Royal Agricultural University

The Royal Agricultural University

Programme Specification:

BSc (Hons) Agriculture

2026-27

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/27]

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 they take 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

Criteria	Details
Validating body	The Royal Agricultural University
Teaching Institution	The Royal Agricultural University
Subject Area	Agriculture Science and Practice (ASP)
Entry Award(s)	BSc (Hons) Agriculture BSc (Hons) Agriculture with Foundation Year BSc (Hons) Agriculture with Professional Placement Year
Final Award and exit route(s)	BSc (Hons) Agriculture BSc (Hons) Agriculture with Foundation Year BSc (Hons) Agriculture with Professional Placement Year Diploma of Higher Education Agriculture Certificate of Higher Education Agriculture
Programme title	BSc (Hons) Agriculture
Location(s) of study	Cirencester
Full time study	3 years 4 years with Foundation or Professional Placement Year
Part-time study	6 years (Foundation Year and Professional Placement Year are not available as part-time study)
Language of study	English
Programme start month	September
Period of validation	September 2026 to August 2031
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not applicable
Type of Accreditation	Not applicable
Accreditation due for renewal	Not applicable
UCAS Code	D700, D704, D701
Quercus Code	AG
HECos Code	Code 1: 100517 Agriculture; Code 2: 100516 Agricultural Sciences
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). Business and Management (2023)
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 6
Approval at AQSC	20 March 2025 When printed this programme specification becomes an uncontrolled document. Please visit the RAU's website for the most up to date version of the programme specification: https://www.rau.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate-
Version	V1

Entry requirements for the BSc (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 104 UCAS tariff points across three A-Levels or equivalent qualifications – recommended at least one science subject (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Maths, Further Maths, Environmental Science, and Sport) • 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) Other level 3 qualifications will be considered A period of relevant practical experience is also highly recommended.

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.

The BSc (Hons) Agriculture programme is normally three years duration of full-time study (approximately 24 weeks per year). Study is undertaken at three levels on the FHEQ; Levels four, five, and six (one for each year of study). However, it is possible to follow the programme on a part-time basis, over a longer period, by gaining credits for the modules taken and achieved year-by-year. The time limits appropriate to part-time study are indicated in the University Academic Regulations available on the RAU website.

The option with a Foundation Year is normally four years of taught full-time study and the option with a Professional Placement Year is normally three years of taught full-time study

with one year based in industry. A credit system ensures a balanced workload across the programme, with each credit point requiring approximately 10 hours of student work. Thus a 20-credit module will require a notional input of 200 hours of work, and a complete academic year of 120 credits will require 1200 hours of work or approximately 40 hours per week. The programme is designed to allow students to choose, through elective choices at levels 5 and 6, to specialise within four pathways – crop and livestock production, farm business and agri-environmental management.

Foundation Year

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

Level 0

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Optional	Semester
0IFY20	Land-Use and Management	0	20	Core	1+2
0IFY21	Countryside Evolution and Development	0	20	Core	1+2
0IFY22	Enterprise and Marketing	0	20	Core	1+2
0IFY23	Land-based Data Handling	0	20	Core	1+2
0IFY24	Food and Farming	0	20	Core	1+2
0IFY25	Developing your Skills	0	20	Core	1+2
	Total credits: Integrated Foundation Year		**120**		

BSc (Hons) Agriculture

Students enrolled to study the BSc (Hons) Agriculture with/without professional placement year will study the following modules:

Level 4

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Optional	Semester
4M002	Professional, Practical and Study Skills	4	20	Core	1+2
4A002	Farm Business Finance and Accounts	4	20	Core	1+2
4A001	Applied Plant and Animal Science	4	20	Core	1+2
4A005	Farming Systems and Sustainability	4	20	Core	1+2
4A003	Agricultural Machinery, Technology and Buildings	4	20	Core	1+2
4A004	Soil Science and Ecosystem Services	4	20	Core	1+2
	Total Credits: Certificate of Higher Education		**120**		

Level 5

5M002	Research & Evidence	5	20	Core	1+2
5A001	Agronomy	5	20	Core	1+2
5A002	Livestock Husbandry	5	20	Core	1+2
5A007	Technology and Nature-Based Innovations	5	20	Core	1+2
5A003	Farm Business Planning and Food Supply Chains	5	20	Core	1+2
5M001	Industry Engagement	5	0	Core	1+2

