

Programme Specification

BSc (Hons) Countryside Management

1) Programme Information

Quercus code	<i>CM</i>
Valid entry routes	BSc (Hons) Countryside Management (Top-up)
Additional exit routes	BSc Countryside Management (Top-up)
Location(s) of Study	Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester Campus with visits to relevant field visits 'off site'.
School	Agriculture, Food and Environment
Programme Manager	Ian Grange
Awarding Body	The Royal Agricultural University
Teaching Institution	The Royal Agricultural University
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 6
Admissions Body	The Royal Agricultural University
UCAS code(s)	D444
Entry Criteria (include IELTS if relevant)	<p>The BSc Countryside Management is an Honours conversion programme ('top-up') designed to build on previous study and work experience.</p> <p>Students will be expected to have already achieved an acceptable Foundation Degree or HND qualification prior to entry. Students progressing from approved cognate FdSc programmes will be eligible for direct entry onto the BSc Honours Programme with no additional requirements to complete bridging studies. Students from Foundation Degree and HND feeder programmes that do not articulate directly may be required to complete additional work in order to gain entry onto the BSc Honours</p>

	programmes. The nature of such additional work will be determined following discussion/ interview with the Programme Manager and will relate to identified gaps in prior learning. This may involve the completion of coursework, or the sitting of an examination. In exceptional cases, students may be required to complete additional level 2 modules prior to enrolment onto the BSc Honours Programme.
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points, e.g. FD qualification benchmark	Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2016) benchmark statement. Subject Benchmark Statement – Archaeology (QAA 2014) The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA 2008)
Details of accreditation by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)	None. However, this Honours Degree has been closely aligned with sector feedback and developed to meet the needs of employers.
Mode of delivery	Full-time or part-time
Language of study	English
Programme Start Month(s)	September
Academic Board approval date	
Valid from	September 2020

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Valid to	
Version	

2) What are the aims and objectives of the programme?

BSc (Hons) Countryside Management has been taught as a top-up programme by the RAU since 2008 with a consistent track record of equipping graduate students with the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully launch or reinforce their careers within the countryside sector. The Programme is primarily aimed at those students wishing to make informed and effective countryside management decisions which fully take into account the fundamental environmental, economic and sociological principles that are essential components of sustainability.

This programme also provides students with an appreciation of the dynamic nature of this sector and how best to position themselves to be effective operators, as well as

having the knowledge and skills to both adapt to, as well as influence, those changes taking place over the coming years and decades.

3) What opportunities are graduates likely to have on completing the programme?

As a leading educator serving the countryside and rural business sectors, the RAU is well placed to provide networking opportunities for graduates interested in careers in countryside management and heritage. This programme is specifically designed to equip graduates with the additional knowledge within these sectors to be employable within the countryside/ heritage management sectors. Potential employers might include:

- Statutory organisations (e.g. Natural England, Historic England, Environment Agency)
- NGOs (e.g. Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, FWAG, National Trust, English Heritage)
- County Councils (e.g. country parks)
- Private estates
- Archaeological/ heritage consultancies (e.g. Cotswold Archaeology)
- Ecological consultancies (e.g. Wildwood Ecology, Keystone Ecology)
- Curator: Museums and Records Offices (e.g. Corinium Museum).
- Heritage Project Manager
- Building Conservationist

Graduates will also possess qualifications sufficient to support applications for further study at Masters or PhD level on completion of this BSc Honours award.

4) What should students expect to achieve in completing the programme?

Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

This programme is designed to enhance the outcomes of previous studies, enabling students to achieve a deeper understanding of issues and to academically critique these whilst still recognising how such issues are applied on a day to day basis in the land-based sector. This approach will result in the achievement of the following intended learning outcomes:

A. Knowledge and understanding

A1 Evaluate how policies and pressures affecting the countryside are developed and can be influenced, analysing contemporary examples to reinforce knowledge.

A2 Determine appropriate solutions to environmental/ heritage problems, blending a knowledge and understanding of policy, regulation, incentive schemes with 'real-world' management and application.

A3 Understand the critical importance of sustainability in the management of environmental and heritage resources, assessing the trade-offs between environmental, social and economic factors.

