Guidelines for composing "Free activities" (8 CFU) and additional educational activities (3 CFU)(a.y. 2025-2026)

These guidelines are compiled with the purpose to help the BforB students in addressing the technical aspects regarding the composition of "Free activities" (8 CFU) and the additional educational activities group (3 CFU) in the Study Plan.

Please note that these guidelines do not replace any formal rule stated in the "Manifesto degli Studi" (BforB Programme Description). Please consider the specific rules reported in the "Manifesto degli Studi" valid for the year of your first enrollment to BforB.

"Free activities" (8 CFU)

In the absence of an online-submitted and approved Study Plan, students can take all the exams from the didactic offer of their own degree programme, but not those of the other degree programmes.

In the frame of the "Free activities" (8 CFU) student can freely choose one or more courses among:

A) the optional courses that are specifically activated by the BforB Master's Degree and/or the courses not already chosen among the elective course list:
   - Molecular biobased approaches for plant protection (6 CFU; semester I)[1]
   - Developing soft skills in science: case-studies from microbial biotechnology (6 CFU; semester I)[2]
   - Biomolecular experiment planning (2 CFU; semester II)
   - REE CRISPRes - A workshop on genome editing technologies (3 CFU; semester II)[3]
   - Plant microbiome-based strategies for agri-environmental biotechnologies (4 CFU; semester II)
   - Molecular analysis and traceability of biotechnological products (6 CFU; semester I)
   - Applied biocatalysis (6 CFU; semester II)
   - Bio-based innovation in food industry (6 CFU; semester I)
   - Biostatistics and design of experiments in biotechnology (6 CFU; semester I)[4]
   - Functional foods and nutraceuticals (6 CFU; semester II)
   - Other activities (3 CFU)[5]

B) any other course among all the courses activated by the University of Milan (Università degli Studi di Milano) for Master's Degrees having a scored examination as the registered assessment[6]. Such

[1] Those that enrolled in years prior 2025-2026, "Molecular biobased approaches for plant protection" must be selected as a 4 CFUs course (semester I) if already attended and exam given.

[2] For the students enrolled in years prior 2022-2023, this course cannot be chosen in the study plan if they have given the exam "Microbiology and Biotechnology of Extremophiles: case studies to develop soft skills in science" which has an overlapping program.

[3] Access is limited! Contact the teacher as early as possible (by the end of January) to be admitted to the course and the exact delivery period (usually in June). Note that it is structured as a one-full week workshop, requires full team work, and the final assessment (i.e. the examination) method is different than usual: basically it will be **only once** at the end of the workshop (usually around mid September).

[4] For students enrolled in years prior to 2022-2023, this course corresponds to "Experimental planning and biostatistics in biotechnology" and the exam will be verbalized with the proper title in accordance with their "Manifesto degli Studi".

[5] "Other activities" (3 CFU) can be selected only once in the study plan.

[6] The database of the courses of the University of Milan is displayed here: https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/degree-courses-2025-2026. If you intend to follow a chosen course the following year, you need

courses must be consistent with the aims of BforB Master's Degree and their programs cannot be a repetition of the other BforB compulsory courses and any other selected course included in own study plan. Note that a teaching unit (i.e. a module that is not independently graded) cannot be selected as a course since it is formally scored together the other teaching units of an integrated course. Please contact the Study Plan Tutor (Dr. Fabio Forlani) for instructions and technical advice on how to fill out the study plan, and the Academic Guidance Tutors (Dr. Fabio Forlani or Prof. Eleonora Rolli, depending on the initial letter of the student's surname: A–L and M–Z, respectively) for guidance on course selection based on personal aptitudes and topic interests.

As a cue for searching courses of interest for "Free activities", a list of the courses selected by BforB students in previous years is available at the end of this document.

In the frame of the "Free activities" (8 CFU), it is possible to include Interdisciplinary Laboratory Activity, up to a maximum of 4 CFU. The laboratory activity can also regard a small additional project running in parallel to the final dissertation thesis (in this case, must not be part of the thesis work and must be agreed with the Degree Internship supervisor[7]). One CFU is equivalent to 25 hours of laboratory activity. Research Enriched Education (REE) laboratory activities not included in the database of the courses of the University of Milan, or similar laboratory activities organized by the University of Milan, can also be included as Interdisciplinary Laboratory activity.

