Programme Specification: Post Graduate Taught

For Academic Year 2026/27

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	MSc Biodiversity and Conservation (Keele Pathway) MSc Biodiversity and Conservation (Keele & VMU Lithuania Pathway)
Award type	Taught Masters
Mode of study	Full-time Part-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 7
Normal length of the programme	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time NB: September (semester 1) or January (semester 2) start dates
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	n/a
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS)
Tuition Fees	**UK students:** Full-time fee for 2026/27 is £11,700 Part-time fee for 2026/27 is £6,400* **International students:** Full-time fee for 2026/27 is £18,200 ***NB:*** *a separate fee arrangement applies to the VMU pathway as follows:* **UK students:** £7,600 payable to Keele University and €5,266 payable to Vytautas Magnus University **International students:** £11,800 payable to Keele University and €5,266 payable to Vytautas Magnus University

How this information might change: *Please read the important information at http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.*

** We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/*

2. Overview of the Programme

This programme will give you a comprehensive understanding of biodiversity, ecology and conservation. You will explore biodiversity, ecology, conservation biology, conservation practice, environmental management and

interdisciplinarity to develop solutions in both practical application and case study analysis for the key ecological and conservation issues facing our planet. Graduates will also be competent in research design and methods, interdisciplinary approaches, and a broad range of field skills. Ecology and conservation field and lab skills are taught comprehensively across the programme, including extensive use of our green campus. Fieldwork and residential field courses are an integral part of the programme throughout, as is employability.

3. Aims of the programme

The broad aims of the programme are to enable you to:

- Undertake a comprehensive programme of study of biodiversity, ecology and conservation in their scientific and societal context
- Develop the ability to apply conceptually underpinned conservation practice, environmental management, and interdisciplinarity
- Engage in evidence-based debates on biodiversity, ecology and conservation issues
- Develop career enhancing proficiencies in biodiversity, ecology and conservation field skills, approaches, methods and research design

4. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to:

- KU1 (Conservation biology). Apply conceptual understanding of conservation biology to case studies and research design.
- KU2 (Conservation practice). Critically evaluate case studies of conservation practice in relation to theory and contributing scientific and social science disciplines.
- KU3 (Ecology). Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ecological principles and their relation to fieldwork, research and assessment approaches.
- KU4 (Environmental management). Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of environmental management principles and approaches in a range of contexts.
- KU5 (Interdisciplinary practice). Explain the principles of interdisciplinary practice and integrate different contributing disciplines including biology, geography and social sciences to address ecological and conservation issues.
- KU6 (Workplace competencies). Demonstrate employability and professional competence in the ecology and conservation sector.
- KU7 (Independent research practice). Demonstrate advanced knowledge of principles of research design as relevant to both professional and academic practice in ecology and conservation.
- KU8 (Key issues). Demonstrate critical awareness and detailed knowledge of current key issues for professional practice in ecology and conservation.
- KU9 (Approaches and methods). Demonstrate an advanced level of understanding of core ecological and conservation approaches and how they are applied in professional, practical and research contexts.

Subject specific skills

Successful students will be able to:

- SS1 (Field and laboratory skills). Employ a broad range of fieldwork skills and laboratory skills including ecological techniques, species identification and habitat classification methods, mapping, planning, risk assessment, and health and safety.
- SS2 (Data handling, analysis and statistics). Use data handling, data analysis and statistics skills in a broad range of ecological and conservation applications.
- SS3 (Information Technology and GIS). Apply Information Technology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) skills in a range of ecological and conservation contexts.
- SS4 (Critical thinking and information literacy). Demonstrate the ability to theorise ecology and conservation practice and relate applied work to conceptual frameworks.
- SS5 (Team working and project management). Demonstrate team working and project management skills including group work planning and coordination of team inputs.
- SS6 (Workplace conservation practice). Apply ecological and conservation knowledge and understanding in

a workplace context.
- SS7 (Advanced research design). Apply advanced research design skills as relevant to both professional and academic practice.
- SS8 (Advanced data, team and project skills). Demonstrate professional level competence in Information Technology, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data handling, critical thinking, team working and project management.

