

The Royal Agricultural University

Programme Specification:

MSc Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas

Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas

Postgraduate Certificate in Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas

**(RAU Joint Institute for Advanced Agritechnology at
Qingdao Agricultural University (RAU at QAU))**

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 specifications.

Section 1 – Material Programme Information

Criteria	Detail
Validating body	The Royal Agricultural University
Teaching Institution	Qingdao Agricultural University (QAU)
Subject Area	Other Subject Areas (Partners)
Entry Award(s)	MSc Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas
Final Award and exit route(s)	PG Certificate Cultural Heritage Management PG Diploma Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas MSc Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas
Programme title	MSc Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas
Location(s) of study	Qingdao Agricultural University (QAU)
Full time study	2 Years
Part-time study	N/A
Language of study	English
Programme start month	September
Period of validation	September 2023-August 2028
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not applicable
Type of Accreditation	Not applicable
Accreditation due for renewal	Not applicable
UCAS Code	Not applicable
Quercus Code	QAUCMCH1F
HECoS Code	Not applicable
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points	<u>QAA UK Quality Code of Higher Education (2024)</u> <u>QAA Archaeology (including Master's) (2022)</u> The professional standards criteria of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation (2012), the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (2016) & the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (2019). In order to provide a coherent approach given the range of sources the Cultural Heritage Institute (CHI) project group developed an internal benchmark which was "road tested" with professionals and then used to inform the development of the degree curriculum. Master Degree- Characteristic Statement (Feb 2020)
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 7
Approval at AQSC	July 2023

Entry Requirements

Criteria	Detail
Entry requirements (this should be the standard University entry requirements unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board)	A minimum of GPA 2.9 which is equivalent to 2:2 honours degree from a UK university. Mature candidates with significant relevant work experience and lower academic qualifications may also be considered for entry, following interview with the programme managers.
English language	English language at or above equivalent IELTS score of 6.5 average with no element below 5.5. or Obtained first degree in an English-speaking country. or Pass RAU internal integrated English language proficiency (EAP reading and writing) test 60%.

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.

MSc Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas (180 credits)

The accumulation of 180 credits through the assessment of programme elements as detailed below:

Year 1:

Semester 1: Students will undertake English language studies

Semester 2: Study modules

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Elective	Semester
Q4327	Conservation Planning	7	30	Core	2
Q4733	Understanding Buildings and Landscapes	7	30	Core	2

Year 2:

Semester 3: Study modules

Semester 4: Dissertation writing

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Elective	Semester
Q4006	Managing Protected Areas	7	30	Core	3
Q4005	Heritage Interpretation	7	30	Core	3
Q4008	Dissertation	7	60	Core	3+4

Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas (120 credits)

Year 1:

Semester 1: Students will undertake English language studies

Semester 2: Study modules

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Elective	Semester
Q4327	Conservation Planning	7	30	Core	2
Q4733	Understanding Buildings and Landscapes	7	30	Core	2

Year 2:

Semester 3: Study modules

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Elective	Semester
Q4006	Managing Protected Areas	7	30	Core	3
Q4005	Heritage Interpretation	7	30	Core	3

Postgraduate Certificate in Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage and Protected Areas (60 credits)

Year 1:

Semester 1: Students will undertake English language studies

Semester 2: Study modules

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Elective	Semester
Q4327	Conservation Planning	7	30	Core	2
Q4733	Understanding Buildings and Landscapes	7	30	Core	2

Section 3 – Programme overview and Programme Aims

This programme is designed to provide a post graduate qualification in cultural heritage. Here, heritage is defined in both its tangible and intangible forms, as materials, traditions, buildings, landscapes and protected areas that are valued from the past, including the recent past. Cultural heritage has become increasingly important and relevant in modern society, as a link to history and the past, and as a key part of society's identity. The MSc will explore these concepts at both a theoretical and practical level, providing training in the management and conservation of the cultural heritage and protected areas.

The programme is built around four core modules including a dissertation, and three optional modules of which students can choose one.