Plus, one elective from the list below

5A010	Agricultural Commodities Trading	5	20	Elective	1+2
5A008	Farm Animal Health and Welfare	5	20	Elective	1+2
5A009	Alternative Cropping Systems	5	20	Elective	1+2
	Total Credits: Diploma of Higher Education		**240**		

Professional Placement Year (studied after Year 2 of the programme)

PPY	Professional placement	5	**120**	Core	1+2

Level 6

6M001	Research Project	6	40	Core	1+2
6A001	Agroecological and Technological Solutions	6	20	Core	1+2
6A002	Agri-Food Systems and Policies	6	20	Core	1+2

Plus, two electives from the list below

6A003	Advanced Farm Business Management	6	20	Elective	1+2
6A004	Farm Business Consultancy	6	20	Elective	1+2
6A005	Advanced Livestock Nutrition and Breeding	6	20	Elective	1+2
6A006	Crop Health, Nutrition and Protection	6	20	Elective	1+2
6W001	Countryside and Environmental Management	6	20	Elective	1+2
Total Credits: BSc (Hons) Agriculture			**360**		
Total Credits: BSc (Hons) Agriculture with Professional Placement Year **BSc (Hons) Agriculture with Foundation Year**			**480**		

Students wishing to study this programme on a part-time basis will normally study half the credits in each year, equating to 60 credits (3 modules) per year, over six years, to achieve 360 credits in total and the same exit qualification as full-time equivalent students.

Section 3 – Programme overview and Programme aims

The BSc (Hons) Agriculture programme is an interdisciplinary course designed to develop the professional agriculturalists of the future. This wide-reaching, industry-recognised programme is built on the latest applied research and informed by the RAU's extensive industry networks. It develops students who will make a difference and stand out in the agriculture sector. This is through the applied understanding of science, practice, policy and innovation that underpins agricultural production, sustainability and resilient farm management.

This flagship programme aims to inform, inspire and enable students to gain a fundamental understanding and critical awareness of the problems facing agriculture, particularly issues pertaining to the challenges of food production and its global impacts. Students do not need to have an agricultural or farming background; they simply need the passion and drive to make a difference in a rapidly evolving industry.

The design of the Agriculture programme is centred around four cornerstones: 1) Technology and Innovation, 2) Environmental Sustainability, 3) Business and Enterprise and 4) Employability and Leadership. Within each of these cornerstones, modules are designed to challenge students to progress towards the goal of an RAU graduate who has acquired the technological knowledge and employability skills to help them thrive in the workplace.

Students will learn and develop practical skills in core farming methods including agronomy, livestock husbandry and land management in the context of modern global food production. Students can also choose, through their electives choice at levels 5 and 6, to specialise within four pathways – crop and livestock production, farm business and agri-environmental management.

The first year provides students with a fundamental understanding of **Applied Plant and Animal Science** and how agricultural production and management are interlinked to, and supported by, key natural resources (**Farming Systems and Sustainability** module). Students will also develop their skills through the **Professional Skills & Fundamentals of Land-based Industries** modules. Technology and innovation are also present in the first year through the **Agricultural Machinery, Technology & Buildings** module. These modules enable students from non-agriculture backgrounds to gain an understanding of the industry, while also challenging those with a farming background to expand their knowledge by exploring the scientific principles and business factors that influence global agriculture.

In the second year, students will look at the principles of crop production in **Agronomy** while **Alternative Cropping Systems** explore the challenges affecting global cropping systems and how they influence food security. The components of sustainable farming of ruminant and non-ruminant species are evaluated in **Livestock Husbandry** and **Farm Animal Health and Welfare**. **Technology and Agroecological Innovations** are also a fundamental part of the second year. Students will also learn key principles such as research methodologies in the **Research & Evidence** module. This knowledge will support their progression into their final year module, **Research Project** which encourages students to

conduct experimental investigations whilst working with stakeholders or on the RAU collaborative farms.

