

**BSc Environmental Science**  
**For students entering Part 1 in 2013/4**

**UCAS code: F851**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies
Faculty:	Science Faculty
Programme length:	3 years
Date of specification:	08/Jun/2015
Programme Director:	Dr Hazel McGoff
Programme Advisor:	Dr Hazel McGoff
Board of Studies:	Geography and Environmental Science
Accreditation:	Institution of Environmental Science

**Summary of programme aims**

The programme aims to provide students with a sound scientific understanding of the processes operating in the Earth system, and to apply this science to the understanding of current and future environmental issues. It also aims to provide students with the scientific and transferable skills that are relevant to the application of environmental science in research, industry and other areas such as government policy.

The programme aims to provide a thorough degree-level education in Environmental Science, with 'pathways' such as Water Resources, Climate Change and Habitat Management being determined by the choice of optional modules.

Part 1 is designed to provide a sound foundation in Environmental Science, and supporting knowledge of relevant Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. A wide range of subject options are available and shape the particular pathway chosen. Part 2 has a core of compulsory modules to develop further technical skills with particular emphasis on understanding key environmental processes and their interactions. Options are designed to give depth to knowledge and methodology in selected subject areas. Part 3 has an emphasis on environmental management whilst providing scope for specialisation through the selection of options and through project work. The latter provides the student with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to conduct and report on a detailed research investigation.

**Transferable skills**

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working, field work and use of information technology and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum.

As part of this programme students are expected to have gained experience and show competence in the following transferable skills: IT (word-processing, using spreadsheet and graphical applications programs, scientific programming, internet), scientific writing, oral presentation, experimental methods (laboratory and field), team-working, use of library resources, career planning and management. They will have developed skills in team-working and leadership, and be confident and self-reliant, particularly as a result of experience during field courses and independent fieldwork. They will also have a sound knowledge of fieldwork safety procedure.

**Programme content**

The profile which follows states which modules must be taken (the compulsory part), together with lists of modules from which the student must make a selection (the 'optional' modules). Students must choose additional modules, in consultation with their programme adviser, to make 120 credits in each Part. The number of module credits for each module is listed.

**Part 1 (three terms)**

*Compulsory modules*

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
GV1A3	Chemistry of the Earth and Environment	10	4
GV1A4	Introduction to Physics of the Environment	10	4

GV1B1	Introduction to Environmental Science	10	4
GV1B2	Environmental Science Field Class	10	4
GV1D1	Earth Structure and Processes	10	4
GV1E1	Soils in the Environment	10	4

*Optional modules (60 credits)*

Students select a minimum of three contributory subjects to Environmental Science, including: Earth Science, Meteorology, Geography, Chemistry, Biology, Agriculture and Environmental Management. They may also chose a language as part of the Institution-Wide Language Programme. Choice is subject to timetable constraints and students having appropriate pre-requisites.

*Recommended:*

GV1D2	Earth Materials	10	4
GV1F2	Biogeography and Soils	10	4

*Others including:*

*Biology*

BI1BA1	The Living Cell	10	4
BI1ED2	Mammals: Diversity, Behaviour and Conservation	10	4
BI1EF2	Ecology: Species and their Interactions	10	4
BI1EF3	Practical Field Ecology	10	4

*Archaeology*

AR1TS2	Bones, Bodies and Burials: the Archaeology of Death	20	4
AR1TS3	Practising Archaeology: methods and approaches	20	4

*Rural Science and Agriculture*

AP1A10	Countryside & Environment	10	4
AP1A02	Introduction to Agriculture and Food Systems	10	4
AP1EE3	Economics 1	10	4

*Chemistry*

CH1FC1	Fundamental Chemistry 1	10	4
CH1PH2	Physical Processes for Biologists	10	4

*Geography*

GV1C	Climatology	10	4
GV1D	Hydrology	10	4
GV1GS	Geomorphology	10	4
GV1ENV	Environment and Development	10	4

*Meteorology*

MT11C	Introduction to Meteorology	20	4
MT11D	Weather and Climate Fundamentals	20	4

*Languages*

LA1XX1	IWLP- Various Languages	20	4
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*Plus up to 20 other credits subject to approval by the Programme Adviser*

