

MSC CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Institute of Science and Environment

Academic Level:	7	Credits:	180
UCAS Code:	Not applicable		
Awarding Body:	University of Cumbria		
Delivery Site:	Ambleside		
Programme Length:	Standard Length 1 year Maximum Registration 5 years		
Mode of Delivery:	Face-to-Face		
Pattern of Delivery:	Full time		
	Total weeks of study:	36 weeks	
	Delivery pattern:	3 x 12-week semesters	
	Standard semester dates:	Yes	
Programme Webpage:	https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate/msc-conservation-management/		

Entry Criteria

The University's standard criteria for admissions apply. Please refer to the [Applicant Information](#) pages of the University website for more information. For [APL](#), please refer to the University website. Detailed criteria for admission to this programme can be found on the programme webpage (currently being developed).

PROGRAMME AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Programme Aims

By the end of this programme learners will be able to:

1. Develop the specialist knowledge and skills required for a successful career in conservation science.
2. Attain and apply appropriate higher transferable skills within conservation and research project management.
3. Conduct multidisciplinary reviews based on in-depth critical evaluation of appropriate evidence and case studies.
4. Conduct robust critical thinking to apply an adaptive mindset in planning, implementing and management of conservation projects.
5. Demonstrate skills to lead on conservation projects.
6. Disseminate complex information to a variety of audiences using a broad range of formats and media types.

Programme Outcomes – Knowledge and Understanding

The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following:

After 60 credits of study (PGCert) you will be able to demonstrate:

- K1.** Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of current conservation issues resulting from a wide range of causes.
- K2.** In-depth knowledge and understanding of natural and social science research methods to allow critical analysis of current environmental / conservation issues and priorities across spatial scales (local, regional, national and international).
- K3.** Understanding of how to conduct critical assessments on the human dimensions of conservation and how to develop evidence-based actions to address them.

After 120 credits of study (PGDip) you will be able to demonstrate:

- K4.** The original and novel application of data sets to investigate unique environmental / conservation scenarios and to develop and apply evidence-based solutions.
- K5.** Ability to apply knowledge and understanding in project management for effective implementation and best practices in natural resource management.
- K6.** Knowledge and understanding to deal with complex issues, both systematically and creatively, to identify evidence-based outcomes and to develop and deliver effective dissemination activities that inform a wide range of audiences, from specialists to the general public.

After 180 credits of study (MSc) you will be able to demonstrate:

- K7.** Knowledge and understanding of the importance of working effectively within a project team setting and developing and managing partnerships.
- K8.** Critical evaluation of and reflection of relevant research literature to make informed management decisions.

K9. The ability to transfer evidence-based findings into practice and evaluate effectiveness in different contexts.

Programme Outcomes – Skills and other Attributes

The programme provides opportunities for you to develop and demonstrate the following:

After 60 credits of study (PGCert) you will be able to demonstrate:

- S1.** Expertise in research, technical communication and professional skills.
- S2.** Robust data analysis skills to develop actions appropriate for addressing diverse conservation issues.
- S3.** Professional written and verbal communication skills that allow effective and appropriate dissemination of information across a range of audiences.

After 120 credits of study (PGDip) you will be able to demonstrate:

- S4.** Ability to effectively manage complex conservation projects.
- S5.** Effective skills in seeking external funding.
- S6.** Initiative, enthusiasm and adaptability in investigating and problem-solving issues.

After 180 credits of study (MSc) you will be able to demonstrate:

- S7.** Ability to present complex scientific information in a variety of forms and to discuss, debate and evaluate a range of environmental / conservation management strategies.
- S8.** Successful project management and development / maintenance of partner relations.

PROGRAMME FEATURES

Programme Overview

Earth is currently experiencing many unsustainable, anthropogenic demands that are causing extreme pressures on global processes and resources, which is negatively impacting our ecosystems and biodiversity. IUCN President, Razan Al Mubarak (2023), when announcing that the next IUCN World Conservation Congress, in 2025, will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates, stated the need to “...address the triple planetary crises of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change threatening lives and livelihoods around the world.”

