Programme specification

(Notes on how to complete this template are provided in Annexe 3)

1. Overview / factual information

Programme/award title(s)	BSc (Hons) Wildlife and Conservation
Teaching Institution	Merrist Wood College and University Centre – Activate Learning
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	September 2025
Date of latest OU (re)validation	
Next revalidation	
Credit points achieved for the award	120
UCAS Code (if applicable)	*Course Code: S039* *Institution Code: O25*
HECoS Code (if applicable)	
LDCS Code (FE Colleges England only	
Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.	September 2027
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	QAA Subject Benchmark Statement - Agriculture, Rural Environmental Sciences, Animal Studies, Consumer Science, Forestry, Food, Horticulture and Human Nutrition
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes (including QAA Characteristics Statements). For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.	• IAG Matrix Self-Assessment (2024) • Landex Peer Review Report (2024) • The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies
Professional/statutory/ accreditation recognition	N/A
For apprenticeships fully or non-integrated Assessment. If fully integrated, EPAO being used.	N/A
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship	FT, PT, Face-to-Face
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	Full time – 1 year Part time – 2 years

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 on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the students handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Dual accreditation (if applicable)	N/A
Date of production/revision of this specification	N/A

2. Programme overview

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the programme are to:

Aims:
The Top Up degree at level 6 builds upon the knowledge, cognitive skills, practical and professional skills, and transferable skills gained at foundation degree level (or equivalent) to ensure that learners are gaining advanced competencies in wildlife and conservation. This comprehensive course serves to enhance and develop integrated knowledge, skills and technical competence in behavioural ecology, creating sustainable futures, conservation technology, science communication and research, all of which will be driven by evidence-based approaches towards best practice. This enables learners to develop coveted skills and knowledge essential for progressing into the animal industry or post-graduate study.

Objectives:

1. To provide a cohesive and integrated course that builds on the knowledge and skills acquired at Foundation Degree level in wildlife and conservation (or equivalent).

2. To equip learners with in-depth knowledge and critical understanding of wildlife and conservation and the advanced technical competences needed within this evolving field.

3. To empower learners with the skills and knowledge to conduct robust independent research related to wildlife and conservation in real-world settings.

4. To develop essential practical, technical and academic skills, enabling learners to progress into a career within the conservation sector or support them towards postgraduate academia.

5. To deliver a varied course of study that guides learners to develop strongly desired skills within the wildlife and conservation industry, including the application of scientific information and advanced analytical skills to inform decision-making processes.

6. To enhance learner's abilities to engage and communicate effectively, in a range of styles to diverse audiences that directly contributes to the improved conservation of flora and fauna.

7. To support and sustain learner's motivation and passion for wildlife and conservation and provide learners with a springboard to make meaningful impacts and careers within the conservation industry.

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards (Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)
Progression from the Foundation Degree in Wildlife and Conservation (and equivalent courses)

2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60-credit work-related learning takes place. For apprenticeships an articulation of how the work based learning and academic content are organised with the award.
N/A

2.4 List of all exit awards
BSc (Hons) Wildlife and Conservation To be eligible for this exit award a student must have passed 120 credits in total. *BSc Wildlife and Conservation* To be eligible for this exit award a student must have passed 60 credits in total.

3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)
Please adjust 'levels' to reflect SCQF if applicable

Programme Structure - LEVEL 6 Full-time						
Compulsory modules	**Credit points**	**Optional modules**	**Credit points**	**Is module compensatable?**	**Semester runs in**	**Available as single registerable module?**
Behavioural Ecology	30	N/A	N/A	No	All	No
Conservation Technology and Science Communication	30	N/A	N/A	No	All	No
Creating Sustainable Futures	30	N/A	N/A	No	All	No
Research Projects	30	N/A	N/A	No	All	No

Programme Structure - LEVEL 6 Part-time						
Compulsory modules	**Credit points**	**Optional modules**	**Credit points**	**Is module compensatable?**	**Semester runs in**	**Available as single registerable module?**
Behavioural Ecology	30	N/A	N/A	No	All (Year 1)	No
Conservation Technology and Science Communication	30	N/A	N/A	No	All (Year 1)	No
Creating Sustainable Futures	30	N/A	N/A	No	All (Year 2)	No
Research Projects	30	N/A	N/A	No	All (Year 2)	No

