The Royal Agricultural University

Programme Specification:

BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business

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 (ASP)
Entry Award(s)	BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business (Foundation Year) BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business with Placement Year
Final Award and exit route(s)	BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business (Agriculture) BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business (Bloodstock and Performance Horse Management) Diploma of Higher Education Equine Science & Business Certificate of Higher Education Equine Science & Business The above exit awards are available with Foundation Year and Professional Placement Year.
Programme title	BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business
Location(s) of study	Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester
Full time study	3 years 4 years with Foundation Year or Professional Placement Year
Part-time study	6 years (Foundation Year and Professional Placement Year are not available part time)
Language of study	English
Programme start month	September
Period of validation	September 2024 to August 2029
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)	GCSE minimum five GCSEs at Grade C/4 including English Language and Mathematics (or Maths Numeracy for Welsh applicants) plus satisfactory level 3 qualifications: A-Level: (Example grades BCC) – minimum of 96 UCAS tariff points across three A-Levels or equivalent qualifications – recommended one science subject • C&G Advanced Technical/BTEC – Level 3 Extended Diploma (1080) at Distinction-Merit-Merit • C&G NPTC/C&G Advanced Technical/BTEC – Level 3 Diploma (720), Extended Certificate (360) and 90-Credit Diploma (540) acceptable when accompanied by other Level 3 qualifications • International Baccalaureate: 26 points • Access to Higher Education: 45 credits at level 3, of which 21 must be awarded at Distinction and 15 at Merit or

	higher. (Pass at Functional Skills level 2 are accepted in lieu of GCSE English & Mathematics) • A period of relevant practical experience is also highly recommended IELTS 6.0 overall with no element below 5.5
UCAS Code	D322 (ESB), D323 (ESBZ), D324 (ESBP)
Quercus Code	AESB
HECos Code	100519 - Equine Studies, 100518 – Animal Management
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points	Agriculture, Rural Environmental Sciences, Animal Studies, Consumer Science, Forestry, Food, Horticulture and Human Nutrition (April 2024).
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 4, 5 or 6
Approval at AQSC	06 March 2024

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.

Students can apply and gain Student Affiliation to the British Society of Animal Science (BSAS) register of Animal Scientists with the Royal Society of Biology by undertaking this degree. The Register of Animal Scientists requires separate BSAS membership.

Students that elect the Bloodstock and Performance Horse elective route will achieve all the required underpinning to complete the 'British Racing Schools Diploma in Racehorse Care' which is essential for working in the sector.

Students enrolled to study the programme with the Integrated Foundation Year will study the following modules in their first year of study:

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Optional	Semester
Level 0					
0IFY1	Managing Landscape	0	15	Core	1
0IFY9	Developing Your Skills	0	15	Core	1
0IFY6	Enterprise and Marketing	0	15	Core	1
0IFY8	Agriculture and Farming	0	15	Core	1
0IFY4	Land related studies	0	15	Core	2
0IFY5	Change in the Countryside	0	15	Core	2
0IFY7	Environment and Conservation Data Handling	0	15	Core	2
0IFY10	Individual project	0	15	Core	2
	Total Credits: Integrated Foundation Year		**120**		

All students enrolled to study the BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business with/without professional placement year will study the following modules:

Level 4					
Module code	**Module title**	**Level**	**Credit value**	**Core/ Elective**	**Semester**
1314	Equine Anatomy and Physiology	4	15	Core	1
1415	Global Business Environment	4	15	Core	1
1440	Academic and Practical Skills	4	15	Core	1
1443	Business Finance and Accounts	4	15	Core	1
1450	Introduction to Equine Nutrition	4	15	Core	2
1447	The UK Equine Industry	4	15	Core	2
1448	Introduction to Equine Health and Disease	4	15	Core	2
1247	Equine Breeding and Genetics	4	15	Core	2

	Total credits:		**120**		

Students studying the **BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business** award will study the following modules at level 5 and level 6:

