

Programme Specification

MRes in Wildlife Conservation 2019-20

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.

Awarding Institution	University of Southampton
Teaching Institution	Centre for Biological Sciences
Accreditation details	None
Final award	Master of Research (MRes) [with exit point of Postgraduate Certificate]
Name of award	Wildlife Conservation
UCAS code	n/a
QAA Subject Benchmark or other external reference	QAA National Qualifications Framework
Programme Leader	Dr Judith Lock (UoS) & Dr Heidi Mitchell (Marwell Wildlife)
Date specification was written	Revalidation = January 2018

Educational Aims of the Programme

The MRes Wildlife Conservation is a collaborative programme between the University of Southampton's Biological Sciences and Marwell Wildlife. It is the only current UK Wildlife Conservation programme with such a high degree of collaboration between a University and a Conservation organisation, with the ultimate aim of producing graduates who have the skills for employment by Conservation Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and/or to pursue an academic career.

The MRes in Wildlife Conservation is designed for graduates of biology, zoology, ecology and other relevant biological or ecological disciplines. The programme has a research focus but in semester 1 there will also be modules taught by academic staff at the Centre for Biological Sciences and also by practising conservation biologists at Marwell Wildlife.

Research and statistical skills will be taught by Biological Sciences lecturers, based in the iconic Life Sciences building. Students on other postgraduate programmes within the Biological Sciences will take the statistics module, providing a postgraduate University of Southampton student experience for MRes in Wildlife Conservation students. You will also have weekly tutorials in small groups throughout semester 1 to develop your research skills and encourage you to use knowledge across modules.

Wildlife Conservation will be taught by active conservation biologists at Marwell Wildlife. Marwell Wildlife is located 9 miles from the main Highfield campus of the University of Southampton, near Winchester. As a conservation charity with a zoological park as part of its conservation profile Marwell Wildlife undertakes a broad portfolio of conservation research which includes managing individuals and populations of threatened species and the restoration of endangered wildlife and ecosystems. During semester 1 you will attend taught modules at the zoological park and a field course at one of Marwell Wildlife's research sites in the UK or abroad. You will also have the unique experience of undertaking an extensive individual research project at one of Marwell Wildlife's sites, in the UK or abroad, becoming part of an existing and dynamic team.

By the end of your MRes programme you will have extended your subject-specific and employability skills beyond the level of your undergraduate degree.

A Master of Research programme differs from a conventional MSc programme in the balance between teaching and research. As an MRes student you will spend more time on the research project and correspondingly less time will be devoted to formal teaching.

The specific aims of our MRes programmes are to provide you with:

- In-depth training through advanced coursework and an 8 month individual research project.
- A sound and suitable qualification that would enable you to proceed to a more specialist higher degree at PhD level or a job with a conservation NGO.
- A training in relevant practical conservation research methods (including field techniques and analysis) and the application of advanced research techniques during your individual research project.
- A high-quality and intellectually stimulating experience of learning in a supportive environment.

In addition to the above, students enrolled on the MRes in Wildlife Conservation will gain:

- An extensive and in-depth knowledge of all aspects of wildlife conservation and their relationships to other disciplines within biology, geography and environmental science;
- Vocational training for a professional career in industries, including conservation NGOs, that have interests in wildlife conservation;
- Critical appraisal and analytical skills in wildlife conservation and the ability to communicate results to non-specialists;
- Communication and presentation skills, developed through group fieldwork, seminar presentations and production of a research report;
- An opportunity for original and independent research on wildlife conservation topic.
- An opportunity to develop your skills in scientific computing and critical analysis of scientific literature.

Knowledge and Understanding

Having successfully completed this programme you should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

1. A wide selection of topics currently at the frontiers of research and many of the specialist techniques used to investigate them.
2. Analytical skills to a level sufficient to understand the principles of statistical modelling.
3. A solution-conscious approach to the challenges faced by the modern conservationist.
4. Expand and enhance knowledge of the underlying conceptual and theoretical framework required by conservation biologists.
5. The limitations and challenges associated with surveying in order to gather field-based systematic data from individuals, populations and communities.

