Programme Specification

Title of Course: FdSc Wildlife and Conservation

Date Specification Produced: January 2017

Date Specification Last Revised: January 2017

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook and Module Descriptors.

Examples of completed programme specifications can be found on the KU Programme Specification Archive

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Title:	FdSc Wildlife and Conservation
Awarding Institution:	Kingston University
Teaching Institution:	Guildford College
Location:	Merrist Wood Campus
Programme Accredited by:	N/A

SECTION2: THE PROGRAMME

A. Programme Introduction

The Wildlife and Conservation Foundation Degree provides a comprehensive understanding of the scientific study of wildlife, the diversity of living organisms and their habitats, and the practical steps that can be taken for effective conservation. It provides an opportunity for students to explore the theory and practice related to wildlife conservation, and to develop both subject specific and important generic graduate skills. Students will examine ecological principles which seek to explain how populations interact with each other and the physical environment and integrate understanding of the natural, socio-cultural, economic and political issues which promote the need for wildlife management. Through academic course-based delivery, supported by integrated professional development, students will be able to engage with National Occupational Standards (NOS) and enhance their employment opportunities. Study of the subject area can open up a broad range of career pathways.

Assessments are designed to allow students to develop subject specific skills and knowledge, and to research topics and species of interest linked to subject areas they would wish to specialise in. The teaching team undertake vocational continuous professional development to keep up to date with their subject specialism. This vocational currency gives a real edge to course content and value is added through guest speakers, visits and realistic work-based learning assignments. These are shared with our colleagues employed within the sector to ensure that we remain agile and focused on the needs and skills required by the industry.

Teaching and learning takes place on the 400 acre Merrist Wood campus and is supported by an extensive animal collection that is utilised throughout the course where learners will encounter a range of familiar and unusual species. An investment of £4.5 million was put into the animal facilities; culminating the opening of a state-of-the-art Animal Management Centre in September 2015. This centre provides excellent facilities including desert; tropical and nocturnal biomes housing a wide range of exciting species both exotic and domestic. Some of these are of conservation importance; including our red squirrels which are part of a British reintroduction programme. The various different habitats that are found within the 400 acre site are utilised for a range of activities to support the Wildlife and Conservation course, for example when conducting ecological surveys.

Foundation degree students utilise the animals for practical work including enrichment, training and investigative projects. This will give opportunities for the development of further practical and research skills in a realistic working environment. The Merrist Wood Animal Management Unit is a member of the International Species Information System (ISIS); our educational licence allows our students to experience first-hand the software used to

manage global species populations using the Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS). It is anticipated that the college will gain a Zoo Licence in 2017 allowing the collection to expand further.

On completion of the course students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to support the start of their career in this competitive sector of the animal industry. Students can progress onto BSc (Hons) top-up qualifications to gain a Level 6 qualification. Merrist Wood College is planning to further expand its BSc (Hons) top-up course offer for 2019 intake which would allow alternative progression routes for students on this programme. Our graduates can be found working in a range of wildlife trusts, animal collections, welfare organisations and educational establishments.

B. Aims of the Field/Course

The main aims of the field are to:

1. achieve a recognised level five qualification and provide excellence in terms of industry standards to prepare the learner for employment, or progress to a full honours degree qualification.
2. enable learners to develop skills for independent work and learning.
3. create opportunities for learners to gain practical experience with a wide range of animal species.
4. introduce learners to a breadth of topics related to the wildlife conservation sector.
5. allow learners the opportunity to explore a range of career areas within wildlife conservation industries and develop aspirations in chosen fields through the use of professional development and module delivery.

C. Intended Learning Outcomes

The course provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding specific to the subject, key skills and graduate attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes are referenced to the QAA subject benchmark for Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Sciences (July 2016), the Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark (May 2010) and relate to the typical student.

Programme Learning Outcomes					
	Knowledge and Understanding On completion of the course students will be able to:		**Intellectual Skills** On completion of the course students will be able to		**Subject Practical Skills** On completion of the course students will be able to
A1	Draw from theory, practicals, investigations, and application of principles to develop knowledge and understanding of wildlife conservation for a range of species.	B1	Recognise and apply theory, concepts and principles from diverse disciplines appropriately.	C1	Collect and record information or data from primary or secondary sources, summarising it using appropriate qualitative and quantitative techniques.
A2	Appreciate the welfare implications of exploitation and concerns over ethical, legal, and cultural issues involving animals.	B2	Critically analyse information synthesising and summarising the outcomes.	C2	Devise, plan and undertake investigations in a responsible and safe manner, paying due attention to risk assessment, rights of access, relevant health and safety regulations, legal requirements and sensitivity to impact of investigations on the environment and stakeholders.
A3	Demonstrate understanding of the structure and functioning of the natural world at an organism, population, community and ecosystem levels.	B3	Apply knowledge and understanding to address both familiar and novel problems.	C3	Undertake field surveys and develop biodiversity management plans.
A4	Evaluate the threats to global biodiversity and contemporary approaches to wildlife conservation.	B4	Utilise research skills that enhance contribution to the animal industry.	C4	Execute and appraise specified ecological data collection, data analysis and data interpretation techniques.

