



## **ROYAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY CIRENCESTER COLLEGE**

### **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

### **Foundation Degree in British Wildlife Conservation**

#### **NB**

*The information contained in this document is intended only as a guide to the programme. It does not constitute a legally binding document or contract between the individual and the Royal Agricultural University.*

*The information contained herein is correct at the time of going to print, but the University reserves the right to make changes to the structure of the programme, assessment methods, etc., at any time without prior notification. Any changes made however will be made known as soon as possible.*

**Programme Manager: Dr Kelly Swallow**

**© The Royal Agricultural University, August 2018**

<b>1. Awarding Institution</b>	The Royal Agricultural University (RAU)
<b>2. Teaching Institution</b>	The RAU and Cirencester College (CC)
<b>3. Final Award Title(s)</b>	Foundation Degree (FdSc) in British Wildlife Conservation
<b>4. UCAS Code(s)</b>	7C27
<b>5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points, e.g. FHEQ, FD Qualification benchmark etc.</b>	<p>This Foundation Degree has been developed with reference to the following reference points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA 2014)</li> <li>▪ Subject Benchmark Statement - Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, food and consumer sciences (QAA 2016)</li> <li>▪ Foundation Degree Qualification benchmark (QAA 2010)</li> <li>▪ Environmental Conservation Sector Skills Agreement (Lantra 2010)</li> <li>▪ Subject Benchmark Statement -Earth sciences, environmental sciences and environmental studies (QAA 2014)</li> <li>▪ Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Managers Graduate Survey Skills (2007)</li> </ul>
<b>6. Details of accreditation by a professional/statutory body</b>	n/a
<b>7. Mode of Study</b>	Full-time or part-time
<b>8. Language of Study</b>	English
<b>9. Date of Production/Revision</b>	August 2018

## **10. Educational Aims of the Programme**

### **10.1. The Educational Aims of the Programme**

The University intends that the following capability statements will provide an overarching framework for all its graduates, and inform specific course aims and outcomes. Thus the University expects that all graduates will:

- (i) apply creative, critical and compassionate thinking processes to social and organisational issues
- (ii) develop communication abilities using people, ideas, texts, media and technology
- (iii) work with, manage and lead others in ways which value their diversity and equality and which facilitates their contribution to the organisation and the wider community
- (iv) acquire and apply appropriate management, technical and practical skills and knowledge
- (v) recognise and accept continuing learning as being central to one's capacity to realise potential
- (vi) develop, express and be able to defend personal values, beliefs and ethics
- (vii) hold a perspective which acknowledges local, national and international issues
- (viii) value a citizenship role which is connected to and responsible for the social, environmental, political and economic systems in which we live

In relation to the above general capability statements, the FdSc British Wildlife Conservation aims to:

- Provide education and training delivering the appropriate knowledge and skills required for future employees who wish to seek employment in the environmental and wildlife conservation sectors.
- Enable existing workers who already work in the environmental conservation and wildlife sectors to pursue their learning further and to develop their skills through studying on this programme by part-time attendance.

- Assist both employed and volunteer workers who complete this programme to understand and respond to the changing and increasing pressures to conserve and enhance both natural and man-made environments.
- Make available a progression route for those completing level 3 education and for those already employed in relevant agencies as part of their continuing personal and professional development activities.
- Facilitate a progression route for students who successfully complete this Foundation Degree to proceed onto an appropriate BSc honours conversion programme such as the BSc (Honours) in Wildlife and Countryside Management at the RAU.
- Promote the acquisition of transferable skills to meet the future needs of employment in environmental conservation and wildlife management and related occupations.
- Stimulate a desire to pursue lifelong learning in both vocational and academic subjects.

## **11. Intended Learning Outcomes**

### *A. Knowledge and Understanding*

- A1 Understand the fundamental concepts, principles and principles in relation to British conservation and wildlife management in both urban and rural contexts in line with the principles of sustainable development and the ecosystem approach.
- A2 Recognise the roles of regulatory and advisory bodies and the policies, legislation and designations involved in the protection of wildlife sites in both urban and rural contexts.
- A3 Demonstrate an understanding of different ecosystems, their origins and the impact of human interactions in their development, management and maintenance.
- A4 Recognise the challenges in managing wildlife sites sustainably in the light of climate change, population demands, economic pressure and agricultural requirements.