Subject Specific Intellectual and Research Skills

Having successfully completed this programme you will be able to:

1. Recognise and use subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles in the context of research;
2. Critically analyse, synthesise, interpret and summarise complex scientific information.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the techniques of collecting, recording and analysing data in the field, using various ecological surveying techniques;
4. Read, use and reference the work of others in an appropriate manner;

5. Undertake field investigations in a responsible and safe manner, paying due attention to risk assessment, rights of access, relevant health and safety regulations, and sensitivity to the impact of investigations on the environment and stakeholders.

Transferable and Generic Skills

Having successfully completed one of these programmes you will have developed a range of graduate key skills. The Biological Sciences' Career Management Agreement advisor will help you to identify employability skills gained during your MRes, to aid with job applications. You should be able to:

1. Synthesise, apply and develop further the computing, statistical and mathematical skills that you brought to the MRes programme from your undergraduate programme. Including collecting and integrating several lines of evidence to formulate and test hypotheses.
2. Design, implement and report on scientific research projects, including a major research project at the forefront of wildlife conservation knowledge.
3. Critical use of a range of resources as a source of information, means of communication and data dissemination.
4. Identify individual and collective goals and learning, recognising and respecting the views of other team members.
5. Develop an adaptable and flexible approach to study and work, this is particularly relevant to field work abroad.

Teaching and learning methods

To assist the development of your knowledge and understanding of wildlife conservation we use a wide range of teaching methods in this MRes. As well as your in-depth research project, you will develop core knowledge and understanding via four core taught modules which will include: module lectures, tutor-led and student-led tutorials, student-led seminars and presentations, practical classes, case studies, fieldwork, guided independent study, group study and your own research project. A wide range of support is available for those students who have further or specific learning and teaching needs.

Your subject-specific, general and transferable skills are embedded within the curriculum and many of the teaching methods used to develop these skills are common to those discussed in the Knowledge and Understanding Section. You will develop your subject-specific, general and transferable skills via compulsory modules, tutor-led and student-led tutorials and with the help of representatives from Career Destinations. A wide range of support is available for those students who have further or specific learning and teaching needs.

Assessment methods

Assessment of your knowledge, understanding and skills will be achieved through a combination of essays, computer laboratory exercises, oral presentations, fieldwork reports, short coursework assignments, poster presentations, and a substantial research project dissertation.

To test your knowledge and understanding of material presented in the lectures and associated practicals, you will be assessed via a combination of oral presentations (individually and in a group), a written assignment, poster presentation, and a reflective notebook. In addition, at the start of Semester 2, you will give a seminar about your proposed individual research project, which will be assessed by the project supervisors, based at the University of Southampton and Marwell Wildlife. In semester 2, all students carry out a major 8-month individual research project at one of Marwell Wildlife's research sites, culminating in a dissertation that is assessed by both examiners from UoS and Marwell Wildlife. Additional support can be provided for those students who have further or specific needs.

Programme Structure

The programme involves teaching activities occupying about one third of the programme and a research project occupying the remaining two thirds of the programme. All taught modules will take place in Semester 1, generally running from October to January.

The duration of the full-time programme is one year. Students undertake the taught component between October and January. The research component is undertaken from January and normally completed with the submission of your dissertation by the end of September.

There are two taught modules on this programme, one is worth 7.5 ECTS credits which equates to 150 hours of study, and one worth 22.5 ECTS which equates to 450 hours of study. The hours of study include contact teaching with the remainder of the time for your own independent study.

You will also be encouraged to attend research seminars, which at the Biological Sciences are run at a variety of different levels. In particular, you will be encouraged to attend key seminars from leading visiting scientists. You will also be able to be part of the Biological Sciences' weekly "Conservation club", which includes presentations from PhD students and academic staff, and discussions on new or seminal research or topics related to Conservation Biology.

Graduates will find the extra support offered by the MRes programme an excellent way to prepare for a subsequent three-year research project as you will experience what it is like to be a postgraduate research student and benefit from the experience of an 8 month research project. Students should note that the research undertaken for the MRes Project would be independent of research for a PhD. Graduates will also have the experience of working amongst a team of conservation biologists at a conservation organisation, Marwell Wildlife.

Details of the teaching structure and modules for the programme can be found in Appendix 1.

