

## Programme Specification for BSc (Hons) Ecology

<b>This document applies to Academic Year 2018/19 onwards</b>
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1.	<b>Awarding institution/body</b>	University of Worcester
2.	<b>Teaching institution</b>	University of Worcester
3.	<b>Programme accredited by</b>	N/A
4.	<b>Final award</b>	BSc (Hons)
5.	<b>Programme title</b>	Ecology
6.	<b>Pathways available</b>	Major, joint, minor
7.	<b>Mode and/or site of delivery</b>	Standard taught programme
8.	<b>Mode of attendance</b>	Full time or part time
9.	<b>UCAS Code</b>	DN49 joint Ecology and Environmental Science CC31 joint Animal Biology and Ecology C193 joint Biology and Ecology CF18 joint Ecology and Physical Geography
10.	<b>Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement</b>	<a href="#">QAA Benchmark : Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies</a> , October 2019
11.	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision</b>	April 2015 (Single/Major/Minor Honours), July 2015 (PAT) August 2017 - AQU amendments, January 2018 title change to ENVS3100, BIOS2010 pre-reqs updated February 2018 – AQU removal of single honours May 18 – title change for ENVS1011 August 2018 – AQU amendments, regulations and updates throughout. June 2019 – ENVS 3001/2 correction to code October 19 - update to Independent Study title and code to be implemented Sept 20 July 20 – Temporary removal of ENVS3100 due to Covid-19 for 20-21 only. July 20 – Benchmark Statement updated.

### 12. Educational aims of the programme

In the Ecology programme students are provided with the opportunity to follow an intellectually challenging and contemporary programme of study at Honours degree level. In addition to the teaching of the theoretical and factual aspects of the subject, there are numerous opportunities for fieldwork, both local and regional, and additionally an optional foreign residential field trip. These enable the learning and practise of key skills and enhancement of employability. The course prepares students for entry into a wide range of potential occupations.

The course aims to:

1. Provide a rigorous and disciplined curriculum of organized, current knowledge and practice relating to the discipline of 'Ecology' so that students develop a sound understanding of its principles, theories and applications;
2. Offer students opportunities to develop a range of subject-specific and transferable skills to support their undergraduate studies and to prepare them for employment and/or post-graduate study;
3. Provide a supportive learning environment which acknowledges and responds to the diversity of student backgrounds and experiences, and which allows students the opportunity to realize their academic potential;
4. Enable students to develop a capacity for sustained independent work and ability to work with others as part of a team;
5. Develop students' skills of reflection, critical analysis, information literacy and communication in a range of formats;
6. Develop graduates who are ethically and environmentally responsible.

### **13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods**

At the end of the course students who have successfully completed their studies will be able to:

#### **Knowledge and understanding of:**

- a) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ecology of species, populations, communities, ecosystems and landscapes, the interrelationship between these and the application of such knowledge;
- b) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of species, habitat and landscape conservation issues, ecosystem services and the management thereof and an appreciation for the need for continual evidence-based reflection and integration;
- c) Use skills and have the ability to collect, manage, analyse and interpret biological data and conduct long-term monitoring of wildlife, habitats and the wider environment;
- d) Understand methods of acquiring, interpreting and analysing information with a critical understanding of the applications of ecology;
- e) Understand a range of management approaches and methods appropriate for effective management of ecology at local, regional, national and international scales;
- f) Understand a range of approaches and methods appropriate to embark on a career in ecology.

#### **Knowledge and understanding: examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods employed:**

All modules deliver a range of subject specific material incorporating concepts and issues in those areas of Ecology appropriate to the award programme.

The content of mandatory modules ensures that students are well versed in the essential knowledge and applications of the subject. Introductory Level 4 modules provide the preliminary subject knowledge and context. Development and applications of the subject is continued at Level 5 in the mandatory modules, additionally students are prepared for their Dissertation at Level 6. Preparation for careers in the ecological sector is also incorporated within modules. A range of optional modules are available for students who can use this flexibility to specialise in particular areas. At Level 6 advanced material and applications are studied, with a residential field trip offered to study the ecology and environment in a different climatic zone. Again, at this Level, students can continue to specialize or maintain a broader approach. The Dissertation module is a major enterprise which allows the student to plan,

design and carry out a project which will utilise and develop the knowledge and skills acquired on the course.