The final year then focuses on research, evidence-based critical evaluation and innovations in the agriculture industry. New developments are explored in **Solutions for Livestock and Crops** and the critical evaluation of **Agri-Food Systems & Policies .** Elective modules also allow for the critical review of farm businesses through **Advanced Farm Business Management** and **Farm Business Consultancy** modules. The electives modules **Advanced Livestock Nutrition & Breeding**, and **Crop Health, Nutrition & Protection** will allow students to create sustainable breeding strategies and integrated pest management; important skills needed for advisory roles in these sectors. Students can also choose to learn about **Countryside & Environmental Management** and how to formulate management solutions that can be applied in the real world.

Students on the Agriculture programme will learn how to build sustainable, profitable and resilient agricultural businesses, which contribute to a thriving sector - whether as a farmer; land manager; rural entrepreneur; agronomist; livestock nutritionist; economist; policymaker; researcher or consultant – career opportunities are diverse and eclectic.

This programme provides practical training opportunities, immersive learning opportunities, and valuable insights into global challenges and perspectives. With a strong focus on innovation, personal development, and the integration of research-informed teaching, it equips students with the skills to thrive in a dynamic and ever-evolving world.

Part-time Study

The University is committed to increasing flexible access to learning and therefore the academic programme on offer can be studied on a part-time basis to fit studying around already busy lives.

Part-time study will take longer than the full-time equivalent, but students spend fewer hours in the classroom each week. The modular programme structure means part-time students study alongside full-time counterparts and can access the same student support, resources and facilities as full-time students.

While it will take longer to complete a part-time programme, it could be the perfect option if:

- Pursuing a qualification is essential for advancing professional growth and enhancing career opportunities.
- A full-time study schedule is not possible.
- The university can be satisfied that the academic requirements can be met alongside work or personal commitments.

If you have queries related to part-time study, please contact the Programme Leader

Section 4 – Programme Sustainability

The BSc Agriculture programme has been specifically designed to foster greater knowledge and awareness of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are also embedded within the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of all modules. These are a collection of 17 global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all" which was set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and intended to be achieved by the year 2030, are part of UN Resolution 70/1 - https://sdgs.un.org/goals

Section 5 – Programme intended learning outcomes

On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to demonstrate the following Learning Outcomes (LOs):

Knowledge and Understanding

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	**Module Code/s**
1.	Evaluate and apply scientific and technological developments to improve current and future agricultural systems (SDGs 1,2,3)	4M002, 4A002 4A001, 4A005 4A003, 4A004 5A001, 5A002 5A007, 5A003, 6M001, 6A001 6A002
2.	Appraise the management of crop and livestock systems from a sustainable soil and environmental perspective, and assess their application in commercial practice (SDGs 1,2,15)	4M002,4A001 4A005,4A003 4A004, 5A001 5A002, 6A001 6A002, 6W001
3.	Assess and evaluate the global food system in relation to sustainable food supply and consumption (SDGs 8,11,12,17)	4A005, 5A003 6A001, 6A002
4.	Demonstrate thorough knowledge of crop and livestock systems and the underpinning scientific, technological, environmental, legislative and business principles involved in modern agriculture	4A001, 4A005 4A003, 4A004 5A001, 5A002 5A007, 6A001, 6A002
5.	Consider and assess the factors influencing conservation, ecology, climate change, land use, and environmental management in the context of food production (SDGs 7,12,13,15,17)	4A005, 4A004 5A001, 5A002 6A001, 6A002
6.	Understand and appraise the role of agricultural business planning, management, finance, human resources, and IT management within an effective business structure (SDGs 8,9)	4M002, 4A002 5A003, 6A003, 6A004

Intellectual, Professional, Key skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	**Module Code/s**
7.	Evaluate problems, analyse alternatives and think creatively to develop solutions with reference to environmental, ethical, social, technological and economic perspectives.	4M002, 4A002 4A001, 4A005 4A003, 4A004 5M002, 5A001 5A002, 5A007 5A003, 5M001 6M001, 6A001, 6A002, PPY
8.	Demonstrate personal, academic and career development skills for lifelong learning by effectively participating in teamwork and demonstrating the ability to communicate with a wide range of stakeholders	4M002, 4A002 4A001, 4A005 4A003, 4A004 5M002, 5A001 5A002, 5A007 5A003, 5M001 6M001, 6A001, 6A002, PPY
9.	Demonstrate appropriate independent research skills, an evidenced-based approach, the capacity for critical thought and self-directed learning for the investigation and problem-solving of issues in agriculture	4M002, 4A002 4A001, 4A005 4A003, 4A004 5M002, 5A001 5A002, 5A007 5A003, 5M001 6M001, 6A001, 6A002, PPY
10.	Effectively design, conduct and interpret investigative study in the context of sustainable farming	4M002, 5M002 6M001

