

Course Unit	Polymer Science and Product Engineering		Field of study	Polymers	
Master in	Chemical Engineering		School	School of Technology and Management	
Academic Year	2025/2026	Year of study	1	Level	2-1
Type	Semestral	Semester	1	ECTS credits	6.0
Code	6362-756-1101-00-25				
Workload (hours)	162	Contact hours	T 30	TP 30	PL -
			TC -	S -	E -
			OT -	O -	

T - Lectures; TP - Lectures and problem-solving; PL - Problem-solving, project or laboratory; TC - Fieldwork; S - Seminar; E - Placement; OT - Tutorial; O - Other

Name(s) of lecturer(s) Maria Filomena Filipe Barreiro

### Learning outcomes and competences

At the end of the course unit the learner is expected to be able to:

1. Know some historical and industrial perspectives on polymer science;
2. Identify the most relevant synthetic polymers, associated chemistry and used polymerization processes;
3. Recognize the most relevant, natural or natural-based polymers, having in view industrial applications;
4. Understand average molecular weight and polydispersity concepts, and know the major experimental determination techniques;
5. Understand polymer morphology, and know some experimental techniques to access structural, morphological and thermal characterization;
6. Know polymer processing techniques;
7. Learn about specialty polymers and recent developments in polymer science;
8. Know product engineering topics aimed at designing new polymer-based products oriented towards new developments, sustainability, and functional products.

### Prerequisites

Before the course unit the learner is expected to be able to:

Demonstrate background knowledge of Mathematics, Physics and Organic Chemistry.

### Course contents

Identify synthetic polymers, associated chemistry and polymerization processes; Know natural or natural-based polymers; Understand the concept of molecular weight, polydispersity and techniques for its determination; Learn morphological concepts and techniques for structural, morphological and thermal characterization; Know polymer processing techniques; Know specialty polymers and new developments; Know and apply concepts of product engineering.

### Course contents (extended version)

1. Introduction
  - Macromolecules, historical perspectives, technological and economic importance;
  - Monomer, polymer, repeating unit and polymerization degree;
  - Homopolymers and copolymers;
  - Tacticity;
  - Linear, branched and crosslinking polymers;
  - Amorphous and crystalline polymers;
  - Thermoplastic and thermoset polymers.
2. Synthetic polymers
  - Polyurethanes, polyamides, polyesters, polyethers, phenolic resins and epoxides;
  - Applications;
  - Polymers produced by polycondensation and polyaddition;
  - Polymerization techniques (bulk, solution, emulsion and suspension).
3. Natural and natural derived polymers
  - Natural rubber; polysaccharides, polyamides and polyesters;
  - Importance as biomaterials.
4. Degree of polymerization and molecular weight
  - Molecular weight distribution and average molecular weight;
  - Degree of polymerization and average molecular weight in number, weight;
  - Experimental determination of molecular weight: absolute and relative methods;
  - End-group analysis, membrane and vapour pressure osmometry, light scattering;
  - Intrinsic viscosity measurements and size exclusion chromatography.
5. Morphology concepts
  - Morphological changes: linear amorphous polymers, crystalline polymers and crosslinking polymers;
  - Glass transition temperature (T<sub>g</sub>);
  - Melting temperature (T<sub>m</sub>);
  - Crystallization kinetics;
  - Experimental techniques for determining crystallinity: density measures and X-ray diffraction;
  - Structure-properties relationship;
  - Effect of molecular weight and composition on T<sub>g</sub>;
  - Experimental techniques for T<sub>g</sub> and T<sub>m</sub> evaluation: dilatometry and differential scanning calorimetry.
6. Technological aspects
  - Extrusion and molding techniques, composites, polymer blends, compounding;
  - Extrusion, injection and thermoforming processing. Composites, nanocomposites and polymeric blends.
7. Novel polymers and applications
  - Water-based, conducting polymers, polymers derived from renewable resources, microencapsulation;
  - Hydrogels, biocompatible and biodegradable polymers, adhesives devoted for biomedical applications.
  - Polymeric nanofibers and their applications.
8. Product engineering concepts
  - Steps to reach the production phase: identify and classify consumer needs;
  - Develop product ideas, apply criteria of ideas selection, and outline manufacturing processes.
9. Product development project.

### Recommended reading

1. Fried, Polymer Science and Technology, 2nd Edition, Prentice Hall, 2009;
2. Campbell, Introduction to Synthetic Polymers, 3th Edition, Oxford University Press, 2011;
3. Al-Maadeed, Ponnammam, Carignano Eds. , Polymer Science and Innovative Applications: Materials, Techniques, and Future Developments, 1st Edition, Elsevier Science Publishing, 2020;
4. N. D. Polychronopoulos, J. Vlachopoulos, Polymer Processing and Rheology, Functional Polymers, 1st Edition, Springer International Publishing, 2019.
5. Cussler and Moggridge; Chemical Product Design, 2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2011

**Teaching and learning methods**

The teaching methodologies involve theoretical and theoretical-practical classes for the exposition of concepts and problem solving. Additionally, a project for the development of an innovative product of polymeric origin will be carried out under a tutorial regime, where students, organized into groups, will combine the knowledge acquired in polymer science with that of product engineering.

**Assessment methods**

1. Alternative 1 - (Regular, Student Worker) (Final, Supplementary, Special)
  - Development Topics - 50% (Product development project.)
  - Final Written Exam - 50%
2. Alternative 2 - (Regular, Student Worker) (Special)
  - Final Written Exam - 100%
3. Alternative 3 - (Student Worker) (Final, Supplementary)
  - Final Written Exam - 100%

**Language of instruction**

English

**Electronic validation**

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07-10-2025	10-10-2025	01-11-2025