The Interdisciplinary Laboratory Activity must start with a formal declaration of the supervising Master's Degree teacher (needed for insurance purposes) and the registration will be certified upon presentation of his/her attestation assessing the completion of laboratory activities. Both declarations (see forms at the end of this document) can be forwarded by email to Dr. Fabio Forlani for the final formal registration[8] on the student's career in agreement with the approved Study Plan.

If the laboratory activity will be carried out outside[9] the University of Milan (Università degli Studi di Milano), follow the instructions described in the sections "Internship activation procedures and offers" and "Activating an external internship or a thesis project with external internship" at: https://www.unimi.it/en/study/traineeships-and-work/traineeships-and-internships/tutors-curricular-internships-and-ects-credits/agricultural-and-food-sciences-internships

In some rare cases, the Interdisciplinary Laboratory Activity (see for example most REE laboratory activities) is coded in the University system[10]. Only in these cases, the activity must be inserted in Study Plan with its coded name and no declaration must be forwarded to Dr. Fabio Forlani because it will be directly registered by the teacher as a normal course where the assessed and registered activity will be automatically included in "Free activities" (8 CFU), according to the approved Study Plan.

In the frame of the "Free activities", it is possible to exceed the total amount of 8 CFU. Students that already acquired courses for the 8 CFU in the "Free Activities" are allowed to follow an additional course, and it will be reported in the final study transcript, but it will not be computed in the final degree score.

Any out-of-plan (i.e. additional) exam can only be taken by students with an approved Study Plan but should not be included in the plan.

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to check as early as possible whether the delivery characteristics of the chosen courses are maintained also in **2026-2027**.

[7] See "Guidelines for the Degree Internship (DI) and the Final Examination of Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy (G64, BforB)"

[8] The registration code will be G64L00.

[9] It is mandatory to notify the mobility tutor in case you are planning to do the Interdisciplinary Laboratory Activity outside. It can be also abroad.

[10] The coded REE are those present in the University database of courses (for 2025-2026: https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/degree-courses-2025-2026)

The additional educational activities group (3 CFU)

For the international students (i.e., students without an Italian degree or diploma), the course "Additional Language skills: Italian" is recommended in the frame of the additional educational activities group (3 CFU) (see below the paragraph "International students" for other details).

For the other students, in the frame of the additional educational activities group (3 CFU), any activity different from university courses can be included as a coded course named "Other activities"[11] (https://www.unimi.it/it/corsi/insegnamenti-dei-corsi-di-laurea/2025/other-activities-laboratories-seminars). Examples are the participation to seminars, webinars, conferences, workshops, external courses, or the attendance to a language course (any language different from English and not the mother tongue). All these activities must be consistent with the general aims of BforB Master's Degree and cannot be formally a part of the program of an activated course that will be included in the Study Plan. In the presence of doubts regarding the possible validation, ask to Dr. Fabio Forlani.[12]

The announcements for specific activities are normally published in the "News" section of the BforB web site, in the "BforB Bullettin" (Microsoft Team) or in other University Departments or Faculties Boards. Such activities can be also carried out outside the University of Milan and can be identified by the student herself/himself.

In order to be validated as "Other activities", it is necessary to submit to Dr. Fabio Forlani (by email) a documentation (as pdf files) witnessing the participation and the student time commitment (in hours) involved in the activity.

Documentation that must be provided for each event must be:

-a formal signed attendance certificate, plus the flyer or announcement where i) the event-identifying details (e.g.: title, place, speaker, timetable, organization affiliation) and ii) the time (hours) commitment are clearly stated, plus a short report* of the event (0.5-1 page). If formal certificates are not delivered by the event organizing body, a simple attendance declaration is accepted, clearly handwritten in the back of a printout copy of the flyer/announcement and signed by the speaker or the organizer.

