

From: Prof Mark Wormald
Associate Director of Teaching, Department of Biochemistry

6th July 2026

To all applicants holding offers or places for Biochemistry starting in October 2026

Dear Student,

Pre-course Maths Resources

All undergraduates on the Biochemistry course do a Quantitative Biochemistry course in their 1st year, comprising lectures and departmentally organised problems classes and computing workshops. To help students prepare for these we have produced a set of Maths resources for you to work through before arriving in Oxford. The lectures and problems classes will assume that you are familiar with all of this material.

The Maths resources can be accessed in both PDF and online formats in this Canvas course:

<https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/297558/assignments/syllabus>

The home page has instructions on how to log in to Canvas (which is the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that you will use throughout your degree). If you have any problems accessing Canvas, then please e-mail msdlt@medsci.ox.ac.uk.

We strongly recommend that you work through these resources and brush up any areas about which you are not confident before you arrive in October. If you find any of the above material significantly more challenging, then please don't worry but let your College tutor and maths class tutor know when you arrive in Oxford.

Chemistry pre-reading

If you would like to start reading about some of the chemistry that is relevant to the 1st year course, then we would recommend that you have a look at the following review article:

Essays in Biochemistry (2017) 61, 401-427 – “Essential chemistry for biochemists”

which you can find at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5869253/pdf/ebc-61-ebc20160094.pdf>.

You will cover most of this material in lectures, classes and tutorials during the 1st year and there is no assumption that you will be familiar with, or understand, this material at the start of the course, particularly in the way that it is described in the article. However, if you decide to have a look and find there are large areas of the chemistry discussed that you have not seen before in

any form during your school chemistry career then again please let your College tutor know once you have arrived in Oxford.

We are not expecting students to have spent a long time over the summer working on these two resources (or indeed to have done any other academic preparation before arrival) and most students won't start looking at them until late August or September after places have been confirmed. We are sending these to you now so that you have, if you want, the opportunity to have a look at them and then to talk to teachers at your school before the start of the summer holiday.

Please let me know if you have any queries and we very much look forward to seeing you in October.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. R. Wormald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Prof Mark Wormald