

Programme Specification

FdSc Environmental Conservation & Heritage Management

1) Programme Information

Quercus code	<i>FH</i>
Valid entry routes	FdSc Environmental Conservation & Heritage Management.
Additional exit routes	Higher Education Certificate.
Location(s) of Study	Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester Campus with visits to relevant enterprises and land-use examples 'off site'.
School	Agriculture, Food and Environment
Programme Manager	Ian Grange
Awarding Body	The Royal Agricultural University (RAU)
Teaching Institution	The RAU & Cirencester College (CC)
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 4 & 5
Admissions Body	The Royal Agricultural University
UCAS code(s)	D492
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 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, or

	<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)
Details of accreditation by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB)	None. However, this Foundation Degree has been developed to meet the needs of employers and has been articulated with the BSc (Hons) Countryside Management degree validated by the RAU
Mode of delivery	Full-time or part-time, mostly residential, 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 2020

For Registry use only

Valid to	August 2026
Version	V4.0July2020

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 environmental conservation and heritage management occupations.
- 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 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 Countryside Management at the RAU.
- Promote the acquisition of transferable skills to meet the future needs of employment in environmental conservation and heritage management and related occupations.
- Stimulate a desire to pursue lifelong learning in both vocational and academic subjects.

Within this programme, the term 'Heritage' is used to denote all aspects of man's environment, but with a particular emphasis on our rural heritage, such as historic landscapes, ancient woodlands, areas of outstanding natural beauty and important wildlife habitats, as defined within the Heritage Protection Bill.

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:

- Archaeological Consultant

- Museum collections & outreach
- Countryside Ranger
- 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 heritage organisations including the Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, Cotswold Conservation Board (AONB), Butterfly Conservation, Cotswold Archaeology, Local Authorities, amongst many others.

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

The programme also provides an entry route 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 Understand the fundamental concepts, principles and theories of environmental conservation and heritage 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 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.

A4 Recognise the challenges in managing sites, which often include heritage sites with high wildlife value and appreciate the complexity of management decisions needed to achieve multiple sustainable benefits.

B. Intellectual, Professional, Key Skills

B1 Understand subject specific theories, concepts and principles, applying the skills necessary for academic study and enquiry.

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 conservation and heritage 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 Understand the role 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 Source and assemble information to apply and communicate knowledge systematically and coherently.

C4 Relate to, and interact effectively with, individuals and groups, including working effectively both as a team member and leader.

C5 Ability to use a range of technological and operational equipment and systems.

D. Programme Specific Skills

D1 Plan and execute both individual and group activities.

D2 Plan and undertake a variety of environmental surveys, analyse and report results, including recommendations for further investigation.

D3 Undertake a range of practical skills including taxonomic identification, environmental conservation and land management skills to accepted professional standards.

D4 Critically assemble and evaluate verbal, written and/ or visual communications to inform decision-making.

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

Practical activities & Inquiry-based Learning

A significant part of the programme is practical fieldwork, typically 1 day a week. This includes hands-on management and restoration of habitats and species (e.g. grassland/ woodland restoration for butterfly conservation), biodiversity surveys (e.g. phase 1 habitat surveys, farmland bird monitoring), archaeological investigations and field surveys (e.g. geophysical surveys and excavations of Roman villa sites/ deserted medieval villages). There is also ample opportunities 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 inquiry-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 10% 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:

- 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

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 (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 environmental conservation and heritage 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

¹ Details of the implementation of the Assessment Strategy are found in Appendix A.

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.

Year 1	Environmental Conservation and Heritage Management (FH)	Credits
1434	Introduction to Environment, Wildlife and Heritage	15
1437	Landscape History and Change	15
1135	Heritage Management 1	15
1421	Species and Ecosystems	15
1007	Soil and Environmental Science	15
1422	Ecosystem Services and Sustainability	15
1436	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.

Year 2	Environmental Conservation and Heritage Management (FH)	Credits
2360	Supervisory Skills and Volunteer Management	15
2367	Landscape Conservation	15
2361	Habitat Classification and Management	15
2362	Environmental Data and Research Skills	15
2135	Heritage Management 2	15
2139	Historic Asset Management	15
2365	Education, Recreation and Access	15
2368	Heritage Investigation 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 Environmental Conservation and Heritage Management.

Part time FdSc Environmental Conservation and Heritage Management:

Part-time students will complete their studies over a 4-year period.

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). 'Short-fat' module, all completed by mid-November.	Heritage Management 1 (15 credits)
Species & Ecosystems (15 credits)	Soil & Environmental Science (15 credits)

Year 2 Level 4 part time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Landscape History and Change (15 credits)	Ecosystem Services & Sustainability (15 credits)
Practical Conservation Skills & Work Placement (30 credits). 'Long-thin' module, initial RIC training courses, Thursday activities and placement before the start of year 2.	

Year 3 Level 5 part time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Heritage Management 2 (15 credits)	Historic Asset Management (15 credits)
	Landscape Conservation (15 credits)
Supervisory Skills & Volunteer Management. 'Long-thin' module (15 credits)	

Year 4 Level 5 part time	
Semester 1	Semester 2
Habitat Classification & Management (15 credits)	Education, Recreation & Access (15 credits)
	Environmental Data Collection & Research Skills (15 credits)
Heritage Investigation Tour. 'Long-thin' module, with a study tour in March (15 credits).	

Academic Level of the Programme

This FdSc Environmental Conservation and Heritage Management 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 (‘Top-up’), to achieve a BSc (Honours) Degree. An example of such a programme is the RAU’s BSc (Honours) in 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 that 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	C5	D1	D2	D3	D4
Year 1																	
Introduction to Environment, Wildlife and Heritage	CW1	CW1		CW1/ CW2		CW1/ CW2				CW2							CW2
Landscape History and Change		CW1		CW1			CW1				CW1				CW1		CW1
Heritage Management 1	CW1							CW1		CW1				CW1			CW1
Species and Ecosystems	Ex		Ex		CW1	CW1	CW1				CW1			CW1	CW1	CW1	CW1
Soil and Environmental Science	CW1	CW1	Ex	CW1/ Ex	CW1					CW1					CW1		
Ecosystem Services and Sustainability	CW2		CW2	CW2	CW2			CW1		CW1	CW1	CW1					CW1
Practical Conservation Skills & Work Placement	CW2	CW2		CW2				CW1/ CW2	CW3	CW3	CW2	CW1/ CW4	CW4	CW2		CW2/ CW4	
Year 2																	
Supervisory Skills and Volunteer Management		CW1		CW2			CW2	CW2	CW1/ CW2	CW2		CW2	CW2	CW2		CW2	CW2
Landscape Conservation	CW1	CW1/CW2	CW2	CW2	CW2	CW2					CW2		CW2		CW2		
Habitat Classification and Management			CW1	CW1		CW1			CW2			CW2	CW2			CW2	
Environmental Data and Research Skills					CW1				CW1						CW2		
Heritage Management 2		CW1/ CW2				CW2			CW2	CW2	CW1	CW1/ CW2		CW1			CW1
Historic Asset Management	CW1	CW1		CW1			CW1/CW2	CW2	CW2	CW1	CW1	CW1/CW2		CW1			CW2
Education, Recreation and Access	Ex			CW1	Ex	CW1				CW1	CW1				Ex		
Heritage Investigation Tour				CW1				CW1	CW1	CW2	CW2	CW2		CW1	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.