Intended learning outcomes at Level 6 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
A1 Investigate and appraise defining elements of wildlife and conservation through in-depth study and research. A2 Demonstrate interdisicplinary applications and a systematic understanding of widllife conservation practices. A3 Integrate appropriate theories, concepts and principles from a range of disciplines and explain them in practice in a range of wildlife conservation-based scenarios. A4 Critically discuss the inter-relationship between wildlife management systems, ecological conditions and society.	**Active and experiential learning** Tutors will direct students to be responsible for their own independent learning, but there will be opportunities for group work. Theoretical knowledge in Wildlife and Conservation will be put into practice within practical sessions and project-based learning. For this level, tutors will facilitate learners in critiquing and evaluating research to develop their own understanding and knowledge of the defining elements of Wildlife and Conservation. This will be developed within lectures and reading lists provided for further independent study. **Formal approaches and assessment** A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed throughout this programme to include tutor lead lectures, group discussion, individual study, debated case studies, independent research, guest speakers, field trips, individual/ group presentations, assignment workshops and practical husbandry sessions.

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6	
3A. Knowledge and understanding	
	Students are encouraged to carry out independent research and develop self-assessment skills. The assessment strategies are designed to include formative and summative assessment through out the year which will challenge the learning outcomes of the programme and will also give the students an opportunity to receive feedback in a variety of ways. Students will take part in group projects, presentations, journal critiquing, essays, reports and case studies. Guest speakers will also be invited to share their industry-based knowledge. **Assessment strategies** Summative assessment strategies for this programme are varied to encourage modern transferable skills. This includes posters, presentations, peer teaches, reports, exams, research projects practical assessments and portfolios.

3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
B1 Critique and justify appropriate theories, concepts and principles from a range of subjects in wildlife conservation. B2 Critically analyse and argue information from a variety of sources in the setting of wildlife conservation. B3 Construct creative solutions to address complex challenges in wildlife conservation using interdisciplinary approaches, innovation and evidence-based decision making. B4 Synthesise and interpret several lines of evidence to develop balanced arguments demonstrating research and critical thinking skills.	The teaching and learning strategy used will encourage students to develop the cognitive skills relevant to this programme such applying theory into practice, evaluations, critical analysis and applying their knowledge into assessments. Students will use independent research within their learning both summatively and formatively to evidence their skills development. The research project element of this programme will encourage critical analysis. Tutors will facilitate learners with the tools needed to collect and analyse evidence to create robust dissertation research projects. **Formal approaches and assessment** A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed throughout this programmeto include tutor lead lectures, group discussion, individual study, debated case studies, independent research, guest speakers, field trips, individual/ group presentations, assignment workshops and practical husbandry sessions. Students are encouraged to carry out independent research and develop self-assessment skills. The assessment strategies are designed to include formative and summative assessment through out the year which will challenge the learning outcomes of the programme and will also give the

