INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION PROGRAMME HEALTH AND MEDICAL BIOSCIENCES

Faculty of Health

Academic Level:	3	**Credits:**	120
UCAS Code:	N/A		
Awarding Body:	University of Cumbria		
Delivered by:	Malvern International		
Delivery Site:	International College – Lancaster Campus		
Programme Length:	1-year (IFY) + 3 years of core programme standard		
Mode of Delivery:	Face-to-face		
Pattern of Delivery:	Full-Time		
	Total weeks of study:	24	
	Delivery pattern:	2 semesters x 12 weeks each semester	
	Standard semester dates:	Yes	
Programme Webpage:	https://internationalcollege.cumbria.ac.uk/programmes/international-foundation-programme/		

Entry Criteria
The University's standard criteria for admissions apply. Please refer to the Applicant Information pages of the University website for more information. APL, is not accepted for these programmes. Detailed criteria for admission to this programme can be found on the above programme webpage.

PROGRAMME AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Programme Aims

By the end of this programme, you will be able to:

1. Become equipped with essential academic skills, including critical thinking, analytical abilities, and independent learning, laying a strong foundation for success in higher-level studies in health and medical biosciences.
2. Improve your English language skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, targeting an IELTS equivalent of overall 6.0 with no element below 5.5 to enable effective communication in academic and healthcare contexts. Please be aware that students wanting to progress onto other programmes will need a higher IELTS equivalent score as seen in the Programme Overview section.
3. Familiarise yourself with the expectations of UK higher education and healthcare environments, including academic integrity, collaborative work, and ethical practices, ensuring a smooth transition into undergraduate programmes.
4. Have a grounding in core concepts in medical biosciences, human anatomy, healthcare practices, and patient care, preparing them for specialised study in fields such as healthcare and medical biosciences.
5. Instil professionalism, effective time management, and self-reflection skills, equipping you with the personal resilience and discipline required to thrive in both academic and healthcare environments.
6. Become equipped with the academic, communication, and health science-specific skills necessary to meet the entry requirements and standards of undergraduate programmes.

Programme Outcomes – Knowledge and Understanding

The programme provides opportunities for you to:

After completing 120 credits (FdCert) of study, you will be able to:

K1 Demonstrate proficiency in academic and professional communication including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, with a focus in healthcare and scientific contexts, achieving a targeted IELTS equivalent of overall 6.0 with no element below 5.5. Please be aware that students wanting to progress onto other programmes will need a higher IELTS equivalent score as seen in the Programme Overview section.

K2 Apply critical thinking and analytical reasoning to evaluate information, interpret data, and solve problems using an evidence-based approach, distinguishing between scientific and clinical applications.

K3 Develop quantitative reasoning and data analysis skills to interpret scientific and healthcare-related data, applying statistical methods and research techniques for informed decision-making.

K4 Demonstrate learning and understanding through a variety of assessments, including written tasks, presentations, and practical applications, to showcase comprehensive knowledge in healthcare and medical biosciences disciplines.

K5 (Health Pathway) Gain foundational knowledge of health sciences, including patient care principles, healthcare ethics, and professional practice, preparing for undergraduate study in health disciplines.

K6 (Health Pathway) Understand and apply ethical and professional conduct standards in healthcare, particularly in patient interactions, confidentiality, and **responsibility**, adhering to health and social care guidelines.

K7 (Health Pathway) Engage in multidisciplinary teamwork to develop an integrative approach to patient care, emphasising collaborative problem-solving and patient-centred practice.

K8 (Medical Biosciences Pathway) Gain a strong foundation in core biological sciences, covering molecular biology, physiology, pathology, genetics, and microbiology, essential for further study in biomedical science.

K9 (Medical Biosciences Pathway) Develop essential laboratory skills, including biosafety procedures, aseptic techniques, safe handling of biological materials, and the use of laboratory equipment for basic experimental methods.

Programme Outcomes – Skills and Other Attributes

The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following:

After completing 120 credits (FdCert) of study, you will be able to demonstrate:

S1 Develop effective communication skills in both written and spoken English, tailored to academic, scientific and healthcare contexts, including scientific writing, structured reporting, and patient communication.

S2 Apply problem-solving and critical thinking skills to scientific and practical scenarios, demonstrating evidence-based decision-making and analytical reasoning.

S3 Cultivate teamwork and interpersonal skills by engaging in inter-disciplinary, multi-cultural and collaborative projects, contributing effectively to teamwork, research collaborations, and patient-centred healthcare environments.

S4 Enhance digital literacy and technical proficiency, developing skills in data analysis tools, digital platforms, and management systems relevant to healthcare and medical biosciences research and practice.