Level 5					
Module code	**Module title**	**Level**	**Credit value**	**Core/ Elective**	**Semester**
2388	Sustainable Forage and Turf Management	5	15	Core	1
2337	Personal and Professional Development Skills and Employability	5	15	Core	1
2385	Equine Veterinary Science	5	15	Core	1
2032	Marketing Management	5	15	Core	1
2378	Research and Evidence	5	15	Core	2
2317	Industry Placement	5	15	Core	2
2384	Equine Sports Physiology and Nutrition	5	15	Core	2
2387	Equine Behaviour and Welfare Applications	5	15	Core	2
Level 6					
Module code	**Module title**	**Level**	**Credit value**	**Core/ Elective**	**Semester**
3332	Specialist Study	6	15	Core	1
3344	Advances in Equine Nutrition	6	15	Core	1
3300	Research Project / Dissertation	6	30	Core	1+2
3217	Advances in Training the Equine Athlete	6	15	Elective	1
3325	Rural Entrepreneurship	6	15	Elective	1
3343	Advances in Equine Health	6	15	Core	2
3206	Equine Breeding Management	6	15	Elective	2
3316	Changing Consumer Behaviour	6	15	Elective	2
3242	Negotiations in Business	6	15	Elective	2
3345	Equine Assisted Services for Human Wellbeing	6	15	Elective	2
	Total Credits: BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business		**360**		

Students studying the **BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business (Bloodstock and Performance Horse)** award will study the following modules at level 5 and level 6:

Level 5					
Module code	**Module title**	**Level**	**Credit value**	**Core/ Elective**	**Semester**
2388	Sustainable Forage and Turf Management	5	15	Core	1
2337	Personal and Professional Development Skills and Employability	5	15	Core	1
2385	Equine Veterinary Science	5	15	Core	1
2386	Global Bloodstock Production	5	15	Core	1
2378	Research and Evidence	5	15	Core	2

2317	Industry Placement	5	15	Core	2
2384	Equine Sports Physiology and Nutrition	5	15	Core	2
2387	Equine Behaviour and Welfare Applications	5	15	Core	2
Level 6					
Module code	**Module title**	**Level**	**Credit value**	**Core/ Elective**	**Semester**
3332	Specialist Study	6	15	Core	1
3344	Advances in Equine Nutrition	6	15	Core	1
3217	Advances in Training the Equine Athlete	6	15	Core	1
3300	Research Project / Dissertation	6	30	Core	1+2
3343	Advances in Equine Health	6	15	Core	2
3226	Irish Bloodstock Industry	6	15	Core*	2
3206	Equine Breeding Management	6	15	Core	2
3242	Negotiations in Business	6	15	Elective	2
	Total Credits: BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business (Bloodstock and Performance Horse)		**360**		

* 3242 Negotiations is Business is offered as an alternative to 3226, should a student be unable to study this module.

Students studying the **BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business (Agriculture)** award will study the following modules at level 5 and level 6:

Level 5					
Module code	**Module title**	**Level**	**Credit value**	**Core/ Elective**	**Semester**
2388	Sustainable Forage and Turf Management	5	15	Core	1
2337	Personal and Professional Development Skills and Employability	5	15	Core	1
2385	Equine Veterinary Science	5	15	Core	1
2032	Marketing Management	5	15	Core	1
2375	Livestock Husbandry Systems	5	15	Core	1
2372	Animal Health and Welfare	5	15	Core	2
2378	Research and Evidence	5	15	Core	2
2317	Industry Placement	5	15	Core	2
Level 6					
Module code	**Module title**	**Level**	**Credit value**	**Core/ Elective**	**Semester**
3332	Specialist Study	6	15	Core	1
3337	Sustainable Farm Management	6	15	Core	1
3041	Corporate Finance	6	15	Elective	1
3325	Rural Entrepreneurship	6	15	Elective	1
3317	International Marketing	6	15	Elective	1
3300	Research Project / Dissertation	6	30	Core	1+2
3343	Advances in Equine Health	6	15	Core	2
3238	Advances in Livestock Nutrition	6	15	Core	2
3206	Equine Breeding Management	6	15	Core	2

	Total Credits: BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business (Agriculture)		**360**		

Students enrolled to study the Professional Placement Year will do so after the completion of Level 5 studies:

Professional Placement Year (studied after Year 2 of the programme)					
PPY	Professional placement year	5	120	Core	1+2