In the case of webinars/online courses these documentations must be presented:

i) a pdf print of the webinar/online course description/program/syllabus where, possibly, the hourly time commitment is indicated too;
ii) if expected, a receipt of the registration to the webinar/online course (which is usually an email);
iii) a print screen of the beginning of the first slide of the webinar where there should usually be the title and name of the speaker, or the outline of the webinar (only for webinars)**
iv) a print screen of the last slide of the webinar with greetings or conclusions (only for webinars)**
v) a short report* (half page, maximum one page) with the clear indication of time commitment required (in hours).
*The short report must mainly synthesize in few lines the novel knowledge that the student has acquired and must include in the headings: student name, date (or period) and exact title and location of the event (including possibly the web link), name of organizing institution, the hourly time commitment, and proposed CFU to be assigned to the described event (see the CFU-assigning table below).

[11] Next academic year (2026-2027), the name will be changed in "Complementary activities".
[12] To find out the number of credits that can be assigned, use the CFU assignment table as a cue (see below). It should be noted that the exact number of credits can be attributed only when the hourly commitment is clear upon the presentation of the aforementioned documentation.

**The iii) and iv) can be replaced by a certificate of attendance (if it is available for free), or by any document that can witness the effective participation of the student to the webinar or the online course completion.
The 3 CFU of additional educational activities can also be acquired through a laboratory activity, possibly extending the CFU acquired as Interdisciplinary Laboratory Activity in "free activities". The laboratory activity can also be within the final laboratory internship, by prolonging the research activities with a small side project not included in the final thesis dissertation. The activities will be evaluated and certified (1 CFU = 25 hours) by Dr. Fabio Forlani on behalf of the BforB Study Plan Committee. The laboratory activity must start with a formal declaration of the supervising Master's Degree teacher (needed for insurance purposes) and the registration will be certified upon presentation of attestation of the supervising teacher assessing the completion of laboratory activities. Both declarations (see forms, below) can be forwarded by email to Dr. Fabio Forlani for the final formal registration with the name of "Other activities". If laboratory activity will be carried out outside the University of Milan (Università degli Studi di Milano), follow the instructions described in this part "Activating an external internship or a thesis project with external internship" (and "Internship activation procedures and offers") in the site: https://www.unimi.it/en/study/traineeships-and-work/traineeships-and-internships/tutors-curricular-internships-and-ects-credits/agricultural-and-food-sciences-internships

Complete documentation can be submitted time by time, or in a cumulative email before the registration. In any case, the student is responsible in storing all the original documentation until Master's Degree is obtained. The registration can be carried out only once the student enrolls online (in SIFA) to a round of the "Other activities" and notices Dr. Fabio Forlani about. Many rounds (at least 6) of "Other activities" will be opened in each academic year.

REE CRISPRes[13] can be directly optioned in additional educational activities group during the online compilation of Study Plan and the exam registration will be as a normal exam.

International students.
The international students (i.e., students without an Italian degree or diploma) are strongly suggested to attain an Italian language proficiency at level A2 within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This level can be assessed by the end of the degree course in the following ways:
i) by submitting a language certificate achieved no more than three years prior to the submission, at level A2 or higher, recognised by the University (see "Certificates of Italian as a Foreign Language accepted by the University of Milan" at: https://www.unimi.it/en/study/language-proficiency/italian-language-foreigners-tests-and-courses). The language certificate must be uploaded through the service https://informastudenti.unimi.it/saw/ess?AUTH=SAML by choosing the category SLAM;
ii) by an entry-level test, organised by SLAM, which can be taken at the beginning of every semester.
Who fail to reach level A2 will have to attend a 60-hours Italian course organised by SLAM and to pass the final test during the I semester of the second year of study in order to earn 3 ECTS credits of "Additional Language Skills: Italian". International students will be directly contacted by the SLAM office and subscribed to the Italian test and course.
To be selected, the course "Additional Language skills: Italian" must be inserted in the frame of additional educational activities group in the Study Plan of international students.