*B. Intellectual Skills*

- B1 Understand subject specific theories, concepts and principles.
- B2 Apply the skills necessary for academic study and enquiry.
- B3 Research, critically assemble and evaluate a wide variety of information types and evidence.
- B4 Demonstrate the skills necessary to plan, conduct and report on a variety of conservation and wildlife management projects.
- B5 Apply professional judgement to balance risks, costs, benefits, safety, reliability, aesthetics and environmental impact.

*C. Practical Skills*

- C1 Plan and execute both individual and group activities.
- C2 Plan and undertake a variety of environmental surveys, analyze and report results, including recommendations for further investigation.
- C3 Undertake a range of practical skills including taxonomic identification, environmental conservation and wildlife management skills to accepted professional standards.
- C4 Critically assemble and evaluate verbal, written and visual communications to inform decision making.

*D. Transferable Skills*

- D1 Source and assemble information to apply and communicate knowledge systematically and coherently.
- D2 Develop and apply analytical and numerical skills and techniques.
- D3 Development of personal roles and responsibilities in new and changing situations and contexts.
- D4 Relate to, and interact effectively with, individuals and groups, including working effectively both as a team member and leader.
- D5 Development of reflective and assessment skills.
- D6 Manage tasks and identify and solve problems using information sources.
- D7 Use a range of technological equipment and systems.

D8 Apply a range of skills and techniques, using a variety of thought processes, to develop ideas in creative work.

## **12. Programme Structure and Requirements**

### **12.1. Length of Study Programme**

Students registered full-time will complete the programme over two academic years (30 weeks per year), with the additional requirement of a compulsory period of work experience totalling a minimum of 30 days and completed either during the student's first academic year or during the summer vacation between year 1 and year 2. The objective of this period is to expose the students directly to conservation management activities within the sector. Students who can already demonstrate suitable prior experience may seek exemption from this 30-day requirement, following agreement with the Programme Manager. However, they may not be exempted from the associated assessments for this period, which contribute to the Supervisory and Mentoring Skills module in the final year.

Part-time students will be expected to attend on a two day per week basis, spreading their studies over a longer period of time, up to a maximum of four academic years.

### **12.2. Detailed Modular Structure**

The curriculum for the full-time route for the FdSc will consist of the following modules (with credits shown in brackets). The Module Reference Sheets are available on the University website.

#### **Year 1 [Level 4 Modules]**

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Introduction to Environmental Conservation and Heritage Management | (10 credits) |
| 2. Environment and Ecosystems   | (20 credits) |
| 3. Wildlife Conservation: Principles and Practice                     | (20 credits) |
| 4. Field Ecology  | (20 credits) |
| 5. Wildlife Handling, Protection and Survey                           | (20 credits) |
| 6. Practical Conservation Skills                                      | (30 credits) |

**Total for Year 1 = 120 credits**

On successful completion of 120 Credits at level 4, students leaving the programme will be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education.

*Year 2 [Level 5 Modules]*

- |                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Conservation Ecology               | (20 credits) |
| 2. Landscape Conservation             | (20 credits) |
| 3. Wildlife Habitat Management        | (20 credits) |
| 4. Amenity, Access and Education      | (20 credits) |
| 5. Conservation Research Skills       | (20 credits) |
| 6. Supervisory and Mentoring Skills   | (20 credits) |
| <b>Total for Year 2 = 120 credits</b> |              |

On successful completion of 240 credits, to include 120 at level 4 and 120 at level 5, students will be awarded a Foundation Degree in British Wildlife Conservation.

### **12.3. Academic Level of the Programme**

This Foundation Degree in British Wildlife Conservation is a qualification in its own right, matched to the Intermediate level in the QAA “Framework for Higher Education Qualifications”. It is recognized as appropriate for graduate level recruitment for intermediate jobs by many employers.

This programme has been designed so that those successfully completing this Foundation Degree can undertake a period of further study, normally of one years' duration, to achieve a BSc (Honours) Degree. An example of such a programme is the RAU's BSc (Honours) in Wildlife and Countryside Management. The learning outcomes for this FdSc have been articulated with this Honours Degree Programme so as to facilitate student progression.

## **12.4. Credits Relating to the Programme**

The programme is in line with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA 2014) and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements in Higher Education in England (QAA 2008), as shown below:

<b>QAA Level</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Higher Education Award</b>
Level 4	120	Certificate in Higher Education
Level 5	240*	Foundation Degree

\* 120 @ level 4 + 120 @ level 5

## **12.5. Awards and Any Distinctive Features of the Programme**

Successful completion of all modules will lead to the award of a Foundation Degree (FdSc) in British Wildlife Conservation.

