

Action plan based on students' feedback regarding the 1st semester of the 2023/2024 academic year

Department: Department of Molecular Biology
Faculty: Faculty of Medicine
Compulsory subjects: Medical Chemistry; Molecular Cell Biology I
Elective subjects: Basics of Medical Chemistry; Molecular Medicine Research

1. Response to the general comments:

A little more than half of our students considered it important to evaluate our teaching activity and give feedback by filling the questionnaire. The scores corresponded to the faculty average. We thank our students for acknowledging the strengths of the curriculum (logical and easy-to-follow lectures, well-organized practical teaching, well-defined examination requirements). This positive feedback further supports our efforts to keep these subjects an up-to-date and comprehensive pillar of the preclinical module in the medical training.

We are dissatisfied by the attendance on our lectures, which is likely due to the availability of recordings throughout the semester. Though it might be tempting to skip the lectures and only watch the recordings in the exam period, we do believe that regular attendance at the lectures strengthens our students' motivation and prompts them to deal with the material regularly – a token of better understanding and a more in-depth knowledge. In addition, our laboratory practical classes are based on the material of the lectures, so proper understanding of the measurements also requires a regular attendance at the lectures.

We continue to do our best in highlighting the medical relevance and importance of the learning material. Our aim is to make you understand the molecular processes underlying human health and disease. However, these mechanisms are challenging to teach and study as they are so intangible and not as easy to see as anatomical structures. Reliable information on molecular systems can only be gained indirectly, through carefully designed experiments. However, the logical and amazing complexity of molecular pathways are admirable and fascinating, and we will try to put more effort and perseverance in making you understand and enjoy these principles.

2. Response to specific comments on compulsory subjects:

We are grateful for the positive comments acknowledging our high-quality teaching and for appreciating the preparedness and proficiency of some lecturers and lab teachers.

Criticism was focused on the following issues:

“Less emphasis on basic chemistry and more emphasis on clinically relevant chemistry. Topics like f.ex. electrochemistry & permanganate titration have little to none significance in medicine, but still take up a lot of the chemistry course. Given the weighting of the chemistry & biophysics course it feels more like we are taking a degree in chemistry or biophysics rather than an MD.”

We believe in the importance of providing medical students with a broad and solid theoretical background as a basis for pre-clinical and clinical courses. Electrochemistry, for example, covers the basic principles of

redox reactions, an understanding of which is essential for a well-trained physician. Our metabolism is based on redox reactions, and disturbances in redox state and/or antioxidant defense underlie many human diseases.

“Can we have the lectures uploaded on the Moodle straight away after the lecture?...”

Although the originally announced plan was to publish the audio and video recordings of the lectures only two weeks before the corresponding assessment, this was soon changed (as we were forced to acknowledge that it did not improve the attendance of the lectures) and we uploaded the recordings within a few days after the lectures starting after the first third of the term. Our experiment with teaching methodology had a negative outcome and, having drawn the conclusion, the Department plans to continue to make the recordings available shortly after the lectures.

3. Response to specific comments on elective subjects:

Nothing substantial.

Date: 28 April, 2024