[13] See note 3 on REE CRISPRes

Forms[14]:

Starting-Laboratory-Activity Declaration[15]

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the student [**name, surname**] ([**code number**]), actually enrolled at the [**enrolled year**: first or second year] in the [**academic year**] a.y. of the Master's Degree in Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy, will start on [**starting date**] a laboratory activity (internship) about [short topic description]. The laboratories involved in this activity are located in the [**name of the department or building and address**], and the student will be supervised by the undersigned…… [or by name. surname: if different by the undersigned].

Teacher [**name surname** and affiliation]

Place and Date

Signature

Attestation of Completion[16] of the Laboratory Activity/REE[17]

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that **[name, surname] ([code number])**, actually enrolled at the [enrolled year: first or second year] in the [academic year] a.y. of the Master's Degree in Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy, has fruitfully participated in the laboratory activity [or internship / or Research Enriched Education (REE) laboratory] about **[short topic description]** [any comment about his/her activity as a typical "reference letter"] during the [period] **for [total hours of the lab activity]** in laboratories of the [name of the department or building and address], under the **supervision of the undersigned…… [or of name surname of supervisor appointed by the undersigned]**.

Teacher [name surname and affiliation]

Place and Date

Signature

Attendance declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the student **[name, surname] ([code number])**, actually enrolled at the [enrolled year] in the [academic year] a.y. of the Master's Degree in Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy, has attended to the [**title, date of the event**, other details to identify the event].

Speaker or **Organizer** of the event [**name surname and affiliation**]

Place and date

Signature

[14] The boldface parts are important. All statements (with the exception of "Attendance declaration") must be written on the institutional heading paper of the signing teacher.
[15] Not needed for REE
[16] This can be freely structured as a reference letter for the student, but the boldface information must be present.
[17] In the case of REE, this attestation is requested only for not coded REE. In the case of coded REE, this attestation is requested only in the rare event it is registered as "Other activities", and **the REE teacher must also include: "I will not register the APPROVED evaluation on SIFA/UniMIA"**.

CFU assignation table (approved on 24/06/2019, formally modified on 23/09/2020)[18]

Activity	**Time involvement**	**CFU**
Seminar/Conference/Journal Club	< 2 hours	0.1
Student oral speech in a seminar		0.25
Conference/workshop	half a day < 5 hours	0.25
	1 day ≥ 5 hours	0.5
	more days	0.5 / day
Course		Theoretical: 1 / 8 hours
		Practical: 1 / 16 hours
Laboratory activity		1 / 25 hours

[18] This table has no formal value, and it is used as a referring guideline in the CFU assignation.

Courses selected by students in previous years for the composition of "Free activities" (8 CFUs).

This is a list of the courses selected in the past years by BforB students in their study plan as "Free activities". The listed courses are all delivered in English language, and it is reported here as a not-exhaustive cue for the search of courses of interest to be selected for "Free activities", for whose composition you should read carefully the "Programme description" ("Manifesto degli Studi") of the Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy Master Degree Course.

It is strongly suggested to carefully check i) the updated course syllabus (see link) – which can change year-by-year –, ii) the course activation in the year/semester in which you would plan to attend the lessons, and iii) the eventual restrictions to the number of participants. Only for courses not delivered by BforB, before the definitive inclusion in the study plan, it is necessary to undertake an email consultation with the teacher of the course of interest, communicating her/him the academic year in which you intend to attend the course and checking together her/him the pre-requisites required for the attendance. Sometimes basic requisites are met also considering the own previous bachelor studies. Please, then report the whole outcome of the consultation to the study plan tutor (fabio.forlani@unimi.it) by pasting as such the email thread of the consultation.

Course Name	Delivering Master Degree	Syllabus link	CFUs	Note
Applied Biocatalysis	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/applied-biocatalysis-1	6	If not already selected as eligible mandatory course
Bio-based innovation in food industry	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/bio-based-innovation-food-industry	6	If not already selected as eligible mandatory course
Biomolecular experiment planning	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/biomolecular-experiment-planning-0	2	
Biostatistics and design of experiments in biotechnology	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/biostatistics-and-design-experiments-biotechnology-0	6	If not already selected as eligible mandatory course
Developing soft skills in science: case-studies from microbial biotechnology	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/developing-soft-skills-science-case-studies-microbial-biotechnology-0	6	If not already selected as eligible mandatory course
Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/functional-foods-and-nutraceuticals-0	6	If not already selected as eligible mandatory course
Molecular Analysis and Traceability of Biotechnological Products	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/molecular-analysis-and-traceability-biotechnological-products-0	6	If not already selected as eligible mandatory course