3B. Cognitive skills	
	students an opportunity to receive feedback in a variety of ways. Students will take part in group projects, presentations, journal critiquing, essays, reports and case studies. Guest speakers will also be invited to share their industry-based knowledge. **Assessment strategies** Summative assessment strategies for this programme are varied to encourage modern transferable skills. This includes posters, presentations, peer teaches, reports, exams, research projects practical assessments and portfolios.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
C1 Collect and evaluate diverse types of information generated by a wide range of methodologies using appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative techniques. C2 Devise, manage and conduct original research in a responsible and ethical manner, paying due attention to health and safety regulations, legal compliance, and the impact of research on animals, the environment and stakeholders. C3 Assess information pertaining to ecology, conservation and sustainability to enhance wildlife management in practice.	The teaching and learning strategy will provide students with opportunities to develop their practical and professional skills and apply them to real life practices. **Active and experiential learning** Tutors will direct students to be responsible for their own independent learning, but there will be opportunities for group work. Theoretical knowledge in Wildlife and Conservation will be put into practice within practical sessions and project-based learning.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
	Formal approaches and assessment A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed throughout this programme to include tutor lead lectures, group discussion, individual study, debated case studies, independent research, guest speakers, field trips, individual/ group presentations, assignment workshops and practical husbandry sessions. Students are encouraged to carry out independent research, work based learning and develop self-assessment skills. The assessment strategies are designed to include formative and summative assessment through out the year which will challenge the learning outcomes of the programme and will also give the students an opportunity to receive feedback in a variety of ways. Students will take part in group projects, presentations, journal critiquing, essays, reports and case studies. Guest speakers will also be invited to share their industry-based knowledge. **Assessment strategies specific to these learning outcomes:** Practical skills will be assessed through data collection and observational records.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	**Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods**
D1 **Self-Awareness Skills** • Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development. • Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback. • Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets. • Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts. D2 **Communication Skills** • Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken word. • Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing. • Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others. D3 **Interpersonal Skills** • Work well with others in a group or team. • Work flexibly and respond to change.	**Active and experiential learning** Tutors will direct students to be responsible for their own independent learning, but there will be opportunities for group work. Theoretical knowledge in Wildlife and Conservation will be put into practice within practical sessions and project-based learning. Transferable skills will be encouraged particularly through the development of a research project, practical elements of the programme and formative and summative assessments. **Formal approaches and assessment** A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed throughout this programme to include tutor lead lectures, group discussion, individual study, debated case studies, independent research, guest speakers, field trips, individual/ group presentations, assignment workshops and practical husbandry sessions. Students are encouraged to carry out independent research and develop self-assessment skills. The assessment strategies are designed to include formative and summative assessment throughout the year which will challenge the learning outcomes of the programme and will also give the students an opportunity to receive feedback in a variety of ways. Students will take part in group projects, presentations, journal critiquing, essays, reports and case studies. Guest speakers will also be invited to share their industry-based knowledge.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
• Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement. • Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback. • Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs. D4 **Research and information Literacy Skills** • Search for and select relevant sources of information. • Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately. • Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information. • Accurately cite and reference information sources. Use software and IT technology as appropriate. D5 **Numeracy Skills** • Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data. • Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems. • Present and record data in appropriate formats. • Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence.	**Assessment strategies** Assessment strategies for this programme are varied to encourage modern transferable skills. This includes posters, presentations, peer teaches, reports, research projects, practical assessments and portfolios.

3D. Key/transferable skills	
• Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments. • Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy, and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data. D6 **Management & Leadership Skills** • Determine the scope of a task or project. • Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and schedule and manage the resources. • Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary. • Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants. D7 **Creativity and Problem-Solving Skills** • Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems • Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence	

4. Distinctive features of the programme structure

- **Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features such as:**
  - where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression
  - any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules
  - where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route
- **Additional considerations for apprenticeships:**
  - how the delivery of the academic award fits in with the wider apprenticeship
  - the integration of the 'on the job' and 'off the job' training
  - how the academic award fits within the assessment of the apprenticeship

Placement year – Before joining Level 6 (Optional).

5. Support for students and their learning
(For apprenticeships this should include details of how student learning is supported in the workplace)

Students are supported by:

- A personal tutor who is available to give support and guidance in relation to professional development, academic support and pastoral care via one-to-one tutorials, email, phone or virtual calls.
- Module leaders for each module studied who can provide academic tutorial support.
- Individual or Group tutorials with an Academic Study Tutor to develop study skills and provide feedback where appropriate.
- Additional learner support (ALS) which is available through the Skills Centre. This department extensively supports those students with a DSA as a result of a learning difficulty, health problem or disability.
- A supportive induction during the first week of the programme.
- A Student Handbook
- A Programme Handbook specific to the study area that contains the timetable and assessment schedule.
- Core/Key Reading Lists for each module.
- A Research Project Supervisor if relevant to the programme and year of study.
- A Learning Resource centre and induction to e-learning and digital resources.
- Canvas (Activate Learning Online, or ALO) for all programme specific materials.
- Student-Staff Consultative meetings throughout the academic year to collate student feedback.
- Elected Student Representatives.