The first core module is **Conservation Planning**, which looks at the legal and other forms of protection for heritage and the institutions that look after it. It examines how heritage is designated, managed and protected, through key concepts such as value and significance and managing change. This will enable students to grasp many of the core concepts behind conservation planning and its operation.

The second core module relates to **Understanding Buildings and Landscapes**. This module provides a detailed understanding of historic buildings, from the perspective of style, building archaeology and phasing, materials, function, and their positioning within the landscape. Students will learn how to record historic buildings using traditional and digital techniques and understand the role of such records in managing the historic environment.

The third core module relates to **Managing Protected Areas**, which will consider the interconnectedness between natural and cultural heritages examining how these can be sustained and protected. It discusses the economic values of these heritages examining how these can be balanced to ensure they are managed sustainably as national and community assets. The module is built around a number of contemporary and topical case studies to draw out the ways in which heritage is sustainably managed to enhance its values and increase its resilience. Students will be introduced to concepts such as 'conservation deficit', management and business planning.

The final core module provides an insight into theoretical issues linked to hands-on **Heritage Interpretation skills**. Concepts around contested heritage, treatment of human remains, and repatriation / restitution will be discussed, as will ideas concerning narrative and interpretation of heritage assets. Students will be encouraged to think about the nature and purposes of communication, and the different forms that it can take. The module will then look at these approaches - ranging from re-enactment, media (print, broadcast, web, social etc.), visitor management, access and organisation, to interpretation (guides, signage, tours, etc.).

The **dissertation** is the capstone to the programme, where the student can bring together the different elements of their learning, to write a considered piece of academic writing, based around primary research. The student is guided in their choice of subject, and through the programme will have regular discussions and seminars on structure and research methods. There will be flexibility in the form of the dissertation from very practical research to more formal academic investigations and reviews. The module is broken down into three semester-based sections. Semester Two introduces students to the essential concepts involved in research. These include how to design and develop research questions, how to formulate aims and objectives, how to select appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches, and how to manage data. As well as providing them with a thorough grounding in research ethics, risk assessment, project planning and research management. The module will also introduce students to the many platforms, apps and processes they can use to support their work. Semesters Three and Four are devoted to scaffolding student's self-led research through individual tutorials and group-crit events as well as sessions on structuring and writing for different outputs.

By the end of the programme students will be prepared for a career in the management and interpretation of cultural heritage. The degree will also provide graduates with transferable skills to work in the heritage world, that might for instance include journalism, and broadcast media research or production, as well as those with life-long learning aims. We will expect our students to graduate with a high level of autonomy and self-direction, the demonstration of adaptability, initiative and originality alongside accountability, integrity and ethical judgement.

Section 4 – Programme Sustainability

Sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals are built into the programme learning outcomes with heritage training in protecting and managing our world's cultural and natural heritage critical to enabling us to address global challenges. The programme content supports the national ambitions to deliver Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 13 & 16 as well as contributing to the implementation of key international conventions such as the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the 2003 UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage amongst others.

Section 5 – Programme intended learning outcomes

The learning outcomes employ those of the QAA Master's degree specification and the QAA Archaeology specification. They use established skill group descriptors which relate to national standards from the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

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.	Heritage in Context Critically evaluate the concepts of heritage and cultural heritage and the many settings and multiple ways in which they are employed. Understand how economic, cultural, ethical, and social factors shape public and political perceptions of community and national heritage. Understand the main principles of sustainable development in both rural and urban developments.	Q4327 Q4733 Q4006
2.	Heritage Interpretation Demonstrate a critical understanding of interpretation and the interpretive narrative and practical approaches to the interpretation of buildings, sites, monuments and landscapes. Understand audiences, segmentation, costs and benefits in interpretation decision making.	Q4005
3.	Communicating Heritage Be able to assess, evaluate and employ different media forms to communicate and promote the aims and aspirations of a heritage project. Students will also be able to articulate a coherent and professional strategy for a heritage project.	Q4327 Q4005, Q4006