Molecular biobased approaches for plant protection	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/molecular-biobased-approaches-plant-protection-0	6	
Plant microbiome-based strategies for agri-environmental biotechnologies	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/plant-microbiome-based-strategies-agri-environmental-biotechnologies-0	4	
REE CRISPRes - a workshop on genome editing technologies	Biotechnology for the Bioeconomy	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/ree-crispres-workshop-genome-editing-technologies-0	3	Check with the course teacher the admission rules and delivery time
Agriculture and Sustainable Development	Law and Sustainable Development	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/agriculture-and-sustainable-development-0	6	
Methods in Bioinformatics	Molecular biotechnology and bioinformatics	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/methods-bioinformatics-1	6	
Structural Bioinformatics	Molecular biotechnology and bioinformatics	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/structural-bioinformatics-1	6	
Photobiology and Bioenergy	Plant Science	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/photobiology-and-bioenergy-2	6	
Plant Development	Plant Science	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/plant-development-0	6	
Programming in Python	Quantitative Biology	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/programming-python-0	6	
Patents and Management of Innovation	Sustainable Industrial Chemistry	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/patents-and-management-innovation-1	6	
Environmental Law	Environmental change and global sustainability	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/environmental-law-5	6	
Waste Management and Sustainability	Environmental change and global sustainability	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/waste-management-and-sustainability-0	6	
Biodiversity Dynamics and Conservation	F6B, Environmental change and global sustainability	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/biodiversity-dynamics-and-conservation-0	8	
Economics and Management	Sustainable Industrial Chemistry	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/economics-and-management-1	6	
Protected Cultivation Systems	Crops and Plant Sciences	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/protected-cultivation-systems-0	6	
Proximal Sensing and Data Analysis for Agricultural Products	Crops and Plant Sciences	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/proximal-sensing-and-data-analysis-agricultural-products-1	6	
Molecular Bases of Taste	Human Nutrition and Food Science	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/molecular-bases-taste-0	4	Check if delivered in the academic year of interest

Nanotechnology in the food industry	Food Science and Technology	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/nanotechnology-food-industry-0	4	
Microbial Biotechnology in Oenology	Viticulture and Enology Sciences	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/microbial-biotechnology-oenology	5	Check with the course teacher the delivering period
Sensory and Consumer Science for The Wine Industry	Viticulture and Enology Sciences	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/sensory-and-consumer-science-wine-industry	5	
Environmental and Food Law	Environmental and Food Economics	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/environmental-and-food-law-0	6	
Food Industry Design Technology and Innovation	Environmental and Food Economics	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/food-industry-design-technology-and-innovation-2	6	
Project Management for Sustainable Development	Environmental and Food Economics	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/project-management-sustainable-development-1	3	
Water Resources Sustainable Economy	Environmental and food economics	https://www.unimi.it/en/education/degree-programme-courses/2026/water-resources-sustainable-economy-1	3	

Courses about soft skills that can be included as “Free activities” (8 CFUs).

Several degree programmes at Milan University are complemented by training in soft skills to provide students with competencies, including interpersonal and communication skills, applicable across all professional careers. In May 2018 the Council of the European Union adopted recommendations on eight key competencies: literacy; multilingual; math, science, technology, engineering; digital; personal, social, and learning to learn; citizenship; entrepreneurship; cultural awareness and expression. The University of Milan has a catalogue of soft-skills training courses to supplement the core subjects of the degree programme with teachings grouped in four areas (https://www.unimi.it/en/study/bachelor-and-master-study/following-your-programme-study/soft-skills). University of Milan students are eligible to participate in these courses including them in their free activities. Please note that certain courses in the catalogue are specific to a particular programme and may only be chosen by students in that programme; for all of them enrolment is limited and attendance is obligatory: contact the teacher if you are interested in any of the courses. Details are provided in the specific course syllabus.