In 2022, UNEP/IUCN’s ‘World Database on Protected Areas’ (WDPA) mapping interface (ProtectedPlanet.net) stated that just 15.7% of the terrestrial world was under protected area (PA) status, while just 7.9% of the marine environment was protected. Furthermore, in 2022, IUCN’s Red List ([IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#)), a barometer of life, stated that of the more than 142,500 species on The IUCN Red List over 40,000 were threatened with extinction. Biodiversity is declining faster than at any time in human history. Since 1970, there has been on average almost a 70% decline in the populations of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians (ZSL, 2021).

The UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries, globally in the bottom 10% and last in the G7. It has about half its biodiversity left, far below the global average of 75%, with its large, charismatic species extirpated centuries ago (BBC, 2021).

Acting globally and nationally, governments around the world are starting to implement increased efforts towards arresting and reversing these trends. For example, the UK government introduced the 25 yr Environmental plan, been led in its actions by commissioned reports (e.g., Lawton, 2010, and Dasgupta, 2021) resulting in the introduction of policies and support that promote environmental actions such as, BNG, LNRS, etc.

Legally binding targets to protect our environment were set out under the Environment Act (2021) and greatly enhanced under the ‘Environmental Improvement Plan’ (Jan 2023), which set clear targets for the UK:

- Halt the decline in species populations by 2030, and then increase populations by at least 10% to exceed current levels by 2042
- Restore precious water bodies to their natural state by cracking down on harmful pollution from sewers and abandoned mines and improving water usage in households
- Deliver our net zero ambitions and boost nature recovery by increasing tree and woodland cover to 16.5% of total land area in England by 2050
- Halve the waste per person that is sent to residual treatment by 2042
- Cut exposure to the most harmful air pollutant to human health
- Restore 70% of designated features in our Marine Protected Areas to a favourable condition by 2042, with the rest in a recovering condition.

In responding to the legislation, policies and targets, a greater number and range of projects are being implemented across the UK and internationally. Therefore, implementation actions place a much greater need for suitably qualified staff who can lead and manage projects, conduct research on the impacts of projects and report these appropriately, etc. Due to the ever-increasing depth of

detail required for such practices, previous experiential learning whilst on the job does not cover the details required nor keep the individual up to date with the latest practices and systems. Entering the Anthropocene means an even greater demand for individuals to possess greater knowledge and understanding on current biological priorities whilst being able to effectively implement and manage conservation actions to best effect. This Master's programme provides you with the essential competencies required by a modern-day conservation leader/manager, and the knowledge, skills and competencies to allow you to take up such posts and perform at the highest level.

Learning and Teaching

Teaching

The programme will be delivered from the Institute of Science and Environment (IoSE) from its Ambleside campus, the only University campus in England situated in a National Park and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which has been recognised as globally significant through its UNESCO world heritage site status. The geographical location supports the delivery of environmentally based programmes.

Over a number of years, researchers in the Institute have developed an international research portfolio. These research activities include outdoor experiential learning, climate change impacts, biodiversity monitoring, wildlife conservation, community resilience, land management, and ecosystem evaluation. This provides the research guided perspective and contemporary academic knowledge to support your studies while maintaining a strong emphasis on experiential teaching and applied research.

The University prides itself on teaching excellence which 'brings together theory and practice in a powerful combination to provide exceptional learning that is both inspirational for you and relevant to the workplace'. A variety of teaching and learning methods are employed throughout the programme to ensure you acquire and develop appropriate concepts, knowledge, professional and personal skills. These include traditional methods such as lectures and seminars, but we also aim to embed experiential learning experiences as a foundation of learning and development through field-based case studies and experimental field work at regionally prominent forestry research projects. The academic team utilise live projects and case studies to demonstrate process, methodologies, analysis of results and formulation of conclusions and argument. You are then provided with opportunities to undertake research-based experiential learning to test and develop your own skills and understanding followed by opportunities for self-reflection to identify where further development of knowledge, practice or skill acquisition is necessary for self-improvement.

The emergence of new methods of course delivery has increased the complexity of determining a course's optimal delivery mode. As a team, we will seek to undertake systematic approaches, such as the Course Delivery Decision Model (CDDM), that helps make pedagogically sound decisions regarding the delivery modes that best target your learning outcomes. For example, 'assessment for learning' is a commonly used phrase describing the theory that assessments can be utilised within service to facilitate learning as opposed to just measuring it. The following

'features' support instructional utility and will be included in this programme: 1/ coherence with the enacted curriculum, 2/ items and tasks that support deeper thinking, 3/ results at the appropriate grain size to support useful feedback; and 4/ results that inform instruction. Such actions will support and facilitate your learning and development, thus, assisting your personal and academic progression.

