

The Royal Agricultural University

Programme Specification:

FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management

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	Agricultural Science and Practice (ASP)
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
Full time study	2 years
Part-time study	4 years
Language of study	English
Programme start month	September
Period of validation	September 2026 – August 2031
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not applicable
Type of Accreditation	Not applicable
Accreditation due for renewal	Not applicable
UCAS Code	
Quercus Code	FA
HECos Code	100517 – Agriculture, 100978 - Farm Management
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points	Agriculture, Rural Environmental Sciences, Animal Studies, Consumer Science, Forestry, Food, Horticulture and Human Nutrition (March 2024) Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (Feb 2020)
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 4 and 5
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	V.1

Entry requirements for (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 / 4 including English Language and Maths (or Maths numeracy for Welsh applicants) plus satisfactory level 3 qualifications: • A-Level: (example grades CD) – minimum of 56 UCAS tariff points (applicants should have either two A-levels or one A-level and two AS level subjects or equivalent qualifications) • C&G Advanced Technical/BTEC - Level 3 Extended Diploma (1080) at Merit-Pass-Pass • International Baccalaureate: 24 points • Access to Higher Education: 45 credits at level 3 of which minimum of 15 must be awarded at Merit or higher. (Pass in Functional Skills level 2 are accepted in lieu of GCSE English & Mathematics) Other level 3 qualifications will be considered. Interest from applicants who may not have the standard entry requirements is also invited. A wide range of qualifications and experience are accepted in order to join University degree programmes. The University always considers evidence of personal, professional (APL) and educational experience, (APEL), which show an ability to meet the demands of their intended programme of study.
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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) – full time

Level 4

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Optional	Semester
4M002	Professional, Practical and Study Skills	4	20	Core	1+2
4A007	Applied Agricultural Science	4	20	Core	1+2
4A002	Farm Business Finance and Accounts	4	20	Core	1+2

4A003	Agricultural Machinery and Technology and Buildings	4	20	Core	1+2
4A004	Soil Science and Ecosystem Services	4	20	Core	1+2
4A005	Farming Systems and Sustainability	4	20	Core	1+2

Level 5

5A001	Agronomy	4	20	Core	1+2
5A002	Livestock Husbandry	4	20	Core	1+2
5A003	Farm Business Planning and Food Supply Chains	4	20	Core	1+2
5A004	Land, Property and Woodland Management	4	20	Core	1+2
5A005	Agricultural Commodities Marketing and Data Management	4	20	Core	1+2
5A006	Agriculture and Food Policy	4	20	Core	1+2
	Total credits: FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management		240		

FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management (240 credits) – part time

Students studying the programme part time over four years will study the following:

Level 4 – Year 1

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/Optional	Semester
4M002	Professional, Practical and Study Skills	4	20	Core	1+2
4A007	Applied Agricultural Science	4	20	Core	1+2
4A002	Farm Business Finance and Accounts	4	20	Core	1+2

Level 4 – Year 2

4A003	Agricultural Machinery and Technology and Buildings	4	20	Core	1+2
4A004	Soil Science and Ecosystem Services	4	20	Core	1+2
4A005	Farming Systems and Sustainability	4	20	Core	1+2

Level 5 – Year 1

5A001	Agronomy	4	20	Core	1+2
5A002	Livestock Husbandry	4	20	Core	1+2
5A003	Farm Business Planning and Food Supply Chains	4	20	Core	1+2

Level 5 - Year 2

5A004	Land, Property and Woodland Management	4	20	Core	1+2
5A010	Agricultural Commodities Marketing and Data Management	4	20	Core	1+2
5A006	Agriculture and Food Policy	4	20	Core	1+2
	Total credits: FdSc Agriculture and Farm Management		240		

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 four years, to achieve 240 credits in total and the same exit qualification as full-time equivalent students.

Section 3 – Programme overview and Programme aims

The Royal Agricultural University's FdSc in Agriculture and Farm Management equips students with the necessary skills to be successful in the agriculture and farming industry whether you are from a farming or non-farming background. If you wish to be a farmer, farm manager or work in the agriculture industry, this foundation degree will equip you with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed. Allied to the RAU's food and farming strategy the foundation degree acknowledges the importance of commercially run farming enterprises and farming more generally as the backbone of strategies to grow more food for an expanding global population while responding to the challenges of climate change, environmental protection and natural resource management. To ensure that the programme reflects the contemporary challenges of agriculture and farming, it has been developed with the needs of employers in mind. This is supplemented by a broad range of experienced teaching staff, many with industry experience in their disciplines and all focused on ensuring the delivery of research informed teaching.