A4 Evaluate and critique the roles and responsibilities of regulatory and advisory bodies in influencing countryside management, decision making and policy development.

B. Intellectual, Professional, Key skills

B1 Develop a critical understanding of subject-specific theories, concepts and principles.

B2 Assemble and evaluate a variety of information and evidence for use in better informing countryside management decision making.

B3 Demonstrate the skills necessary to plan, conduct and report an individual research project.

B4 Develop and utilise problem-solving skills.

C. Graduate skills

C1 Demonstrate awareness and critical analysis of the importance of personal attributes in the workplace such as resilience, open-mindedness, the ability to reflect, motivation, professional behaviours, and employability and how these link specifically with work in the land-based and heritage sectors.

C2 Understand the roles and opportunities of education initiatives in raising awareness of the importance of environment, including heritage, as it integrates alongside the expectations of business and society and the challenges associated with this at local, regional and global scales.

C3 Synthesize quality information and evidence and to be able to communicate this, systematically and coherently, in different ways.

C4 Understand the fundamental importance of interacting effectively with, individuals and groups, including working effectively both as a team member and leader.

D. Programme Specific Skills

D1 Critically examine the policies and drivers of change affecting the countryside including: links between farming and semi-natural ecosystems; heritage; influences of businesses, organisations and agencies associated with the management; conservation and utilisation of countryside resources.

D2 Provide the opportunity for the individual study of particular interest and for self-expression through the Honours dissertation or via the work-based equivalent.

D3 Further develop critical learning and transferable skills, both generic and sector specific, to prepare the learner for graduate employment.

D4 Enhance and develop the learner's interpersonal skills.

5) How is the Teaching and Learning delivered in this programme?

Acquisition of knowledge is achieved mainly through lectures and directed student-centred learning. Where appropriate, understanding is reinforced through tutor and student-led tutorials, seminars and field visits.

Lectures

The purpose of lectures is to broadly interest students in a particular subject in order that they can research it independently and develop their understanding of the subject further via tutorials and seminars. Specifically, lectures will:

- Explain difficult concepts and theories
- Offer different perspectives on a subject
- Pass on relevant information and signpost students to key sources
- Show students how to deepen their knowledge
- Providing an opportunity to listen to specialist guest lecturers

Seminars & Tutorials

Seminars and tutorials are primarily interactive and work best when students engage. They provide an opportunity for students to interact with each other in an academic context. They are occasions for the exchange of ideas and information under the guidance of a lecturer/tutor.

Seminars and tutorials can be helpful to study by:-

- Offering the chance for students to express their views
- Allowing academic interaction
- Giving students valuable practice in making presentations
- Facilitating discussions
- Encouraging structured research
- Sharing and diversification of information and experience
- Introducing group work

Practicals

Student practicals, visits and demonstrations will take a variety of forms on estates, farms and laboratories. They form an important part of overall course provision and help to reinforce and apply the subject principles received in the lecture room.

Honours Research Project

The Honours Research Project or Dissertation requires the completion and submission of a formal, structured document, based on some form of original research activity. Students are expected to develop and demonstrate their research skills and critical ability through the medium of this piece of work. The main purpose

of this research is to demonstrate the application of knowledge gained in the taught element of the course and to show that a research activity can be handled with the right level of academic competence.

The project may take a variety of forms, depending on the interests and abilities of the individual student and the particular requirements of the study agreed with their supervisor. The project is used as a vehicle for encouraging individual student efforts and expression. Whilst there is no minimum length requirement, students are advised to aim for a final report length of around 10,000 words.

Directed and Private Study

Students are expected to undertake private study as an important learning method within the course. This will normally involve reading to explore the breadth and depth of the syllabus, preparation of tutorial/seminar work, preparation of coursework, case study submissions and preparation of major projects. The use of the University Library is very important for the effective use of private study time. The Library staff provide advice and assistance on both finding and using relevant material. Guidance in private study is also given by the academic staff.

