

The Royal Agricultural University

Programme Specification:

FdSc Wildlife Conservation and Countryside Management

2023-24

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24]

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Module descriptors.

Section 1 – Material Programme Information

Validating body	The Royal Agricultural University		
Teaching Institution	The Royal Agricultural University		
Subject Area	Agricultural Science and Practice (ASP)		
Entry Award(s)	FdSc Wildlife Conservation and Countryside Management		
Final Award and exit route(s)	FdSc Wildlife Conservation and Countryside Management Certificate in Higher Education Wildlife Conservation and Countryside Management		
Programme title	FdSc Wildlife Conservation and Countryside Management		
Location(s) of study	The Royal Agricultural University		
Mode of study	Full time	2 years	Part-time 4 years
Language of study	English		
Programme start month	September		
Period of validation	2020 - 2026		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
Entry requirements (this should be the standard University entry requirements unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board, and include UCAS entry profile for UG programmes and IELTS)	<p>Required: GCSE minimum five GCSEs at Grade C/4 including English Language and Mathematics (or Maths Numeracy for Welsh applicants) plus satisfactory level 3 qualifications:</p> <p>A-Level: (example grades CD) – minimum of 56 UCAS tariff points (points to include at least one full A-Level or equivalent qualifications)</p> <p>C&G Advanced Technical/BTEC - Level 3 Extended Diploma (1080) at Merit-Pass-Pass</p> <p>International Baccalaureate: 24 points</p> <p>Access to Higher Education: 45 credits at level 3 of which minimum of 15 must be awarded at Merit or higher. (Pass in Functional Skills level 2 are accepted in lieu of GCSE English & Mathematics)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other level 3 qualifications will be considered. 		
UCAS Code	D450		
Quercus code	FWC		
HECoS Code	100998 – Sustainable Agriculture and Landscape Development 100864 – Ecosystem Ecology and Land Use		

QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points	<p>Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2019)</p> <p>Foundation Degree Qualification benchmark (2010)</p> <p>Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies (2022)</p> <p>QAA Subject Benchmark Statements</p> <p>Foundation Degree Sectoral Framework for Environmental Industries (Lantra 2005)</p> <p>Environmental Conservation Sector Skills Agreement (Lantra 2010)</p> <p>Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2016) A Guide to CIEEM Accreditation for Undergraduate Degree Programmes and Named Pathways</p>
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 4 and 5
Approval at AQSC	June 2020
Version	<p>V4.0 July 2020</p> <p>V4.1 Aug 2021; removal of reference to Cirencester College.</p> <p>v.5 Jan 2022, update to assessment for module 2366 Conservation Science Study Tour</p> <p>v.6 ASPC July 2022: Change in programme title from FdSc British Wildlife Conservation</p> <p>v7.</p>

Section 2 – Programme structure

The structure of all University awards complies with the University's [Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes](#) which includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a programme;
- Consequences of failure for referrals, compensation and exist awards;
- Calculation and classification of awards.

FdSc Wildlife Conservation and Countryside Management (240 credits)

The accumulation of credits to include a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 and a minimum of 120 credits at Level 5 through the assessment of taught modules as detailed below.

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Elective	Semester
Level 4					
1434	Introduction to Environment, Wildlife and Heritage	4	15	Core	1

1431	Wildlife Handling, Ethics and Conservation	4	15	Core	1
1421	Species and Ecosystems	4	15	Core	1
1436	Practical Conservation Skills & Work Placement	4	30	Core	1+2
1430	Wildlife Ecology and Survey	4	15	Core	2
1007	Soil and Environmental Science	4	15	Core	2
1422	Ecosystem Services and Sustainability	4	15	Core	2
Level 5					
2360	Supervisory Skills and Volunteer Management	5	15	Core	1+2
2136	Landscape Conservation	5	15	Core	2
2361	Habitat Classification and Management	5	15	Core	1
2378	Research and Evidence	5	15	Core	2
2363	Biodiversity Conservation	5	15	Core	1
2349	The Resilience of Agro-Ecosystems	5	15	Core	1
2365	Education, Recreation and Access	5	15	Core	2
2366	Conservation Science Study Tour	5	15	Core	2
	Total Credits: FdSc Wildlife Conservation and Countryside Management		240		

