

# UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

*University of London*

## EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

*For the following qualifications :-*

*M. Sc.*

### **Biochem Eng G23: Integrated Downstream Processing**

COURSE CODE : **BENGE23**

DATE : **03-MAY-02**

TIME : **14.30**

TIME ALLOWED : **3 hours**

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Biochemical Engineering

G23

Answer **FOUR QUESTIONS**.

**ALL** questions carry a total of **25 MARKS** each, distributed as shown [ ]

1. The specification of many downstream processing operations is based on the use of theoretical models and requires assumptions be made about the system being described. In reality performance often differs quite significantly from that predicted by these ideal equations.

Taking two of the following operations as examples explain why deviations from ideality occur and discuss how the differences are dealt with by biochemical engineers.

- a) Centrifugation [12.5]
- b) Membrane selection [12.5]
- c) Filtration [12.5]

2. Define the following and explain their use and significance in bioprocess design.

- a) Sigma Theory [5]
- b) rejection coefficient [5]
- c) micronisation [5]
- d) Window of Operation [5]
- e) Van Deemter curve [5]

3. a) The following data was generated during a chromatographic separation. Discuss how you might use this information to determine suitable conditions of operation for the step? [10]

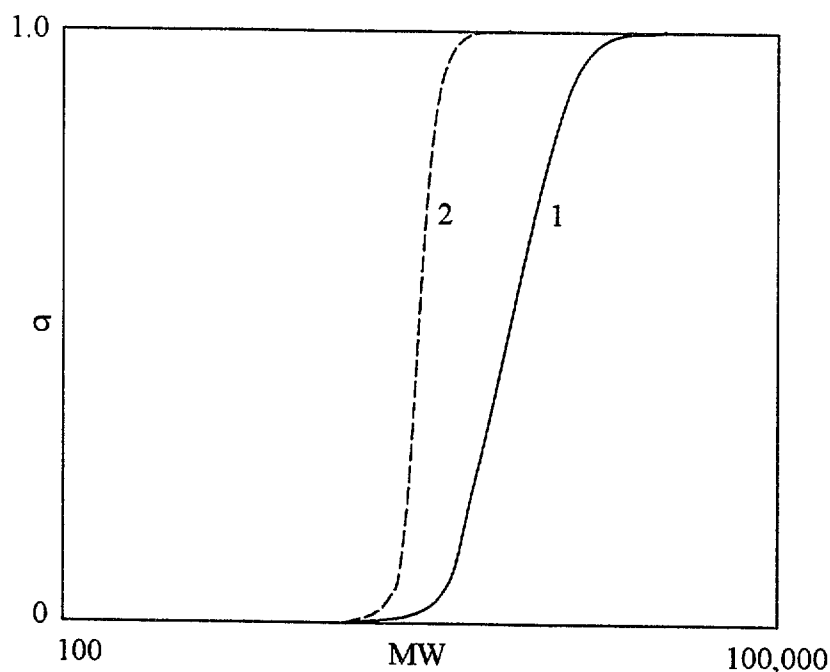
Flowrate (cm <sup>3</sup> /min)	Product peak dimensions	
	Height (cm)	Base width (cm)
50	20	10
100	15	5
150	10	10

- b) How would you recommend scaling up of a chromatographic separation? [5]
- c) "Expanded bed chromatography provides an alternative to conventional processing based upon packed bed systems." Discuss to what extent this is a valid statement. [10]

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4. The specification of a membrane unit for the concentration of a labile protein requires estimation of key design parameters as well as a selection of the appropriate module and membrane type. Provide a checklist for this specification that reflects all aspects of operation including re-use. [15]

The following figure presents rejection data for two membranes. Discuss the salient details and relate these to likely fractionation and transmission behaviour. [10]



5. a) In practice the conditions selected for many unit operations require that a balance be struck in order to achieve an acceptable output specification. Taking the example of high pressure disruption and subsequent solids removal discuss how such a trade-off comes about and detail the procedure you might adopt in order to identify a suitable operating strategy. [15]
- b) The operating conditions chosen will need to reflect the capabilities of subsequent steps in a process. How might the adoption of an expanded bed process alter the decisions reached in part a) of this question? [10]

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6. Briefly describe the mechanisms whereby high salt concentrations can lead to precipitations of proteins. A commentary of how the choice of salt type can affect protein structure should be included. [5]

A 700L batch of clarified fermentation broth is contacted with a solution of saturated ammonium sulphate (500L) to recover and concentrate an extracellular protein. A continuous disc stack centrifuge is used for this recovery process. The protein yield at the full scale is just 50% while at laboratory scale using the same precipitating agent solution the yield was ~95%.

Prepare a full analysis of how this reduction of yield may be occurring. [10]

You suspect that much of the problem lies in the properties of the precipitate particles and how easily they are recovered by centrifugation.

Prepare a design of a reactor to work with just 70mL of clarified broth which produces precipitate of the same physical properties as that obtained at the large scale. Give full reasons for all your choices of design. [10]

Details of large-scale reactor; height = diameter; baffled vessel; stirrer speed 30 rpm; stirrer diameter = one third vessel diameter; clarified broth viscosity and density  $0.010 \text{ Nsm}^{-2}$  and  $1000 \text{ kg/m}^3$  respectively.

7. A recombinant strain of *Saccharopolyspora erythraea* has been engineered to produce a novel antibiotic, AB1. During fermentation, however, the strain continues to produce two related antibiotic compounds, AB2 and AB3. The table below gives the mass fraction of each antibiotic in the fermentation broth together with their equilibrium distribution coefficients for extraction with butyl acetate at pH 9.

	AB1	AB2	AB3
Mass fraction ( $\text{g kg}^{-1}$ )	20.0	14.5	10.0
Distribution coefficient, K	10.0	3.0	6.0

- a) It is intended to recover AB1 at the pilot scale by extraction with butyl acetate using a centrifugal contactor. The flow rates of broth and solvent to be used are  $100 \text{ kg hr}^{-1}$  and  $40 \text{ kg hr}^{-1}$  respectively. If it is necessary to recover 95% w/w of AB1, and the centrifugal contactor corresponds to 2 theoretical stages, estimate the mass fraction of each antibiotic in the solvent extract. Clearly state any assumptions made. [17]
- b) Briefly outline the design and operation of centrifugal liquid-liquid contactors and their advantages compared to alternative contactor designs. [8]

A sheet of graph paper is supplied.

**END OF PAPER**