

**University of Plymouth**

Faculty of Science and Engineering

School of Biological and Marine Sciences

**Programme Specification**

MSc Marine Conservation

Programme Code: 6469

September 2021

## 1. MSc Marine Conservation

**Final award title:** Master of Science in Marine Conservation  
(on completion of 180 credits)

### **Level 7 Intermediate award title**

Completion of 60 Credits: Postgraduate Certificate

Completion of 120 Credits: Postgraduate Diploma

<b>UCAS code</b>	N/A
<b>HECOS codes</b>	100418 Marine Science
<b>(50:50)</b>	101318 Biodiversity Conservation

2. **Awarding Institution:** University of Plymouth  
**Teaching institution(s):** University of Plymouth

3. **Accrediting Body:**

N/A

## 4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

- The only UK MSc course in existence to focus on Marine Conservation in practice
- The only Marine Conservation Masters course in the UK to be delivered in partnership with a suite of regional, national and international marine conservation practitioners.
- The only such programme where all students, if they wish, can directly gain experience working for their masters project embedded within these potential employers.
- The 60 credit masters project is not specifically a typical research project resulting in a scientific paper, but allows a diversity of options depending on collaborative work with the partner (e.g. policy review, option appraisal, etc.)
- Students will draw on the cumulative knowledge and expertise of one of the largest concentrations of Marine Conservation researchers in Europe.

- Taught modules are designed to feature dynamic and contemporary content based on both state-of-the-art marine conservation research and current experience and practice of implementing marine conservation in the “real world”.
- Unusually for such a programme, there will be a true integration of natural and social science underpinning and skills.
- Students can choose between two career destinations, Policy and Advocacy, through taught components, working with relevant partner(s) and option module choice. All students will cover aspects of both themes, however.
- Course is designed to be accessible to capable students without a specific background in marine conservation and assumes no specialist knowledge of marine conservation science or policy at the outset.
- Course provides opportunities for students to work on marine conservation projects in the UK and abroad.

## **5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)**

There is no specific Masters-level Marine Conservation or Marine Science benchmark group. We therefore employ the most appropriate undergraduate programme benchmark group to the programme and SoBMS, namely ‘Biosciences’ and the SEEC level 7 descriptors (2016; p12):

<http://www.seec.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SEEC-descriptors-2016.pdf>;

the 2016 QAA FHEQ for L7 (p28):

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

and the relevant ‘specialized/advanced study’ master’s descriptor of the QAA ‘Masters’ Degree Characteristics’

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Masters-degree-characteristics.pdf>

## **6. Programme Structure**

This new MSc programme complements, and adds to, the suite of interrelated masters programmes that is provided by the School of Biological and Marine Sciences. In particular, the new MSc will interact with both MRes Applied Marine Science and MRes Marine Biology in order to give students choice over marine conservation in practice, or a more research focussed degree with a more academic, research project. Both MRes courses have relevant modules in Ecology and Conservation, plus there is the

potential for sharing of modules between these courses and the new MSc Marine Conservation. However, the firm focus on marine conservation practice, and the interaction with the partners to experience this, is specific to the new MSc.

First semester: 2 x 20 credit modules (core)

Second semester: 2 x 20 credit modules (including choice of 1 from 2 options).

Across first and second semesters: 1 x 40 credit module (core)

All year (primarily summer): 1 x 60 credit Marine Conservation Project

The MSc programme is assessed 75% by coursework, 20% Practical and 5% Test.

<b>TIMING</b>	<b>MODULES</b>		
<b>Semester 1</b> <b>15 weeks</b> <b>(Including 12 weeks of taught material before Christmas and a 3 week block on partner collaboration work towards the project after Christmas)</b>	<b>MAR513: Research Skills and Methods (15 weeks)</b> <b>Core 20 credits</b>  Preparation for partner collaboration and project (3 Wks)	<b>MBIO505 Marine Conservation Theory (12 Weeks)</b> <b>Core 20 credits</b>	<b>MAR532: Marine Conservation Practice (24 weeks)</b> <b>Core 40 Credits</b>
<b>Semester 2</b> <b>12 weeks of taught material</b>	<b>MAR530: Managing Marine Ecosystems (12 weeks)</b> <b>Core 20 credits</b>	<b>MAR507: Economics for the Marine Environment (12 Weeks)</b> <b>Option 20 credits</b> <b>OR</b> <b>ANIM5007: Small Population Conservation (12 weeks)</b> <b>Option 20 credits</b>	
<b>All year</b> <b>60 credits of Professional Project</b>	<b>MAR533 Marine Conservation Project (all year)</b> <b>60 credits</b>		

