Royal Agricultural University

The Royal Agricultural University

Programme Specification:

FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management

2024-25

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25]

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
Entry Award(s)	FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management
Final Award and exit route(s)	FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management
Programme title	FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management
Location(s) of study	The Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester
Full time study	2 years
Part-time study	4 years
Language of study	English
Programme start month	September
Period of validation	September 2019 – August 2025
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)	5 GCSE's at Grade C or 4 including English Language and Maths plus 56 UCAS points to include one A level, or equivalent Level 3 qualification. This may include vocational qualifications.
UCAS Code	D401
Quercus Code	FA
HECos Code	100517 – Agriculture, 100978 - Farm Management
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points	Foundation Degree prospectus. HEFCE 2000. The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies. QAA 2014. Subject Benchmark Statements – Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences. QAA 2016. Foundation Degree – Characteristics Statement. QAA 2016. Foundation Degree Sectoral Framework for Land Management and Production. Lantra 2005. Agricultural Management – National Occupational Standards. Lantra 2011. QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 4 and 5
Approval at AQSC	05 July 2019

Version	V.1 Removal of 1117, replaced with 1125 Agriscience. Removal of module 1122 Livestock Production 1, replaced with new module 1126 Livestock Husbandry. May AQSC V2. AQSC March 2023: Replace 1118 with 1052 and 2125 with 2226 V3. AQSC Oct 2023: Replace 2226 with 2380 V4. Replace 1400 with 1440

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 Agriculture and Farm Management (240 credits)
The accumulation of credits to include a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 and a maximum of 120 credits at Level 5, through the assessment of taught modules as detailed below.

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Optional	Semester
Level 4					
1442	Applied Plant Science	4	15	Core	1
1123	Mechanisation and Buildings	4	15	Core	1
1125	Agriscience	4	15	Core	1
1440	Academic and Practical Skills	4	15	Core	1
1116	Accounts and Economics	4	15	Core	2
1120	Farm Business Management	4	15	Core	2
1121	General Agriculture	4	15	Core	2
1441	Applied Animal Science	4	15	Core	2
Level 5					
2380	Agri-Food Policy and Legislation	5	15	Core	1
2375	Livestock Husbandry Systems	5	15	Core	1
2131	Work Based Learning	5	15	Core	1
2342	Farm Business Planning and Operation	5	30	Core	1+2
2373	Agronomy	5	15	Core	2
2341	Commodities Marketing and Data Handling	5	15	Core	2
2343	Land, Property and Woodland Management	5	15	Core	2
	Total credits: FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management		**120**		

Section 3 – Programme overview and Programme aims

The educational aims of the programme will be to provide students with:

- The development of their learning in agriculture and farm management in a flexible manner on either a full-time or part-time study basis.

- Technical agricultural and farm management skills and knowledge for work in land-based businesses.

- A learning experience that is directly related to the needs of employers, a number of whom were consulted in the development and on-going running of this Foundation Degree programme.

- Transferable skills to meet the future needs of employment in the land-based sector and other industries.

- An opportunity to progress on to an honour's degree programme and further professional qualification, without the need for any bridging course.

- A stimulus to pursue life-long learning in both vocational and academic subjects.

These aims will be achieved through the delivery of a programme with flexible modes of study, including work-based learning and skills development. The programme has been developed through wide consultations with employers in land-based businesses and the Sector Skills Council for the Environmental and Land-based Sector (Lantra).

The Foundation Degree has been designed to allow students to develop greater academic skills through the programme as they progress from Certificate level modules at stage 4 to Intermediate level modules at stage 5.
On completion of the Foundation Degree, students will have the opportunity to progress to the BSc Hons Agricultural Management Top Up Degree. The articulation between the two programmes has been considered carefully in the module structure and in the individual module design.

Section 4 – Programme Sustainability

At the heart of the foundation degree programme is Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. The level four modules in applied plant and animal science together with modules in agri-science and general agriculture introduce underpinning knowledge and skills to equip students to develop their learning in this arena. These modules are complimented by modules in mechanisation and buildings, accounts and economics and farm business management that seek to embed the development of sustainable agricultural businesses able to drive forward food production to end hunger, achieve improved levels of food security and improve people's nutrition.

