

Programme Specification

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

PFTZSPIDENHM

For students entering in 2021/22

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	MSc in Species Identification and Survey Skills (full-time) - 12 months
Accreditation	N/A
Programme Start Dates	September

Programme information and content

The MSc in Species Identification and Survey Skills (SISS) is designed with employability to the fore and to facilitate student entry into careers in ecological consultancy, conservation and other ecological areas. These sectors have made it very clear in recent years that species identification and survey skills are rarely found in new graduates but are essential skill sets required by applicants seeking to enter career pathways in these sectors. The overarching aim of this programme is therefore to equip students with these skills by designing modules with these to the fore, by working with a wide range of expert research and teaching staff at Reading, working with partners in the relevant industries and by broadening the scope of skills taught, including traditional identification and survey skills alongside cutting edge approaches such as molecular techniques. The proposed programme is therefore fit for purpose in the 21st century and should equip students for the demands of the ecological consultancy, conservation and other ecological and environmental sectors. The expected outcomes from this programme are that students should acquire and demonstrate:

- Have a sound knowledge of the ecological consultancy industry, wildlife legislation, development planning, ecological impact assessment, biological recording, and biodiversity assessment.
- Be able to identify a wide range of plants and animals accurately using material in the lab and in the field using keys and other ID aids.
- Understand how to carry out professional level plant and animal surveys and analyse the data and present the results competently in written and spoken formats to industry standards and to appreciate how to cost such surveys and appraisals.
- Understand and discuss the legislation and legislative restrictions associated with the survey of plant and animals in the UK.
- Be able to discuss the pros and cons of molecular identification and survey techniques and to recognise how and when to apply these techniques for environmental monitoring and understand how to design and carry out a survey based on molecular techniques.
- Be experienced and competent in working in a team undertaking complex environmental projects, including designing a sampling strategy, presenting spatial data and interpret and evaluate environmental data in the context of legislation and

to achieve objectives to a tight deadline and present the findings of an environmental investigation to a client.

- ***If taking the placement option:***
- Be competent operating as part of an Ecological Consultancy and to learn first-hand what is required to work in the sector.
- Be experienced and display initiative in carrying out work, both field and desk related, to the standard required by a professional Ecological Consultancy.
- Interact and work with colleagues in an appropriate manner in the office and the field;
- Present the results of their placement in the form of a portfolio.
- ***If taking the research project option:***
- Be competent carrying out a research project on an environmental topic including the statement of a clearly formulated aim, the accurate reporting of scientific methodology and results, the appropriate collection, organisation and analysis of data, reasoned discussion of results in the context of the subject area and the writing of clear scientific English.

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
BIMASA	Animal Survey and Assessment	20	M
BIMBFS	Botanical Field Skills	30	M
BIMECS	Ecological Consultancy Skills	30	M
BIMMSIS	Molecular Methods for Species Identification and Survey	20	M
GVMENVC	Environmental Consultancy	20	M

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

Module	Name	Credits	Level
BIMPLACS	Project Placement (SISS)	60	M
Or			
BIMRPS	Research Project	60	M

Part-time or flexible modular arrangements

The course can only be taken on a full-time basis. A Diploma in Species Identification & Survey Skills can be awarded on the successful completion of 120 taught Credits.

Additional costs of the programme

There are recommended books for purchase and a good hand lens (total ca. £100) and if they don't already have them, students should 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 and EU job market.

Study abroad opportunities

N/A

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 the programme will be 1800 hours. The contact hours for a typical set of modules on this programme is 450 hours. In addition to scheduled contact hours, students 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 reports, group team work exercises, oral presentations, spot tests, open book tests and a research dissertation or placement portfolio.

Progression

N/A

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

1. gain an overall average of 70 or more over 180 credits; and
2. a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation/project placement; and
3. the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
4. students must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for **Merit**, students must

1. gain an overall average of 60 or more over 180 credits; and
2. a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation/project placement; and
3. the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
4. students must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for **Passed**, students must

1. gain an overall average of 50 or more over 180 credits; and
2. a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation/project placement; and
3. the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
4. the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits.

For PG Diploma

To qualify for **Distinction**, students must

1. gain an overall average of 70 or more over 120 credits; and
2. In addition, the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
3. students must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for **Merit**, students must

1. gain an overall average of 60 or more over 120 credits; and
2. the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
3. students must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for **Passed**, students must

1. gain an overall average of 50 or more over 120 credits; and
2. the total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits; and
3. 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

1. gain an overall average of 50 or more over 60 credits; and

the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

MSc in Species Identification and Survey Skills (full-time) for students entering in session 2021/22

28 October 2020

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