The first year (level 4) of the programme introduces students to the key knowledge and skills necessary for a successful career in the agriculture and farming industry ensuring that students establish the strong underpinnings necessary for both their academic and professional careers. The teaching and learning at this level, mirrored in the second year (level 5) is a combination of theory and practice with the emphasis very much on practical based teaching with academics utilising the network of diverse local farm businesses 'attached' to the RAU, not to mention the RAU's zero-dig enterprise that assists in teaching students about climate and nature-friendly farming. This practical approach to teaching is supplemented by a broad range of visits to a host of different farming enterprises showcasing their varied business approaches to the changing requirements of society, not to mention utilising our new joint venture at Coates Farm showcasing regenerative and integrated farming practices.

The first year of the foundation degree programme is capped with work-based learning of 10 weeks undertaken by the students after the Easter break. This vital component of the foundation degree enables students to embed the skills they have learned during their first year. Students are encouraged to find their own work-based learning placements (with assistance from the RAU's work based learning co-ordinator). Although students are

encouraged to seek out alternatives to their own family run businesses, commercial realities sometimes dictate this isn't possible. On these occasions students are encouraged to be mentored by an individual external to the family business e.g. farm agronomist. Upon return to their second year of study students are required to reflect on what they have learned during their work-based learning by submitting a portfolio of work-based learning experiences reflecting their time on the placement.

The second year of the programme (level 5) builds on the establishment of core knowledge and skills at level 4. For example, the level 5 module in Agronomy builds on the underpinning Applied Agricultural Science module by developing student knowledge and skills in soil management and crop production, while the level 5 Farm Business Planning and Operations module takes the underpinning knowledge of the Farm Business Finance and Accounts module and develops student skills of being able to successfully plan and run a farm enterprise.

The aspiration is that at the end of the foundation degree, as a result of student's hard work, engagement and participation, they will be work ready and equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the agriculture and farming industry. Destinations for those leaving the RAU at the end of two years of study range from returning to the family farm, managing farm businesses, taking up work as an agronomist, or working for allied farming sectors. Many students also decide to continue studying at the RAU by completing the one-year top-up programme enabling them to graduate with an honour's degree in agriculture. This means a further year of study immediately after they have completed their foundation degree programme or even after the student has taken some time away after completing their foundation programme, returning to undertake the top-up programme in a future year.

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

What we eat and how we use land are central to tackling climate change, restoring nature, health, and livelihoods. The RAU's purpose, to care for the land and all that depend on it, puts us at the heart of these important issues.

At the core of the foundation degree in agriculture and farm management sits Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. The aim of the foundation degree is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to play their part in an industry that is key to achieving that goal. Underpinning modules at level 4 such as Professional, Practical and Study Skills for the land-based industries equip students with essential practical skills taught through a hands-on approach, while modules at level 5 stretch student curiosity by exposing them to different approaches to farming systems. For example, in the Livestock Husbandry module, students are exposed to different models of environmentally respectful production and the sustainable production of different types of livestock.

The foundation degree programme also explores other elements of the SDG's including SDG 15 – Life on land and SDG 13 – Climate action. SDG's 13 and 15 are explored through modules examining Soil Science and Ecosystem services as well as different farming systems and the utilisation of natural resources. While at level 5 the Agriculture and Food Policy module examines how these two SDG's translate into food and farming policy domestically and internationally with the core aim of ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture.

The aims of the foundation programme are mirrored by the RAU's food and farming strategy which is to increase the amount of sustainably produced 'home-grown' food at the University. The strategy enables students to see in practice what they have learned in the classroom via the zero-dig enterprise which is complimented by our joint venture at Coates Farm which emphasises the movement towards regenerative farming and integrated agricultural practices.

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.	Demonstrate the principles of livestock and crop production, management and marketing and the mechanisation of agriculture and farming	4A007; 5A003 4A003
2.	Apply a range of business management techniques to agricultural and farming businesses to address different challenges faced by the sector.	4A002; 5A003
3.	Explain the roles, impact and responsibility of regulatory and other influencing bodies on agriculture and farming businesses.	5A006; 4M002

4.	Explain and demonstrate the importance of sustainability and environmental management on agriculture and farming businesses	4A004; 4A005
5.	Identify the limits to your understanding and how this may influence analysis and decision taking.	5A006; 4M002

Intellectual, Professional, Key skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Apply academic, practical and problem-solving skills and techniques.	4M002
2.	Critique the usefulness and relevance of literature and data to livestock and crop production, farm business management and other agricultural operations.	5A003; 5A001; 5A002
3.	Research and critically understand information relevant to solving problems on agricultural and farm business.	5A003
4.	Apply critical analysis skills to balance costs, benefits, risks, health and safety and environmental impacts in real life agriculture and farm business settings.	4A002; 5A003
5.	Apply practical skills and associated knowledge in a working environment	5A006
6.	Perform work related tasks in a safe and competent manner with minimal guidance/supervision	5A006
7.	Analyse technical and financial data to determine their validity and applicability to agriculture and farm businesses.	4A002; 5A001; 5A005
8.	Research and critically understand information relevant to solving problems on agricultural and farm business.	5A006

