

Programme Specification

FdSc British Wildlife Conservation

1) Programme Information

Quercus code	<i>FBW</i>
Valid entry routes	FdSc British Wildlife Conservation.
Additional exit routes	Higher Education Certificate.
Location(s) of Study	Royal Agricultural University with visits to relevant enterprises and land-use examples 'off site'.
School	Agriculture, Food and Environment
Programme Manager	Dr Kelly Hemmings
Awarding Body	The Royal Agricultural University (RAU)
Teaching Institution	The RAU
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 4 & 5
Admissions Body	The Royal Agricultural University
UCAS code(s)	7C27
Entry Criteria (include IELTS if relevant)	<p>Applicants should confirm their ability to study on a Foundation Degree by presenting evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56 UCAS points – new linear A level structure (UCAS points equivalent to C, D at A level) • BTEC National Diploma (MM) or BTEC Extended Diploma (MPP), or • International Baccalaureate Full Diploma <p>Additionally candidates will normally be expected to present GCSE passes at Grade 4/C or above in at least 3 other subjects which would normally include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE in English and Mathematics.

	<p>Applications from mature students or those with non-standard qualifications will be considered on an individual basis taking account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). • A combination of academic and experiential learning, to be considered on its individual merits. <p>Interview or discussion around interest and motivation to study the programme. Non-standard admissions will be discussed with the Programme Manager and admissions office staff.</p>
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points, e.g. FD qualification benchmark	<p>This Foundation Degree has been developed with reference to the following reference points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA 2014) • Subject Benchmark Statement - Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, food and consumer sciences (QAA 2016) • Foundation Degree Qualification benchmark (QAA 2010) • Foundation Degree Sectoral Framework for Environmental Industries (Lantra 2005) • Environmental Conservation Sector Skills Agreement (Lantra 2010) • Subject Benchmark Statement -Earth sciences, environmental sciences and environmental studies (QAA 2019) • Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2016) A Guide to CIEEM Accreditation for Undergraduate Degree Programmes and Named Pathways
Details of accreditation by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)	N/A
Mode of delivery	Full-time or part-time, on campus, several off site visits, including some residentials, some work-based learning
Language of study	English
Programme Start Month(s)	September/ October

Academic Board approval date	25 th June 2020
Valid from	September 2021

For Registry use only

Valid to	August 2026
Version	V4.0 July 2020 V4.1 Aug 2021; removal of reference to Cirencester College.

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

The intended educational aims of this Foundation Degree are to:

- Provide education and training delivering the appropriate knowledge and skills required for future employees in wildlife conservation and ecological occupations.
- Promote the acquisition of transferable skills to meet the future needs of employment in wildlife, conservation, and ecology-related occupations. 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.
- Stimulate a desire to pursue lifelong learning in both vocational and academic subjects.
- Enable existing workers in such jobs to pursue their lifelong learning further and to develop their skills through studying on this programme through 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 the farmed and natural environments.

This programme focuses on conservation of wildlife and habitats particularly, but not exclusively, in Britain. Employer feedback strongly indicated that knowledge of national environments and species is a significant employability advantage. However, conservation is naturally a global issue. International conservation organisations, case studies and species form an important part of the teaching.

'Wildlife Conservation' is a broad study area including animals and plants, their interactions with each other and their environment, and their interaction with humans.

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

Our graduates have gone on to pursue careers with nationally-recognised organisations and in roles such as:

- Countryside Ranger
- Wildlife Reserve Manager
- Ecological Surveyor/ Consultant
- Conservation / Biodiversity Officer
- Farming and Wildlife Advisor
- Environmental Education Officer

The programme has developed strong linkages with a wide number and range of conservation and environmental organisations including the Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, Cotswold Conservation Board (AONB), Butterfly Conservation, various Ecological Consultancies, Local Authorities, amongst many others.

Students have multiple opportunities to meet with and often work alongside organisations and people from the conservation sector via our practical field activities and teaching sessions.

The programme also provides a step towards into higher-degree levels, research programmes, and other opportunities in academia.