Learning and Teaching Methods include:

- Lectures
- Seminars, workshops, presentation and discussion
- Individual and group tutorials
- Use of case studies
- Project work, both individual and in groups
- Fieldwork and visits
- Training and practice in the use of IT and software packages
- Problem based learning
- Reading and interpreting research publications and professional reports

The location of our Ambleside campus, within the Lake District National Park, allows for the learning and teaching environment to be extended beyond the lecture theatre whenever possible. Students who also wish to engage in independent study projects outside of the campus grounds are supported. Off-campus access to IT resources and specialist software packages is also provided.

Overview of the methods of learning and teaching used on the programme:

At Level 7 you typically have around 6 contact hours per week, typically consisting of:

- 2 hours of lectures
- 2 hours of seminars
- 2 hours of lab work, field work, etc.
- Additional personal tutor meetings may be requested, and module tutors can also be approached for individual module support.

Independent Learning

When not attending scheduled learning activities you will be expected to continue learning independently through self-study. Whilst there will be weekly variations in the number of hours that you dedicate towards self-learning, the average is estimated at 16 hrs per week.

Lectures

The core theory and underpinning knowledge, needed for your studies, will be delivered via lectures within modules. Whilst most lectures will be delivered within classrooms / lecture theatres, some will be delivered in the field.

Practical sessions

These sessions provide the hands-on practical skills required of a conservation scientist and the opportunity to engage with experiential learning to both broaden and deepen your understanding of relevant practices required to work within the sector.

Tutorials

Tutorials provide an opportunity for you to consolidate your knowledge and learning within a friendly environment that allows you to explore thinking. Tutorials can be conducted as either a group or one to one session and are planned and structured within modules to help embed your understanding of the content.

Seminars

Opportunities for wider open discussion and debate are provided via seminars that allow exploration of complex topics and to voice one's own experiences or different perspectives and reflection on topics.

Problem-based learning

Allows directed, experiential learning, either within teams or individually, to engage with content that often reflects the application of either knowledge or practice within 'real-world' contexts.

Directed/independent study

Can vary between modules as the types of involvement to be engaged with, ranging from reading published literature that is highlighted to engaging with digital resources on Blackboard (our virtual learning environment, VLE). It is important that every effort is made to engage with all the additional resources and materials made available to you within modules.

Research informed teaching

Research informed teaching underpins all the delivery types and content/materials presented within modules. Integrating recent research findings from forestry and conservation projects into the curriculum can provide you with up-to-date knowledge and real-world context. For example, using case studies on sustainable forest management practices or conservation strategies from recent publications allows you to critically analyse the methodologies, results, and implications of current research. This approach not only deepens your understanding of contemporary issues but also demonstrates the direct application of research to practical decision-making in the field.

Field-based modules can incorporate research techniques and methodologies commonly used in ongoing studies, such as biodiversity assessments, ecological monitoring, or the use of GIS in habitat mapping. For instance, you might participate in habitat inventory exercises using the latest remote sensing technologies, replicating the methods used in contemporary research. This hands-on experience with cutting-edge research tools and techniques equips you with relevant skills and fosters an appreciation for the role of research in informing sustainable management and conservation practices.

Involving active researchers and practitioners as guest lecturers or through collaborative projects can provide you with insights into the latest advancements in forestry and conservation science. For example, you could engage in discussions with researchers working on topics such as climate change impacts on forest ecosystems or the effectiveness of conservation interventions in protecting endangered species. These interactions expose you to ongoing research challenges,

encourage critical thinking, and inspire you to consider how you might contribute to the field through your own research initiatives or professional practice.

Field Trips

During Week 9, a 3-day residential, running concurrently with that in MSc Forest Science will provide practical experience of ecosystem process assessment. This residential will draw on the natural resources of the regional landscape, located in the surrounds of the Lake District.