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will be able to:

- TS1 (Employability and professional development). Take an adaptable, reflective, self-managed and motivated approach to study and work and to academic and professional development, demonstrating integrity, responsibility, independence, and recognition of professional codes of conduct and ethical considerations.
- TS2 (Theoretically underpinned and evidence-based practice). Make reasoned decisions and judgements addressing familiar and unfamiliar problems with reference to concepts and principles, synthesising a wide range of evidence types and using appropriate citation.
- TS3 (Data collection and analysis). Collect, process, interpret, summarise and present data of various types including from field and laboratory studies, the internet and prior research with appropriate planning using qualitative and quantitative techniques, computer software, statistical programmes and spreadsheets.
- TS4 (Teamwork). Work effectively as part of a team, recognising and respecting the viewpoints of others, to achieve an objective and evaluate the roles and development of team members including themselves.
- TS5 (Communication). Communicate effectively with a variety of audiences by written, spoken and graphical means.

Keele Graduate attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social, environmental and ethical responsibility.** You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

5. How is the programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. They include the following:

- **Lectures** - in which the lecturer typically narrates an overview of intended learning outcomes, core concepts, literature and case studies to provide a framework for follow on reading, independent study and completion of assignments.
- **Tutorials, seminars and workshops** - in which typically intended learning outcomes, core concepts, literature and case studies can be discussed in depth, with students expected to play a full part in, and occasionally to lead, these discussions.
- **Problem-solving classes** - in which students typically work collaboratively to apply knowledge and understanding to real-world scenarios and learn new concepts, with discussion and feedback from tutors scaffolding learning.
- **Practical and laboratory classes** - in which students typically learn and apply a range of practical techniques, usually to generate data that is then analysed and reported in an appropriate format that engages with subject knowledge and concepts.
- **Field courses** - in which students work in an appropriate location with staff to learn fieldwork and practical skills through application and to develop their knowledge and understanding of core concepts as applied to real-world scenarios; these may be on or off campus and may include overnight stays for multiple consecutive days of fieldwork
- **Group presentations and linked discussion** - in which students typically work collaboratively in small groups on the analysis of an issue, project or assignment and communicate their findings to the wider class and staff, with discussion and questioning.
- **Online learning** - in which the Keele Learning Environment (KLE) and other platforms typically provide students with access to a wide range of resources and tools, and a platform for online discussions, assignment submission, feedback, and announcements.

A residential field course expected to be of 5 or 6 consecutive days takes place in the Spring vacation for LSC-

40139 Practical Field Skills. This is planned as a residential field course in the UK - with exploration of suitable options when personal circumstances make overnight stays impractical for the student. Shorter field trips within semester teaching weeks will be an integral part of both LSC-40143 Biodiversity Skills and LSC-40139 Practical Field Skills. These may be short sessions on campus of 2 or 3 hours or half- or full-day field trips on or off campus.

Apart from these formal activities, students are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any special learning needs they may have, with their Personal Tutors or module lecturers on a one-to-one basis.

6. Teaching Staff

Biodiversity and Conservation is an interdisciplinary subject and so staff delivering teaching and learning activities for the programme come from a range of different Faculties and Schools within the University. The programme is led by the School of Life Sciences, and may have additional teaching by staff from other areas of the University when appropriate. The teaching and research profiles of staff delivering and supporting the programme can be found on the different School websites.

There is a strong emphasis on enhancing the student learning experience within the School, which has developed a national reputation for its learning and teaching activities. The environment degree programmes at Keele have received several Keele Teaching Innovation Awards and course developments have received external funding and recognition from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences subject centre, the HEA Education for Sustainable Development project and the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Several University and national awards for Excellence in Learning and Teaching have been awarded to staff within the teaching team. Staff actively participate in teaching and learning activities, many staff hold a Postgraduate Certificate qualification in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (the professional body for teaching and learning in higher education), and several staff members are actively involved with pedagogic research that seeks to identify ways in which the student learning experience within environment programmes can be enhanced.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

7. What is the structure of the programme?

There are two pathways for the MSc Biodiversity and Conservation programme: i) MSc Biodiversity and Conservation (Keele Pathway), ii) MSc Biodiversity and Conservation (Keele & VMU Lithuania Pathway). The first option is typically completed in one year, based entirely at Keele University. The second option includes an additional two semesters at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) in Kaunas, Lithuania, where additional modules and the dissertation (including field work) is completed. The Lithuania pathway is available only for a full-time, September start and will enable students to obtain a dual award MSc, from both Keele University and VMU.