4.	Threats to Heritage Investigate and evaluate the range of threats facing the historic environment through methods such as PESTLE analysis and horizon scanning and be fully cognisant of the concepts of context, significance and values.	Q4327 Q4733 Q4006
5.	Legal Protection Understand and be familiar with the use of legal tools and instruments to protect the historic environment. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the roles of key international, national and local agencies in heritage protection.	Q4733 Q4327
6.	Practical Protection Understand how cultural heritage and landscapes – natural and cultural can be protected through area-based designation, and how this has been developed by international agencies as a method to identify world heritage.	Q4006 Q4327

Intellectual, Professional, Key skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Personal Effectiveness Demonstrate critical self-awareness, self-reflection and self-management; time management; sensitivity to diversity in people and different situations, and the ability to continue to learn through self-managed study, reflection on practice and experience.	All modules
2.	Interpersonal Skills (Teamwork) Demonstrate effective performance within teams and the ability to recognise and utilise individuals' contributions in group processes and to negotiate and persuade or influence others; team selection, delegation, development and management.	All modules
3.	Communication Carry out effective two-way communication: listening, effective oral and written communication of complex ideas and arguments, using a range of media, including the preparation of reports/documents appropriate to the audience.	All modules
4.	Digital Skills (a) effective comprehension and professional use of IT including email and internet, databases, spreadsheets and word processing. (b) Understanding of digital recording, analysis interpretation and presentation. (c) Ability to apply digital skills to information gathering and problem solving across several areas.	All modules
5.	Critical & Creative Thinking Think critically and be creative: To manage the creative processes in self and others; The capability to organise thoughts, identify assumptions and evaluate statements in terms of evidence, detect false logic or reasoning, identify implicit values, define terms adequately and generalise creatively but appropriately.	All modules

6.	Problem Solving & Decision Making Solve complex problems and make decisions: establish criteria using appropriate decision-making techniques, apply them to create and evaluate options and then implement and review decisions.	All modules
7.	Research Design & Implementation Identify problems, and design and conduct research either individually or as part of a team.	All modules
8.	Synthesis, Analysis & Evaluation Locate, synthesise, analyse and evaluate data and information from a wide range of sources to support and evidence solutions to problems.	All modules
9.	Numeracy & Statistical Literacy Apply quantitative skills including methods for the handling and analysis of large numerical data sets. Understanding of the application of statistical tools to research questions.	All modules

Programme specific skills

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Conservation Management Identify conservation issues and produce a conservation management plan to professional standard and in the appropriate industry format.	Q4327 Q4006
2.	At-risk sites and Threats to Heritage Investigate and evaluate the range of threats facing the historic environment and be fully cognisant of the concepts of context, significance and values.	Q4733 Q4327
3.	Analysis and Significance Use multiple lines of evidence to place a given heritage asset into a wider context and to communicate its heritage significance.	Q4006 Q4733 Q4327
4.	Recording Buildings and Landscapes knowledge of mapping and recording of heritage sites and landscapes	Q4733
5.	Interpretation Define audience(s) for a heritage asset and develop an appropriate interpretation strategy for a given site or collection.	Q4005

Section 6 – Approach to Learning and Teaching delivery

The format of the programme is a mixture of residential learning and blended learning approaches supported by a range of learning materials and activities presented on the RAU International VLE.

A Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) and Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) can be obtained by the successful completion of modules accumulating 60 credits (PGCert) or 120 credits (PG Dip) as specified in the module map in section 2.

The delivery is through a combination of lectures, seminars, speakers, case studies, workshops and with activities presented through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which is also used to host other supporting material including videos, webinars, quizzes, podcasts and other relevant presentations.

Teaching will include group discussions, tutorials, facilitated discussions, workshops, guided independent study and a research project. Assessment will be a balance between individual and group work and will consist of a range of critical reports, written examinations, poster presentations, sustainability plans, policy summaries, oral presentations, critical reflections and dissertation / applied project.

Each module is supported by a comprehensive resource list that is maintained through the RAU Library Talis system.