S5 Manage time effectively and work independently to meet academic deadlines, demonstrating resilience, self-discipline, and adaptability in a structured academic setting.

S6 Demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations and professional standards including patient confidentiality, data privacy, and responsible conduct, and adherence to regulatory frameworks.

S7 Develop self-reflective practices to assess personal growth, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for academic and professional development, fostering a commitment to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

PROGRAMME FEATURES

Programme Overview

The programme is a one-year preparatory course designed to equip international students with essential academic skills, English language proficiency, and foundational knowledge for undergraduate studies in the UK. This programme combines core health and medical biosciences modules with academic and research skills, providing a comprehensive foundation for success in higher education.

This programme is ideal for international students who have completed secondary education but do not yet meet the academic or English language requirements for direct entry into UK university programmes. It bridges this gap by helping students develop the scientific, analytical, and communicative competencies essential for undergraduate study in health and social care and medical biosciences fields.

Students will engage in a curriculum that emphasises academic and professional English, digital literacy, critical thinking, and essential concepts in healthcare and medical biosciences, such as human anatomy, patient care, and foundational laboratory skills. The programme is carefully structured to build critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and a strong understanding of ethical healthcare practices, preparing students for the cultural and professional expectations of UK higher education.

At the point of admissions, you will have selected one of the following pathway programmes:

- BSc (Hons) Medical Biosciences
- BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care
- BA (Hons) Sport, Coaching and Physical Education

Upon successful completion of the Foundation Year , you will be guaranteed a place on a suitable undergraduate programme, allowing for a smooth transition into your chosen field of Health and Social Care or Medical Biosciences.

If you are enrolled in the BSc (Hons) Medical Biosciences pathway, upon successful completion of your foundation year, you may apply for a course transfer to the BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science, which holds professional accreditation.

To be eligible you must:

- Achieve an IELTS score of 7.0 with no element less than 7.

If you are considering this transfer, please speak to your course leader for guidance on the specific requirements and steps needed for a successful transition.

If you are enrolled in the BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care pathway, upon successful completion of your foundation year, you may wish to progress to one of the following programmes:

- BSc (Hons) Nursing – Adult

- BSc (Hons) Nursing – Child
- BSc (Hons) Nursing – Learning Disability
- BSc (Hons) Nursing – Mental Health
- BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy
- BA (Hons) Social Work

The programmes listed above may have additional entry requirements such as:

- Average grade of 50% or above in your foundation year
- Attending and passing an interview
- Submitting an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) background clearance check
- Medical check and Vaccination plan
- Any other programme or professional requirements relevant to the selected programme

For those wishing to transfer to:

- BSc (Hons) Nursing (all fields), you must achieve an overall IELTS of 6.5 with no element less than 6.0
- BA (Hons) Social Work you must achieve an overall IELTS of 7 with no element less than 7

The programme team will be able to discuss these in more detail with you and support you in your application to be considered for one of the above programmes.

Malvern International – International College

Our programme offers a comprehensive blend of English language development and essential skills training through a practice-led, student-centred approach tailored to the demands of healthcare and medical biosciences. Over the academic year, students will build confidence in using English across academic and healthcare contexts, while developing critical research, study, and scientific skills essential for success in UK higher education. Alongside language enhancement, students will engage with foundational concepts in health and social care and medical biosciences, fostering the analytical and compassionate mindset required to address real-world challenges in health and patient care.

Students will also acquire essential digital literacy and technical skills, gaining hands-on experience with scientific tools, lab techniques, and health-related digital platforms for data analysis and research. Exposure to ethical and cultural considerations in healthcare will deepen their understanding of professional conduct and patient-centred care, preparing them for the multicultural and dynamic environments they will encounter in both academic and clinical settings.

This programme ensures that students are well-prepared to transition seamlessly into undergraduate study in health, or medical biosciences, equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in their future academic and professional endeavours.

Programme Structure

The duration of the programme is one academic year. The students will need to complete 120 credits to successfully pass the foundation programme. Each module will have 72 hours of contact time and 128 hours of independent student learning, totalling 200 hours per module.