There is also a one-week international field trip integrated into the programme. This trip will allow you the opportunity to develop and manage a small conservation project in an international setting, thus giving you exposure to real-world conservation skills in a different environmental, and socio-cultural context. This fulfils two integral educational objectives. It provides you with hands-on experience in conservation management within the diverse ecosystems of the UK, including habitats distinct from those typically studied in Cumbria, offering practical opportunities to apply and deepen theoretical understanding of ecological processes, management strategies, and drivers at work. It enhances the programme's educational capacity by incorporating climate-smart conservation tools and strategies, while addressing the challenges of habitat and biodiversity conservation in the face of climate change, directly connecting policy and practice in real-world scenarios.

Teaching Staff

The teaching team for this programme include academic and professional staff members from the Institute of Science & Environment, Centre for National Parks and Protected Areas, an interdisciplinary research centre addressing national to global topics around Protected Area management, resource management and conservation. The programme is delivered by a research-active academic team with contributions from a diverse and complementary set of invited, guest lecturers. The delivery team's research interests' range across ecology, woodland ecology, human dimensions of conservation, project and natural resource management, conservation governance, habitat restoration and species conservation. Programme delivery is enhanced by the team drawing upon many years working within the conservation sector, internationally, within the UK and across Europe, to offer experiences that illustrate firsthand case studies, issues and problems encountered within the management of conservation and provide insights on how they may be solved.

You will be supported in adapting to life on the Ambleside campus through a vibrant induction week programme, campus support staff, dedicated one to ones with your nominated personal tutor and a wide range of university student support services.

We work very closely with a range of local, national, and international conservation organisations to ensure that this programme provides the knowledge and skills required for a successful career within the conservation sector. Examples of organisations we work with include the UN, CITES, IUCN, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, Lake District National Parks Authority and many more. We have excellent contacts with other conservation practitioners and scientists to ensure that the programme provides you with the knowledge and skills relevant to the sector. Graduates from UoC conservation programmes have gone on to secure jobs with a broad suite of organisations, such as the RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, Rivers Trusts, zoos and wildlife parks, London Zoological Society, Red

Squirrels Northern England, National Trust, sustainable farming and aquaculture and various of environmental and ecological consultancy firms.

Student Feedback and Module Evaluation

Your feedback will be sought via the University of Cumbria's centralised module evaluation systems. This protocol has been implemented across the university's programme since 2024-25 and enables lecturers to aggregate your feedback, including access to extensive quantitative metrics on engagement, gathered using an automated and consistent system. Closing the feedback loop through reflexive appraisal of your module evaluations, addressed by the Module Leader identifying actions and reporting these back to the student body in a timely manner, ensures that you are aware that your input is valued and acted upon. This system helps to continuously raise the standard of teaching in modules and assure that they are aligned with your learning.

Assessment

Our assessment strategy aligns with the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and the Curriculum Design Framework. The overarching consideration is to provide assessments, which develop your skills and knowledge while equipping you for postgraduate employment. Assessments will therefore often mirror the type of work that you will encounter in your future careers and may include:

- Field projects
- Computer-based assessments
- Problem solving activities
- Critical analysis of case studies
- Oral, audio-visual and poster presentations
- Dissertation
- Peer and self-assessment
- Group work
- Online blogs
- Mock grant proposal

Formative assessment tasks provide opportunity for collaborative working enabling you to assess, develop and critically evaluate practical skills and methodologies supporting work required throughout summative assessment. Throughout the programme, you are expected and encouraged to be active in your learning and to apply current thinking to practice.

Feedback

A variety of informal and formal feedback mechanisms are included within the learning design to support your progression and professional development. Informal feedback may be delivered on an individual or group basis, through synchronous or recorded asynchronous mechanisms, and may include, for example, knowledge checks, verbal, audio, written comments or summaries, peer-review and worked examples. In line with UoC policy, formal feedback on summative assessments will be provided within 20 working days of submission. It will be based on grading criteria linked to

the module learning outcomes and aligned to the UoC grade descriptors. Taking a consistent approach across the programme, the feedback will demonstrate how the grade was derived in relation to performance against the grading criteria and identify ways for you to improve in future.

Graduate Prospects

The MSc in Conservation Management at the University of Cumbria is designed to equip you with the skills, knowledge, and practical experience needed to address contemporary conservation challenges. Graduates of this programme are highly sought-after in various fields due to their expertise in applied conservation, ecological research, and management skills, making them well-suited for roles in conservation, academia, government, NGOs, and private sectors.