Teaching mode:

The first semester, students will focus on learning English for Academic Purpose (EAP) to improve their English proficiency.

In Year 1 Semester Two and Year 2 semesters Three and Four, all modules are core to the programme. Teaching of each module will be delivered over an 8-week period, including preparation (2 weeks), teaching (3 weekends: mainly Saturday and Sunday), formative assessment (2 weeks) and summative assessment (1 week). Modules may be run concurrently.

During preparation weeks, based on the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), lecturers will provide assessment briefs, set up all reading materials, pre-recorded videos, and tasks on international VLE module page, and ready for students to self-study.

The aim of the three weekends teaching in person is to make sure students understood and learnt all intended learning outcomes following the designed structure in preparation weeks.

During the formative two weeks, students will discuss questions with fellow students and lecturers through module page forum, email and/or face to face communications. During this period of time, lecturers will set up proper formative assessments, to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can help students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas to achieve intended learning outcomes. More importantly, a series of seminars may be scheduled and delivered by members of Joint Institute Industry and Entrepreneurship Committee who are all local, national or international successful entrepreneurs. This will be not only testing the students ILOs, but will also support their future career development.

In the final semester, students will focus on the completion of their dissertation.

Section 7 – Approach to Assessment

The full MSc programme comprises four modules and a dissertation project.

All four taught modules are assessed by course work. The intention of the course work assessments is to replicate the wide range of analyses, syntheses, reports and products which may reasonably be expected from an individual working professionally in the cultural heritage sector. Module leaders will work individually with students to help them develop research topics, methods and approaches that will not only meet the assessment criteria but

will also help them achieve their wider aims for the programme. Assessments are focussed around professional outputs that are typically produced by trained cultural heritage practitioners. This includes conservation management plans, statements of significance, audience development or interpretation plans, national park management plans and impact assessments. There is a great deal of scope within this to pursue individual interests in terms of the content and subject of study, the methodologies adopted and the approaches used. Module leaders will provide in-depth discussion and consultation on assessment items, individually and through group work, to ensure that they are of maximum utility to the learner.

Alongside tutorials and discussions, formative, in-class exercises will be used to scaffold and develop the learner's writing skills. Learners may take part in group-crits on their work in progress, sessions on understanding and incorporating feedback/feed-forward, and in-class supported writing exercises. These will provide valuable formative feedback and allow peer-to-peer learning to take place. The dissertation provides students with the opportunity to complete a significant extended project combining many of the elements and approaches of the modules in an in-depth study. The aim here is to enable participants to demonstrate their ability to deliver a sustained piece of original and innovative work, based on primary fieldwork and supported by a thorough understanding of context and theoretical and methodological approaches. For full-time learners the dissertation module runs from day one, providing support for the assessment and opportunities for group and individual discussion alongside taught content on research design, methodology and management.

The usual outputs of the heritage sector are sizeable professional reports. The programme therefore seeks to familiarise students with longer-form writing. Assessments are generally focused on the production of a single 6000-word output in line with the longer-format industry standard. Writing exercises throughout the programme will help learners to understand how to structure these longer pieces and generate good flow. Learners will be supported through formative tasks, learning how to position their writing, produce drafts, devise methodology, respond to feedback, and self-edit their work. Many of the exercises undertaken in class will feed directly into the learner's ongoing research project, helping them to visualise the longer-form writing in a coherent and structured way.

This programme is very much designed as a stepping-stone into the cultural heritage and national parks sector. Learners are therefore encouraged to treat the assessments and final dissertation project as opportunities for portfolio- and network-building. We encourage and support all learners to approach heritage organisations in order to negotiate 'live' projects for their various pieces of assessed work. Real projects help to build the learner's professional network and introduce them to the reality of working with stakeholders. The public- and/or sector-facing nature of these projects also ensures good visibility for the learner's work, helping them to establish their professional reputation in the sector. Dissertation projects may also be used to lay the groundwork for future projects.