Section 3 – Programme overview and Programme aims

The Equine Science and Business programme has been designed with the structure of the equine industry at the centre. The equine industry in the UK is diverse and fragmented and made up of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs). These SMEs require graduates with a good knowledge of equine science and with core business skills. Many other providers of equine higher education offer programmes focusing upon equine science or equine business, here the two are blended to produce more rounded graduates for the equine industry. The industry itself covers a range of different sectors including horse racing and bloodstock production, the sport horse sector including the Olympic disciplines and the leisure sector. Each of these areas of the equine industry are served by a range of organisations providing goods and services, and the sport side of the industry also supports wider industries such as leisure, tourism and hospitality. While the equine industry is separate to agriculture, it also aligns itself in many ways with regards to feed and forage production for animals and animal production, health and welfare.

The Equine Science and Business programme has therefore been designed to provide students with both equine science elements, based around our core strengths of nutrition, behaviour, physiology, health and welfare, and business elements to support both the products and services sides of the industry, developing an understanding of business structures, financial accounting and marketing. Over the first year of the programme students will study the anatomy and physiology of the horse and how these structures and functions adapt within the equine athlete. From the structure and function of the digestive system, students will study the nutrient requirements at maintenance, for the equine athlete and recent developments that link to health. Students will also study health and disease in the horse, and breeding and genetics. When progressing to the second-year students then have a choice of study route. They can continue to blend equine science with business, or can focus on Bloodstock and Performance Horse Management, or integrate some agriculture by replacing some of the equine science with general animal science.

In the **Equine Science and Business** blend, students will study equine behaviour and welfare applications, building upon the horse's anatomical structure and function to consider why horses may demonstrate behaviours and the physiology underpinning this. The programme then builds upon the first-year foundation of health and disease to consider diseased states in greater depth e.g., metabolic conditions and in-depth study of equine asthma and colic, all of which are common conditions in the horse population. Students will study Sustainable Forage and Turf Management where they will consider how to manage grasslands and produce forage from a practical but also nutritional standpoint while also considering the sustainability aspect of forage and grassland management within the equine sector. The turf management element of this module considers the equine athlete and how turf management plays a role in reducing the risk of

injury on equestrian sport surfaces. The sports physiology and nutrition module, builds upon anatomy and physiology and nutrition studies from the first year but now considers exercise physiology and the nutrients required for exercise. Students will also study Marketing Management and in preparation for both the work placement and future employability though the personal and professional skills module; and will also consider the tools required for research projects in the Research and Evidence module, readying students for the dissertation project in the final year.

In the final year on the Equine Science and Business route there are two core modules Advances in Equine Health and Advances in Equine Nutrition alongside the dissertation and specialist study modules; and students will choose three further modules. Advances in Training the Equine Athlete, Equine Breeding Management, and Equine Assisted Services for Human Wellbeing make up the science-based options and Rural Entrepreneurship, Changing Consumer Behaviour and Negotiations in Business are the business options.

Those electing **Bloodstock and Performance Horse Management** from the second year, will then study Global Bloodstock Production instead of Marketing Management and tailor the focus in the other equine science modules towards bloodstock and performance horses. The final year study covers Advances in Equine Health, Advances in Equine Nutrition, Advances in Training the Equine Athlete, Equine Breeding Management, Specialist Study, Dissertation and The Irish Bloodstock Industry.

The Irish Bloodstock Industry study tour will allow students to contextualise the science theory and consider the Irish equine industry with a bloodstock focus as a comparison to the UK. This study tour has an additional cost of approximately £600.The university has bursaries available to help support this cost. If students are unable to take this module, they are required to study Negotiations in Business as negotiating is a core skill for the bloodstock and performance horse industry.

The third alternative route from the second year is to integrate **Agriculture** by replacing some of the equine science with animal science e.g., Animal Behaviour and Welfare and Livestock Husbandry Systems as opposed to Equine Behaviour and Welfare Applications alongside Equine Veterinary Science, Sustainable Forage and Turf Management, Personal and Professional Development, Research and Evidence and the Industry Placement. In the final year on this route, modules include Advances in Livestock Nutrition, Rural Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Farm Management alongside Advances in Equine Health and Equine Breeding Management, Specialist study and the Dissertation to provide a blend of business management with equine and agricultural science.