Learning and teaching methods are varied throughout the levels of study to ensure appropriate and effective delivery of material in a style which is readily accessible to the students. This is achieved through a structured programme of lectures, field trips, guest lectures, tutorials, group work and VLE methods. Students are encouraged to be interactive in sessions through various questioning methods, class discussions and seminars, and quizzes. These also provide an element of formative assessment.

Modules throughout the course use a range of assessment methods to ensure that students have an opportunity to excel and none are disadvantaged through over-reliance on any one particular assessment mode. Details of assessments are given on the module specifications and on a table given in the Course Handbook. Examples include reports, portfolios, examinations, presentations, species identification tests and essays.

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At the end of their course, students who have successfully completed their studies will be able to:

**Cognitive and intellectual skills:**

- a) Recognize and use subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles;
- b) Search for, analyse, synthesize, summarize and present information critically, including past research;
- c) Collect and integrate several lines of evidence to formulate and test hypotheses to inform a decision making process;
- d) Apply knowledge and understanding to complex and multidimensional problems in familiar and unfamiliar contexts;
- e) Contribute to debates on ecological, environmental, conservation and associated issues,

**Cognitive and intellectual skills: examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods employed:**

All modules involve the development of cognitive and intellectual skills. A table indicating which skills are specifically addressed in each module can be found in the Course Handbook.

Learning and teaching methods include for example at Level 4 the evaluation of students' own practicals and projects, appraisal of environmental management and discussions. Level 5 includes understanding and the evaluation of ecological management practices and planning, the application of current legislation to conservation situations and the designing of a research proposal and choice of statistical methods. These aspects are developed further at Level 6 particularly in the Dissertation and other mandatory and optional modules.

Assessment of these skills occurs throughout the modules. Details of assessments are given in the module specifications and in a table given in the Course Handbook. These include a large element of course work. Examples for these assessments include the production of species recovery plans, evaluation of existing management plans, comparison of landscape ecological feature between rural and urban locations, evaluation of experimental precision and accuracy

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At the end of their course, students who have successfully completed their studies will be able to:

**Practical skills relevant to employment:**

- a) Plan and undertake field and supporting laboratory investigations and analyse data using appropriate techniques in a safe and responsible manner, completing and responding to risk assessment, rights of access, relevant health and safety regulations and sensitivity to the impact of investigations on the environment and stakeholders;
- b) Design and/or evaluate ecological management, species recovery and restoration plans for conservation management of species, communities and landscapes and ecosystem services;
- c) Apply methods of prioritisation and manage limited resources effectively and optimally, recognise moral/ethical dilemmas and issues;
- d) Communicate effectively with individuals and organisations.

**Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:**

Many modules involve the development of practical skills. It is a particular feature of the course that great emphasis is placed on the development and practice of such skills which are relevant to employment and hence enhance the students' employability. A table indicating which skills are specifically addressed in each module can be found in the Course Handbook.

The majority of modules incorporate an element of fieldwork and/or field visits. These are one of the key features of the course. Skills are taught and practiced so that students become competent and confident in the selection and use of the skills thus promoting their employability. Much of the teaching involves the examination of theories and their practical application by the use of case studies, in the classroom, use of guest lecturers and via field visits. Assessment is principally through the production of reports from field data collection and desktop studies, evaluation of published documents, and the production of management and other plans. The Dissertation is a major piece of work in which the students use skills and report on results.

At the end of their course, students who have successfully completed their studies will be able to:

**Transferable/key skills:**

- a) Communicate effectively with a variety of audiences in written, oral, numerical and graphical forms;
- b) Appreciate issues of sample selection, accuracy, precision and uncertainty during collection, recording and analysis of data in the field and laboratory;
- c) Prepare, process, interpret and present data using appropriate quantitative and qualitative techniques and packages;
- d) Use the internet as critically a source of information, recognise and respect various views and opinions, judge the authority and credibility of sources and have well-developed information literacy;
- e) Identify individual and collective goals and responsibilities and perform efficiently and adaptably in ways appropriate to the task;
- f) Develop skills for self-management, identification and attainment of targets and a flexible approach to study and work;
- g) Recognise, appreciate and conform to codes of professional conduct as laid-down by sector professional organisations.

**Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:**

All modules involve the development of transferable/key skills and prepare students to embark on a career within the ecology sector. A table indicating which skills are specifically addressed in each module can be found in the Course Handbook.