Overall, the programme is taught and assessed through:

Learning and Teaching			Assessment		
Directed	Independent	Placement	Exam	Coursework	Practical
23.0%	77.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%

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 116-156).

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

Award	Score
Distinction weighted average of	70% and above
Merit weighted average of	60% - 69%
Pass weighted average of	40% - 59%
Fail weighted average of	0% - 39%

In addition to assigning a percentage mark to each assessment, the tutor will also provide feedback comments; focussing on the strengths and weaknesses of the work. All marks (grades) are subject to internal moderation and external scrutiny by the programme's External Examiner(s), and final confirmation at the exam board. 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.



We inspire our graduates...

-  **RAU VALUES** Collaborative, Open-minded, Resourceful, Responsible & Inclusive.
-  **PROFESSIONAL APPROACH**
To be reflective, self-aware team members with excellent communication skills approaching new challenges with flexibility and confidence.
-  **SUSTAINABLE MINDSET**
To commit to environment and regeneration, demonstrating an understanding of global complexity and system thinking.
-  **INNOVATIVE THINKER**
To have commercial acumen and curiosity, seeking innovative solutions to the real-world.
-  **TECHNICALLY SKILLED**
To enter the workplace as technically and digitally skilled practitioners who value practical knowledge and scientific evidence.

Section 10 – Progression

This programme is designed to provide an introduction to the rapidly changing discipline of cultural heritage and park management. It sets management in wider professional context, bringing together the analysis of values and significance, audience understanding, and the role of sustainable regeneration in future heritage resilience. In consequence the course is suited to those who are seeking curatorial or consultancy roles where this breadth of knowledge is seen as desirable.

Students are moreover encouraged to approach heritage organisations in order to negotiate 'live' projects for their various pieces of assessment work. They could, for example, write a conservation management plan for a local community organisation. Real projects such as these help to build the learner's professional network and introduce them to reality of working with stakeholders. The public- and/or sector-facing nature of these projects also ensures good visibility for the learner's work and helps them to establish their professional reputation.

The degree will enable graduates to pursue a wide range of careers in the cultural heritage / national park sector. On completion of the course our students will be able to work in government, local authorities, amenity organisations, museums, collections, as consultants, and in the private sector, which require specialists with an in-depth and applied understanding of cultural heritage.

The Cultural Heritage Institute has links with a wide range of cultural heritage organisations and businesses. The institute is located in the national 'Heritage Hub' of Swindon which includes national heritage organisations including English Heritage, Historic England, the Science Museum Group and the National Trust. We work with community partners including Swindon's Heritage Action Zone team, Heritage Open Days, Inspire Heritage, Fourth-Street, Pegasus Group, and Create Media to deliver professionally embedded teaching and useful professional practice for our students.

Section 11 – Student support, wellbeing and counselling

Both RAU and QAU offer a wide range of support to students including practical advice and guidance as well as emotional support.

Disability and Neurodivergent 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 Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities](#).

When students inform Student Office they have a disability, they 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

The RAU China team will work closely with RAU China Office and QAU team 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.

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's Reports

- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Course Representatives
- Annual Programme Monitoring

Although this programme is taught in Qingdao Agricultural University (QAU), China, it will be managed by the RAU Joint Institute (JI) for Advanced AgriTechnology at Qingdao Agricultural University (RAU AT QAU). The RAU AT QAU will be managed by the Joint Management Committee (JMC), which will be chaired by the President of QAU, with a Deputy president / chair from the RAU. All academic matters will be managed by the Academic Committee (AC) according to RAU's Regulations for undergraduate degrees. The AC will be chaired by a senior member of RAU staff and will report to the RAU's Academic Board.

Students reading for this degree will effectively have a contract with the Royal Agricultural University that consists of:

- the terms laid out in the Student Contract document
- this Programme Specification and associated Module documents (Module Reference Sheets, Handbooks etc)
- the RAU's [Regulations](#) and [Policies](#) (adapted for the JI) including the University's [Admissions Policy](#).