The programme has been developed following wide consultation with stakeholders interested in environmental conservation and wildlife management.

The distinctive features of the programme are:

- The integrated nature of work-based learning activities, spanning both years of the programme
- The partnership between the RAU and Cirencester College to provide access to a wide range of staff expertise and educational resources
- The close involvement of key stakeholders to ensure the programme fully meets the needs of employers and organisers of volunteer organisations involved in environmental conservation and wildlife management
- The ability to develop supervisory and mentoring skills relevant to the future management of conservation volunteers
- The geographical location of the RAU and Cirencester College, providing easy access to a large number of excellent environmental conservation and wildlife management resources locally. These include, as examples, , Wildlife Trust reserves, Westonbirt National Arboretum, Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and The Bathurst Estate

- Access to 80+ species in the Animal Centre
- Diverse range of staff expertise in animal handling / care (e.g. from dangerous exotics to large animals)
- The number of employer organisations and agencies situated, or with significant presence, locally, including the National Trust, Natural England, Cotswold Canals Trust, Gloucestershire and/or Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.
- The opportunity to train students in fieldwork skills through programmes delivered by the University's Rural Innovation Centre and through practical fieldwork activities on the University Farms, in particular Harnhill Manor.

### **13. Student Support Services**

#### **Academic Support Services Available to Students**

Details of the range of support services provided for students are given in the RAU Student Handbook. In particular, for this programme, the following support services will be provided for students:

- A formal induction programme when you first arrive at University that will introduce you to all aspects of student life, including support services available, and outline the study skills you will need to complete your programme successfully
- The RAU Student Handbook that provides details of all facilities available to students.
- The programme specification and individual module guides that provide clear details of the assessment regulations and outline the teaching and assessment programme for each module of study.
- Personal Development Programmes will be agreed with students at the beginning of the programme and reviewed regularly
- On-line module teaching resources available through the University's VLE.
- Access to extensive Library and study skill packages, many of which are available on-line
- Student e-mail and internet facilities
- Personal access to all lecturing staff to enable you to discuss problems relating to specific modules or assessment activities

- Careers advice through sessions with Careers Guidance personnel
- Access to additional learning support services, such as dyslexia or disability support services
- Access to the Student Liaison Officer, the Student Welfare Officer and the University Health Centre
- Access to independent and confidential Cirencester Counselling services

#### **14. Criteria for Admissions**

Applicants should confirm their ability to study on a Foundation Degree by presenting evidence of:

- 56 UCAS tariff, to include at least one A2 level pass or
- BTEC National Diploma (MM) or Diploma (MPP), or
- Advanced Diploma

Additionally candidates will normally be expected to present GCSE passes at Grade C or above in at least 3 other subjects which would normally include:

- English and Mathematics
- Applications from students with non-standard qualifications will be considered on an individual basis
- Learning through experience, demonstrated in portfolios or records of achievement, and/or by set learning tasks set at interview, and confirmed by employer reference(s). or
- A combination of academic and experiential learning, to be considered on its individual merits.

Applicants should have sufficient motivation to benefit from the programme, based on an understanding of what is involved. Potentially suitable students may be interviewed so that their interest and motivation can be assessed. Non-standard admissions will be discussed with the Programme Manager and admissions office staff.

### *Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)*

The Programme Manager, in consultation with Registry Staff and following RAU policy, will make the admissions decision in cases involving APL and ensure that correct documentation is completed for all APL cases.

### *Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)*

The Programme Manager will make the admissions decision in cases involving APEL, and ensure that students can show intellectual ability, by the submission of a work portfolio and the completion of appropriate coursework. This process will be in line with RAU policy.

### *Overseas Students*

Applicants whose first language is not English must offer evidence of qualifications in written and spoken English. Acceptable qualifications are IELTS 6, or direct equivalents.