Section 3 – Programme overview and Programme Aims

The intended educational aims of this Foundation Degree are to:

- Provide education and training delivering the appropriate knowledge and skills required for future employees in wildlife conservation and ecological occupations.
- Promote the acquisition of transferable skills to meet the future needs of employment in wildlife, conservation, and ecology-related occupations. Make available a progression route for those completing level 3 education and for those already employed in relevant agencies as part of their continuing personal and professional development activities.
- Facilitate a progression route for students who successfully complete this Foundation Degree to proceed onto an appropriate BSc Honours conversion programme such as the BSc (Honours) in Wildlife Conservation and Countryside Management at the RAU.
- Stimulate a desire to pursue lifelong learning in both vocational and academic subjects.
- Enable existing workers in such jobs to pursue their lifelong learning further and to develop their skills through studying on this programme through part-time attendance.
- Assist both employed and volunteer workers who complete this programme to understand and respond to the changing and increasing pressures to conserve and enhance both the farmed and natural environments.

This programme focuses on conservation of wildlife and habitats. Employer feedback strongly indicated that knowledge of environments and species is a significant employability advantage. However, since conservation is naturally a global issue, international conservation organisations, case studies and species also form an important part of the teaching.

'Wildlife Conservation' is a broad study area including animals and plants, their interactions with each other and their environment, and their interaction with humans.

Section 4 – Programme intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

Knowledge and Understanding

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Concepts, principles and theories of wildlife conservation and management both in the field and within ex-situ collections in line with the principles of sustainable development and the ecosystem approach.	1434, 1421, 1007, 1422, 1436, 2136, 2363, 2349, 2365, 2366
2.	The roles of regulatory and advisory bodies and the policies, legislation and designations involved in the protection of wildlife and habitats in both rural and urban contexts.	1434, 1430, 1431, 1007, 1436, 2360, 2136
3.	The ecology and conservation status of a range of species and ecosystems both in terms of theoretical understanding and live case studies from conservation practitioners.	1430, 1421, 1436, 2361, 2378, 2363, 2366
4.	The importance of wildlife conservation and sustainable use of environmental resources alongside the expectations of industry, agriculture, and society and the challenges associated with this at local, regional and global scales.	1434, 1007, 1422, 2136, 2363, 2349, 2365

Intellectual, Professional, Key skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Understand subject specific theories, concepts and principles.	1430, 1421, 1007, 1422, 2136, 2363, 2365, 2366
2.	Application of the skills necessary for academic study and enquiry.	1434, 1430, 2136, 2365
3.	Demonstrate the skills necessary to plan, conduct and report on a variety of wildlife, habitat, and environmental conservation management projects.	1421, 2360, 2361, 2378, 2349

4.	Apply professional judgement to balance risks, costs, benefits, safety, reliability, aesthetics and environmental impact.	1431, 1422, 1436, 2360
Programme specific skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Plan and undertake a variety of species and environmental surveys, and analyse and report the results.	1430, 1421, 1007, 2136, 2361, 2378, 2365
2.	Appreciate the role of academic research in ecology and conservation management and be able to design and carry out research projects consistent with level of study.	1430, 1421, 2136
3.	Undertake a range of professional practical skills including taxonomic identification, wildlife handling and survey, conservation and land management techniques.	1431, 1436, 2360, 2361, 2378, 2363
4.	Be able to make positive contributions to wildlife conservation by combining real world practical conservation activities with academic theory.	1430, 1431, 1421, 1007, 1436, 2360, 2136, 2361, 2378, 2365, 2366

Section 5 – Learning and Teaching Approach

Teaching and learning is achieved by:

Lectures

One of the methods of delivery of learning during the University-based phases of the programme will be by lectures. Lecturers aim to:

- Provide information
- Encourage students to pursue additional information on subjects covered
- Provide various views on subjects
- Explain difficult ideas and issues relating to particular areas
- Demonstrate ways in which students can widen and increase their depth of knowledge.