Current Career Prospects

Conservation Organizations and NGOs:

You can find roles in leading conservation organizations such as WWF, RSPB, and The Wildlife Trusts. Common roles include Conservation Officer, Ecologist, Project Manager, and Biodiversity Specialist. Typical responsibilities may involve species monitoring, habitat management, community engagement, and implementing conservation strategies.

Government and Public Sector Roles:

Positions in government bodies such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, and local councils focus on policy development, environmental management, and regulatory enforcement. Typical job titles include Environmental Officer, Conservation Planner, and Protected Areas Manager.

Ecological Consultancy:

You can work with environmental consultancies, providing expertise in ecological surveys, impact assessments, and habitat restoration projects. These roles often involve fieldwork, data analysis, and producing environmental reports for development projects.

Research and Academia:

Opportunities exist in academic institutions or research organizations as research assistants, conservation scientists, or PhD candidates. You can contribute to scientific studies, publish research findings, and influence conservation policy and practice.

Private Sector Roles:

Companies in sectors like renewable energy, forestry, agriculture, and land management increasingly seek conservation professionals to ensure sustainability and compliance with environmental standards. Job roles include Environmental Consultant, Sustainability Manager, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Specialist.

Future Career Prospects

Advancement to Leadership Roles:

With experience, you can move into senior management positions such as Conservation Director, Program Manager, or Policy Advisor. Leadership roles often involve strategic planning, fundraising, and leading large conservation programs.

Specialization and Niche Roles:

As the field of conservation evolves, there is a growing need for specialists in areas like climate change adaptation, rewilding, and biodiversity offsetting. You may develop niche expertise in fields such as marine conservation, invasive species management, or conservation technology.

International Conservation Work:

Opportunities to work with international NGOs, UN bodies, or overseas conservation projects are likely to grow, particularly in biodiversity hotspots and developing countries. Roles include International Conservation Specialist, Field Project Coordinator, and Capacity Building Advisor.

Emerging Fields: Technology and Data Analytics:

The integration of technology in conservation (e.g., drones, GIS, remote sensing) creates opportunities for you, with skills in data analysis, conservation technology, and digital mapping. New roles such as Conservation Data Analyst and GIS Specialist are expected to be in demand.

Policy and Advocacy:

You can influence conservation policy by working with think tanks, advocacy groups, and international bodies to shape environmental legislation and global conservation efforts. Roles in policy development, lobbying, and environmental law are becoming increasingly prominent.

Academic Prospects**PhD and Research Opportunities:**

You can pursue further academic qualifications such as a PhD, often focusing on specialized research areas within conservation science. Universities, research institutes, and conservation organizations frequently offer funding for applied research projects.

Academic Careers:

There are opportunities to teach and mentor the next generation of conservationists as lecturers, researchers, or professors. Involvement in academic research allows for continued contributions to scientific literature and participation in global conservation discussions.

Collaborative Research Projects:

Partnerships between universities, conservation NGOs, and government bodies provide avenues for collaborative research, allowing you to work on impactful, large-scale conservation initiatives.

MODULES

Year 1			
Code	Title	Credits	Status
CONM7001	Priorities in Conservation	20	Compulsory
CONM7002	Human Dimensions in Conservation	20	Compulsory
CONM7003	Research Skills	20	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 60 credits of study would receive a PGCert in Conservation			
CONM7004	Conservation Governance and Legal Tools	20	Compulsory
FSCI7005	Landscape Ecology and Forests	20	Optional
CONM7005	Natural Resource Management	20	Optional
CONM7006	Conservation Management in Practice	20	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 120 credits of study would receive a PGDip in Conservation Management			
CONM7007	Dissertation	60	Compulsory
Students exiting at this point with 180 credits of study would receive a MSc in Conservation Management			

Key to Module Statuses	
Compulsory modules	Must be taken although it may be possible to compensate as a marginal fail (within the limits set out in the Academic Regulations and provided that all core or pass/fail elements of module assessment have been passed).
Optional modules	Are a set of modules from which you will be required to choose a set number to study. Once chosen, it may be possible to compensate as a marginal fail (within the limits set out in the Academic Regulations and provided that all core or pass/fail elements of module assessment have been passed).
Optional modules may be subject to availability and viability. If we have insufficient numbers of students interested in an optional module in any given academic year, this may not be offered. If an optional module will not be running, we will advise you as soon as possible and help you choose an alternative module. Optional modules are normally selected 3 - 5 months in advance.	