Progression

The University regulations governing progression, determination and classification of results for standalone masters can be found in the University Calendar (Section IV – General Regulations) <http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/progression-regs-standalonemasters.html>

The Academic Regulations for this programme can be found at: <http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIX/sectIX-index.html>

Further details about progression and assessment rules for Master of Research are provided in the Programme Handbook.

Support for student learning

There are facilities and services to support your learning some of which are accessible to students across the University and some of which will be geared more particularly to students in your particular Faculty in the Centre for Biological Sciences.

The University provides:

- library resources, including e-books, on-line journals and databases, which are comprehensive and up-to-date; together with assistance from Library staff to enable you to make the best use of these resources
- high speed access to online electronic learning resources on the Internet from dedicated PC Workstations onsite and from your own devices; laptops, smartphones and tablet PCs via the Eduroam wireless network. There is a wide range of application software available from the Student Public Workstations.
- computer accounts which will connect you to a number of learning technologies for example, the Blackboard virtual learning environment (which facilitates online learning and access to specific learning resources)
- standard ICT tools such as Email, secure filestore and calendars.
- access to key information through the MySouthampton Student Mobile Portal which delivers timetables, Module information, Locations, Tutor details, Library account, bus timetables etc. while you are on the move.
- IT support through a comprehensive website, telephone and online ticketed support and a dedicated helpdesk in the Hartley Library.
- Enabling Services offering support services and resources via a triage model to access crisis management, mental health support and counselling.
- assessment and support (including specialist IT support) facilities if you have a disability, long term health problem or Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)
- the Student Services Centre (SSC) to assist you with a range of general enquiries including financial matters, accommodation, exams, graduation, student visas, ID cards
- Career Destinations, advising on job search, applications, interviews, paid work, volunteering and internship opportunities and getting the most out of your extra-curricular activities alongside your degree programme when writing your CV
- Other support that includes health services (GPs), chaplaincy (for all faiths) and 'out of hours' support for students in Halls (18.00-08.00) a Centre for Language Study, providing assistance in the development of English language and study skills for non-native speakers.

The Students' Union provides

- an academic student representation system, consisting of Course Representatives, Academic Presidents, Faculty Officers and the Vice-President Education; SUSU provides training and support for all these representatives, whose role is to represent students' views to the University.
- opportunities for extracurricular activities and volunteering
- an Advice Centre offering free and confidential advice including support if you need to make an academic appeal
- Support for student peer-to-peer groups, such as Nightline.

You will be able to access:

- Programme and module guides/information. Hard copies are available but are also published on the virtual learning environment www.blackboard.soton.ac.uk
- Equipment to support your field work.
- A research-led environment, which provides a high quality learning environment for students.
- A dedicated Student Office whose role is to support both staff and students in the administration of postgraduate teaching and research within the Centre. This is normally your first port of call for issues relating to the administration of your programme (e.g. registration, timetables, module courses, coursework submission, sickness and absence, examinations, staff whereabouts, etc.)
- A personal tutor system which aims to provide personalised pastoral and academic care for all students. You will be allocated a member of the academic staff as your personal tutor on arrival at University, and he/she will be charged with your guidance throughout your postgraduate career.
- Access via email which is freely available at all times and personal contact with all teaching staff.

Methods for evaluating the quality of teaching and Learning

We take very seriously the quality assurance of our learning and teaching structures. These issues are addressed in a variety of ways by the University, and by direct engagement of student comments at every level.

You will have the opportunity to have your say on the quality of the programme in the following ways:

- Anonymous student evaluation questionnaires for each module of the programme.
- The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).
- Through student representation on MRes Wildlife Conservation Operational Committee and the Biological Sciences' Graduate School committee
- Anonymous exit questionnaires when you leave the degree programme.
- Serving as a student representative on Faculty Scrutiny Groups for programme validation
- Taking part in programme validation meetings by joining a panel of students to meet with the Faculty Scrutiny Group

The ways in which the quality of your programme is checked, both inside and outside the University, are:

- All assessment is double-marked by a representative from Biological Sciences and Marwell Wildlife
- External examiners, who review examination papers, moderate marking and overall results, attend presentations and viva-voce examinations for the research project module, and provide annual reports to the University via the Faculty.
- Periodical Programme review prepared by the Programme Leaders and considered by the School Education and Quality Committee.
- Periodical review of modules via a sub-group of the Education and Quality Committee.
- Annual appraisal of teaching staff, including setting staff development priorities.
- Observation of teaching and learning.
- Annual statement to the Faculty Programmes Committee.