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 agricultural and farm business.	4A002
2.	Undertake the development and implementation of a sustainable business plan for an agricultural and farming business.	5A003
3.	Demonstrate the acquisition of key technical skills and knowledge relevant to agricultural and farm business employers	5A003; 5A001; 5A002
4.	Demonstrate an awareness of the political, economic, social technological and environmental context in which agriculture and farm businesses operate.	5A006
5.	Identify and assess alternative uses and approaches to the utilisation of land in the context of sustainability and food production	5A004

Section 6 – Approach to Learning and Teaching delivery

The foundation degree programme adopts a mixed methods approach to learning and teaching. That is the programme develops students' knowledge and skills through class based, field based (including trips and visits) and laboratory-based teaching, learning and assessment. In practice this means that students are exposed to a range of different teaching and learning approaches including lectures, seminars, workshops, field visits and laboratory work that helps them to develop the knowledge and skills they require to be successful.

The RAU's living land laboratory adds to the experiential learning for students. The living land laboratory compliments the RAU's well equipped teaching and learning estate which includes the Technology Enhanced Academic Learning (TEAL) facility – a technology enhanced classroom that puts technology at the centre of teaching and learning. Materials and resources for teaching, learning and assessment are captured on the RAU's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) known as Gateway. This provides a one-stop-shop for students to be able to access all the information they need to progress their studies.

The teaching and learning on the programme is based on a minimum of two hours contact per module per week and this is significantly increased by trips and visits to relevant agricultural and farm businesses including the RAU's own zero-dig enterprise. Academics on the programme are very much linked to the land and take every opportunity to embed their teaching and learning in practical real world environments echoing students own demands for a practically based programme complimented by theory in the classroom.

In the classroom academics use a wide range of technology to support and enhance their teaching and learning whether that is the use of specific software for the handling of data or the use of technology such as vevox, mind-mapping, padlett and socrativ.

Section 7 – Approach to Assessment

Academics teaching on the foundation degree use a range of authentic, real-world assessment techniques to develop student's knowledge and skills. These vary from individual and team presentations, professional practice reports and problem sheets as well as infographics and video pitches, and individual work portfolios. Students are prepared for their assessments via formative activities. This enables students to practice their skills and knowledge and provides the opportunity for academics to provide feedback to students. In this way students can improve in the development of their skills and knowledge to complete their summative assignments.

The summative assignments lead to a grade (0-100 %) and formal written or verbal feedback will be provided via the Turnitin or Moodle software. Where live presentations are undertaken, students can be given 'instant' feedback. Students are required to pass the modules by obtaining a grade of 40% or above. Students acquiring a grade of 50-59% are awarded an acceptable pass; 60-69% a good pass; 70-79%, excellent, and 80-100%, outstanding. Students have two opportunities to pass assessments unless they have extenuating circumstances. Students failing to pass an assessment without extenuating

circumstances will be eligible to re-sit the module. In order for students to progress to level 5 of the foundation programme, students are required to pass all their modules at level 4.

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	31.67%	68.33%	0.00%	0.00%	91.67%	8.33%

**Academic Quality will provide the data*

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

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 – 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 10 - Progression

At the end of the first year (after the Easter break) students on the foundation degree programme undertake a minimum of 10 weeks work-based learning. To ensure that students can undertake work-based learning, the RAU has developed a network of employers and organisations that value RAU foundation degree students and offer places for them on an annual basis. We regularly review our work-based learning providers to ensure that they remain appropriate to the needs of our foundation degree students. These work-based learning providers also ensure a crucial link to the agricultural and farming industries meaning that in turn they inform the programme team on what sort of foundation degree

graduates they are looking for from the programme which in turn informs the development of the programme and its modules.

The work-based learning is a crucial component in the development of students to being work ready when they graduate. During this period students are mentored by their employers or in the case of the student electing to work on their home farm (external mentors e.g. agronomist) are encouraged to provide guidance and support to the student. The linking of knowledge and skills learned on the foundation programme with the work-based learning prepares students for progression into their chosen career after they have completed the course either graduating with a foundation degree or deciding to remain at the RAU and undertake the one-year BSc Agriculture honours top-up degree.

The foundation degree programme (together with the optional one-year BSc top-up) also prepares students with the necessary skills to undertake further study at postgraduate level. The RAU offers a range of post-graduate programmes where students can continue and enhance their qualifications, skills and speciality in the arena of agriculture, agri-ecology, business or agri-technology.

Section 11 – 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. ASTs 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 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