## **15. Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

This programme is inclusive of disabled people 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](#). However, due to the particular requirements of this programme, students who are mobility impaired are advised to contact the University's Disability Officer to explore whether appropriate support or alternative assessment can be provided to enable successful completion of the programme. All students are encouraged to disclose any impairment to the Disability Officer so that the appropriate support may be provided. Students have the right to request that the nature of their impairment be treated as confidential

### **Personal Development Planning (PDP)**

At the beginning of the programme, following any Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) for a student, a PDP will be drawn up between the University and each student on the programme. This will confirm the student's learning and skills achievements to date as well as any Prior Accreditation that is being sought

relating to any study modules in the Foundation Degree. Also any other learning outcomes a student may want to achieve through the Foundation Degree programme and any learning support required will be documented. Progress towards the achievement of these outcomes will be reviewed regularly.

## **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The forms of teaching that will be employed for the delivery of this Foundation Degree are detailed below:

### ***Learning Activities***

#### *Lectures*

One of the methods of delivery of learning during the University-based phases of the programme will be by lectures. Lecturers aim to:

- provide information
- encourage students to pursue additional information on subjects covered
- provide various views on subjects
- explain difficult ideas and issues relating to particular areas
- demonstrate ways in which students can widen and increase their depth of knowledge.

#### *Seminars / Tutorials*

These will provide opportunities for dialogues between students themselves as well as lecturers. Exchanges of information and ideas can be achieved under the direction of tutors in seminars/tutorials. Through these meetings students should be able to:

- express and share their views
- develop their ability to participate in group activities.

### *Visits*

Visits to environmental conservation and wildlife management enterprises will be an important part of the programme. These will aid the reinforcement and application of information learned through more formal study.

### *Work-based Experience*

Students will gain work-based experience throughout this programme, through skills modules in both Year 1 and Year 2 and, for those students without significant prior direct work experience in the conservation sector, an additional 30-day period that may be completed either during the academic year or during the summer vacation between Year 1 and Year 2 . Learning objectives for this period will be agreed between the learner, employer and University staff. During this experience students should be able to:

- Work effectively in a ‘professional’ environment, individually or in teams
- Organise themselves as regards time management, resourcefulness and ability to work on their own
- Develop existing practical and business skills and acquire new ones
- Gain insight into the management of the enterprise including financial and human resource aspects.

### *Portfolio Development and Key Skills*

During the programme students will be required to develop and maintain a portfolio relating to their work-based and work-related experiences. This will include developing their ability to demonstrate key skills such as numeracy, communications, presentation and IT skills.

### *Directed and Private Study*

Students are expected to undertake additional study on their own behalf as an important learning method within the programme. 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, electronic journals and the RAU intranet resources which can be accessed remotely will be encouraged for the effective use of private study time.

### *Fieldwork and Practical Experience*

A particular feature of this programme will be learning time devoted to fieldwork and the gaining of practical skills. The importance of this has been stressed by employers and was confirmed in the Sector Skills Agreement for the Environmental Conservation industries. Students will be involved on the University farm or local field sites on a one-day per week basis during the academic year where they will be able to develop and enhance their practical skills and underpinning knowledge relating to work in environmental conservation and wildlife management.

The learning outcomes will be promoted employing the range of teaching and learning methods listed above. Students will be required to undertake some self-directed study with learning support provided by University staff. Students will also be encouraged to progress to further study for a BSc Honours degree by completing the top-up programme for the BSc in Countryside Management at the RAU or some similar equivalent programme that may be available at the time of completion of this Foundation Degree.

### **Assessment**

A wide range of assessment techniques will be applied throughout the programme to confirm learning outcomes. These will include:

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

## **16. Work-based Learning**

Work-based learning (WBL) is a very important feature of this Foundation Degree.

Students will undertake training in work-based learning throughout the modular programme, specifically in the Practical Conservation Skills module at level 4 and in the Supervisory and Mentoring Skills module at level 5. In addition, for students without suitable prior experience, a period of more formal work-based learning will be undertaken, either during the academic year of Year 1 or during the summer vacation between Year 1 and Year 2, totaling a minimum of 30 days. Assessment of this period will be linked to the Supervisory and Mentoring Skills module at level 5.

At the end of the WBL, students are required to secure an assessment of their performance from their work-based supervisor(s), using either the RAU's or organisation's own appraisal form, to demonstrate successful completion and help inform the students' own Personal Development Plan.

Further details of the WBL activities is included in the WBL Handbook available on the University's VLE (Gateway).

In addition to the above, learning and assessment activities throughout the programme will further involve students in activities pertinent to future careers in environmental conservation and wildlife management.