These skills are introduced at Level 4 and are developed and reinforced throughout the course. Development of skills is reinforced by the effective use of a Personal Development Planning (PDP) portfolio supported in academic tutorials. In induction and mandatory modules at Level 4 the range of subject specific and generic skills are introduced together with the opportunity to practise these. Formative assessment is ongoing and is evidenced by the use of frequent short in-class tests, structured worksheets and activities, questioning, discussions, etc. All Level 4 modules have a skills-based element.

At a more advanced level, students acquire a range of skills from various specialist modules including use of Blackboard VLE, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), mapping, field and identification skills, research design and management skills, etc. Additionally numerical, data processing and statistical skills are taught and practiced.

Students are strongly encouraged to undertake voluntary work, e.g. with local conservation organisations. Opportunities include undertaking practical habitat management, becoming involved in biological surveys and even as voluntary site wardens. Students are also encouraged to become student members of recognised Institutions (for example, the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) and participate fully in the activities. In addition, students are encouraged to fully participate in the activities of the student run Environmental and Conservation Society.

Students are able to take a work placement module at Level 5 in which existing and new skills are practiced and their work assessed at the end of the placement period. Additionally students are encouraged to become involved in some of the ecological research projects being undertaken by staff within the Institute as and when the opportunity arises.

Incorporation of group and team work into practical, project and field sessions promote a range of interpersonal skills and those of self-management.

All students are required to communicate effectively through a variety of media. Assessment will include the use of oral presentations, use of PowerPoint and posters, written work in a range of formats. Full details are given in the individual module specifications.

## **14. Assessment Strategy**

External Examiners have commended the Environmental Sciences team on the excellent and innovative range of assessment types which are fully appropriate to the learning outcomes. Furthermore, there is recognition that the assessment items have strong links to future employment. Assessments are designed to test knowledge and understanding and the ability to apply these to a range of circumstances, and to demonstrate ability to evaluate, criticise and problem solve. As students' progress through the levels, more advanced knowledge and skills are required to complete more complex assignments such as management plans, site evaluations, modelling reports.

Assessment points occur throughout each semester after an introductory period for each module. All modules include both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments may take a number of different formats and be conducted informally in class practical and field situations or more formally in classrooms or via the VLE. Modules throughout the course use a range of summative assessment methods to ensure that students have an opportunity to excel and none are disadvantaged through over-reliance on one type. Most modules have two summative assessment items. Students are notified at the start of the semester about the contents of their assessments to allow them to organise their study effectively. Details of assessment briefs are included in the module handbooks distributed at the beginning of the semester and are also available on the Blackboard VLE. Additional supporting resources are also made available on Blackboard in many instances.

Assessment types include formal examinations, essays, practical files, field notebooks, writing and evaluation of management plans, short tests and GIS exercises. Additional opportunities

are provided within the modules for formative assessment and may take the form of multiple choice questions, quizzes, discussion, seminars and question-and-answer sessions. Use is also made of various forms of formative assessment.

Throughout all modules, assessments are made in line with assessment criteria (given as subject-specific criteria and descriptors) and in accordance with the University's Assessment Policy and make full use of the UW grade descriptors when awarding grades. A table demonstrating how assessment methods at each level are mapped to modules is included in the course handbook.

The external examiner noted that 'detailed and useful written feedback is provided to the students on their performance'.

## 15. Programme structures and requirements

<b>Course Title: BSc Ecology</b>
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Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status (Mandatory (M) **Designated (D) or Optional (O))	Pre-requisites (Code of Module required)	Co-requisites/ exclusions and other notes
			Joint Hons		
ENVS 1011	Introduction to Environmental Science	30	-	None	None
ENVS 1200	Ecological Diversity and Surveying	30	M	None	ENVS 1013 and ENVS 1102 excluded
ENVS 1100	Introduction to Ecology	15	M	None	None
ENVS 1101	Current Environmental Issues	15	O	None	ENVS 1012 excluded
ENVS 1012	Environmental Change – Past and Present	30	-	None	ENVS 1101 excluded
ENVS 1201	Introduction to Climate Change	15	O	None	None
BIOS 1200	Animal Diversity	30	-	None	(BIOS 1202) excluded
BIOS 1201	Cell Biology	30	-	None	None

### Joint Honours Requirements at Level 4

**Joint Honours students** must take 60 credits from the table above to include ENVS1200 (30 credits) **AND** ENVS1100 (15 credits). Students taking **Joint Honours Ecology and Environmental Science** must take ENVS1011, ENVS1012, **AND** ENVS1100. The remaining modules are available as options.