For both pathways, there are two types of module delivered as part of your programme at Keele. They are:

- Compulsory modules - a module that you are required to study on this programme
- Optional modules - these allow you some limited choice of what to study from a list of modules

For the Keele & VMU Pathway, there are additional modules to choose from at Vytautas Magnus University, taught in English.

VMU will provide students considering VMU Lithuania pathway with information on potential project areas, modules, supervision and regulations via an online information workshop and programme documentation. The student will then enrol at VMU with advanced standing for another two semesters of study.

Year	Compulsory	Optional	
		Min	Max
Level 7	90	90	90

Module Lists

Level 7

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Key topics in Conservation Ecology	ESC-40121	15	Semester 1
Biodiversity Skills	LSC-40143	15	Semester 1
Research Design	ESC-40093	15	Semester 2
Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing	ESC-40109	15	Semester 2
Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology	ESC-40123	15	Semester 2
Practical Field Skills	LSC-40139	15	Semester 2
Key topics in Conservation Ecology	ESC-40121	0	Year 2
Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology	ESC-40123	0	Year 2
Biodiversity Skills	LSC-40143	0	Year 2

Optional modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Climate and Sustainable Development	GEG-40036	15	Semester 1
Collaborative Project	ESC-40101	15	Semester 1-2
Climate Change Science	ESC-40060	15	Semester 2
Dissertation	ESC-40089	60	Semester 2-3
Collaborative Project	ESC-40101	15	Semester 2-3
Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway	ESC-40115	60	Year 1
Practical Field Skills	LSC-40139	0	Year 2

Level 7 Module Rules

International students will have a diagnostic language assessment by the Language Centre. Where a student is evaluated by the Language Centre as needing Academic English support via module ENL-40005 (Academic English for Postgraduate Science Students; 15 credits), the student will need to take ENL-40005 as an additional module (so 195 credits are taken overall).

Two of three optional 15-credit modules (ESC-40060, GEG-40036, ESC-40101) are taken either in Semester 1 or Semester 2.

Depending on the pathway, one of Dissertation (ESC-40089) or Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway (ESC-40115) must be taken.

Course structures

Full-time September Start

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">Pathway</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>MSc Biodiversity and Conservation (Keele)</td><td>MSc Biodiversity and Conservation (Keele & VMU Lithuania)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 1</td><td>S1</td><td colspan="2">Biodiversity Skills LSC-40143 (15 credits)
Key Topics in Conservation Ecology ESC-40121 (15 credits)
Optional modules (15 credits each, for a maximum of two over the programme) - see list above</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>S2</td><td colspan="2">Research Design ESC-40093 (15 credits)
Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing ESC-40109 (15 credits)
Quantitative Skills for Conservation Ecology ESC-40123 (15 credits)
Practical Field Skills LSC-40139 (15 credits)
Optional modules (15 credits each, for a maximum of two over the programme) - see list above</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>S3</td><td>Dissertation ESC-40089 (60 credits)</td><td rowspan="2">Dissertation ESC-40115 (60 credits)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Year 2</td><td>S1-2</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Full-time January Start

S2	Research Design ESC-40093 (15 credits) Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing ESC-40109 (15 credits) Quantitative Skills for Conservation Ecology ESC-40123 (15 credits) Practical Field Skills LSC-40139 (15 credits) Optional modules (15 credits each, for a maximum of two over the programme) - *see list above*
S3	Dissertation ESC-40089 (60 credits)
S1	Biodiversity Skills LSC-40143 (15 credits) Key Topics in Conservation Ecology ESC-40121 (15 credits) Optional modules (15 credits each, for a maximum of two over the programme) - *see list above*