In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow students to develop a range of Key Skills as follows:

Key Skills						
Self Awareness Skills	**Communication Skills**	**Interpersonal Skills**	**Research and information Literacy Skills**	**Numeracy Skills**	**Management & Leadership Skills**	**Creativity and Problem Solving Skills**
Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development	Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken work	Work well with others in a group or team	Search for and select relevant sources of information	Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data	Determine the scope of a task (or project)	Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems
Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback	Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing	Work flexibly and respond to change	Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately	Present and record data in appropriate formats	Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources	Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence
Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets	Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others	Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement	Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information	Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments	Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary	
Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts		Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback	Accurately cite and reference information sources	Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data	Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants	
		Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs	Use software and IT technology as appropriate			

D. Entry Requirements

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

From A levels: 64 UCAS points
BTEC National: 64 UCAS points from Level 3 Animal/Countryside Management
Access Diploma: 64 UCAS points from Access to HE Animal Management however access courses with science units will be considered
Plus: English and maths GCSE grade A*-C
It is advantageous to have geography, biology or psychology A level

A minimum IELTS score of 6 with minimum of 5.5 in any component is required for those for whom English is not their first language.

E. Field/Course Structure

This programme is offered in full-time and part-time mode, and leads to the award of Foundation Degree. Full-time delivery is typically two days per week on-site and one day per week for part-time. Entry is normally at Level 4 with A-level or equivalent qualifications (See section D). Transfer from a similar course is possible at Level 5 with passes in comparable Level 4 modules – but is at the discretion of the course team and subject to Kingston University regulations. Intake is normally in September.

E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies

N/A

E2. Work-based learning, including sandwich courses

Work based learning is an essential component of the Foundation Degree and each student must complete 200 hours at level 4 and again at level 5. This is assessed through a 30 credit Professional Development in the workplace module at each level. It is the responsibility of individual students to source and secure such work-based learning experiences. This allows students to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to theoretical concepts and to evaluate the relationship between theory and practice. A designated work placement coordinator ensures not only that the selected work placement complies with the required health and safety legislative framework, but is also there to support students in problem solving in order to find a suitable placement. Students will have access to a wide range of potential placements from an approved database of employers but will be encouraged to find their own. There are opportunities to work at both the Animal Management and Equine Centre if deemed applicable by the centre managers.

E3. Outline Programme Structure

Each level is made up of four modules each worth 30 credit points. Typically a student must complete 120 credits at each level. All students will be provided with the University regulations and specific additions that are sometimes required for accreditation by outside bodies (e.g. professional or statutory bodies that confer professional accreditation). Full details of each module will be provided in module descriptors and student module guides.

Level 4 (all core)				
Compulsory modules	**Module code**	**Credit Value**	**Level**	**Teaching Block**
Animal health, welfare and nutrition	SG4032	30	4	1&2
Professional development in the work environment 1	SG4031	30	4	1&2
Breeding programmes and animal husbandry	SG4036	30	4	1&2
Fundamentals of Ecology and Ecological Field Skills I	SG4038	30	4	1&2

Progression to Level 5 requires 120 credits including passes in all Level 4 modules.

Students exiting the field/course at this point who have successfully completed 120 credits are eligible for the award of Certificate of Higher Education in Animal Behaviour and Welfare.

Level 5					
Compulsory modules	**Module code**	**Credit Value**	**Level**	**Teaching Block**	**Pre-requisites**
Professional development in the work environment 2	SG5021	30	5	1&2	Professional development in the work environment 1
Research methods	SG5022	30	5	1&2	
Native Wildlife Management and Ecological Field Skills II	SG5031	30	5	1&2	Fundamentals of Ecology and Ecological Field Skills I
Conservation of Global Biodiversity	SG5030	30	5	1&2	

F. Principles of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The Foundation Degree in Wildlife and Conservation is designed to develop a student's knowledge, understanding, cognitive skills, practical skills and key transferable skills at Level 4 and Level 5 and as a suitable progression into Level 6 honours level in an appropriate discipline. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed to include formal lectures, group discussion, seminars, individual study, independent research, practical workshops and field work. Where appropriate guest speakers and a range of working environments are used to support the learning.