Please note:

- The complete BSc Honours award will require, on average, a total of 1200 hours of student effort for a one-year programme, comprising of timetabled activities, private study and assessments. Students in employment and completing the work-based learning modules, should be aware of the total effort required, and of the need to undertake this in addition to that required by their employer.
- This programme is inclusive of disabled people (e.g. hearing impaired, vision impaired, speech impaired, dyslexic and mobility impaired) with particular regard to teaching, learning and assessment, in accordance with Part 10: Inclusive Practice of the University's Teaching Quality Handbook and the Equality Act 2010. Students are encouraged to disclose any impairment to the Disability Officer so that the appropriate support can be provided. Students have the right to request that the nature of their impairment be treated as confidential.

6) What is the Programme Assessment Strategy?

There is a combination of examinations, written coursework and oral presentations providing a diversity of assessments that students are likely to have strengths in. Many of these simulate real-world expectations such as 'funding proposals' and 'consultancy reports', helping to better prepare students professionally. Indicative assessment approaches are as follows:

- Formal (time constrained) examinations
- Research projects
- Employers reporting on work-based experience
- Case studies
- Business plans
- Conservation management plans
- Oral presentations
- Portfolios/appraisals
- Practical skills
- Production of publicity and information materials.

7) What do students need to achieve in order to graduate?

The programme is offered as either a one-year full-time programme or part-time programme, normally to be completed over two academic years and designed to build on previous studies at HND/Foundation Degree. Hence the RAU Honours conversion programme should be considered as the culmination of a period of academic progression, rather than as an independent stand-alone course.

The flexible design of the programme also enables graduates from a wide range of related fields to enter the programme, and provides the ability to tailor the modular programme, through the selection of suitable elective modules, to meet individual career aspirations.

The programme is of a modular format, with each module representing a value of 15 credits or multiples thereof. Each 15-credit module represents a minimum of 150 hours of student learning, effort and assessment. To achieve the award of BSc Honours in Countryside Management a student must achieve a minimum of 120 credits at level 6.

Within this total time, students can expect to participate in formal timetabled activities such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, practicals and visits; for approximately one third of the total time – usually around 3 hours per week for a 15-credit module studied within one of the two 14 week semesters within the academic year. Thus the majority of module activities such as reading around the subject, preparing for tutorials and seminars, completing module assessments and revision for examinations; will take place outside of these scheduled activities, but are an essential part of a student's learning journey.

One of the unique features of the programme is the inclusion of two work-based modules that provide an opportunity for those already in employment to complete 50% of the programme within their current working situation, thus significantly reducing the time required to attend campus-based activities (see Section 5).

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

Notwithstanding University Regulations and the authorities and powers exercised by examiners, students will normally need to demonstrate achievement in the elements of the programme, as laid out in Section 7. Programmes are structured through the accumulation of credit, where 1 credit represents 10 notional learning hours.

In brief, students will normally need to achieve the following in order to be awarded the qualifications:

BSc(Hons) top-up

The accumulation of 120 credits at level 6, through the assessment of taught modules as detailed below:

BSc (Hons) Countryside Management (CM3)	Credits
Core modules	
3092 Countryside and Environmental Management	15
3300 Research Project / Dissertation	30
Elective modules (75 credits)	
3080 Heritage Property	15
3093 Farmland Ecology	15
3207 Farming & Integrated Environmental Local Delivery (FIELD)	15
3010 Game and Deer Management	15
3090 Forestry & Woodland Management	15
3011 Rural Business Diversification	15
3013 Sustainable Management of Soil and Water	15
3085 Climate Change and Development	15
3203 Natural Resource Management	15
*3250 Heritage Study Tour	15

*3230 Ecology Study Tour	15
#3102 Improving Personal Professional Practice	30

*If the student wishes to select a 'Study Tour' module from the elective list, they can only choose one, alongside their other elective choices.

Students should note that the Improving Personal Professional Practice module is **only** available to those with current and continuing positions of employment.

If a student does not meet the required standards for the award, the examiners for the programme may decide to offer a lower award associated with the programme, providing that a lower exit award exists and the student meets the requirements of that lower award.