Collectively the science stream within the degree routes will provide students with a framework around equine physiology, nutrition, behaviour, health and welfare which is integral to this degree and its application to the horse and agricultural industries. Alongside these science and business elements the programme also contains a range of core skills that are developed over the three years. These initially focus upon practical skills for land-based studies which are relevant to the whole agricultural sector, considering essential areas such as health and safety considerations which run throughout the programme. Students will also develop study skills as higher education is a process of becoming an independent learner who can study, interpret and present information in a range of different ways. These broader skills also encompass developing research skills, a requirement for all degree students to complete the honours project.
The programme develops employability skills and an important part of this is the work placement in the second year. All students will undertake a 15-week work placement as

part of their studies; students registered on the placement year will complete a further year on placement. The work placement is an excellent opportunity to take the skills and knowledge gained over the first two years of study and apply these to a work place setting. The placement also provides an excellent opportunity for students to reflect upon the transferrable skills gained with the first two years of the degree before moving to the final year of study.

Whichever route students elect to follow they will all gain the same final degree Equine Science and Business but the elective options allow students to tailor their studies more specifically to their own interests. The core fundamentals of the programme all reflect sustainability and align where possible to the UN sustainable development goals with a focus on sustainable food production for horses, the environmental impacts of keeping and producing horses and their role in the economy. Those studying the agriculture elective route will also be able to consider wider food production for people and climate action to a further degree.

Within the Royal Agricultural University Equine Teaching team our subject specialisms are nutrition, behaviour and welfare, health and biomechanics. The team embed their own research and, where relevant, industry and clinical experience within teaching to provide a research-informed, cutting-edge experience. All of the team are research active which also helps support students with the dissertation project in the final year, as there are many years of experience of research and project design.

Students who have studied Equine Science and Business have progressed to a range of careers following graduation. The key element to this degree programme are the transferable skills to broader science and business, as well as those directly relevant to the horse industry. Students have gone on to work in the horse feed industry, equine media and equine insurance. Those focussed on bloodstock and performance horses have progressed to the Darley Godolphin Flying Start programme and work at the British Racing School, as Bloodstock Agents and studs.

Section 4 – Programme Sustainability

The programme design considers sustainability and the UN sustainable development goals throughout the design of the programme. Within the equine sector some of these goals are more relevant than others due to the nature of the industry. However all of the goals are incorporated in the programme design. Some examples, equestrian sport is one of the few sports where we see gender equality in competition, however this goal is explored if further depth in the business and industry elements of the curriculum. The leisure element of the sector aligns with good health and wellbeing and this is also a consideration in our Equine assisted services for equine wellbeing module. An important are for the equine sector is responsible consumption and production. As an industry we feed horses cereal grains and oil seeds some of which are imported. We also use bedding, straw, wood and other materials that are often wrapped in plastic packaging and the bedding itself could have alternative uses. Therefore as part of the programme design these issue are considered under both current issues facing the equine industry and the equine nutrition strand to the programme design. Many of the areas of the programme design also align to the life on the land goal and the with agriculture route also considers the zero-hunger goal through sustainable agriculture.

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.	Explain the structure of the equine industry and the inter-relationships between its key components	1447, 2386, 3226
2.	Analyse equine structure, function, health and disease	1314, 1448, 2385, 3343
3.	Critically appraise equine nutrition, training, behaviour and welfare for a range of horses and equestrian disciplines	1450, 2384, 2387, 2388, 3344, 3217
4.	Appraise the equine genetic resource and understand its tailoring to market demand.	1247, 2386, 3206
5.	Explain the business environment as applied to the equine industry	1415, 1447
Intellectual, Professional, Key skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	**Module Code/s**
1.	Select and acknowledge relevant information from a wide range of appropriate resources	1440, 3300, 3332
2.	Synthesise information from a number of sources to develop a coherent understanding of the subject	3300, 3332
3.	Apply problem solving skills to theoretical concepts	2378, 3300, 3332
4.	Analyse different types of data	2378, 3300
5.	Demonstrate clear and effective communication through a range of mediums	1447, 1448,2384, 2387, 3332, 3300, 3344, 3345
6.	Critically evaluate information and articulate arguments	3332, 3300
7.	Apply team working skills to various scenarios	1447, 2337
8.	Apply self-reflection to personal practice	1440, 2337, 2317
9.	Manage time and tasks, seek advice when appropriate, prioritise work.	2317
Programme specific skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	**Module Code/s**
1.	Safely apply laboratory analytical techniques and practices	1440,1448, 1450, 2388, 2385
2.	Identify appropriate and evidence based management strategies for optimal equine health and welfare	1448, 2385, 2387,3345
3.	Demonstrate responsibility in a practical working situation	1440, 2317
4.	Apply equine science and equine business theory into the equine industry	1447, 2317, 3226