**Part 2 (three terms)**

*Compulsory modules*

<i>Mod Code</i>	<i>Module Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
GV2F4	Soil Ecology and Functions	10	5
GV2P5	Excel Data Management and Analysis	10	5
GV2FCA	Geography & Environmental Science Field Class 1	20	5
GV2ECH	Environmental Chemistry	10	5

And one field class from:

GV2Z6	Environmental Science Field Class	10	5
AP2A58	Environmental Science and Management Field Course (to be taken at end of Term 3)	10	5

*Optional Modules (60 credits)*

Students develop depth in a minimum of two contributory subjects to Environmental Science, including: Earth Science, Meteorology, Geography, Chemistry, Biosciences, Rural Environmental Science, Archaeology. They may also chose a language as part of the Institution-Wide Language Programme.

*Recommended:*

### *Earth Sciences*

GV2C5	Crime Scene Analysis	10	5
GV2D5	Sustainable Resource Management	10	5
GV2M5	Quaternary Global Climate Change	10	5

### **Others Including:**

Archaeology (20 to 40 credits)

AR2S1	Archaeological Science	20	5
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Rural Science and Agriculture (20 to 40 credits)

AP2A26	Forestry and Woodlands	10	5
AP2A39	Environment and the Farm	10	5
	Business (prerequisite AP1A02)		
AP2A56	Grassland Management and Ecology	10	5
AP2A57	Methods in Ecology and Environmental Management	20	5
AP2A59	Nature Conservation	10	5

Bioscience (20 to 40 credits)

BI2BN4	Vertebrate Zoology - Structure, Form and Function	10	5
BI2EE4	Evolutionary Biology	10	5
BI2E14	Invertebrate Zoology	10	5
BI2EN5	Animal Behaviour	10	5
BI2EX5	Introduction to Entomology	10	5
BI2EY5	Birds: Diversity, Behaviour and Conservation	10	5

Meteorology (20 or 40 credits)

MT24A	Atmosphere and Ocean Dynamics	20	5
MT24B	Atmospheric Physics	20	5

Physical Geography (20 to 40 credits)

GV2ER	Energy Resources	10	5
GV2P1	Geomorphological Hazards	10	5
GV2P3	Human Activity and Environmental Change	10	5
GV2HY	Hydrological Processes	10	5
GV2P8	Biogeography and Ecosystems	10	5

Others

LA1XX1	Institution Wide Language Programme	20	5
MM270	Entrepreneurship	20	5

*Plus up to 20 other credits subject to approval by the Programme Adviser*

### **Part 3 (three terms)**

#### *Compulsory modules*

Compulsory modules

<i>Code</i>	<i>Module title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
GV3GED	Geography and Environmental Science Dissertation	40	6
And either			
GV3I7	Carbon and Global Change	10	6
GV3G8	Contaminated Land Management	1	6
Plus 60 credits of optional modules as listed below to make a total of 120 credits			
Or one from			
GV3SA	Study Abroad (60 credits)	60	6
GV3SA2	Study Abroad (50 credits)	50	6
GVSA1	Study Abroad (40 credits)	40	6
Plus 20, 30 or 40 credits of optional modules as listed below to make a total of 120 credits			

### Optional Modules (60 credits)

#### Recommended:

GV3F8	Applied and Environmental Soil Microbiology	10	6
GV3J8	Soil, Vegetation and Atmosphere Modelling	10	6
GV3LP	Environmental Science Literature Project	10	6
GV3Z8	Earth Systems Field Class	10	6
Others including:			
Archaeology			
AR3S15	People, Plants and Environmental Change	20	6
AR3S16	Climate Change and Human Society	20	6
Rural Science and Agriculture			
AP3EP3	Rural Policy and Countryside Planning	10	6
AP3AE70	Environmental Management in Practice	10	6
AP3AE75	Wildlife and Farming	10	6
AP3A89	Water, Agriculture and Irrigation	10	6
AP3A90	Climate Change and Food Systems	10	6
AP3A99	Plants, Greenspace and Urban Sustainability	10	6
Biological Sciences			
BI3EA7	Insect Ecology and its Applications	10	6
BI3EB7	Forensic Zoology	10	6
BI3EE7	Urban Biodiversity	10	6
BI3EJ8	Conservation Biology	10	6
BI3EM7	Plants, Animals and Climate Change	10	6
BI3EN7	Conservation and Biodiversity: Global and Local Scales	10	6
Physical Geography			
GV3CC	Climate Change	20	6
GV334	Glacial and Periglacial Geomorphology	20	6
GV342	Environmental Modelling	20	6
GV362	Water Resources	20	6
Others			
LA1XX1	Institute Wide Language Programme*	20	6

\*Not available if Study Aboard modules are taken

Plus up to 20 other optional credits subject to approval by the Programme Adviser.