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status (Mandatory (M) or Optional (O))			Pre-requisites (Code of Module required)	Co-requisites/ exclusions and other notes
			Major	Joint	Minor		
ENVS 2010	Research Practice and Professional Development	30	M	O	-	None	ENVS 2004 (excluded)
ENVS 2011	Ecology – Individuals to Ecosystems	30	M	M	M	ENVS 1100	ENVS 2100 (excluded)
ENVS 2107	Conservation Legislation and Policy	15	O	O	-	ENVS 1100	
ENVS 2304	Managing Ecology	15	O	O	-	ENVS 1100	ENVS 2106 and ENVS 2013 (excluded)
ENVS 2303	Field Techniques and Identification Skills	15	O	O	O	ENVS 1100	None
ENVS 2104	Ecology of Fresh Waters	15	O	O	O	ENVS 1100	None
GEOG 2113	Geographical Information Systems	15	O	O	O	None	GEOG 3113
BIOS 2010	Animal Behaviour	15	O	O	O	None	None
ENVS 2005	Work Experience	15	O	O	O	None	None
ENVS 2006	Soils and the Environment	15	O	O	O	ENVS 1011, ENVS 1100 or GEOG1110	ENVS 2012
BIOS 2202	Molecular Genetics and Conservation	30	O	-	-	BIOS 1201	BIOS 2100 & BIOS 2201 excluded

#### Joint, Major and Minor Honours Requirements at Level 5

Students following Joint Honours pathways can adjust their studies at level 5 to take more modules in one subject or can maintain an equally balanced programme of modules in each subject. The precise award title (Joint Hons or Major/Minor Hons) depends on the total number of credit achieved in each subject at levels 5 and 6 – for further information see the table at the end of this document.

#### Major Pathway Requirements at Level 5

Major Pathway students must take at least 60 and no more than 90 credits from the table above to include ENVS2010 **AND** ENVS2011.

#### Joint Pathway Requirements at Level 5

Joint Pathway students must take at least 45 credits and no more than 75 credits from the table above.

**A: if intending to take a Dissertation in ENVS** students must take ENVS2010 and ENVS2011.

**B: if not intending to take a Dissertation in ENVS:** students must take ENVS2011.

#### Minor Pathway Requirements at Level 5

Minor Pathway students must take at least 30 credits and no more than 60 credits from the table above to include ENVS2011.



Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status (Mandatory (M) or Optional (O))			Pre-requisites (Code of Module required)	Co-requisites/ exclusions and other notes*
			Major	Joint	Minor		
ENVE 3002	Dissertation in Ecology	30	M	O	-	ENVS 2010	Any other Dissertation module excluded. Direct Entry students will take ENVS 3116
ENVS 3103	Restoration Ecology	15	M	M	O	ENVS 2011 or ENVS 2100	None
ENVS 3105	Project Management	15	M	O	-	None	None
ENVS 3106	Landscape Ecology	15	M	M	M	ENVS 2011 or ENVS 2100	None
ENVS 3112	International Conservation	15	O	O	O	None	None
ENVS 3107	Zoo-based Conservation	15	O	O	O	None	None
ENVS 3102	Environmental Impact Assessment	15	O	O	O	ENVS 1011 and ENVS 1100 or ENVS 2011 or ENVS 2100	None
GEOG 3114	Applied GIS and Remote Sensing	15	O	O	-	GEOG 2113	None
GEOG 3113	Geographical Information Systems	15	O	O	-		Exclusions: GEOG 2113
ENVS 3116	Research Methods and Research Project for Ecology (for direct entry students only)	30	O	O	-	None	Exclusions: ENVS 3301/3302

#### Direct entry students into Level 6

Students must take ENVS3116 (30 credits) in place of ENVE3002, **AND** ENVS3103 **AND** ENVS3105 (15 credits) **AND** ENVS3106 (15 credits) **AND** a minimum of one of either: ENVS3112 **OR** ENVS3102, plus 2 modules from the options listed above.

#### Joint, Major and Minor Honours Requirements at Level 6

Students following pathways in two subjects can adjust their studies at level 6 to take more modules in one subject or can maintain an equally balanced programme of modules in each subject. The precise award title (Joint Hons or Major/Minor Hons) depends on the total number of credits achieved in each subject at levels 5 and 6 – for further information see the table at the end of this document.