Timetables

Timetables are normally available week commencing 1st September. Please note that while we make every effort to ensure timetables are as student friendly as possible, scheduled learning can take place on any day of the week.

Our Timetabling team work hard to ensure that timetables are available to students as far in advance as possible, however there may be occasional exceptions such as in the case of teaching which falls outside of the usual academic calendar. The UoC academic calendar runs from July to July, so timetabling information for programmes which include teaching sessions in August may not be published until closer to the August delivery.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Student Support

The [Student Enquiry Point](#) is a simple way to contact Student Services. Using the Student Enquiry Point tile on the Student Hub you can submit an enquiry to any of the Student Services teams, which includes:

- [Careers and Employability](#)
- [Chaplaincy](#) for faith and spiritual wellbeing
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Digital Skills](#)
- [Disability and Specific Learning Difficulty \(SpLD\)](#)
- [International Student Support](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Money Matters](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)
- [Skills@Cumbria](#)
- [Sports and Fitness Facilities](#)
- [University Student Accommodation](#)

As a student at the University of Cumbria you automatically become a member of the Students' Union. The Students' Union represents the views and interests of students within the University.

The Students' Union is led by a group of Student Representatives who are elected by students in annual elections. They also support approximately 400 Student Academic Reps within each cohort across the entire University. The Students' Union represent the views of their cohort and work with academic staff to continuously develop and improve the experience for all University of Cumbria students. You can find out more about who represents you at www.ucsu.me.

You can email at any time on studentvoice@cumbria.ac.uk.

Course Costs

Tuition Fees

Course fees can be found here: <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/student-finance/postgraduate/>

The following course-related costs are included in the fees:

- Access to desktop computers on campus and laptops available in the Barn for you to sign out and use free of charge.
- You can install key software and apps free of charge for use on your own devices for the duration of the programme.
- The costs of most UK based field trips and visits are included in the fees.

Additional Costs

The following course-related costs are not included in the fees:

Stationery and IT

Stationery for your own personal use (pens, papers and folders, etc.). Whilst you choose how much you need, expect to pay around £40-£50 per year for these.

Field notebook (£10 - 15).

Laboratory notebook (£10 - 15).

Clothing and Equipment

Essential:

Waterproof jacket and trousers (£150 - 200).

Walking boots (£50 - 150).

Warm hat and gloves (£30).

Wellington boots (£20 - 100+).

Rucksack (ideally with waterproof cover) for day use (£30 - 50).

Other outdoor clothing e.g. thermals, fleeces, socks, walking trousers, etc. (prices vary).

Recommended:

Thermos, water bottle and lunchbox for field trips (prices vary).

Binoculars (prices vary).

Field Trips

The programme includes a number of field trips in the UK. Many of these are covered in your course fees, but others may incur costs which will vary depending on the activity, typically £20 - 60.

The cost of the one-week field trip would typically be around £1000-1500 which includes flights, transport, bed and breakfast accommodation, in-country travel, park entrance fees, guide fees and cost of excursions. You will also need to budget around £20 per day for other meals. Vaccinations and anti-malaria treatment may be required, these typically cost £80 - 120 and you may want other spending money to use when on the trip. Attendance on the field trip is mandatory, but a week-long local (UK) field trip will be offered for those students who cannot participate in an international trip due to health or financial reasons.

Books

The University library holds copies of all core texts (including many eBooks, accessible online). But you may wish to purchase your own copies of textbooks or field guides for use on field trips and in your own time. The cost of these varies greatly depending on edition and condition.

Exceptions to the Academic Regulations

This programme operates in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and Academic Procedures and Processes.

External and Internal Benchmarks

The Qualifications Framework's level descriptor for the master's degree includes generic information that all holders of the master's qualification can do, which includes the following:

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline.
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues - both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations.
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

An MSc is considered an example of specialised or advanced study, which aim to prepare students for the next stage in their careers, whether that is further academic or professional study, or entering or progressing within employment of different kinds. Thus, [QAA's 'Characteristics Statement' for master degrees](#) are as follows:

- they are usually predominantly composed of structured learning opportunities (are 'taught'). Frequently, at least a third of the course is devoted to a research project, leading to a dissertation/comparable research output or the production of other output such as an artefact, business plan, performance or musical composition.
- they include research methods training, which may be provided in a range of different ways (for example, through content modules).