In the second year of the programme, the underpinning knowledge developed in year one is developed further. For example, the module livestock husbandry systems builds on the applied science module by examining in more detail the key components of market led, environmentally sensitive, sustainable production of ruminant and non-ruminant species. It explores the impact of livestock production on the pollution of soil, air and water in line with SGG's. This relates to both SDG goal 15 and SDG goal 13.

The RAU's food and farming strategy is the way for foundation degree programme students to put the theory they have learned in the classroom into practice. The aim of the strategy is to increase the amount of 'home' produced food by the University and doing so sustainably. Students can see how what they've learned is being put into practice. In addition, students on the degree are given access to a wide range of visits and trips that seeks to take the theory into the field. This is supplemented by the RAU's unique access to the Bathurst Estate.

Section 5 – Programme intended learning outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	**Module Code/s**
1.	The principles of crop and livestock production, management and marketing and the mechanisation of agricultural production.	1442, 1441, 1125, 1123
2.	How to apply business management techniques to land-based businesses and use them in different approaches to problem solving.	1120, 2342
3.	The importance of sustainable development and environmental management in the rural sector.	2343
4.	The roles, impact and responsibilities of regulatory and other influencing bodies on land-based businesses.	1121, 2380
5.	The limits of their knowledge and how this may influence analyses and interpretations.	1440, 2380
Intellectual, Professional, Key skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	**Module Code/s**
1.	How to acquire and apply research methodology and problem-solving techniques.	1440
2.	How to evaluate the usefulness and relevance of literature and other data to crop and animal production, farm management and related rural issues.	2341, 2342
3.	How to research, collect and critically evaluate information relating to problem solving in land-based businesses.	1120, 2342
4.	How to propose and test hypotheses using appropriate techniques.	1440
5.	How to apply intellectual skills to balance costs, benefits, risks, health and safety and environmental impact in real life situations.	1116, 1120, 2380
6.	How to apply practical skills and associated knowledge in a working environment.	2131
7.	How to perform work related tasks at commercial speed, in a safe and competent manner with minimal guidance/supervision.	2131
8.	How to analyse technical and financial data so as to determine their validity and relevance to land-based enterprises.	1116, 2373, 2341
9.	How to prepare business plans for land-based enterprises, including strategic planning and problem solving, so as to achieve the objectives of a business.	2342, 2343

Knowledge and Understanding		
Programme specific skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	**Module Code/s**
1.	Analyse and identify the attributes of a successful rural business.	1120, 1116
2.	Undertake the development and implementation of a sustainable business plan for a rural business.	2342
3.	Demonstrate the acquisition of key technical skills and knowledge relevant to rurally based businesses and employers.	2373, 2131, 2373
4.	Demonstrate an awareness of the environmental, social and political context in which rural businesses operate	1121, 2380
5.	Assess alternative approaches to the utilisation of land in the overall context of sustainability and food production	2343

Section 6 – Approach to Learning and Teaching delivery

This Foundation Degree has been designed so that students can study flexibly, either on a full-time or part-time basis. The programme can be completed full-time over 2 years or part-time over 4 years.

Phase II
One work-based module relating to:
The student's personal development whilst on work-based experience including the achievement of the clearly stated objectives in the Individual's Learning Agreement (ILA).

A minimum period of ten weeks will be spent by the student in a work-based environment. The bulk of this period may be spent on the home farm, but a period of two weeks must be spent in a work-based situation that is not the home farm. Experience can be gained on the home farm, but work experience from other venues are preferred.

Each student will be required to assemble a portfolio of evidence and deliver a presentation for assessment in this module.

During this work-based learning period, employers or their staff will be encouraged to provide guidance and advice to students and help them link knowledge and understanding with work-based activities.

<ins>Learning and Teaching Strategy</ins>

This programme is inclusive of disabled people with particular regard to teaching, learning and assessment, in accordance with Part 10: Inclusive Practice of the University's Teaching Quality Handbook and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

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

2. encourage students to pursue additional information on subjects covered
3. provide various views on subjects
4. explain difficult ideas and issues relating to particular areas
5. 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 and develop their ability to participate in group activities.