The structure of the programme is as follows:

Degree Title	Common Modules	Degree Progression Modules
BSc (Hons) Medical Biosciences	English Language Development and Proficiency Exploring Research: Foundations for Inquiry Foundations of Mathematics Foundations of Biology for Health Sciences	Introduction to Medical Bioscience Laboratory Techniques Bioethics and Biomedicine
BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care	English Language Development and Proficiency Exploring Research: Foundations for Inquiry Foundations of Mathematics Foundations of Biology for Health Sciences	Foundations of Health and Social Care Professional Practice in Health and Social Care
BA (Hons) Sport, Coaching and Physical Education	English Language Development and Proficiency Exploring Research: Foundations for Inquiry Foundations of Mathematics Foundations of Biology for Health Sciences	Foundations of Health and Social Care Professional Practice in Health and Social Care

Learning and Teaching

Teaching

A variety of blended learning teaching methods will be embedded in the programme to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes and to facilitate their personal and professional development. Methods of teaching and learning will include formal lectures, seminars, group work and discussions, tutorials and self-directed study. The teaching and learning will be supported by online asynchronous learning activities accessed via the Virtual Learning Environment.
Underpinning the learning and teaching methods will be an enquiry-based learning approach where an exploration of scenarios and real-world problems will be utilised to discuss and develop the students understanding thereby integrating theory into practice.

At Level 3 you typically have around 6 contact hours per week per module, typically consisting of:

- 2 hours of lectures
- 2 hours of seminars
- 2 hours of workshop

Independent Learning

When not attending scheduled learning activities you will be expected to continue learning independently through self-study.

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff for this programme will typically have a blend of academic qualifications in the subject area and practical experience. In our pathway programmes, we ensure English language development is integrated with core subject knowledge. Our English for academic purposes and research skills team are applied linguistics professionals with academic experience in teaching English and research skills to international students. Our core subject specialists possess at least a Masters in the field of study and have extensive teaching experience in higher education. Often our subject leads also have extensive professional experience and/or are engaged in active research.

Assessment

Year 0

The programme makes use of both summative and formative assessments to meet the overall learning outcomes at the programme level and the individual learning outcomes at the modular level. The assessment strategy will enable students to integrate their learning and apply it to the academic environment. The assessments will also enable students to demonstrate a variety of skills required for academic autonomy and decision-making within the higher education setting.

Students will be assessed using a variety of methods including portfolios, reflective accounts, case studies, verbal presentations, reports and essays. Formative assessment will be embedded in all modules to allow for monitoring and progression of student learning.

Feedback

Feedback is provided within 20 working-days in either written or oral form.

Graduate Prospects

The International Foundation Programme in Health and Medical Biosciences is designed to support your progression into undergraduate study and to lay the early foundations for long-term academic and professional development within the healthcare and life sciences sectors.

Throughout the programme, you will begin developing the academic, research, and professional awareness skills needed to succeed in UK Higher Education. This includes written and spoken communication, critical thinking, digital literacy, teamwork, and an understanding of ethical and cultural expectations in health and biosciences contexts.

You will be introduced to key concepts in healthcare, human biology, and laboratory techniques, as well as foundational scientific inquiry and quantitative reasoning. These skills are essential for transitioning confidently into undergraduate study in areas such as medical biosciences, health and social care, or sport, coaching and physical education.
As part of your transition to university life, you will also engage with the Career Ahead Award, a flexible, online employability programme designed to help you reflect on your skills, record your experiences, and begin planning for your future. The award focuses on three key areas:

- Skills – recognising and reflecting on your developing academic and personal skills
- Experience – documenting the learning and activities you complete during the year
- Career Planning – starting to consider your long-term academic and professional goals

You will also have access to the University of Cumbria's Careers and Employability Service, where you can access 1:1 guidance, workshops, online tools, and events to support your employability journey throughout your time at university.

Upon successful completion of the Foundation Year, you will be well-prepared to begin undergraduate study in your chosen pathway and continue developing the knowledge, skills, and attributes required for academic success and future professional opportunities.

MODULES

Year 1			
Code	**Title**	**Credits**	**Status**
UCIC3013	English Language Development and Proficiency	20	Compulsory
UCIC3014	Exploring Research: Foundations for Inquiry	20	Compulsory
UCIC3015	Foundations of Mathematics	20	Compulsory
UCIC3019	Foundations of Biology for Health Sciences	20	Compulsory
Students progressing to BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care or BA (Hons) Sport, Coaching and Physical Education are required to take:			
UCIC3020	Foundations of Health and Social Care	20	Compulsory
UCIC3021	Professional Practice in Health and Social Care	20	Compulsory
Students progressing to Medical Biosciences Degrees are required to take:			
UCIC3022	Introduction to Medical Biosciences Laboratory Techniques	20	Compulsory
UCIC3023	Bioethics and Biomedicine	20	Compulsory
Note: Students progressing to the BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care or BA (Hons) Sport, Coaching and Physical Education are required to take: UCIC3019 Foundations of Health UCIC3020 Professional Practice in Healthcare Students progressing to the BSc (Hons) Medical Biosciences are required to take: UCIC3022 Introduction to Medical Biosciences Laboratory Techniques UCIC3023 Bioethics and Biotechnology			
Students exiting at this point with 120 credits would receive an International Foundation Certificate (FdCert) in Health and Medical Bioscience			

Additional Module Information
- Students must pass 120 credits in order to progress to the next level of studies. - Students must complete all the modules relevant to the selected pathway at the point of admission. There are no optional modules available to students at this level.