Section 6 – Approach to Learning and Teaching delivery

All full-time academic programmes at the RAU are constructed using a selection of modules, each of which requires engagement with a variety of learning activities. Successful completion of module assessments will result in the award of credits, and students are required to achieve a total of 120 credits for each year of a full-time programme.

The credit system is used to ensure a balanced workload across each programme, with each credit point representing a notional learning time of 10 hours of student work. Thus a 15-credit module will require a notional input of 150 hours of work, and a complete academic year of 120 credits will require 1200 hours of work, or approximately 40 hours per week.

Within this total time, students can expect to participate in formal timetabled activities; such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical's and visits; for approximately one third of the total time – usually around 3 hours per week for a 15-credit module studied over 12 weeks of the year. Thus the majority of module activities; such as reading around the subject, preparing for tutorials and seminars, preparing for, and completing, module assessments and revision for, and sitting, examinations; will take place outside of these scheduled activities, but are an essential part of a student's learning journey. Learning and assessment materials are provided via a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) called Gateway. Electronic materials are generally made available to students 48 hours in advance of the learning activity. Part of the learning experience is practical learning, this may take place in the laboratories e.g. analysing the nutrient content of a feedstuff or at the Equestrian Centre considering biomechanics or behavioural observations of horses. Study visits e.g. to view the management of sports turfs and visiting speakers from the industry are also incorporated into the programme of study.

Students attempting to short-cut their learning activities may find themselves experiencing difficulties as each module progresses, and as the level of assumed understanding increases. Thus it is vitally important that new students establish an effective routine for their studies as soon as possible. Maintaining a balanced workload from the start of the programme will help to avoid intense periods of activity, and ensure knowledge and understanding gradually develop throughout the year in readiness for any end-of-module examination. 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.

Throughout, the design of the programme, the delivery and the assessment strategies have been designed to allow for differing types of learners. Our approach to teaching, learning and assessment is designed to allow both practical and theory based learners can work within the learning style most appropriate to them. Our teaching approach provides students with directed learning specifically associated with our lecturer, practical or seminar sessions. Following each session students are recommended self-directed learning to include stretch of each topic to motivate students to further explore the topic and to stretch each students learning development within their own capabilities.

The RAU aims to be an inclusive environment and we actively welcome applications from students with disabilities. Your application for a place will be considered solely on academic grounds. Many of our students have additional learning needs that are supported through the Universities Enable team. We have an excellent track record of supporting the needs of students with dyslexia or other forms of specific learning difficulties, and aim to be 'dyslexia friendly' in all our teaching and learning environments. All students are asked to declare any dyslexia, learning difficulty or other disability to the RAU Disability & Inclusive Learning Advisor as early as possible (ideally before or during first-year registration), so that we can ensure provision for your needs is in place during your studies.

Students enrolled on the BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business with Professional Placement Year are required to undertake 1200 hours in a professional placement, i.e. 35 weeks @ minimum 35 hrs per week. The Professional Placement Year is taken between Levels 5 and 6 of the academic programme (section 9).

Section 7 – Approach to Assessment

The programme has a variety of assessment styles to encourage the application of knowledge in ways appropriate to the industry or to develop core graduate skills. Many of the assessments occurs via coursework or practical assessment rather than traditional examinations. Coursework exercises include (but are not limited to) written essays and reports, practical application of skills, reflective portfolios and oral presentations which may also include using audio visual media. Where examinations are utilised, these are generally 'seen' scenarios whereby the paper is made available to students 2 weeks before the assessment date or open book where students can take their course notes into the exam room. The open book or seen exams are looking for students to analyse, evaluate and apply, rather than just to retain knowledge. Finally, for most equine specific modules, there is a single point of assessment per 15 credits. In order to ensure students are adequately prepared, formative 'practice' assessments are utilised.