Seminars/ Tutorials

These will provide opportunities for dialogues between students themselves as well as lecturers. Exchanges of information and ideas can be achieved under the direction of tutors in seminars/tutorials. Through these meetings students should be able to:

- Express and share their views
- Develop their ability to participate in group activities.

Visits

Visits to wildlife, conservation, and environmental management sites will be an important part of the programme. These will aid the reinforcement and application of information learned through more formal study.

Practical activities & Enquiry-based Learning

A significant part of the programme is practical fieldwork. This includes hands-on management and restoration of habitats and species (e.g. grassland/ woodland restoration for butterfly conservation), biodiversity surveys (e.g. UKHab Surveys, Phase One habitat surveys, farmland bird monitoring), and habitat management experiment plots. There is also ample opportunity to meet and work alongside and to network with a range of organisations and people in the sectors.

Field activities are also combined with an enquiry-based approach to learning. Management questions are explored with students and are refined into actual field experiments where data is generated and analysed, giving evidence-based recommendations for better management approaches. This combines the academic and practical elements of the course giving solid 'real-world' outcomes.

Section 6 – Assessment Approach

There is now minimal use of exams in the traditional sense, with only a few in-class test, with more emphasis on a range of coursework type and some practical assessments (e.g. animal handling). The emphasis on other forms of assessment stems from the need for students to have the skills and outcomes to make a difference. A wide range of assessment techniques will be applied throughout the programme to confirm learning outcomes. These will include:

- Academic research reports
- Professional reports
- Employers reporting on work-based experience
- Case studies
- Essays
- Conservation management plans
- Digital in-class tests
- Oral presentations
- Portfolios/appraisals
- Practical skills
- Production of publicity and information materials

Formative feedback is given on a number of modules guiding students at strategic points of the Programme prior to summative assessment submissions.

Section 7 - Course work grading and Feedback

Assessment is an integral part of the learning experience of students. All University programmes are assessed by a range of assessment activities, each developed to provide the most appropriate means of demonstrating the student's achievement of a specified learning outcome. An assessment may assess more than one learning outcome (see Section 4).

The University operates standard pass criteria which can be found in the RAU Academic Regulations.

The normal basis for awards will be the overall average score in the final assessment, graded as follows:

Distinction	70% and above
Merit	60% - 69%
Pass	40% - 59%
Fail	Below 40%

The final assessment will comprise an average score of the results of level 4 weighted at 30% plus the results of level 5 weighted at 70%.

In addition to assigning a percentage mark to the work, the tutor adds comments; usually about the strengths and weaknesses of the piece as well as advice about improving the work. All assessment decisions are subject to internal moderation and external scrutiny by the programme's External Examiners. Students must ensure they retain all coursework in case the External Examiner(s) wishes to see it.

Section 8 – Employability

Our graduates have gone on to pursue careers with nationally-recognised organisations and in roles such as:

- Countryside Ranger
- Wildlife Reserve Manager
- Ecological Surveyor/ Consultant
- Conservation / Biodiversity Officer
- Farming and Wildlife Advisor
- Environmental Education Officer

The programme has developed strong linkages with a wide number and range of conservation and environmental organisations including the Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, Cotswold Conservation Board (AONB), Butterfly Conservation, various Ecological Consultancies, Local Authorities, amongst many others. Students have multiple opportunities to meet with and often work alongside organisations and people from the conservation sector via our practical field activities and teaching sessions.

The programme also provides a step towards into higher-degree levels such as MSc's and PhD's, research programmes, and other opportunities in academia.

Section 9 – Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The programme is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 6 years. This process ensures that the programme engages with the applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All programmes are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys

- Feedback from Student Course Representatives
- Annual Programme Monitoring