#### Major Pathway Requirements at Level 6

Major Pathway students must take 75 or 90 credits from the table above to include ENVE3002 (30 credits), **AND** ENVS3103 (15 credits) **AND** ENVS3105 (15 credits) **AND** ENVS3106 (15 credits).

#### Joint Pathway Requirements at Level 6

Joint Pathway students must take either 45, 60 or 75 credits (to make at least 105 credits over levels 5 and 6 in the subject, and no more than 135 credits over levels 5 and 6 in the subject ) from the table above to include: ENVS3103 (15 credits) **AND** ENVS3106 (15 credits).

Joint pathway students taking their Dissertation (or equivalent) in this subject must take ENVE3002 (30 credits).

Joint pathway students who choose to place their Dissertation in their other joint subject must take ENVS3103 (15 credits), ENVS3106 (15 credits) plus 30 credits from the options above.

Joint pathway students must take one Dissertation (or equivalent), either in this subject, in their other joint subject, or take JOIN3002 where a Dissertation covers both joint subjects.

#### **Minor Pathway Requirements at Level 6**

Minor pathway students must take either 30 or 45 credits to include ENVS3106 (15 credits), plus optional modules drawn from the table above.

#### **Credit requirements for awards involving two subjects**

In determining whether an award derived from two subjects is Joint Honours (subject 1 **and** subject 2) or Major/Minor Honours (subject 1 **with** subject 2) credits taken in each subject at levels 5 and 6 will count as follows:

<b>Subject 1</b>	<b>Subject 2</b>	<b>Award</b>
120	120	Joint Hons
135	105	Joint Hons
150	90	Major/minor Hons
165	75	Major/minor Hons
180	60	Major/minor Hons

## 16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

This course design has been informed by the benchmark statement: [Earth Science, Environmental Sciences, Environmental Studies](#) (ES3) (2014) QAA 10/14.

Hence the course incorporates the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, skills and practices advocated within this benchmark statement. The course follows the QAA and UW guidelines of work experience. The course operates at levels 4, 5 and 6 of the Framework for HE Qualifications.

This award is located at level 6 of the FHEQ.

## 17. Support for students

- Ecology students will encounter a wide range of learning experiences, including lectures, seminars, group work, laboratory and field practical sessions, workshops, and tutorials.
- All new students attend a week-long induction at the start of the course to familiarise them with the course structures and expectations. Presentations from current and past students (where possible) are included to help welcome the newcomers and additionally the 'Environmental and Conservation Society' is invited to sessions to explain their activities and encourage new membership.
- All students have a personal academic tutor who offers specific support and guidance enabling them to become effective learners understanding the requirements of their course in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills development and assessment requirements. Students are required to attend tutorials with their tutors twice per semester at level 4 and 5 and at level 6 they have frequent meetings with their Dissertation tutor (who may be the same person). Grades and feedback from assessments are discussed together with strategies to improve learning outcome attainments. Students are encouraged to actively reflect on their achievements and to document their evidence in a Personal Development Plan and maintain a current CV. In addition career planning is formally addressed at Level 5 and through the University's Careers Advisory Service. Frequent visits and talks from practitioners in the environmental sector help to reinforce aspects of career planning.
- All tutors have an 'open door policy', that is, there are no restrictions on the number of times a tutor will meet and discuss issues with their tutees. Additionally, subject tutors offer additional tutorials if required.
- Students have access to a range of specialist resources including the GIS, Mapping and Visualization Suite, GPS equipment, and hydrological and meteorological monitoring equipment, field and analytical equipment.
- A comprehensive course handbook is provided online which details essential information about the course, availability of modules, etc.
- All modules provide module handbooks for the students as paper copies and also on the Blackboard VLE. These include planned teaching activity, attendance requirements, assessment brief(s), assessment criteria and reading lists.
- The VLE 'Blackboard' has a section dedicated to the Environmental subject areas (Environmental Science and Ecology). This acts as a notice board for events, employment and volunteering activities. Details of Course Management Committees, Annual Evaluation and External Examiners' reports are posted here for the students to read. Past Independent Studies in the subject area are available as is information on staff details and StAR contacts. Additionally there are discussions fora posted on the site
- All students following this course will be provided with a study guide on Blackboard, and have access to study skills assistance provided by the University.