Overall, the programme is assessed through*:

	Learning and Teaching			**Assessment**		
	Directed	Independent	Placement	Exam	Practical	Coursework
Year 1	**23.50%**	76.50%	0.00%	20.00%	2.50%	77.50%
Year 2	**21.00%**	72.75%	6.25%	12.50%	0.00%	87.50%
Year 3	**22.28%**	77.72%	0.00%	12.50%	2.50%	85.00%

**The course stage data is based on the BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business, electives 3217, 3325 and 3206*

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).

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

First Class Honours	70% and above
Second Class Honours upper division	60% - 69%
Second Class Honours lower division	50% - 59%
Third Class Honours	40% - 49%
Fail	0% - 39%

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 – Placement module (2317) and Professional Placement Year (PPY)

The Work Placement (2317)

In the second year of the programme, students are required to undertake a 15-week self-employment placement (or in an organisation) between end of March / early April and September of that year.

For students enrolled on the BSc (Hons) with Professional Placement Year students are also required to undertake 120 credits (1200 hours, i.e. 35 weeks with a minimum 35 hrs per week, professional placement year. The Professional Placement Year (Module Code: PPY) is taken between Levels 5 and 6 of the academic programme from September of that year, having competed the placement requirement for 2317.

Approval process

It is the University's responsibility to ensure that learning opportunities during a placement are appropriate. However, it is at the same time obviously desirable that students secure a self-placement (or in an organisation) which is suitable for their needs as well as amenable to them. For this reason, as well as for others, the **responsibility** for developing and securing a placement rests with the individual student. However, to ensure that the University's responsibilities are carried out, all placements are subject to **approval** by the University, **in advance** of the placement commencing.

This means that no placement can be considered to be in place and accepted until such time that appropriate checks have been made, and the placement has been approved for this purpose, by the placement coordinator. Students must submit relevant details of their desired placement on the appropriate form (including dates, name of organisation, outline job description, and so on) well in advance of the placement commencing, and at least by the date laid down, to ensure that checks can be carried out, and in case subsequent difficulties emerge.

Criteria for approval will include:

- The nature and function of the placement organisation, in relation to the student's learning programme (considering the student's pathway, for example).
- The placement organisation's ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities, (which must include the likely nature of the tasks and responsibilities that students may be expected to undertake during the work-based placement)
- Whether and how the University is able to support students on placements, and;
- The extent to which the placement organisation can fulfil its responsibilities under Health & Safety legislation.

It is in the interests of students, as well as the RAU, in this approval process, if students are able to gain an outline job description indicating the likely content of the job role during the placement, and submit this for approval.
The University must be in a position to assess whether placement providers know what their responsibilities are during the period of placement learning, both in terms of the provision of learning opportunities, and in relation to their role on the assessment of students, and thus have the organisation and prospective job role approved, before any placement commences.

The Placement Module and its role in Year 2
The compulsory work placement module is a very important element of the Year 2 programme. It has a large and important educational value, in terms of the ability to provide a bridge or link for the learning aims of many individual programme modules, between the formal 'academic' activities, in-university, and the specific practical work-based experience and organisational reality to which they often ultimately relate. It is especially important in the whole programme as it represents an opportunity for students to locate their final year dissertation topic (with the agreement of the employing organisation) in a real-world organisation, and thus focus the research study on an area where empirical data-gathering is feasible. Students are strongly encouraged to consider this aspect in advance, and discuss this with the link tutor (see below).

Failure to secure a work placement, or to submit a satisfactory report within the time scale laid down (normally mid-October in each academic year), will normally result in a failure in the 15-credit module, and thus a failure in Year 2.

The placement opportunities are generally viewed very favourably by potential employers and provide you with the chance to experience real organisational life at first hand. It is not uncommon, in some situations, for students to find that a placement may also result in a job offer, for take-up after graduation. It is particularly important that students undergoing placements keep alive to the possibility of using their experience as the basis for a research project in Year 3, and thus basing a dissertation on a 'real-life' organisation.
The opportunity is open to wide ranging possibilities of type of organisation, and also country of placement. It is certainly important for students to remember the many types of organisation that may usefully provide opportunities; including those in the public and private sector, the for-profit and not-for-profit organisations, charities, co-operatives, and so on.
The Placement Coordinator is assisted by the subject Academics. Their role is specifically to provide support for students during the search process, and while the placement is underway, and he will be pleased to talk to students about possible placements. It is important for students to give thought to the placement in good time in order to arrange the best possible opportunity.