Section 6 – Approach to Learning and Teaching delivery

The BSc Agriculture programme is designed to meet the diverse needs of students, recognising the varied skills, knowledge, and prior experiences they bring into the course. The first-year programme supports students at all levels of knowledge and practical skills through a blended and active learning approach that ensures an inclusive and enriching learning experience. All modules emphasize interactive, student-centred, and student-led learning, encouraging critical engagement with course content. Teaching methods include lectures, seminars, tutorials, site visits, fieldwork, lab practicals and guided independent reading. Group learning activities will encourage teamwork, effective decision-making, and the ability to evaluate and synthesise information. These skills will be further reinforced through guided tasks, individual work and student-led discussions, where fundamental concepts are critically evaluated and applied in real-world contexts.

Work-related Learning

A series of carefully designed campus-based seminars and tutorials will deliver essential information, complemented by practicals and field trips that provide hands-on opportunities to contextualize learning and practice essential skills. Practical activities, visits and demonstrations will take place at our **Land Laboratory Teaching Centre** and research facilities, the **RAU farms** and external farms and agricultural businesses. These along with guest lectures from industry professionals provide real-world applications and insights into the topics taught. Work-related learning also features through the course assessments including farm management planning where student use information from real farms to e.g. produce farm accounts, fertiliser regiments, produce a new tenancy plan, analyse breeding records or produce an animal health plan. By integrating academic study with experiential and collaborative learning, this programme equips students to critically engage with key concepts, apply them across diverse contexts, and develop as independent and effective learners.

Intellectual skills

Intellectual skills are developed through both the delivery of dedicated contextualised modules (e.g. **Research and Evidence** module) and via the embedding of the skills in other topical modules. These skills are practiced, assessed formatively, and used within summative assessments. For example, critical analysis and evaluation skills feature as a key element of Level 6 assessment but they are developed using staged assessments throughout the Foundation Year and Level 4 and 5. Argument construction, evidence use, and reasoning skills are central to this. There is also a specific module in Level 4, **Professional Skills & Fundamentals of Land-based Industries,** which focuses on personal and professional development skills to enhance student's employability and prepare them for the workplace.

Information technology and computational skills

Each module incorporates a degree of technology and digital platforms to assist in this. Information technology and computational skills are also developed through project work, presentations and assignments. Students are explicitly trained in digital skills in a number of

modules. Real-world farm management scenarios through the **Technology and Agroecological Innovations** module allow for the development of applied skills along with problem-solving and analytical skills, which are further honed in research activities and the level 6 **Research Project** module. Our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) will also support this active learning approach by providing access to resources such as lecture notes, self-assessment activities, and additional reading materials.

Independent learning is encouraged by students spending time reading and studying to supplement and consolidate what is being taught in face-to-face sessions and to broaden individual knowledge of the subject. This will normally involve reading to explore the breadth and depth of the syllabus, preparation of tutorial/seminar work, preparation of

coursework/assignments, case study submissions and preparation of major projects.

Additional guided-independent study may take the form of pre-recorded lectures online, which aim to:

- Stimulate interest in the subject matter
- Provide key information
- Offer different perspectives on a subject
- Explain difficult concepts and theories
- Deepen subject knowledge
- Provide an opportunity learn from specialist guest lecturers

Section 7 – Approach to Assessment

A range of assessment techniques will be applied throughout the programme to allow students to demonstrate their attainment of the appropriate learning outcomes of each module. Overall, the programme is assessed through:

	Learning and Teaching			**Assessment**		
	Directed	Independent	Placement	Exam	Coursework*	Practical
Year 1	30.00%	70.00%	0.00%	8.33%	86.67%	5.00%
Year 2	21.68%	52.58%	25.74%**	0.00%	91.67%	8.33%
Year 3	22.67%	77.33%	0.00%	0.00%	95.00%	5.00%

*This refers to any other assessment methods except examinations.
*** placement data includes module 5M001, Industry Engagement (0 credits)*

