

Programme Specification

Wildlife Conservation (2021-22)

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	Marwell Wildlife, University of Southampton
Mode of Study	Full-time
Duration in years	1
Accreditation details	None
Final award	Master of Research (MRes)
Name of award	Wildlife Conservation
Interim Exit awards	Postgraduate Certificate
FHEQ level of final award	Level 7
UCAS code	
Programme code	8411
QAA Subject Benchmark or other external reference	QAA Masters level characteristics, 2015
Programme Lead	Judith Lock

Programme Overview

Brief outline of the programme

The MRes Wildlife Conservation is a collaborative programme between the University of Southampton's School of Biological Sciences and Marwell Wildlife. It is the only current UK Wildlife Conservation MRes 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.

Full information about contact hours is provided in individual module profiles.

Your contact hours will vary depending on your module/option choices. Full information about contact hours is provided in individual module profiles.

Learning and teaching

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 two 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.

Assessment

Assessment of your knowledge, understanding and skills will be achieved through a combination of essays, computer exercises, oral presentations, fieldwork reports, coursework assignments, 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, written assignments, and a reflective notebook. You will 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 examiners from UoS and Marwell Wildlife. Additional support can usually be provided for those students who have further or specific needs.

Special Features of the programme

This programme is run in collaboration with conservation NGO, Marwell Wildlife. You will become part of the team of conservation biologists at Marwell, and undertake a research project which is part of their ongoing conservation research in the UK and abroad.

Course fees include travel and accommodation for a field trip to Kenya.

Please note: As a research-led University, we undertake a continuous review of our programmes to ensure quality enhancement and to manage our resources. As a result, this programme may be revised during a student's period of registration; however, any revision will be balanced against the requirement that the student should receive the educational service expected. Please read our [Disclaimer](#) to see why, when and how changes may be made to a student's programme.

Programmes and major changes to programmes are approved through the University's [programme validation process](#) which is described in the University's [Quality handbook](#).

Educational Aims of the Programme

The MRes in Wildlife Conservation is designed for graduates of biology, zoology, ecology and other relevant biological or ecological disciplines. The programme begins with the taught element (one third of programme credits) from academic staff at the University of Southampton and also by Marwell Wildlife's practising conservation biologists.

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. This includes managing individuals and populations of threatened species and the restoration of endangered wildlife and ecosystems. During semester 1 you will attend taught sessions at the zoological park and a field course at one of Marwell Wildlife's research sites in the UK or abroad. During semester 2, 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 aboard, 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.

Programme Learning Outcomes

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

Knowledge and Understanding

On successful completion of this programme you will have knowledge and understanding of:

- A1. A wide selection of topics currently at the frontiers of wildlife conservation research and many of the specialist techniques used to investigate them.
- A2. Analytical skills to a level sufficient to understand the principles of statistical modelling.
- A3. A solution-conscious approach to the challenges faced by the modern conservationist.
- A4. Applying conceptual and theoretical frameworks to conservation biology
- A5. 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

On successful completion of this programme you will be able to:

- B1. Evaluate and apply subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles in the context of researchB2. Critically analyse, synthesise, interpret and summarise complex scientific information.
- B3. Application of methodology to collect, record and analyse data
- B4. Synthesise and integrate relevant scientific literature
- B5. Undertake field investigations in a responsible and safe manner, paying due attention to risk assessment, ethical approval, rights of access, relevant health and safety regulations, and sensitivity to the impact of investigations on the environment and stakeholders.

Transferable and Generic Skills

On successful completion of this programme you will be able to:

- C1. Synthesise, apply and develop further the computing, statistical and mathematical skills
- C2. Design, implement and report on scientific research projects, including a major research project at the forefront of wildlife conservation knowledge.
- C3. Critically use of a range of resources as a source of information, means of communication and data dissemination.
- C4. Be able to design and manage an independent research project.
- C5. Develop an adaptable and flexible approach to study and work, this is particularly relevant to field work

Programme Structure

The programme structure table is below:

Information about pre and co-requisites is included in individual module profiles.