Criteria for admission

The University's general admission requirements, including information for overseas/European applicants can be viewed on the web page: www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/admissions.html

Biological Sciences' admissions requirements can be viewed at: www.southampton.ac.uk/biosci

The MRes Wildlife Conservation is most suited to students with biology, zoology and ecological discipline degrees, a closely related subject, or those already working at a conservation organisation. Tuition fees for this programme will be based on the requirements of individual research projects, with location having the largest influence individual research projects. Applicants will be allocated to projects following interview, to ensure that fees paid by students match projects available. The interview process will be particularly important for those already working at a conservation organisation who do not have a relevant degree.

All individuals are selected and treated on their relative merits and abilities in line with the University's Equal Opportunities Policy. Disabled applicants will be treated according to the same procedures as any other applicant with the added involvement of Enabling Services to assess their needs. Such applicants are therefore encouraged to make contact early and discuss their needs. The programme may require adaptation for students with disabilities (eg: hearing impairment, visual impairment, mobility difficulties, dyslexia), particularly the practical laboratory and fieldwork sessions, and we will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate students wherever possible.

This information is available, upon request, in large print, Braille, on audio tape and on disc, as well as other languages. For further information please contact: The Faculty of Natural & Environmental Sciences' [Postgraduate Admissions team PGapply.FNES@soton.ac.uk](mailto:PGapply.FNES@soton.ac.uk)

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 can be found in our programme handbook or online at www.southampton.ac.uk/biosci

Appendix 1

Programme Structure: MRes Wildlife Conservation

Details of the modules listed (i.e. module specifications) can be downloaded from the Centre for Biological Sciences website (www.southampton.ac.uk/biosci)

Taught Component: 30 ECTS Points at FHEQ Level 7

All students must take three modules: one subject-specific modules taught at Marwell Wildlife, a statistical skills module taught at Biological Sciences and the individual research project. The individual research project is commenced in semester 2, following a series of tutorials in semester 1.

Semester 1:	Pre-requisite	ECTS points
<i>BIOL6052 Advanced Quantitative methods</i>	Biology, zoology or ecology background	7.5
<i>BIOL60XX Wildlife Conservation</i>	Biology, zoology or ecology background	22.5
Semesters 2:	Pre-requisite	ECTS points
<i>BIOL6051 MRes Wildlife Conservation Research Project</i>	None	60

Research Component: 60 ECTS Points at FHEQ Level 7

In addition to enabling you to complete a substantial piece of independent research, this module will provide you with training in research methodology including assessment of some elements. The module includes tutorials to assist in your transition to become an independent researcher.

You will also prepare a presentation about your proposed research project, for a seminar where your project will be discussed with your supervisors and the wider programme team. The research proposal presentation is expected to evaluate any published literature about your particular project, set out the project aims and give an estimate of the resources required.

It is anticipated that the quality of the research and its novelty will lead to results that are suitable for publication in the peer-reviewed scientific literature.

Learning outcomes mapping

Module Code	Module Title	Knowledge and Understanding					Subject-specific Intellectual Skills					Transferable/ key skills				
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
BIOL6091	Wildlife Conservation	X		X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X
BIOL6051	MRes Wildlife Conservation Research Project						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
BIOL6052	Advanced Quantitative Methods		X			X			X	X		X		X		

Assessment Mapping

Module code	Module Title	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3	Assessment 4	Assessment 5
BIOL6052	Advanced Quantitative Methods	Hypothesis testing (25%)	Interpretation of summary of statistical output (25%)	Grant proposal, including analysis of pilot data (50%)	N/A	N/A
BIOL6091	Wildlife Conservation	Group presentation (20%)	Group poster symposium (20%)	Individual presentation (20%)	Written assignment (25%)	Reflective notebook (15%)
BIOL6051	MRes Wildlife Conservation Research Project	Research proposal concept note (10%)	Oral presentation and exam (10%)	Research project report in the style of a research paper, 1000 words (80%)	N/A	N/A