*Assessment methods include:

- Essays
- Reports – either academic research or professional
- Case studies
- Group work exercises
- Oral presentations
- In-class / in-lab / in-field / online tests – e.g., multiple choice, short answer
- Practical assessments – e.g., livestock performance assessments, health and welfare diagnosis, crop management plan, animal feed plan, laboratory experiments

- Portfolio/e-portfolios
- Skills observation
- Peer review
- Subject-specific exercise
- Academic poster
- Research proposal
- Dissertation

Knowledge acquisition at Level 4 is assessed partly through examinations (online or open-book) but mainly through coursework to encourage critical thought.

Level 5 and 6 assessments involve a greater emphasis on independent research and critical evaluation to develop, for example, industry-relevant management recommendations and research proposal. These are used to develop skills and to differentiate between the levels of attainment of individual students.

Analytical and research skills are assessed at each level of the programme, for example with primary collection of farm data at level 4 **Soil Science and Ecosystems Services**, and writing a research proposal at level 5 **Research and Evidence**. The level of independence and difficulty will ultimately increase leading to the **Research Project** at level 6**.**

Assessments are normally set at the start of each module with a date for submission generally at the middle and before the end of each module. Modules include formative assessments which are not used in the grading of a module but to identify strengths and weaknesses in subject knowledge and to provide opportunities to develop students' skills and support improvement to the summative assessments within each module.

Students will be provided with written feedback on all assessed coursework. Where appropriate, this may be supplemented by oral feedback. Individual feedback will be provided within 20 working days of the submission of the assessment.

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:

Grade	**Equivalent mark**
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, tutors provide written feedback for all assessments which normally includes the strengths and weaknesses of the piece as well as advice about improving the work. Individual feedback is provided within 20-working days of the deadline for submission. 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 – Industry Engagement (5M001) and Professional Placement Year (PPY)

All RAU degrees, including those with a 52-week Professional Placement Year, feature a 12-week industry placement. Employers have consistently expressed their desire to employ graduates who are able to evidence successful periods of prolonged work experience in relevant positions in agricultural businesses and related allied industries and the ability to reflect on individual skills, their own performance and the decision making and performance of the business.

The ability to reflect on personal and business performance is a key graduate skill required within industry. Many practitioners within the agricultural industry demonstrate their ability to reflect daily on a range of management decisions and business performance but seldom take the time to also reflect on personal performance and career aspirations.

The module enables students to reflect on the skills and experiences they have gained during the time spent in the industry and in higher education.

The 12-week module is assessed through a reflective portfolio of evidence. This module aims to support students to become reflective practitioners in their selected subject area. It builds on the development of knowledge and understanding gained across modules within the applied programme of study to enable the application of theory into practice and reflection of their own and an organisation's practices in the workplace.

Students will be required to produce an industry experience portfolio recording progress on your individual role and responsibilities covering 444 hours of work-based engagement. Reflection on personal development should be included within the portfolio and students should draw on knowledge and skills attained throughout their course of study to help them complete their portfolio. The period of work-based learning will also provide the opportunity for students to critically reflect upon the practical application of knowledge and research gained on their programme of study into a real-world context to enable evaluation of working practices.

The Professional Placement Year is assessed through a reflective portfolio which includes a case study and a professional skill assessment which is undertaken by a nominated supervisor at the placement host organisation.

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 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.

<u>Criteria for approval will include:</u>

- 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 Industry Engagement module and its role in Year 2

The industry engagement 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 their link tutor.

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.

During placements

It is important that students keep in touch with the 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 the placement team. The purpose of the visit is to ensure that all is satisfactory from the viewpoint of both the 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.

Students are encouraged to keep in touch with their link 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 Leader, 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 – RAU Graduate Framework

At the RAU we have chosen five values to underpin our learning community. These are the values which we will all work by and for which we want the RAU to be known for. We aim for our graduates to be:

Collaborative

We believe in the power of working together. We are stronger as a community of practice - inspiring each other, identifying shared goals, and providing reciprocal support leads to greater success.

Open-minded

We are receptive to new ideas and we value the diversity of experiences and skills. We are committed to listening to everyone across the RAU community.

Resourceful

We adopt creative approaches to achieve our goals while setting higher standards, promoting professionalism and sustainability.