Part-time September Start

Year 1	S1	Biodiversity Skills LSC-40143 (15 credits) Key Topics in Conservation Ecology ESC-40121 (15 credits)
	S2	Quantitative Skills for Conservation Ecology ESC-40123 (15 credits) Practical Field Skills LSC-40139 (15 credits) Research Design ESC-40093 (15 credits; option to register here for this module)
	S3	Begin: Dissertation ESC-40089 (60 credits)
Year 2	S1	Optional modules (15 credits each, for a maximum of two over the programme) - *see list above*
	S2	Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing ESC-40109 (15 credits) Research Design ESC-40093 (15 credits; register here for this module if not taken in Year 1) Optional modules (15 credits each, for a maximum of two over the programme) - *see list above*
	S3	Complete: Dissertation ESC-40089 (60)

Part-time January Start

Year 1	S2	Quantitative Skills for Conservation Ecology ESC-40123 (15 credits) Practical Field Skills LSC-40139 (15 credits) Research Design ESC-40093 (15)
	S3	Begin: Dissertation ESC-40089 (60 credits)
	S1	Key Topics in Conservation Ecology ESC-40121 (15 credits) Biodiversity Skills LSC-40143 (15 credits)
Year 2	S2	Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing ESC-40109 (15 credits) Optional modules (15 credits each, for a maximum of two over the programme) - *see list above*
	S3	Complete: Dissertation ESC-40089 (60 credits)
	S1	Optional modules (15 credits each, for a maximum of two over the programme) - *see list above*

Learning Outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

Level 7

Subject Knowledge and Understanding	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
KU1 (Conservation biology). Apply conceptual understanding of conservation biology to case studies and research design.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Research Design - ESC-40093 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115 Key topics in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40121 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
KU2 (Conservation practice). Critically evaluate case studies of conservation practice in relation to theory and contributing scientific and social science disciplines.	Key topics in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40121 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
KU3 (Ecology). Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ecological principles and their relation to fieldwork, research and assessment approaches.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115 Key topics in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40121 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
KU4 (Environmental management). Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of environmental management principles and approaches in a range of contexts.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115 Practical Field Skills - LSC-40139 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
KU5 (Interdisciplinary practice). Explain the principles of interdisciplinary practice and integrate different contributing disciplines including biology, geography and social sciences to address ecological and conservation issues.	Research Design - ESC-40093 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Key topics in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40121 Climate and Sustainable Development - GEG-40036
KU6 (Workplace competencies). Demonstrate employability and professional competence in the ecology and conservation sector.	Research Design - ESC-40093 Collaborative Project - ESC-40101 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123
KU7 (Independent research practice). Demonstrate advanced knowledge of principles of research design as relevant to both professional and academic practice in ecology and conservation.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Research Design - ESC-40093 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
KU8 (Key issues). Demonstrate critical awareness and detailed knowledge of current key issues for professional practice in ecology and conservation.	Climate Change Science - ESC-40060 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Key topics in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40121 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Climate and Sustainable Development - GEG-40036
KU9 (Approaches and methods). Demonstrate an advanced level of understanding of core ecological and conservation approaches and how they are applied in professional, practical and research contexts.	Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Key topics in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40121 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123