### Progression requirements

To gain a threshold performance at Part 1 a student shall normally be required to achieve an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1, and a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits. In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student shall normally be required to achieve a

threshold performance at Part 1. In addition, students shall normally obtain at least 40% in the compulsory modules GV1A3, GV1A4, GV1B1, GV1B2, GV1D1 and GV1E1 averaged together.

To gain a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to achieve:

- a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken at Part 2; and
- marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits; and
- marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 120 credits.

To be eligible for Honours, students must normally pass Level 6 modules with a total credit of at least 100.

### **Assessment and classification**

The University's honours classification scheme is:

Mark	Interpretation
70% - 100%	First class
60% - 69%	Upper Second class
50% - 59%	Lower Second class
40% - 49%	Third class
35% - 39%	Below Honours Standard
0% - 34%	Fail

For the University-wide framework for classification, which includes details of the classification method, please see: [www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx)

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is

### **Three-year programmes**

Part 2 one-third

Part 3 two-thirds

Teaching is organized in modules that typically involve lectures, problem solving classes, and practical classes. The assessment is carried out within the University's degree classification scheme, details of which are in the programme handbooks. The pass mark in each module is 40%. Parts 1 and 2 are predominantly assessed by a mixture of coursework and formal examination. In Part 3 there are some modules which are assessed wholly by coursework and others wholly by examination: the details are given in the module descriptions. The Part 3 project involves a substantial component of independent learning, under the supervision and guidance of Project Supervisors. The projects are assessed on the basis of formal reports, oral presentations and development of independent learning skills.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

Grade C or better in English, Science and Mathematics in GCSE, and a minimum of ABB at A level. One subject from Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, Geology or Environmental Science preferred;  
*Or* International Baccalaureat: minimum 32 points including minimum 6 in a Higher Level Subjects including at least one science or maths.

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Hazel J McGoff

### **Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. Students can get key information and

guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

The providing Departments have well-equipped teaching laboratories, analytical laboratories and dedicated computer laboratories. Substantial collections of earth materials and maps are available for hands-on access by students. Within the providing Departments additional support for students is given through practical and field classes and in the course of the independent project. There is a Course Adviser to offer advice on the choice of modules throughout the programme.

### **Career learning**

#### **Career prospects**

The requirement for environmental scientists with a sound scientific training continues to grow and opportunities for graduates from this course include employment by environmental consultants, water companies and the many offices of national and local government concerned with environmental issues as well as post-graduate study. Private industry is increasingly concerned to employ scientists to help minimise the adverse environmental impact of its activities.

#### **Opportunities for study abroad**

As part of the degree programme students have the opportunity to study abroad at an institution with which the University has a valid agreement. Study abroad normally takes place in the first term of the final year. Students following this degree programme may transfer to the parallel degree BSc Environmental Science with Professional Experience (F852). It may be possible to undertake the period of Professional Experience with a company overseas. Such transfers are only permitted if the student displays the appropriate ability to benefit from such a secondment, has taken appropriate options in Part 2, has the requisite degree of fluency in the foreign language required, and, if suitable industrial experience can be found for the student. Students may also participate in the ERASMUS exchange scheme where one or two terms are spent studying in a European university. Further details are available from the Course Director and the Study Abroad Office.