Responsible

Individually and collectively we take accountability for our actions working with integrity to achieve the highest ethical standards.

Inclusive

We acknowledge the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals and are committed to maintaining an environment that seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and respects diverse traditions, heritages, and experiences.

Section 11 - Progression

The employability of RAU agriculture graduates is excellent at 96% employed or in professional training after 6 months, and there are many diverse career opportunities available to the students in all sectors of the food chain.

The applied nature of the programme, research-led teaching methods and close links with industry provide students with the academic, technical and professional employment skills highly valued by employers. As an example, the agronomy and crop-related part of the degree aligns with BASIS training through the selection of modules **Applied Plant & Animal Science, Agronomy** and **Crop Health, Nutrition & Protection**. Subject to academic performance in specific modules and undertaking an appropriate placement, students will be eligible to undertake and apply for BASIS and/or FACTS training and exams, following successful completion of the degree programme.

The livestock-focused part of the programme is aligned with 3 AMTRA RAMA SQP level modules - **Applied Plant & Animal Science, Farm Animal Health & Welfare** and **Advanced Livestock Nutrition & Breeding**. Depending on which species, or combination of species students will be working with (farm animals, companion animals, and/or equine), they can choose any number of SQP qualifications to complete post-graduation. After completing the AMTRA assessments, they will become RAMA accredited (Registered Animal Medicines Advisors, or SQPs) and able to prescribe and/or supply certain veterinary medicines overseen by a professional body and according to professional Rules, Regulations and a Code of Practice.

Students will also be provided with access to Land Based Skills through the **Professional Skills & Fundamentals of Land-based Industries** module which can lead to students undertaking externally provided competency certificates, such as tractor driving, telehandler, Pesticide Application (PA1 and PA2) and Animal Handling. The programme is aimed at supporting students towards industry-recognised qualifications in a variety of practical skills, in preparation for the workplace.

The BSc (Hons) Agriculture programme can open the door to a range of career opportunities on a local, national and international level. RAU graduates go into a wide variety of sectors, whether as farmers, land managers, rural entrepreneurs, agronomists, livestock nutritionists, economists, policymakers, researchers or consultants. This programme provides professional agriculturalists of the future with the specific skills required to achieve change across sectors and tackle the global challenges facing agriculture. Studying agriculture also develops the skills needed for other graduate careers, such as accountancy, teaching, journalism and the civil service. Alternatively, students may qualify for progression into further study either at the RAU (e.g., MSc Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security, MSc Agriculture Technology and Innovation, MSc Rural Estate Management, MRes, MPhil and PhD studies) or elsewhere.

Section 12 – Student support, wellbeing and counselling

The University is offering a wide range of support to all RAU students, including practical advice and guidance as well as emotional support.

Disability and Neurodivergent support

We support disabled & neurodivergent students and students with long-term health conditions. These disabilities include dyslexia, mental health diagnoses, ADHD, autism, mobility challenges, sensory impairments and many more. Students are encouraged to make contact with Student Services as early as possible by emailing: studentservices@rau.ac.uk . 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.

· Access to assistive technology (AT), which helps remove barriers to learning, communication and participation. The AT can help students who face difficulties with taking notes, organisation and time management.

Mental Health Support

Student Services has a dedicated team who are here to support you with the emotional challenges that can crop up during university life. They take a wide-ranging approach to mental health support, and the team ensure they are available for informal chats as well as providing in-depth support for students with emerging or existing mental health conditions.

The team also offer mental health support in the form of daily drop-in sessions, weekly group Time to Talk sessions, mental health workshops, awareness and campaign days and 1:1 confidential meetings for when students face challenges to their wellbeing.

Student Services can also refer students for counselling sessions with an external agency if they are required. They can also signpost you to our Student Assistance Programme, providing 24/7 care, support and advice.

Academic Support Tutor Programme

All 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 who are 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 (in line with the AST Handbook). Individual support focuses on continuation and may be in person or online.

Section 13 – Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The programme is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialists 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
- Annual Programme Monitoring
- Student Voice data captured through:
    - National Student Satisfaction surveys
    - Programme Committees
    - Academic Student Experience Steering Group
    - Internal surveys – Programme Evaluations, Mid-Module Evaluations and End-Module Evaluations.