

Programme Specification

MSc Ecological Survey Skills with placement (full-time)

PFTZECOSSPHM

MSc Ecological Survey Skills (full-time)

PFTZECOSSXHM

For students entering in 2023/24

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 Ecological Survey Skills with placement (full-time) - 12 months MSc Ecological Survey Skills (full-time) - 12 months
Accreditation	N/A
Programme Start Dates	September

Programme information and content

Our planet faces an unprecedented human-caused global extinction crisis. More than a century of habitat destruction, pollution, the spread of invasive species, overharvesting from the wild, climate change, population growth and other human activities have pushed nature to the brink. Addressing the extinction crisis will require leadership from politicians and others alongside bold, courageous, far-reaching initiatives that attack this emergency at its root.

Development for housing, transport and infrastructure continues apace and there is an ever growing need for individuals with expert knowledge of how to identify plant and animal species, understand their conservation needs and the relevant survey methods required to document their presence abundance and the likely impacts of development.

The Chartered Institute for Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) has identified serious specialist and transferable skills gaps in the market that impede recruitment – the so-called taxonomic skills-gap (<https://cieem.net/resource/closing-the-gap-rebuilding-ecological-skills-in-the-21st-century-ieem-2011/>). To help plug some of these gaps, the School of Biological Sciences at Reading University has teamed up with a number of Ecological Consultants in Reading and further afield to deliver the MSc (Ecological Survey Skills with Placement). The programme focusses on appropriate learning and skills to generate well-trained highly employable graduates for the ecological, conservation and consultancy sectors. As an important part of this philosophy, students work on a placement with a consultancy for 6 months (April-September inclusive).

Module information

The programme comprises 180 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. 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
BIMPLACS	MSc SISS Placement	60	M
GVMENVC	Environmental Consultancy	20	M

Students who do not secure a placement will be transferred to the non-placement MSc Ecological Survey Skills programme and will take the compulsory module BIMRPS Research Project (60 credits) in place of BIMPLACS Project Placement (SISS) (60 credits).

Part-time or flexible modular arrangements

Additional costs of the programme

There are a small number of costs e.g. text books associated with the MSc. The placement module is a paid placement and the salaries vary slightly between companies but are made clear to students during the placement allocation process.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. The estimates were calculated in 2022.

Optional modules

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. 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

Students undertake a 6-month 60 credit summer work placement with one of our partner ecological consultancies. Placements are allocated using a CV and interview process in Semester 1. The Programme Director works with consultancies and students to ensure as far as possible that placements are allocated for all students that want one.

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.

After the end of the spring term students embark on their 6 month placement with an ecological consultancy.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including 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

The programme will be assessed through written, oral and practical assignments. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

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

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Master's degree:

Award of a Master's degree

- i. an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 180 credits
- ii. a mark of 50% or more in at least 120 credits
- iii. not more than 20 credits with a mark below 40%
- iv. a mark of 50% or more for the Dissertation

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Master's degree, the following **further** conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 180 credits and marks of 70% in at least 90 credits]

AND

A mark of at least 60% in the dissertation

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 180 credits and marks of 60% in at least 90 credits

AND

No marks below 40.

For Postgraduate Diploma

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma:

Award of a Postgraduate Diploma

- i. an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 120 credits
- ii. a mark of 50% or more in at least 80 credits
- iii. not more than 20 credits with a mark below 40%

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, the following further conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 120 credits and marks of 70% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 120 credits and marks of 60% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40.

For Postgraduate Certificate

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate:

Award of a Postgraduate Certificate

i. an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 60 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.

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20 September 2023

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