## **17. Quality Assurance Procedures**

### **17.1. RAU Procedures for Quality Assurance**

These are described in the University's Teaching Quality Handbook and include procedures for:

- Programme and module development, monitoring and review
- Student assessment, progression and awards

- Assessment moderation and external examining

## **17.2. The Programme Management Team and Student Representation**

A Programme Management Team will be appointed with the following membership:

- Programme Manager who will be Chair
- Head of School
- A representative of Cirencester College staff
- Two student representatives from each programme year-group

The two student representatives will be elected at the beginning of each academic year and will serve for a minimum period of one year. Their prime function will be to bring a student's perspective to the deliberations of the Programme Management Team (PMT) and feedback on the progress of the programme.

The team will normally meet at least twice a year and its function will include discussion of general issues relating to teaching, learning resources, curriculum and careers guidance.

## **17.3. Stakeholder Feedback**

The University's practice for programme reviews, which provides useful stakeholder feedback, includes a yearly Programme Management Report on the programme and a periodic review, which includes employers.

Because of the emphasis on work-based learning and the acquisition of practical skills in this programme, a Programme Review Forum will be established. This will include employers and volunteer organisers and will meet twice per year.

This Forum will also comprise RAU and Cirencester College staff members involved with the delivery of the programme. The Forum will review the progress of the programme and its associated assessment procedures and also make

recommendations about the future development of the programme.

## **18. Marking Guides and Assessment Regulations**

The marking guide for student assignments and for examinations is given in Appendix 2. University Regulations for Assessment and Progression are to be found on the University website: <https://www.rau.ac.uk/about/organisation/public-information/academic-information/academic-policies-and-procedures>

## **19. Ownership of programme specification**

The responsibility for this Foundation Degree will lie within the RAU School of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

## **20. Curriculum Map**

The curriculum map for this programme, showing where the programme outcomes are assessed within the modular programme, is shown in Appendix 1.

## **21. Career Prospects**

Career opportunities that should become available to those completing this Foundation Degree would include:

- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) e.g. Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, National Trust
- Statutory agencies e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England
- Wildlife parks, zoos, natural history collections and botanical gardens.
- Volunteer organisations / community groups
- Environmental consultancy or advisory businesses
- Local councils
- Leisure pursuits groups

- Tourism organisations
- Habitat management businesses eg. woodland management
- Wildlife management enterprises eg. deer management
- Self-employment

## **22. Further Information**

This Programme Specification document is designed to be a concise summary of the main features of the Foundation Degree in British Wildlife Conservation. More detailed information about the programme modules is available in the individual module handbooks and web-sites available from the University's VLE (Gateway).

Please also check the 'Student One Stop Shop' found on the Intranet:<https://gateway.rau.ac.uk/>. This contains information on the following:

- The Student Handbook
- General academic assessment rules
- Blank mitigating circumstances forms and the new rules
- Dissertation guidance forms
- Past exam papers.

The Student Handbook includes details of the University's Equal Opportunities and Disabilities statements and the details of the learning resources available to students.

## **23. Module Reference Sheets**

The Module Reference Sheets are available on the University Intranet and website. Please follow the link to:

<https://www.rau.ac.uk/about/organisation/public-information/academic-policies/module-details>

## **Appendix 1. Curriculum assessment map**

Practical Skills Practical skills through tutorials and seminars	C1	Plan and execute both individual and group activities.			■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	
	C2	Plan and undertake a variety of environmental surveys, analyze and report results, including recommendations for further investigation.		■						■				
	C3	Undertake a range of practical skills including taxonomic identification, environmental conservation and wildlife management skills to accepted professional standards.		■					■					
	C4	Critically assemble and evaluate verbal and written communications to inform decision making.						■		■		■		
Transferable Skills	D1	Source and assemble information to apply and communicate knowledge systematically and coherently.	■							■				
	D2	Develop and apply analytical and numerical skills and techniques.	■	■		■				■				
	D3	Management and development of personal roles and responsibilities in new and changing situations and contexts.				■	■			■				
	D4	Relate to, and interact effectively with, individuals and groups, including working effectively both as a team member and leader.						■		■				
	D5	Development of reflective and assessment skills.	■			■								
	D6	Manage tasks and identify and solve problems using information sources.						■		■		■		
	D7	Use a range of technological equipment and systems.	■	■		■	■	■			■	■		
	D8	Apply a range of skills and techniques, using a variety of thought processes, to develop ideas in creative work.			■					■				