Key to Module Statuses	
Compulsory modules	Must be taken although it may be possible to compensate as a marginal fail (within the limits set out in the Academic Regulations and provided

	that all core or pass/fail elements of module assessment have been passed).

Timetables

Timetables are normally available during Welcome Week. Please note that while we make every effort to ensure timetables are as student friendly as possible, scheduled learning can take place on any day of the week.

Our Timetabling team work hard to ensure that timetables are available to students as far in advance as possible, however, there may be occasional exceptions such as in the case of teaching which falls outside of the usual academic calendar. The University of Cumbria academic calendar runs from July to July, so timetabling information for programmes which include teaching sessions in August may not be published until closer to the August delivery.

All classes will be delivered in the centre with face-to-face teaching. There is no possibility for online delivery mode with this programme.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Student Support

Student Support Services

The Student Enquiry Point is a simple way to contact Student Services. Using the Student Enquiry Point tile on the Student Hub you can submit an enquiry to any of the Student Services teams, which includes:

- Careers and Employability
- Chaplaincy for faith and spiritual wellbeing
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Digital Skills
- Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)
- International Student Support
- Library
- Money Matters
- Safeguarding
- Skills@Cumbria
- Sports and Fitness Facilities
- University Student Accommodation

As a student at the University of Cumbria, you automatically become a member of the Students' Union. The Students' Union represents the views and interests of students within the University.

The Students' Union is led by a group of Student Representatives who are elected by students in annual elections. They also support approximately 400 Student Academic Reps within each cohort across the entire University. The Students' Union represent the views of their cohort and work with academic staff to continuously develop and improve the experience for all University of Cumbria students. You can find out more about who represents you at www.ucsu.me

You can email at any time on studentvoice@cumbria.ac.uk

Induction

Induction takes place during Welcome Week, prior to the official start of teaching. All foundation year students will participate in a shared induction programme with international college and University events, giving you the opportunity to meet students from your subject area as well as those from other foundation pathways. In addition, you will also take part in programme-specific induction activities, where you'll be introduced to your academic team**,** learn more about your modules and assessment types, and get to know the expectation of your chosen programme.

Throughout Welcome Week, you will take part in a range of activities designed to:

- Build a strong sense of community with your classmates
- Help you navigate life at the University
- Introduce you to the academic support and wellbeing services available

- Prepare you for the transition into UK higher education

You will be shown how to access and use our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Blackboard, and how to submit your assessments using Turnitin.

During your first week of teaching, you will be assigned a Personal Tutor (PT). Your PT will support you throughout the Foundation Year, providing academic guidance and helping you settle into university study. In addition, UCIC students benefit from dedicated support from the Student Services Team. This enhanced induction and support structure is specifically designed to ensure a successful transition to your follow-on course at the University of Cumbria.

Transitioning to Level 4: When you progress to your main degree programme, you will already have taken part in a Foundation Year induction. However, it is important that you also engage with your Level 4 induction activities, which are designed to help you meet your new cohort, understand your programme structure, and feel fully integrated into your academic department.

Personal Tutor

All students on this programme are assigned a Personal Tutor (PT) from the International College academic team at the beginning of their Foundation Year. The Personal Tutor provides structured academic and pastoral support, helping students to engage with their studies, reflect on their progress, and access appropriate services when needed.

Personal Tutors:

- Offer one-to-one academic guidance
- Monitor student engagement and progress using tools such as the Student Progress Tracker (SPT)
- Support students in managing challenges that may impact their academic performance
- Refer students to relevant support services when necessary

The International College's Academic Development Policy underpins the delivery of personal tutoring through regular progress reviews, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) where appropriate, and coordinated support from student services.

Upon successful completion of the Foundation Year, students progressing to Level 4 will be assigned a new Personal Tutor within their academic department at the University of Cumbria, in line with the University's Personal Tutoring Policy. This tutor will support students through the remainder of their undergraduate studies, offering discipline-specific academic advice and ongoing developmental support.

Library Services and Academic Skills

The Library home page can be accessed here: https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning.