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

Portfolio Development and Key Skills
During the programme students will be required to develop and maintain a portfolio relating to their work-based and work-related experiences.

Directed and Private Study
Students are expected to undertake additional study on their own behalf as an important learning method within the programme. This will normally involve reading to explore the breadth and depth of the syllabus, preparation of tutorial/seminar work, preparation of coursework, case study submissions and preparation of major projects. The use of the University library, electronic journals and the RAU intranet resources which can be accessed remotely will be encouraged for the effective use of private study time.

The learning outcomes will be promoted employing the range of teaching and learning methods listed above. Students will be required to undertake some self- directed study with learning support provided by University staff. Students will also be encouraged to progress to further study for a BSc Honours degree

Section 7 – Approach to Assessment

Each taught module will include summative assessments that will assess all learning outcomes. The assessment strategy for each module has been chosen based on the relevance for the module and to ensure an appropriate mix of assessment approaches. Assessment marking criteria will integrate the RAU level 4 and 5 marking criteria, discipline specific criteria and reference to the four learning pillars.

Overall, the programme is assessed through:

	Directed	Independent	Placement	Exam	Practical	Coursework
	26.50%	73.50%	0.00%	0.00%	7.50%	92.50%
	22.90%	67.90%	9.20%	0.00%	3.75%	96.25%

Section 8 – 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.

The University operates standard pass criteria which can be found in the RAU Academic Regulations; (paragraphs 137 – 153).

Candidates for the award of a Foundation Degree who have achieved the required credits as specified above and whose average score in the final assessment is 40% or greater will be awarded a Foundation Degree. The final assessment will normally comprise the results of level 4 weighted at 30% plus the results of level 5 weighted at 70%. The normal basis for awards will be the overall average score in the final assessment, graded as follows:

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

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 9 - Progression

During Phase II of the course students will be required to undertake a minimum of 10 weeks work-based experience. Prior to starting work, learning objectives for this period will be agreed between the student, employer and university staff. During this experience students should be able to:

1. Work effectively in a commercial environment
2. Organise themselves as regards time management, resourcefulness and ability to work on their own
3. Develop existing practical skills and acquire new ones
4. Gain insight into the management of the enterprise including financial and personnel aspects.

A minimum period of ten weeks will be spent by the student in a work-based environment. The bulk of this period may be spent on the home farm, but a period of two weeks must be spent in a work-based situation that is not the home farm. Experience can be gained on the home farm, but work experience from other venues are preferred.

Each student will be required to assemble a portfolio of evidence and deliver a presentation for assessment in this module.

During this work-based learning period, employers or one of their staff will be encouraged to act as mentors to provide guidance and advice to students and help them link knowledge and understanding with work-based activities.

Section 10 – Student support, wellbeing and counselling

The [University](#) is offering a wide range of support to all RAU students including practical advice & guidance as well as emotional support.

Disability & neurodiversity support

We support students with a range of disabilities, learning difficulties, and other health and mental health conditions, helping them to access funding via the [Disabled Students Allowance](#) .

When you tell us about a disability, you will be offered support based on your specific needs which can include:

- **Alternative exam arrangements** such as extra time, rest breaks, or a smaller room.
- **Access to support workers** such as study skills tutors, specialist mentors, readers and scribes.

Mental health Support

We are also here to support students with the ups and downs of university life, offering drop-in sessions, providing expert advice and support for students in crisis or with more complex needs, and together the team runs events and campaigns throughout the year to encourage positive wellbeing.

We also can help students to access external counselling sessions and these are generally delivered in collaboration with our long-term partners at Cotswold Counselling.

Academic Support Tutor Programme

Students have access to the Academic Support Tutor (AST) programme which provides high quality academic support for students. ATS provide timetabled group tutorials, and individual support for students most at risk. Group tutorials focus on providing high quality academic support at the appropriate academic level; advice and guidance in relation to the course; and advice about making study choices on the course (commensurate with the supporting AST Handbook). Individual support focus on student continuation (commensurate with The Team around the RAU Student spheres of integration student retention model) and may be in person or online.

Section 11 – 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 Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Delegates from programme committees
- Feedback from Student-Staff Liaison committees
- Annual Programme Monitoring