Subject Specific Skills	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
SS1 (Field and laboratory skills). Employ a broad range of fieldwork skills and laboratory skills including ecological techniques, species identification and habitat classification methods, mapping, planning, risk assessment, and health and safety.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
SS2 (Data handling, analysis and statistics). Use data handling, data analysis and statistics skills in a broad range of ecological and conservation applications.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Research Design - ESC-40093 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Practical Field Skills - LSC-40139 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
SS3 (Information Technology and GIS). Apply Information Technology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) skills in a range of ecological and conservation contexts.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
SS4 (Critical thinking and information literacy). Demonstrate the ability to theorise ecology and conservation practice and relate applied work to conceptual frameworks.	Research Design - ESC-40093 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Key topics in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40121 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123
SS5 (Team working and project management). Demonstrate team working and project management skills including group work planning and coordination of team inputs.	Collaborative Project - ESC-40101 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Practical Field Skills - LSC-40139
SS6 (Workplace conservation practice). Apply ecological and conservation knowledge and understanding in a workplace context.	Collaborative Project - ESC-40101
SS7 (Advanced research design). Apply advanced research design skills as relevant to both professional and academic practice.	Research Design - ESC-40093 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
SS8 (Advanced data, team and project skills). Demonstrate professional level competence in Information Technology, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data handling, critical thinking, team working and project management.	Research Design - ESC-40093 Collaborative Project - ESC-40101 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143

Key or Transferable Skills (graduate attributes)	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
TS1 (Employability and professional development). Take an adaptable, reflective, self-managed and motivated approach to study and work and to academic and professional development, demonstrating integrity, responsibility, independence, and recognition of professional codes of conduct and ethical considerations.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Collaborative Project - ESC-40101 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115
TS2 (Theoretically underpinned and evidence-based practice). Make reasoned decisions and judgements addressing familiar and unfamiliar problems with reference to concepts and principles, synthesising a wide range of evidence types and using appropriate citation.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Collaborative Project - ESC-40101 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115 Key topics in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40121
TS3 (Data collection and analysis). Collect, process, interpret, summarise and present data of various types including from field and laboratory studies, the internet and prior research with appropriate planning using qualitative and quantitative techniques, computer software, statistical programmes and spreadsheets.	Research Design - ESC-40093 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing - ESC-40109 Quantitative Skills in Conservation Ecology - ESC-40123 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
TS4 (Teamwork). Work effectively as part of a team, recognising and respecting the viewpoints of others, to achieve an objective and evaluate the roles and development of team members including themselves.	Collaborative Project - ESC-40101 Practical Field Skills - LSC-40139 Biodiversity Skills - LSC-40143
TS5 (Communication). Communicate effectively with a variety of audiences by written, spoken and graphical means.	Dissertation - ESC-40089 Research Design - ESC-40093 Collaborative Project - ESC-40101 Dissertation - VMU Lithuania Pathway - ESC-40115 Practical Field Skills - LSC-40139

8. Final and intermediate awards

Master's Degree **MSc Biodiversity and Conservation**	180 credits	You will require at least 150 credits at Level 7
Postgraduate Diploma	120 credits	You will require at least 90 credits at Level 7
Postgraduate Certificate	60 credits	You will require at least 40 credits at Level 7

9. How is the Programme Assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the degree programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on your programme:

- **Technical reports** require you to describe the process and progress of a scientific investigation, including engagement with and analysis of scientific data, and present this is a clear and concise format. Some technical reports may require you to make recommendations.
- **Poster presentations:** enable students to develop their communication skills and summarize the findings of their research in a clear, concise and professional format. Posters may be presented in the form of a

'conference-style' presentation session whereby students give an oral summary of their work. Posters may be completed in small groups or as individuals.
- **Oral presentations** assess individual students' subject knowledge and understanding. They also test their ability to work effectively as members of a team, to communicate what they know orally and visually, and to reflect on these processes as part of their own personal development.
- **Portfolios** document a range of activities and exercises undertaken in the field or lab, either individually or in small groups.
- **Field Notebooks** allow you to document and record your field-based observations, including the use of field sketching, to enable you to better understand the unfamiliar field environment in which you are working in.
- **Reflective Diaries** enable you to critically reflect on your learning experiences, for example as part of a work placement experience. They are assessed on the quality of this reflection and on their ability to respond constructively to the challenges and difficulties they encounter in the process of their own creative development and learning.
- **Essays** allow you to demonstrate your ability to articulate ideas clearly using argument and reasoning skills and with close reference to the contexts and critical concepts covered in the modules. Essays also develop and demonstrate research and presentation skills (including appropriate scholarly referencing).
- **Laboratory reports** - structured proformas and full lab reports are formal summaries of work carried out in the laboratory and test students' understanding of the practical aspects of the programme and develop the skills necessary to enable students to present and analyse their results.
- **Class tests** taken either conventionally or online via the Keele Learning Environment (KLE) assess students' subject knowledge and their ability to apply it in a more structured and focused way.
- **Dissertations** enable students to explore in depth an area of particular interest through a substantial piece of focused research and writing, and test their ability to formulate and answer research questions.
- **Research projects** and reports test student's knowledge of different research methodologies and the limits and provisional nature of knowledge. They also enable students to demonstrate their ability to formulate research questions and to answer them using appropriate methods.
- **Reviews** of other scholars' work test students' ability to identify and summarise the key points of a text and to evaluate the quality of arguments and the evidence used to support them. In the case of work based on empirical research, reviews also assess students' knowledge of research methodologies and their ability to make critical judgements about the appropriateness of different strategies for collecting and analysing data.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