The programme has been designed to extend the academic knowledge and understanding through application to the workplace environment and through the development of vocational skills and competencies. Consideration has been given to the balance of intellectual and practical skills. Throughout the field emphasis is placed on developing self-awareness skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, research and information literacy skills, numeracy skills, management and leadership skills and creativity and problem solving skills.

All students are provided with an opportunity to gain experience in a related workplace setting through the Professional Development Modules in levels 4 and 5. Expectations of the student experience in the workplace are fully articulated at the commencement of the placement. This is by means of a workplace learning contract / agreement and

handbook/feedback for employers. The modules relating to Professional Development in the Work Environment provide a mechanism for students to identify and apply self-awareness techniques for their own skill development and create a professional development plan to support career choices.

A sound appreciation of ethics will be considered throughout the course through application to pertinent and current case studies that have impacted on the industry. This will allow a greater appreciation of the issues faced in wildlife conservation and will provide the learner with information to make valued and considered judgements.

Equality and diversity is fully embedded within the content and delivery of the course giving an inclusive programme for the learner. Diversity is represented, for example, through cultural differences in perception to animals. This will give a wider appreciation of faith, culture and our complex relationship with animals particularly in a time where social media is used as a tool to share information rapidly that may lack scientific validity or credibility. Equality is a fundamental value of our teaching and learning, with all learners having the ability to demonstrate academic and practical strengths and develop further through support and self-directed study. This can be facilitated through feedback and tutorial support for all. The practical nature of this module and specific nature of the programme may mean that a range of industry experience will be present in the cohort. Peer learning, small study groups and evaluation of the latest industry advances will allow inclusion in the development of employability skills for the cohort. A range of teaching styles and activities will be used to reflect the diversity of the groups learning needs.

Students are encouraged to recognise the workplace as a learning environment and to apply the knowledge and skills gained to the other fields of study and taught modules. Although learners may have specific career paths and aims, the programme has been designed to reflect the necessary skills development leading to the autonomy required should they progress to level 6. By liaising with industry professionals we have developed a programme with a sound grounding to specific animal behaviour and welfare needs at level 4 and 5. The underpinning knowledge is developed in the classroom and supported further with assessment, both formative and summative.

The assessment strategy promotes authentic learning and flexibility to equip students to work in this diverse field. Assessments are designed to allow students to develop subject specific skills and knowledge, and to research topics/species of interest linked to subject areas they would wish to specialise in and career aspirations. Feedback on assessment performance and feed forward advice is provided on all assessment activities to enhance student development and progression. This comprises mainly individual comments but also group feedback to the cohort so that generic issues such as technical writing and referencing skills can be enhanced. Formative assessment is designed to promote learning and allows students to become familiar with the expectations and requirements associated with assessment processes. Throughout the course there are many opportunities for formative assessment which provide constructive feedback (to feed forward) prior to summative assessment. Typically this includes practical work, informal in-class or online tests, discussions and peer review. These are designed to inform students of their own progress, allowing reflection on learning to identify strengths and weaknesses and to facilitate planning for success.

The students are expected to exercise increasing autonomy in their learning as they progress from Level 4 to Level 5 as preparation for progression to Level 6 Honours. Up take for the level 6 is high so it is essential that the learners are equipped with the research and evaluative skills that are required to succeed. Independent research, critical thinking and

scientific objectivity is developed further at level 5 which prepares for the dissertation at BSc level. Students are supported with academic skills sessions in both year 1 and year 2 to ensure they are equipped with skills required for study at each level. Furthermore, students are prepared for the Level 5 Research Methods module through development of skills at Level 4 such as collection and review of data e.g. in Animal Health, Welfare and Nutrition.

Teaching and learning is informed by current scholarship in both educational and vocational practice, and typically has a strong multidisciplinary element to further enhance the more traditional research-led curriculum. Throughout the programme of study, students are supported by a highly skilled and passionate team of tutors. These tutors all take part in regular industrial updating to ensure their knowledge and skills are current within their area of expertise. Practice informed teaching ensures that students are given the highest quality of lessons throughout the programme. To support teaching and learning the team remain committed to their relevant industry sectors and have embedded good practise. One such recent development is the application and use of QR codes across the Animal Management Centre. This project is continuously evolving and will give HE students the opportunity to embrace technology both as a learner and facilitator through the use of online in-class quizzes, pod casts, audio clips and videos through our YouTube education channel. Technology is key to the learning opportunities available with embedded in taught sessions and though our VLE. Students will have the opportunity to manage our animal collection on the Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS); an industry standard. The rebuild also has the provision for behavioural studies with equipment for video recording, CCTV and nocturnal observation.

