

John McCarthy studied biochemistry at Oxford University and followed this up with a PhD in membrane biochemistry/biophysics, in which he studied how electron transport-dependent ion translocation can be coupled to chemical synthesis. As an EMBO Fellow in Germany, he studied the synthesis and assembly of the membrane-associated proton-translocating ATPase in *Escherichia coli*. This was followed by a switch in research orientation towards posttranscriptional control in eukaryotic systems. JEGM became Group Leader and then Department Head at the National Biotechnology Research Institute in Germany. He returned to the UK to become a Professor in (and then Chairman of) the Department of Biomolecular Sciences at UMIST in 1996. In 1998, he took charge of a new initiative to build the UK's first large-scale university-based centre dedicated to interdisciplinary bioscience. The Manchester Interdisciplinary Biocentre (>550 staff) will house physical scientists, mathematicians, biochemists and engineers, creating a unique environment that will foster interdisciplinary research and technology development at the interface to biology. The JEGM group currently applies a range of biochemical and biophysical techniques to the study of biomolecular systems, including the ribosome.