Prior to placement

Before placements commence, it is important that students familiarise themselves with the guidance available in the module handbook. In particular, they must be aware of your responsibilities and rights

Responsibilities include those:

- As representatives of the University as a Higher Education Institution (as the placement provider might well be asked to offer equivalent opportunities to other students in future years)
- Towards the placement provider; their customers or clients; and to their other employees. In effect students are acting as employed persons within the organisation, subject to the normal employer/ employee mutual obligations, to fulfil the contract of employment.
- For managing their learning & professional relationships
- For recording progress and achievements (very important in terms of the final reporting process, as documented in the module handbook and assessment brief)
- For alerting both the placement provider and the Royal Agricultural University to any problems experienced during the placement. In the latter case, the expectation is that students maintain an ongoing communication with the University, in most cases through the designated tutor.

Students should be aware of their rights;

- To a safe working environment, with all that this entails
- To be treated in accord with the law, for example in relation to discipline and grievance issues, redundancy, and equal opportunities.

Before placements commence, all students will be called to a pre-placement advice session, to begin the process of providing them with appropriate guidance and support in preparation for, during, and after their placements.

During placements

It is important that students keep in touch with University throughout their placement period, and for this purpose all students are allocated a tutor who will provide for liaison, and a point of contact during the placement. This tutor will normally visit the student on at least one occasion during the period of the placement, normally before the end of July. For the PPY contact will be scheduled as; X3: 1-1 tutorial in person/online with academic teaching team 3 x 30 mins and 3 x 15 mins online interactions by placement team The purpose of the visit is to ensure that all is satisfactory from the viewpoint of both student and placement provider, to counsel all parties if difficulties emerge, and to remind students of the requirements of the reporting process required of students to fulfil the module criteria. In some rare instances no visit will be possible, in which case alternative arrangements will be made to fulfil this function of monitoring.

The student is encouraged to keep in touch with this tutor throughout the placement period, by email or telephone as appropriate, both before and after the visit. If all is going well a weekly email may well be sufficient. Thus, it is crucial that all student email addresses, mobile telephone numbers, etc., that are relevant to the placement period, are recorded by University and maintained as up-to-date as possible. However, if problems occur during placements, as sometimes happens, please ensure you make contact as soon as possible, if necessary with the Programme Manager, or the Placement Coordinator, if the link tutor is not available at the time. Students must not wait for a visit if the problem is an urgent one.

Section 10 - Progression

This programme has been developed based upon prior industry feedback on the development of our equine courses. The industry have recommended a blend of science and industry based topics specifically tailored to produce employable graduates. Moreover, the programme features a 15-week core placement in a relevant industry setting (section 9), providing real-life experience of the working environment, which further boosts employability. There is also the opportunity for a year (35 week) professional placement year between Year 2 and Year 3 of study, which provides additional experience, skills and industry links to support future employment.
We are ideally situated to provide an excellent range of visits locations such as Cheltenham Racecourse, Beaufort Polo Club, and top local trainers such as Fergal O'Brien. Together these provide essential career networking opportunities to our students.

On completion of the degree students will have gained the fundamental business and science skills for the industry. Some examples are students that have progressed to working in marketing and brand management for companies within the horse industry. Students have also progressed to become Assistant Clerk of the Course or working for Bloodstock agents within the racing sector. Many of our students also progress to postgraduate study commonly progressing to undertake a masters by research at the RAU in equine nutrition or behaviour. Other passed graduates have progressed to masters and PhD studies in other institutions. We have also had students following completion of postgraduate study who have gone on to become lecturers in other universities. The Royal Agricultural University has a reputation for developing students' entrepreneurship through the Enterprise department. Many of our previous students have progressed to setting up their own businesses following completion of our courses. An example of this is Gillian Higgins business Horses Inside Out, which started by winning the annual Royal Agricultural University Grand Idea competition proving the start-up capital for this now successful equine enterprise.

Section 11 – 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 12 – 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