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

A. Knowledge and Understanding

A1 Concepts, principles and theories of wildlife conservation and management both in the field and within ex-situ collections in line with the principles of sustainable development and the ecosystem approach.

A2 The roles of regulatory and advisory bodies and the policies, legislation and designations involved in the protection of wildlife and habitats in both rural and urban contexts.

A3 The ecology and conservation status of a range of species and ecosystems both in terms of theoretical understanding and live case studies from conservation practitioners.

A4 The importance of wildlife conservation and sustainable use of environmental resources alongside the expectations of industry, agriculture, and society and the challenges associated with this at local, regional and global scales.

B. Intellectual, Professional, Key Skills

B1 Understand subject specific theories, concepts and principles.

B2 Application of the skills necessary for academic study and enquiry.

B3 Demonstrate the skills necessary to plan, conduct and report on a variety of wildlife, habitat, and environmental conservation management projects.

B4 Apply professional judgement to balance risks, costs, benefits, safety, reliability, aesthetics and environmental impact.

C. Graduate Skills

C1 Demonstrate awareness of the importance of personal attributes in the workplace such as resilience, open-mindedness, reflection, motivation, professional behaviours, and employability.

C2 Source and assemble information to apply and communicate knowledge systematically and coherently in written and verbal formats

C3 Relate to, and interact effectively with, individuals and groups, including working effectively both as a team member and leader.

C4 Ability to use a range of technological and operational equipment and systems.

D. Programme Specific Skills

D1 Plan and undertake a variety of species and environmental surveys, and analyse and report the results..

D2 Appreciate the role of academic research in ecology and conservation management and be able to design and carry out research projects consistent with level of study.

D3 Undertake a range of professional practical skills including taxonomic identification, wildlife handling and survey, conservation and land management techniques.

D4 Be able to make positive contributions to wildlife conservation by combining real world practical conservation activities with academic theory.

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 Disability Discrimination Act 2010. However, due to the particular requirements of this programme, students who are vision impaired and/or 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.

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

Teaching and learning is achieved by:

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

Practical activities & Enquiry-based Learning

A significant part of the programme is practical fieldwork. This includes hands-on management and restoration of habitats and species (e.g. grassland/ woodland restoration for butterfly conservation), biodiversity surveys (e.g. Phase One habitat surveys, farmland bird monitoring), and habitat management experiment plots. There is also ample opportunity to meet and work alongside and to network with a range of organisations and people in the sectors.

Field activities are also combined with an enquiry-based approach to learning. Management questions are explored with students and are refined into actual field experiments where data is generated and analysed, giving evidence-based

recommendations for better management approaches. This combines the academic and practical elements of the course giving solid 'real-world' outcomes.

6) What is the Programme Assessment Strategy¹?

Less than 15% of assessment is by formal examination. The emphasis on other forms of assessment stems from the need for students to have the skills and outcomes to make a difference. A wide range of assessment techniques will be applied throughout the programme to confirm learning outcomes. These will include:

- Academic research reports
- Professional reports
- Employers reporting on work-based experience
- Formal (time constrained) examinations
- Case studies
- Essays
- Conservation management plans
- Digital in-class tests
- Oral presentations
- Portfolios/appraisals
- Practical skills
- Production of publicity and information materials

Formative feedback is given on a number of modules giving students guidance at strategic points of the Programme (see Annex A for detail) prior to summative assessment submissions.

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

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 6. 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:

A. FdSc

The accumulation of 240 credits (or more), to include a minimum of 120 at level 5 and a maximum of 120 at level 4, through the assessment of taught modules as detailed below:

Students registered full-time will complete the programme over two academic years, with the additional requirement of a compulsory period of work experience totalling a

¹ Details of the implementation of the Assessment Strategy are found in Appendix 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 wildlife and environmental conservation 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 both the Supervisory and Mentoring Skills module, and Heritage Management 2 module in the final year.

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 Intranet.

