

Programme Specification

MSc in Species Identification and Survey Skills (full-time)

PFTZSPIDENHM

For students entering in September 2018

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	12 months
Accreditation	Not applicable
Programme Start Dates	September

Programme information and content

The MSc in Species Identification and Survey Skills (SISS) is designed specifically to facilitate student entry into a career in Ecological Consultancy. The consultancy sector is very clear on the skills that it requires applicants to possess; the single most important aim of the proposed programme is to equip students with these skills. Whilst the Ecological Consultancy sector requires these skills, many conservation organizations, such as Natural England (NE) and RSPB, lament the decline in identification and field skills in students and often find it hard to fill vacant positions due to the lack of suitably skilled applicants. The proposed programme should equip students with the types of skills that would be appreciated by conservation organizations as well as Ecological Consultancies. The expected outcomes are that students should acquire and demonstrate:

- Appreciation of the philosophical context in which wildlife conservation is carried out both in the UK and overseas.
- Understanding of the essential principles of research design in conservation biology and wildlife management.
- Appreciation of a range of wildlife issues both in the UK and overseas.
- Competence in a range of research methods for data collection and detailed expertise in a subset relevant to the student's own research interests.
- Expertise in data management and analysis, and awareness of issues affecting data interpretation.
- Understanding of the legal and ethical issues in the conduct and dissemination of a research programme.
- Competence in research management and in written and oral skills for communicating research output wildlife conservation issues.
- Competence in report writing.
- Awareness of issues relevant to the pursuit of a career in wildlife conservation or management.
- Ability to identify a range of plants and animals under field conditions
- Ability to deploy a range of field survey techniques
- Acquisition of a broad range of transferable employment-related skills.

Module information

The programme comprises of 180 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules. Compulsory modules are listed.

Compulsory Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
BIMPK12	Vegetation Survey and Assessment	20	7
BIMWK1	Invertebrate Survey and Assessment	10	7
BIMPI12	Research and Professional Skills	20	7

Student will be required to take one of the following modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
BIMPLA	Project Placement	70	7
OR			
BIMPROJ	Wildlife Management Project	70	7

The remaining credits will be taken from a list of optional modules from the School of Biological Sciences, or from an approved list of modules from across the University.

Part-time or flexible modular arrangements

The course can only be taken on a full-time basis

Additional costs of the programme

There are no essential additional costs although students might consider purchasing a good pair of binoculars for field survey work.

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your Programme is set out in the Further Programme Information. Details of any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the programme. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Placement opportunities

This course currently offers limited opportunities for study abroad since it is specifically targeted at a UK (perhaps EU) job market.

Teaching and learning delivery:

Teaching is by a variety of methods, including lectures, small group seminars, discussion sessions, field and lab-based practicals, individual feedback on written work and one-to-one advice.

Total study hours for your programme will be 1800 hours. The contact hours for your programme will depend upon your module combination; an average for a typical set of modules on this programme is 450 hours. In addition to your scheduled contact hours, you will be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

n/a

Assessment

Assessment procedures mirror the diversity of teaching methods and include scientific essays, oral presentations, production of a wildlife diary, spot tests and submission of placement portfolio, interviews.

Progression

Part-time and modular progression requirements

none

Classification

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark Interpretation

70 - 100% Distinction

60 - 69% Merit

50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40 - 49% Work below threshold standard

0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degree

To qualify for **Distinction**, students must

- (i) gain an overall average of 70 or more over 180 credits; and
- (ii) a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation/project placement; and

- (iii) the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
- (iv) students must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for **Merit**, students must

- (i) gain an overall average of 60 or more over 180 credits; and
- (ii) a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation/project placement; and
- (iii) the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
- (iv) students must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for **Passed**, students must

- (i) gain an overall average of 50 or more over 180 credits; and
- (ii) a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation/project placement; and
- (iii) the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
- (iv) the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits.

For PG Diploma

To qualify for **Distinction**, students must

- (i) gain an overall average of 70 or more over 120 credits; and
- (ii) In addition, the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
- (iii) students must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for **Merit**, students must

- (i) gain an overall average of 60 or more over 120 credits; and
- (ii) the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
- (iii) students must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for **Passed**, students must

- (i) gain an overall average of 50 or more over 120 credits; and
- (ii) the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
- (iii) the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits.

For PG Certificate

To qualify for a **Postgraduate Certificate**, students must

- (i) gain an overall average of 50 or more over 60 credits; and
- (ii) the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.