One tutor sits on the ethical review committee of a major animal collection and is an active member of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) South-east region education panel. The teaching team all engage with their respective industries including animal cognition and learning, behavioural modification and wildlife management.

G. Support for Students and their Learning

Throughout the two year programme of study, students are allocated a personal tutor who is available to give support and guidance in relation to professional development, academic support and pastoral care. In addition to this, Level 4 students can be supported by a high achieving Level 5 student mentor who assists with study skills, professional development and general academic queries. This mechanism was launched in September 2011 and feedback is positive and wholly constructive. The mentor gives a ‘real feel’ to the learning experience and is approachable as a peer.

Students are supported by:

- Module leader for each module studied
- Individual tutorials with the personal tutor and programme manager to support academic progress and personal development at least once per term
- Group tutorials to develop study skills and allow feedback
- A professional development coordinator to assist with placements
- Professional development and academic skills sessions timetabled weekly
- Additional learner support. Students are introduced to this department during induction and again during initial tutorials. This department extensively supports those students with a DSA and offers guidance to though needing to refine their studentship skills at level 4/5. This can be support with organisation, effective research or structural issues.
- Comprehensive induction and handbook issued
- Level 5 student mentor to support and guide Level 4 students where required
- HE centre for taught sessions and independent research

- Learning Resource centre and induction to e-learning
- Moodle site for course specific material
- Student Staff Course Consultative meetings
- Students Union
- Careers Service supporting job application and CV development.

H. Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

- External examiners
- Boards of study with student representation
- Annual review and development
- Periodic review undertaken at subject level
- Student evaluation
- Moderation policies

I. Employability Statement

Graduates from this programme are entering a very competitive field where the importance of practical experience to support the qualification cannot be underestimated. With this in mind, each student is fully briefed on the limitations within the field and supported with their career path through the professional development module and the tutorial process. Each year level 5 students support the level 4 students with skills workshops that allow transferable skills to be taken into the work place.

Guest speakers and industry visits are integral throughout the qualification to ensure that each learner has the opportunity to explore the diversity of employment pathways or specialise further. Realistic assignments supported by industry links are praised by the external examiners. The professional development module provides an excellent platform for refining career choice and links to modules and practicals taught at Merrist Wood. A dedicated coordinator supports students to secure relevant placements and provides an excellent link to these providers.

Guest speakers normally include but are not limited to;

- Ecologists
- Wildlife managers
- Surrey Police Wildlife Officer
- Conservationists

Industry visits typically include;

- Wildlife trusts
- ZSL - London Zoo & Whipsnade Zoo
- Petworth Park
- WWT London / Arundel

Many level 5 students continue onto level 6 whilst others seek employment within the wildlife conservation field. Employment opportunities exist within wildlife trusts and charities, national parks, research roles for organisations such as ZSL, conservation boards, county councils and private organisations to name but a few.

J. Approved Variants from the Undergraduate or Postgraduate Regulations

There are no variants.

K. Other sources of information that you may wish to consult

Please visit the Unistats site (www.unistats.co.uk) for our most current feedback.

Development of Field/Course Learning Outcomes in Modules

This map identifies where the field/course learning outcomes are summatively assessed across the modules for this field/course. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the field/course aims, a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the field/course progresses and a check-list for quality assurance purposes.

Module code		Level 4				Level 5			
		SG4032	SG4031	SG4036	SG4038	SG5021	SG5022	SG5031	SG5030
Knowledge & Understanding	A1			X	X			X	X
	A2	X							X
	A3				X			X	X
	A4							X	X
Intellectual Skills	B1	X		X	X		X	X	X
	B2	X		X	X		X	X	X
	B3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	B4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Practical Skills	C1	X					X	X	
	C2	X					X		
	C3				X			X	X
	C4				X			X	

Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.

Technical Annex

Final Award(s):	Foundation Degree
Intermediate Award(s):	CertHE
Minimum period of registration:	FT: 2 years PT: 4 years
Maximum period of registration:	FT: 4 years PT: 8 years
FHEQ Level for the Final Award:	5
QAA Subject Benchmark:	Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural Sciences, Food Sciences and Consumer Sciences
Modes of Delivery:	2 years full-time or 4 years part-time
Language of Delivery:	English
Faculty:	
School:	Science, engineering and computing
Department:	
JACS code:	This is the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) agreed jointly by UCAS and HESA
UCAS Code:	D4D4
Course/Route Code:	