#### **Placement opportunities**

The Part 2 module GV2P5 Career and Placement Learning for Environmental Scientists provides students with the opportunity for a short placement, or alternative experience. Non-credit bearing placements are also available. Students can undertake these at any time during their degree although placements should not interfere with normal timetabled classes. Placements may be with companies, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations, schools, museums or universities. The onus for finding placements is on the student but help is available from the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre, the School Placement Co-ordinator and the Programme Director. Students should register their placement activity with the Placement Co-ordinator who will ensure that appropriate Health and Safety precautions are in place, that the student will receive supervision during their activity and that placements are recorded on the final degree transcript. Additional voluntary activities are also possible through the RED scheme, CSV and Student Volunteering.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

1. Earth Systems including the lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere
2. Interactions between the processes operating in the different components of the Earth System.
3. The evolution of the Earth and the environment through different time scales, and the evidence for that change
4. Monitoring and management of natural and human-induced environmental change.
5. Scientific examination of the implications of sustainability and sustainable development.
6. A selected range of optional topics

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Underlying knowledge in the essential areas is set out in lectures, in most cases directly supported by illustrative practicals. The essential field experience required for proper understanding is provided by compulsory field courses in Part 1 and Part 2, with additional optional field courses in Part 3. Students conduct an independent project in the form of practical investigation into an environmental topic in Part 3, with support and advice from academic and technical staff.

##### *Assessment*

7. Environmental issues and management with an interdisciplinary and integrative perspective.
8. Fieldwork safety issues and procedures.

Most knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework and unseen formal examinations. Dissertations and oral presentations also contribute in Part 3.

### **Skills and other attributes**

#### **B. Intellectual skills - *able to:***

1. Think logically and critically in a scientific manner
2. Analyse and interpret environmental observations and data and recognise and identify issues and problems with that data
3. Organise tasks into a structured form
4. Understand the current state of knowledge of the environment - a rapidly developing area
5. Integrate and apply concepts and principles from one area of environmental science to another
6. Recognise the need for professional codes of conduct.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Logical and critical thinking is an essential part of interpreting environmental science data and materials, it is embedded throughout the programme. The ability to integrate and apply concepts and principles from one area of the subject to another are intrinsic to high-level performance in the programme. Current developments in environmental science are highlighted by contact with visiting experts in the field in Part 3.

#### *Assessment*

1 and 2 are assessed indirectly in most parts of the programme, 3 in the course of laboratory and fieldwork. 4 is focused on by courses in Parts 2 and 3, while 5 contributes to more successful work. 6 not directly assessed.

#### **C. Practical skills - *able to:***

1. Plan, conduct and report on investigations, including the use of secondary data
2. Collect, record and analyse data using appropriate field and laboratory techniques
3. Reference work in an appropriate manner
4. Carry out a risk assessment for field and laboratory investigations
5. Consider the impact of field investigations on the environment as well as other interested parties.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Observing, recording and interpreting is taught in laboratory and field classes throughout the course. An investigative independent practical project is conducted by the student in Part 3, with advice from academic and technical staff. Risk assessment forms an essential part of each field course and any field based project work.

#### *Assessment*

1 and 2 are tested both formatively in coursework and particularly during the final year projects. summatively in examinations. 2 is assessed by means of coursework and project work, 4 and 5 during field classes and project work.

#### **D. Transferable skills - *able to:***

1. Use IT (word-processing, using standard software and the Internet)
2. Understand issues of sample selection, accuracy, precision and uncertainty in field and laboratory work
3. Prepare, process, interpret and present data in an appropriate manner, using both quantitative and qualitative techniques
4. Communicate scientific ideas in verbal, written and graphic form to a variety of audiences.
5. Work as part of a team, identifying individual and collective goals, respecting the views and opinions of others and evaluating both individual and team performances.
6. Use library resources

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

The use of IT is embedded throughout the programme with special sessions in Part 1 and in the Skills Module in Part 2. Oral presentation and communication skills are developed in various modules, culminating in the Part 3 practical project. Career management is taught in the Part 2 Skills module. Teamworking is particularly emphasised in field courses. Time management is essential for the timely and effective completion of the programme. Library and internet resources are required for the literature review in Part 3, and contribute to the best performances throughout.

#### *Assessment*

1, 2, 3 and 4 are assessed through coursework and

7. Manage their time  
8. Plan their career, developing skills for self-managed and lifelong learning.

particularly in the Part 3 project. 5 in field courses, 6 in the Library Project and 8 in the skills module in Part 2. 7 is not directly assessed but contributes to successful performance throughout the programme.

**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 he/she 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 description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**