**INTRODUCTION**

**An Introductory Guide to Anatomy & Physiology** aims to give students a firm understanding of the structures and functions of the systems of the human body. The organisation of the body is explained from the chemical and cellular level to each of the biological systems and their interrelationships. Common pathologies are also noted.

This textbook is written to support Level 3 and 4 qualifications for which a knowledge of basic anatomy and physiology is essential, including Nursing and Health Care, and Complementary, Massage and Beauty Therapies.

Anatomy means the study of the body structure. In order to avoid confusion when referring to parts of the body within this structure, it is necessary to have a standardised system of anatomical descriptions and positions. All of these terms refer to what is known as the standard anatomical position: the body is standing erect, facing the observer, with arms extended and the palms of the hands facing forwards.