10. Accreditation

This programme does not have accreditation from an external body.

11. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at: http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

12. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?

See the relevant course page on the website for the admission requirements relevant to this programme: https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/

English for Academic Purposes

Please note: All new international students entering the university will sit a diagnostic language assessment. Using this assessment, the Language Centre may allocate you to an English language module which will be compulsory - see section 6 Level 7 module rules for further details.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director. The University's guidelines on this can be found here: https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/

13. How are students supported on the programme?

The Programme Director is responsible for overseeing the course and organising induction sessions for new students. This includes introductory talks on content, teaching and assessment methods during the course, points of contact for support, library services, avoiding plagiarism, procedures for accessing support and how to access and use the KLE, including a mock assignment so students can gain experience in using the KLE and receiving feedback. This reassures students and sets out clear expectations to students about academic standards and conduct and responsibilities of staff and student s. After this initial introduction, students can contact the Course Director directly about problems and concerns either directly during agreed office hours, by appointment and/or by email and telephone.

Each student has access to an Academic Mentor who acts as an important point of contact for general advice and guidance on academic and career development and other pastoral issues. Academic Mentor meet with their students in the first week and at regular points during the course offering advice and support and signposting to other specialist support services in the University where appropriate. Module leaders are available either directly or indirectly via email for module-specific problems. One-to-one meetings can be arranged as necessary for student consultation. It is the responsibility of module leaders to ensure that appropriate feedback is provided to all students regarding both formative and summative assessment. They will ensure that such feedback is of a high quality and delivered in a timely fashion.

Students are assigned a supervisor and a co-supervisor during the Dissertation module. This ensures that consistent supervision can be provided during the summer months when the dissertation project is carried out even if a supervisor is away for extended periods, for example, on fieldwork. In line with modern and sustainable practices supervision meetings can also be conducted via videoconferencing which can reduce carbon footprint from travel and also allows for continuity of supervision if the supervisor is away or the student has a remotely-based project.

Students are encouraged to participate in the Student Staff Voice Committee (SSVC). This is a student voice mechanism that gives student representatives, elected by their peers, an opportunity to give valuable feedback on the course content and delivery. All students are entitled and encouraged to make use of all central university services, including the Keele Postgraduate Association.

14. Learning Resources

The programme is taught in modern teaching rooms across the University which typically have computers, internet access and projection equipment. Rooms may be arranged either in traditional lecture format or more informally to allow students to work together in small groups. Students have access to flexible teaching spaces, a dedicated computer suite and a range of rooms for study and group study with Wi-Fi access. Teaching will also take place across the campus, renewable energy site and local environment, especially for field work sessions.

The Course Handbook provides information and guidance on procedures, module information and points of contact for advice. Individual module handbooks provide a recommended reading list, which comprise both traditional text-based resources and a range of electronic multimedia resources that are accessed through the KLE. The MS Teams platform is also used to enhance student the student experience, providing learning resources and support during the period of engagement and providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and discussion of issues that arise.