Module leaders will collaborate with Library Services to ensure that your online reading and resource lists are current and items are available via the library discovery tool OneSearch. In order to maximise access, availability and usefulness, ebooks and electronic journal titles will, in most cases, be prioritised. You can access a wide range of electronic and print content using OneSearch

and you can find out more about key texts, databases and journals for your subject by accessing the library's subject resources webpages. Where appropriate, module reading and resource lists will be made available to you electronically on Blackboard.

Each campus library has a dedicated webpage. Check out local information about opening hours, reserving books, using self-service kiosks, printing and photocopying, booking study spaces and more. https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/Libraries/
An Ask a Librarian service runs from 17:00 - 09:00 weekdays and round the clock on weekends and holidays. This means you can get professional help using about library services, finding information, referencing and searching, even when the library is closed.
https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/Libraries/Ask/

The Skills@Cumbria service can help support your academic, library and digital skills and success throughout your programme. It includes a suite of online self-help resources accessible 24/7 via the University's website and Blackboard site.

The Student Enquiry Point is a simple way to contact Library and Skills@Cumbria Services.
Additional skills support for students is offered via:

- Appointments
- Learn Well at Cumbria
- Study from Home Webpage
- Digital Capabilities and LinkedIn Learning Pathways

Further support and guidance, including EDI and Safeguarding: We are an inclusive community, committed to supporting and learning from each other, find out more about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Depending on the nature of your course, you may well already know about or be learning about safeguarding in a professional context and to find out about the University of Cumbria's safeguarding policy and procedures visit: Safeguarding.

Student Voice

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The Students' Union is led by a group of Student Representatives who are elected by students in annual elections. They also support approximately 400 Student Academic Reps within each cohort across the entire University. The Students' Union represent the views of their cohort and work with academic staff to continuously develop and improve the experience for all University of Cumbria students. You can find out more about who represents you at www.ucsu.me.

You can email at any time on studentvoice@cumbria.ac.uk.

IT and Technical Support

Technology is an invaluable asset when it comes to studying, so it's important you know how to make the most out of the excellent IT facilities we have available. Our aim is to ensure you can

access university electronic resources from anywhere or any device, whether on or off campus. The Student Hub is your one-stop gateway to all University systems, Outlook email, and OneDrive.

Whether you consider yourself a computer expert or you're not confident about your IT skills, we're always around to ensure you get the level of support you need. We have a wealth of information and support available on the IT Services website and have a dedicated IT Service Desk where you can talk to someone by phone or log your question online from anywhere, at any time.

University Cumbria Students' Union (UCSU) Student Support

UCSU offers a free, independent and confidential advice service to all students. They can help with things like academic appeals, extenuating circumstances or if you're considering a formal complaint. UCSU are also on hand to represent you in any formal meetings, for example in malpractice panels or fitness to practice meetings. Appointments are telephone based and can be booked at www.ucsu.me/support.

Course Costs

Tuition Fees

Course fees can be found at https://internationalcollege.cumbria.ac.uk/programmes/international-foundation-programme/

Additional Costs

The following course-related costs are not included in the fees:

- Laptop equipped with Microsoft Office package

Exceptions to the Academic Regulations

This programme operates in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes.

External and Internal Benchmarks

All programme and assessment regulations, policies and procedures are aligned with The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ): The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (qaa.ac.uk)

The programme considered the Subject Benchmark statements in QAA Subject Benchmark: Health Studies (2024) and QAA Subject Benchmark: Biomedical Science and Biomedical Sciences (2023) in the development of this foundation course.

Quality Assurance Mechanisms:

Quality assurance is undertaken as close as possible to the point of delivery. There is a route from the module level to course levels so that issues can be addressed and delivery enhanced in the appropriate arena.

Externality is guaranteed via external examiner reports who make judgements on the quality and standards of its provision.

Students can comment on their modules and courses in various ways including module evaluations, and course committees.

- Student evaluations and feedback
- Annual programme monitoring reports
- External examiners' reports and responses to reports
- Periodic teaching and learning review
- Moderation and standardisation processes
- Internal boards
- Internal and external stakeholder feedback
- Continuous evaluation of recruitment and retention data, progression and achievement data, student destination data, and data relating to student support.
- UoC Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- UoC Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes

Disclaimer

This programme has been approved (validated) by the University of Cumbria as suitable for a range of delivery modes, delivery patterns, and delivery sites. This level of potential flexibility does not reflect a commitment on behalf of the University or Malvern International to offer the programme by all modes/patterns and at all locations in every academic cycle. The details of the programme offered for a particular intake year will be as detailed on the programme webpage.

Date of Programme Specification Production	09/04/2025
Date Programme Specification was last updated	25/09/26