to Part 4 of the Integrated Master's will normally be subject to the method detailed under Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's)

Please note that there may be a specific version of the above for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

A range of resources to support your curriculum, including textbooks and electronic resources, are available through the University library. Reading lists and module specific costs are listed on the individual module descriptions. There should not be a need to purchase additional textbooks, but students may wish to purchase their own copies of some textbooks.

Personal Protective Equipment (lab coats and safety glasses) for the laboratory sessions will be provided.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2026.

Students may consider purchasing a laptop to help support their learning. Information on recommended device specifications can be found on the [DTS Student Hub](#).

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

BSc Cosmetic and Pharmaceutical Science with Foundation for students entering Foundation year in session 2027/28

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