	British Wildlife Conservation (FBW)	Credits
Yr1	Introduction to Environment, Wildlife and Heritage	15
	Wildlife Ecology and Survey	15
	Wildlife Handling, Ethics and Conservation	15
	Species and Ecosystems	15
	Soil and Environmental Science	15
	Ecosystem Services and Sustainability	15
	Practical Conservation Skills & Work Placement	30

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.

	British Wildlife Conservation (FBW)	Credits
Yr2	Supervisory Skills and Volunteer Management	15
	Landscape Conservation	15
	Habitat Classification and Management	15
	Environmental Data and Research Skills	15
	Biodiversity Conservation	15
	Resilience of agro-ecosystems	15
	Education, Recreation and Access	15
	Conservation Science Study Tour	15

Total for Year 2 = 120 credits

The programme is structured through the accumulation of credit, where 1 credit represents 10 notional learning hours. On successful completion of 240 credits, to include 120 at level 4 and 120 at level 5, students will be awarded FdSc British Wildlife Conservation.

Part time FdSc British Wildlife Conservation

Part-time students will be expected to attend usually on one or two day per week basis, spreading their studies over a longer period of time, up to a maximum of four academic years. The curriculum for the part-time route for the FdSc will consist of the following modules. The Module Specifications are available on the University Intranet.

Year 1 Level 4 part time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Introduction to Environment, Wildlife & Heritage (15 credits). Usually including 2-day field trip, all completed by mid-November.	Wildlife Ecology and Survey (15 credits)
Practical Conservation Skills & Work Placement (30 credits). 'Long-thin' module. Placement to be done before the start of Level 5.	

Year 2 Level 4 part time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Wildlife Handling, Ethics and Conservation (15 credits)	Soil and Environmental Science (15 credits)
Species and Ecosystems (15 credits)	Ecosystem services and Sustainability (15 credits)

Year 3 Level 5 part time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Habitat Classification and Management (15 credits)	Education, Recreation & Access (15 credits)
	Conservation Science Study Tour. (15 credits).

Supervisory Skills & Volunteer Management. 'Long-thin' module (15 credits)

Year 4 Level 5 part time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Biodiversity Conservation (15 credits)	Resilience of Agroecosystems (15 credits)
Landscape Conservation (15 credits)	Environmental Data Collection and Research Skills (15 credits)

Academic Level of the Programme

This FdSc 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 year duration ('top-up'), 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.

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; \(paragraphs 137 – 153\).](#)

Table 1. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) Chart.

Module	Knowledge and 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
Year 1																
Introduction to Environment, Wildlife and Heritage	CW1	CW1		CW1 CW2		CW1/ CW2										
Wildlife Ecology and Survey		CW2	CW1		CW1	CW2						CW2	CW2	CW2		CW2
Wildlife Handling, Ethics and Conservation		CW1/CW2						CW1				CW1			CW1	CW1
Species and Ecosystems	CW2		CW2		CW2		CW2			CW2		CW2	CW1	CW2		CW1
Soil and Environmental Science	CW1	CW1	CW2	CW1	CW1								CW1			CW2
Ecosystem Services and Sustainability	Ex			CW1 Ex1	Ex			CW1		CW1	CW1					
Practical Conservation Skills & Work Placement	CW2	CW2	CW2					CW1/ CW2	CW3	CW2	CW1/ CW4	CW4			CW2/ CW4	CW3 CW4
Year 2																
Supervisory Skills and Volunteer Management		CW1					CW2	CW2	CW1/ CW2		CW2	CW2			CW2	CW1 CW2
Landscape Conservation	CW1	CW1/CW2		CW1, CW2	CW2	CW2				CW2		CW2	CW2	CW2	CW2	CW2
Habitat Classification and Management			CW1, CW2				CW2		CW2	C1/CW2	CW2	CW1/ CW2	CW1/CW2		CW2	CW1 CW2
Environmental Data and Research Skills						CW1/CW2	CW1/CW2	CW1/CW2	CW2CW2				CW2			CW2

8) Work-based Learning

Work Placement

Students will gain work-based experience throughout this programme, through practical and supervisory 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.

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