- Access to a Graduate Teaching Assistant to provide peer support.
- A Careers Service to support progression including for job applications, interview preparation and CV development.
- An accessible Safeguarding team.
- And a Mental health and student wellbeing team, including a counselling service.

The Personal Tutor Scheme (PTS) has been designed to enable us to give the best possible academic support and guidance to all of our students, and to ensure that they are able to access the wider services that the college provides. The role of the personal tutor and aims of the PTS:

- To build rapport between staff and students and contribute to personalising students' experience at Merrist Wood
- To provide appropriate academic advice and guidance to students throughout their time at Merrist Wood by monitoring their progress and helping to identify individual needs
- To foster a close and engaged academic relationship with students and advise and refer students to other services as appropriate
- To help to develop students' ability to be self-reliant and self-reflective and their ability to use feedback to best advantage

6. Criteria for admission
(For apprenticeships this should include details of how the criteria will be used with employers who will be recruiting apprentices.)

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

From Foundation Degree (FdSc) or Higher National Diploma (HND): Pass in a related subject area. Entry from courses completed at other Higher Education Institutions is subject to satisfactorily meeting Activate Learning's requirements applicable to RPCL / RPEL.

Plus: Candidates are normally required to hold five GCSE subjects at grades A*–C or 4+ including Mathematics and English Language.

A minimum IELTS score of 6 with a minimum 5.5 in each component, TOEFL 5.5 or equivalent is required for those for whom English is not their first language.

For further details about our admissions procedure please see Activate Learning's Admissions Policy and Procedure.

If you don't meet the entry requirements listed above, but have relevant experience, or would like any other relevant prior certificated learning to be considered, please see our Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure.

7. Language of study
English

8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including Professional Statutory Recognised Body requirements)
N/A

9. For apprenticeships in England, summary of how the End Point Assessment (EPA) links to the academic award
N/A

10. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning including the student experience
The programme is enhanced through the following mechanisms: • Activate Learning Quality and Consistency Committee • Activate Learning Board of Study Committee • Activate Learning Student Voice Committee • Employer Engagement Forum • National Student Survey data • Activate Learning Internal Survey data • Activate Learning Module and Course Enhancement Planning processes

11. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation
• Modernisation of the reading list. • Updated the TLA strategy for each module to be in line with OU guidelines and to reflect the QAA Subject benchmark (where necessary) • Updated indicative content of each module to reflect Subject Benchmark Statement: Agriculture, Rural Environmental Sciences, Animal Studies, Consumer Science, Forestry, Food, Horticulture and Human Nutrition. and The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies • Development of all Programme aims, objectives and Learning Outcomes.

- Updated Module titles.
- Updated Curriculum map.
- Development of an assessment map.

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 2: Curriculum mapping against the apprenticeship standard or framework (delete if not required.)

Annexe 3: Notes on completing the OU programme specification template

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes. Please amend this mapping to suit frameworks used within the different nations if appropriate.

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes																			Available as single registerable module?
		A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	
6	Behavioural Ecology	x			x		x			x										x	No
	Conservation Technologies and Science Communication			x				x				x		x			x				No
	Creating Sustainable Futures		x		x										x	x			x		No
	Research Project					x		x	x	x	x							x			No

Annexe 3: Notes on completing programme specification templates

1 **-** This programme specification should be mapped against the learning outcomes detailed in module specifications.

2 – The expectations regarding student achievement and attributes described by the learning outcome in section 3 must be appropriate to the level of the award within the **QAA frameworks for HE qualifications**: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Pages/default.aspx

3 – Learning outcomes must also reflect the detailed statements of graduate attributes set out in **QAA subject benchmark statements** that are relevant to the programme/award: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx

4 – In section 3, the learning and teaching methods deployed should enable the achievement of the full range of intended learning outcomes. Similarly, the choice of assessment methods in section 3 should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of related learning outcomes. Overall, assessment should cover the full range of learning outcomes.

5 - Where the programme contains validated **exit awards** (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGDip), learning outcomes must be clearly specified for each award.

6 - For programmes with distinctive study **routes or pathways** the specific rationale and learning outcomes for each route must be provided.

7 – Validated programmes delivered in **languages other than English** must have programme specifications both in English and the language of delivery.