The Library has many resources relevant to the course, both on campus and online. Further information about the library can be found at: https://www.keele.ac.uk/library/. Students obtain a username and password from the computer helpdesk in order to access online library services. Students are encouraged to build a research profile on sites such as www.researchgate.net, useful networking tools and sources of published peer-reviewed literature. Students have access to the IT Services at the University located in the library building. IT Services is responsible for the computing infrastructure in the university and for the support of all staff and students undertaking academic computing tasks. There is a large number of open access PCs available for students. All student PCs use a standard platform, which includes software such as Microsoft Office, web browsers, and other standard applications you may need. Printing facilities are available either in Schools or in the library building.

15. Other Learning Opportunities

Students are encouraged to take full advantage of the various seminar series that take place across the university and to engage with opportunities for volunteering, work experience, paid work and other events suggested during the programme.

16. Additional Costs

Mandatory costs

You can expect some additional costs as a student on this course, which may support learning activities, specialist equipment, fieldwork, placements, or other course-related requirements. Details of these mandatory costs are outlined below to help you plan accordingly.

Field Course Costs

ALL students undertake compulsory field courses as part of their studies - these are provided at no cost. There is a range of field courses, and costs are dependent on degree pathway, module choices and the nature of the independent project work taken by students. Independent project work carried out by students for their dissertation may be associated with additional costs.

The University provides significant financial support for the compulsory fieldwork elements of the degree programme and the costs of travel and accommodation for compulsory field courses are fully paid for by the University. Students are responsible for their own subsistence.

OPTIONAL FIELD TRIPS:

In addition to compulsory field courses, the programme may offer optional overseas field trips as part of optional modules (not currently offered). The cost of this is subsidized by the University but you will incur additional costs of independently arranged student international travel.

To help students manage their field course costs, the payments are spread over the course of the academic year in which you participate in the field course. The first instalment Is non-refundable due to the need to pre-book accommodation etc. in advance. The costs of field courses are indicated at the start of the year, with details clearly communicated to students.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

ALL students undertake an independent research project for their dissertation, which MAY include fieldwork. Students are responsible for organising their own transport and accommodation as well as paying any costs incurred whilst carrying out fieldwork. These costs are extremely variable as they are dependent on where the student carries out their project. Costs are minimal if the project work is undertaken in the students' local area.

IMPORTANT: Students are expected to have adequate clothing for field trips. We reserve the right to change the venues of field courses due to both cost and academic considerations. Some field courses are fully or partly catered for. Others are self-catered and students are expected to purchase meals (e.g., lunch and/or evening meal).

The costs below are only for indicative purposes and correct at the time of printing:

Activity	**Estimated Cost**
Field courses - compulsory:	£0
Field courses - optional:	N/A
Travel to optional field course:	Variable
Field courses subsistence:	approx. £35
Equipment - waterproof and appropriate clothing and footwear for field courses:	£200
Field Notebook(s):	£30
Total estimated additional costs:	**£265 (except travel costs for optional field courses)**

These costs have been forecast by the University as accurately as possible but may be subject to change as a result of factors outside of our control (for example, increase in costs for external services). Forecast costs are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain representative. Where additional costs are in direct control of the University we will ensure increases do not exceed 5%.

Students may also incur general expenses related to university study, such as for printing, textbooks and other materials. Students who undertake a placement may be responsible for additional costs, such as travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs. For further information, please refer to the additional costs information.

17. Quality management and enhancement

The quality and standards of learning in this programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement.

- The School Education Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and

enhancement procedures and activities across the School.
- Individual modules and the programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Revalidation process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of annual programme review.
- Findings related to the programme from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at programme and School level.
- Feedback received from representatives of students on the programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:
http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/

18. The principles of programme design

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
b. QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies (ES3 Benchmark Statement): https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/earth-sciences-environmental-science-and-environmental-studies
c. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 15 July 2026

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1.1	2025/26	CHRISTIAN DEVENISH		LSC-40139 changed to optional.
1	2025/26	CHRISTIAN DEVENISH	12 June 2025	
1	2024/25	CHRISTIAN DEVENISH	30 August 2024	Reinstated LAW-40043 as SEM1 optional module