- related awards, such as postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma, will often be offered as stages in the progression to a specialised/advanced study master's degree to facilitate continuing professional development at different stages of a professional career.

Equally, this MSc can qualify, under QAA criteria, as a 'Professional' master's degree, which characteristic statements are:

- learning tends to be structured, and course structure may be developed in collaboration with the relevant 'professional, statutory and regulatory bodies' (PSRB) or employer, and may include practical elements, such as fieldwork, placements or other opportunities for work-based learning, as well as a project undertaken through independent study.
- they include research methods training, which may be provided in a range of different ways (for example, through content modules).
- in the case of integrated master's degrees that fall within this type, master's level study is integrated with study at honours degree level within a single course. The second characteristic above applies to the master's level part of the overall award.
- they may be a prerequisite for registration or entry to a profession in accordance with the requirements of the PSRB that recognises or accredits the award.
- related awards, such as postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma, are often offered as stages in the progression to a professional/practice master's award to facilitate continuing professional development at different stages of a professional career.

Alternatively, the Office for Students' (OfS) has its own 'Sector-recognised standards', which state that students at L7 will demonstrate:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- conceptual understanding that enables the student: a) to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; b) to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations.
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Regarding MSc level sector statements, the OfS states (pg.9): “Much of the study undertaken for masters' degrees is at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Successful students show originality in the application of knowledge, and they understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They are able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they show originality in tackling and solving problems. They have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments”.

[QAA's 'Subject Benchmark Statements' for the 'Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies'](#) (ES3) sector are set within the wider context of the ongoing climate emergency and biodiversity crisis, as well as other threats to the natural environment. Actions are required at every level, from global to national political commitment to practical measures at a local level. Graduates in ES3 subjects will be required to ensure actions and decisions are based on sound science, and that they take into account equity, equality, diversity and inclusivity to deliver long-term, sustainable solutions. ES3 is characterised by the following common skills and knowledge:

- a focus on understanding physical, chemical and biological Earth systems in order to learn from the past, understand the present and influence the future.
- an appreciation of societal contribution and context.
- an emphasis on practical investigation.
- multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches.
- the ability to work across a range of spatial and temporal scales.
- the development of skills in observation and analysis to support decision-making in the light of uncertainty.
- the ability to recognise and understand complex relationships through systems thinking.
- the development of professional skills and competencies that enhance employability.
- an understanding of the contribution the subject knowledge, skills and behaviours can make towards a sustainable future.

Furthermore, ES3 communities have a duty to confront and encourage the dismantling of all barriers to engagement and participation in our disciplines. particularly valuing different cultural perspectives, ways of knowing and lived experience. The ES3 subjects are a route to justice through delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and diverse perspectives are essential to confronting global grand challenges. An understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is essential to the vision of ES3 subject areas. In the context of Environmental Sciences, competence with emerging good practices, survey and data analysis techniques, knowledge of current legislation and policy, and the ability to identify the impacts on the environment from activities will be expected.

Subject Benchmark Statements set out the minimum threshold standards that an ES3 undergraduate degree student will have after they are awarded an honours degree; these are listed under the category headings 1) Intellectual skills (knowledge and understanding), 2) Practical skills, 3) Communication skills, 4) Personal and professional skills (located on pages 16 & 17 of QAA's ES3 benchmark statements report). Additionally, at the MSc level it is expected that students will build upon the competencies cited for ES3 undergraduate studies plus focus in greater depth on a specific aspect of the subject area, achieving knowledge and skills to enhance their employability.

Disclaimer

This programme has been approved (validated) by the University of Cumbria as suitable for a range of delivery modes, delivery patterns, and delivery sites. This level of potential flexibility does not reflect a commitment on behalf of the University to offer the programme by all modes/patterns and at all locations in every academic cycle. The details of the programme offered for a particular intake year will be as detailed on the programme webpage:

<https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate/msc-conservation-management/>