Pass Criteria

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

Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) Chart

Module	Knowledge & understanding				Intellectual/Professional/Key Skills				RAU Graduate skills				Programme Specific Skills			
	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	D1	D2	D3	D4
3092 Countryside Management	<i>Ex</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Ex</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>Ex</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>
3093 Farmland Ecology	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	
3207 Farming & Integrated Environmental Local Delivery (FIELD)	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>
3010 Game and Deer Management	<i>Ex</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>Ex</i>					<i>CW1</i>			<i>Ex</i>			
3090 Forestry & Woodland Management		<i>Ex</i>			<i>Ex</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>			
3080 Heritage Property		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>					<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>			
3011 Rural Business Diversification		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW2</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW2</i>				<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>			
3013 Sustainable Management of Soil and Water			<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>				<i>CW1</i>	
3085 Climate Change and Development		<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	
3203 Natural Resource Management	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>		
*3250 Heritage Study Tour		<i>CW1/ CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1/ CW2</i>
*3230 Ecology Study Tour		<i>CW1/ CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1</i>			<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW1/ CW2</i>
3300 Research Report/ Dissertation					<i>CW2</i>		<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>
3102 Improving Personal Professional Practice						<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>	<i>CW3</i>	<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW1</i>		<i>CW2</i>	<i>CW2</i>

*If the student wishes to select a 'Study Tour' module from the elective list, they can only choose one, alongside their other elective choices.

8) Work-based Learning

Students registering for the BSc Honours in Countryside Management will have the option of completing either a full-time campus-based programme of study or a split programme whereby up to 50% of the credits may be achieved through activities undertaken within their existing working environment. Whilst the former will be more suited to those progressing from more traditional HND and FdSc awards, the latter will appeal to those in relevant employment who have the support of their employer/line manager in raising their academic qualifications.

The work-based learning activities comprise two 30-credit modules. A *Work-based Research Project* that links in with the **3300 Dissertation module** which focusses on a project within the work-place to be agreed between the student, an RAU supervisor and a work-place supervisor. In addition, there is also a professional development module, **Improving Personal Professional Practice**, which will require students to reflect on their current position and to develop and acquire new or enhanced skills in order to further progress their career path.

Students should discuss their proposed pathway and study approach with the Programme Manager when initially applying for the programme. Those opting for the work-based route will be required to ensure the University is provided with sufficient assurances from their employer or line manager that the planned activities can and will be supported within the workplace throughout the period of registration.

9) How will the University assure the quality of the provision?

New programme proposals are reviewed by a Validation Panel, comprising at least the following membership: normally one subject matter expert external to the School or University, at least 3 academic staff not associated with the proposal. The Panel may include 1 member of professional staff. Panels are supported by an appropriately trained Secretary who acts as advisor to the Panel. Proposals are reviewed in line with the QAA's UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Course Design And Development and in the case of partnership arrangements in accordance with QAA's Advice And Guidance: Partnerships. All programmes are ultimately approved by Academic Board for a period of up to 6 years.

Programme changes within a validation period are approved by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) on behalf of Academic Board. No more than 1/3 of a programme's core modules may be changed within the validation period before early programme revalidation is instigated.

The University has in place regular monitoring procedures for quality assurance including an Annual Programme Managers Report for each programme.

Each programme has at least one External Examiner who monitors all aspects of the assessment process. This is in line with the advice and guidance provided by the QAA regarding External Expertise which emphasises that external examining is one of the principal means for maintaining UK threshold academic standards within autonomous higher education institutions.

Each programme has a formally constituted Programme Board, which includes the External Examiner(s), and which is responsible for ensuring that awards are made within the Regulations of the University and that students are made awards on the basis of meeting the specified Learning Outcomes of a programme at the appropriate standard.

Each programme has a Programme Committee which meets at least twice a year to discuss, inter alia, programme design and planning, the student experience (including feedback) and student progress.

Each School has an School Advisory Group (or similar) which meets at least once a year to engage with external stakeholders on curriculum design and currency of the School programme portfolio content.

Student feedback both qualitative and quantitative is collected for each module studied. In addition the University's holds Staff Student Liaison Committees and a Student Engagement Committee where students have the opportunity to discuss issues and give and receive feedback. Students are also invited to participate in the University's New Student Survey and Student Satisfaction Survey along with the annual National Student Survey. The results of all feedback are considered by the Programme Committee and additionally, in respect of the University and national surveys, issues of quality are considered by and acted on where appropriate by AQSC, Academic Board, School and University Executives.