- Library and ILS inductions and support are provided at Induction or as the students require by the ILS staff.
- Library, IT, media and print support is provided by Information and Learning Services (ILS) staff through desk services and the support of professionally-qualified librarians including a dedicated Academic Liaison Librarian for the Institute of Science and the Environment (ISE). The Academic Liaison Team offers a portfolio of professional information services, including information literacy programmes for cohorts and one-to-one support, both in-person and online.
- Students have the opportunity to study abroad for one semester under the ERASMUS scheme in the second year.
- The Careers Service provides information, advice and training opportunities for career planning in addition to such opportunities offered within the course.
- Equal opportunities via the Disability & Dyslexia Service provide advice and support for students who have mental health difficulties, dyslexia, sensory or physical impairments or other difficulties. There is a dedicated Assistant Disability Coordinator for students with sensory impairments. Advice is also available on access to technology such as voice recognition and text-to-speech software. Much of the support provided is funded through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm>
- There are a range of student support services, including financial and accommodation advice. <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>

## 18. Admissions

### Admissions Policy

The University aims to be accessible; it is committed to widening participation and encouraging diversity in the student population. The Institute of Science and the Environment works closely with central student support services, including the Admissions Office, the Disability and Dyslexia Service and the International Office, to support students from a variety of backgrounds. We actively encourage and welcome people from the widest range of economic and cultural backgrounds, and value the contribution of mature learners.

Admission to the course is in Semester 1 only of the academic year.

### Entry requirements

The normal minimum entry requirement for undergraduate degree courses is the possession of 4 GCSEs (Grade C/4 or above) and a minimum of 2 A Levels (or equivalent Level 3 qualifications).

The current UCAS Tariff requirements for entry to this course are published in the prospectus and on the UW website <https://www.worc.ac.uk/journey/a-z-of-courses.html>

For GCSE, passes must include at least Science (double award) or the separate science subjects, Mathematics and English.

At A level science subjects (includes Environmental Science/Studies) and/or Geography and/or Geology must have been passed. Biology must have been passed at least at AS level.

For students studying joint honours, the same qualifications are required.

See [Admissions Policy](#) for other acceptable qualifications.

### Recognition of Prior Learning

Details of acceptable level 3 qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University webpages. Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University webpages or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111).

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

### **Admissions procedures**

Full-time applicants apply through UCAS (*see course code below*)

DN49 Joint Ecology and Environmental Sciences

CC31 Joint Animal Biology and Ecology

C193 Joint Biology and Ecology

CF18 Joint Ecology and Physical Geography

Part-time applicants apply directly to University of Worcester (UW).

Students holding offers of places on the courses will be invited to an Applicant Day when the student can experience a 'taster' of what is offered on the courses.

### **Admissions/selection criteria**

The Admissions Tutors will pay particular attention to personal statements, references and predicted or actual grades. In particular, they will be looking for evidence of an interest in the subject, some level of involvement with environmental organisations and a clear explanation as to why the student is keen to pursue Environmental Science at degree level.

## **19. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards include:

- Student module evaluation and feedback for all modules
- An Annual Evaluation Report completed by the Course Leader
- Periodic Review and re-approval including external scrutiny
- Peer learning through observation policy
- Staff research and scholarly activity
- External Examiner's Reports
- Academic staff annual appraisal
- Staff Development Away Days and other events
- ISE Policy on Approval (Module Outlines and Assignment Briefs) and Moderation of Student Work

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience:

- Module feedback questionnaires
- Environmental Sciences Course Management Committee
- Meetings with module tutors and personal academic tutor
- Student Course Representatives

- Informal discussion
- Induction, exit and other ad hoc surveys
- National Student Survey

## 20. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

### Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

### Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.

### Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to re-sit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module).

### Requirements for Progression

- Students at Level 4 will be permitted to progress to Level 5 when they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 4.
- Students at Level 5 will be permitted to progress to Level 6 when they have passed at least 210 credits including at least 90 credits at Level 5.
- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.

### Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
CertHE	Passed 120 credits at Level 4 or higher
DipHE	Passed a minimum of 240 credits with at least 90 credits at Level 5 or higher
Degree (non-honours)	Passed a minimum of 300 credits with at least 90 credits at Level 5 or higher and a minimum of 60 credits at Level 6, including the mandatory modules for Level 5 and Level 6 of the award (not the Dissertation module) as specified on the award map.