Part I

The programme involves a taught component occupying about one third of the programme and a research component occupying the remaining two thirds of the programme.

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, at the School of Biological Sciences which 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 PhD project as you will experience what it is like to be a postgraduate research student, and with 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.

Taught Component: 30 ECTS Points at FHEQ Level 7

All students must take two modules: one subject-specific module taught at Marwell Wildlife and statistical skills module taught at Biological Sciences.

Code	Module Title	ECTS	Type
BIOL6052	Data Management and Generalised Linear Modelling for Biologists 2020-21	7.5	Compulsory
BIOL6091	Conservation Biology 2020-21	22.5	Core

Part II

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.

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.

Code	Module Title	ECTS	Type
BIOL6051	MRes Wildlife Conservation Research Project 2021-22	60	Core

Progression Requirements

The programme follows the University's regulations for [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes](#). Any exemptions or variations to the University regulations, approved by AQSC are located in [section VI of the University Calendar](#).

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 or discipline area.

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. Support includes daily Drop In at Highfield campus at 13.00 – 15.00 (Monday, Wednesday and Friday out of term-time) or via on-line chat on weekdays from 14.00 – 16.00. Arrangements can also be made for meetings via Skype.
- 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 and Employability services, 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 and in the local community, (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.

Methods for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning

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

- Completing student evaluation questionnaires for each module of the programme.
- Acting as a student representative on various committees, e.g. Staff/Student Liaison Committees, School Programmes Committee OR providing comments to your student representative to feedback on your behalf.
- 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.

Further details on the University's quality assurance processes are given in the [Quality Handbook](#).

Career Opportunities

This MRes allows those with career aspirations within conservation to enhance their prospects in a number of ways. You will develop your academic credentials and your practical skills, jointly, without having to choose to invest in one route or the other. You will be exposed to, and have the opportunity to work alongside, practising conservation biologists, providing you with valuable experience and insight into the realities of working in conservation. By undertaking an in-depth 8 month research project you will develop some specialist knowledge within your area of interest, and be exposed to a wider network of conservation biologists and other industry professionals working for organizations that collaborate with Marwell Wildlife (for example, European Association of Zoos and Aquaria, Kenya Wildlife Service, Natural England). This wide range of experience, and any contacts within the conservation network you have made, will assist you when applying for positions within

conservation NGOs and wildlife focused government agencies.

Additionally, graduates will find the MRes programme an excellent way to prepare for a PhD in conservation science as you will gain experience of undertaking postgraduate research, as well as having the opportunity to begin developing your own specialist area of study, off the back of your 8 month in-depth research project . Students should note that the research undertaken for the MRes Project would be independent of research for a PhD.

External Examiner(s) for the programme

Dr Caroline Bettridge

Students must not contact External Examiner(s) directly, and external examiners have been advised to refer any such communications back to the University. Students should raise any general queries about the assessment and examination process for the programme with their Course Representative, for consideration through Staff: Student Liaison Committee in the first instance, and Student representatives on Staff: Student Liaison Committees will have the opportunity to consider external examiners' reports as part of the University's quality assurance process.

External examiners do not have a direct role in determining results for individual students, and students wishing to discuss their own performance in assessment should contact their Personal Academic Tutor in the first instance.

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 they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information can be found in the programme handbook.

Appendix 1:

Students are responsible for meeting the cost of essential textbooks, and of producing such essays, assignments, laboratory reports and dissertations as are required to fulfil the academic requirements for each programme of study. In addition to this, students registered for this programme also have to pay for:

Additional Costs

Type	Details
Accommodation and Travel	Visa and vaccinations: Students must pay for travel to UK airport, visas and vaccinations associated with the field trip (flights and accommodation are included in course fees)

In some cases, you'll be able to choose modules (which may have different costs associated with that module) which will change the overall cost of a programme to you. Details of such costs will be listed in the Module Profile. Please also ensure you read the section on additional costs in the University's Fees, Charges and Expenses Regulations in the University Calendar available at www.calendar.soton.ac.uk.