Degree with honours	Passed a minimum of 360 credits with at least 90 credits at Level 5 or higher and a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6
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## Classification

The honours classification will be determined by whichever of the following two methods results in the higher classification.

- Classification determined on the profile of the best grades from 60 credits attained at Level 5 and the best grades from 120 credits at Level 6. Level 5 and Level 6 grades count equally in the profile.
- Classification determined on the profile of the best grades from 120 credits attained at Level 6 only.

## 21. Indicators of quality and standards

This course was developed out of existing provision in Conservation Ecology and Ecology. Ecology courses have been run at the University of Worcester (or University College Worcester and Worcester College of Higher Education) for many years. The earlier version of the course underwent a successful Periodic Review in November 2014. The Periodic Review Panel commended the facilities across St John's Campus, particularly the support available to students and the philosophy of emphasising practical work. They identified a number of areas of good practice. The Review Panel reported that 'confidence can be placed in the soundness of the management of the academic standards' and that 'confidence can be placed in the quality of the learning opportunities available to students' and these aspects are being carried through to the new course.

Generally in relation to the past courses the External Examiner said, "*The practical and field experience is a strength of these awards, as well as the supportive environment provided for the students.*" This practise is to be continued and built upon in the new course and supports one of the aims for the course which is to enhance the employability of our students in the environmental sector.

The quality of the course team's work has been acknowledged over the years by External Examiners. "*Students benefit from a supportive environment and an excellent level of guidance in the module handbooks and assignment briefs. There is consistently detailed and useful feedback given on the assignments that they undertake.*"

Comments in relation to Environmental courses from the last UW Student Survey are relevant to the new course as the lecturing staff remain the same as do the foundations of many of the modules:

*"Lecturers in general seemed passionate about the subjects they were teaching and made themselves available for out of hour's assistance whenever possible."*

*"A good mix of practical, theory and fieldwork in many modules provided a detailed overview of the subject in question. This also made it easier to understand the more theoretical topics by seeing the processes in action. Assessments were often challenging and interesting with support offered via tutorials and emails with lecturers."*

Students on the related past course have been successful with 100% progression from year 1 to year 2 and from year 2 to year 3. Of those graduating, 88% gained a 2:1 classification in their degrees.

The staff team are all involved in research, scholarly activity, or professional development of some kind. The team have developed links with a range of environmental organisations, consultancies and industries and engage in activities or research with these.

The environmental team now have departmental membership of the Committee of Heads of Environmental Science, CHES. <http://ches.org.uk>. This organisation promotes the

advancement of environmental sciences teaching, learning, research, knowledge exchange and scholarship and helps tutors to remain abreast of developments in the discipline.

## **22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers**

**Student employability** is considered to be one of the key elements of the course. The Employable Worcester Graduate Framework, which encourages students throughout their course to reflect on employability, personal development and their interaction with process of learning, is at the core of teaching and learning activities. The course seeks to increase student employability throughout all three years. The acquisition of practical and transferable skills and experience in the environmental field are considered to be major contributors to student employability. The teaching and practice of skills are embedded within the modules. Students' progress is reviewed by Personal Academic Tutors during the tutorials and the requirement to attend tutorials is linked to modules. This is supported by group employability tutorials in ENV52010. Students also have the opportunity to take a Work Experience module at Level 5; this adheres fully to the university guidance on placement learning, which in turn is informed by the relevant University and QAA policies.

### **Graduate Destinations:**

Students undertaking the outgoing ecology degrees have been pursued a variety of careers, including:

- Reserves officers – wildlife trusts
- Game-keeping officer - British Association for Shooting and Conservation
- Ecologists - for various ecological consultancies
- Countryside officers – city and county councils
- Postgraduate teacher training
- A variety of Masters courses at this and other Universities
- A range of studies leading to PhD qualifications

Feedback from graduates indicates that the focus of acquiring practical skills and the application of theory has been invaluable in securing employment.

**Links with employers** are maintained by visits to a variety of establishments and presentations by practitioners (for example Worcestershire Wildlife Trusts Reserves, Gloucester Motorway Service Station, Bristol Zoo, Swift Ecology) and contacts with organizations such as the local Wildlife Trust and the Forestry Commission. Students are encouraged to join subject associations such as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management to establish links and pursue career opportunities.

**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module study guides and course handbook.