The programme has two optional modules which have been specifically chosen to complement the core modules. The choice is aligned to the “advocacy” and “policy” career goals of students, so providing extra training in areas of study important to those themes (advocacy: ANIM5007; policy: MAR507). Students will start to consider their project topic, and relevant partner to work with, during Semester 1 within MAR513. As part of their assessment on project design, students will be required to write a proposal for their dissertation that will be used to guide the planning of this project and identify appropriate research, or other, techniques. To enable this, interaction with project partners will occur early in Semester 1, with the aim of having all students linked to prospective projects (and partners) by the end of the semester in

January, when there is the opportunity for the student to first visit the partner for a short period.

## **7. Programme Aims**

The overall aim of the MSc Marine Conservation programme is to provide:

(A1) a highly sought after qualification and hands-on experience to enable alumni to be the future leaders in marine conservation

and to provide postgraduates with:

(A2) a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the scientific, policy and practical issues relating to Marine Conservation

(A3) the knowledge, skills and practical tools required to pursue a working career in Marine Conservation

(A4) the opportunity to work with external partners to experience directly practical aspects of Marine Conservation

(A5) the ability to develop their academic and personal skill set to focus on either “policy” or “advocacy” aspects of Marine Conservation in collaboration with potential employers

## **8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes**

### **8.1. Knowledge and understanding**

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

1. A comprehensive knowledge base and understanding of the current state of the theory and practice relating to Marine Conservation.
2. The ability to synthesise and present complex data at a standard which would be acceptable for an industry/government report, presentation or scientific publication.
3. The advanced skills applicable to independent research and collaborative working within marine conservation.

4. The ability to apply in their work the legislative, ethical and moral obligations of researchers and practitioners in a modern civil society.
5. An advanced understanding of the factors that underpin effective marine ecosystem management and conservation.

## **8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills**

On successful completion, graduates should have developed:

1. The ability to manage advanced techniques and intense workload required at Level 7.
2. The ability to critically assess the existing knowledge-base, including legal and policy frameworks, and apply methodologies for the management and conservation of marine ecosystems.
3. The ability to lead debate and craft arguments relating to contemporary marine conservation issues.

## **8.3. Key and transferable skills**

On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:

1. Reflect on feedback constructively to achieve aims and objectives.
2. Design and execute an advanced marine conservation project at Level 7.
3. Synthesise and present reasoned scientific and societal arguments which would be acceptable for dissemination to a variety of audiences.
4. Identify areas for personal development and acquire, where needed, further advanced skills and knowledge relevant to a career in marine conservation policy or advocacy.
5. Work effectively at an advanced level as part of a team and autonomously in complex and unpredictable situations.

## **8.4. Employment related skills**

On successful completion, graduates should have developed the ability to:

1. Demonstrate the capacity to collaborate with partners in order to plan and undertake an advanced marine conservation project within a set timescale.

2. Demonstrate scientific rigour as well as personal application, flexibility and innovation in natural and social science fields.
3. Communicate at a high level with potential employers, policy makers and collaborators in applied marine conservation contexts.

### **8.5. Practical skills**

On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:

1. Anticipate and pre-empt problems within a plan of work and devise solutions to problems arising during the course of a collaborative project.
2. Design and implement effective strategies to manage time and resources.
3. Create materials aimed at clearly communicating complex concepts within marine conservation to a diverse audience from the public to subject specialist.
4. Work safely and undertake appropriate assessments of risks and threats in varied environments.

## **9. Admissions Criteria, Including APCL, APEL and DAS Arrangements**

This programme aims to recruit highly competent science graduates from suitable first degrees in primarily biological, marine and environmental sciences, although applications are considered from well-qualified graduates in other disciplines with relevant experience or interests.

Applications are through the usual system for application to Masters degrees within University of Plymouth, with the Programme Leader or nominated deputy acting as admissions tutor and making all decisions. However, to manage numbers and to provide a competitive entry, it is proposed that a modified application process will be followed for this programme. Candidates will require an appropriate background in a science degree to honours level at 2:1 or above; students yet to graduate will be required to submit transcripts of supporting documents such as a first degree modules/years to enable analysis of their full performance. Applicants without a 2.1 or higher may be considered if they have significant relevant experience. All applicants will also be required to present a personal statement on what their career aims within Marine Conservation are, plus a short written piece or video around what they see as the marine conservation priorities in the UK. This will help selection, achieving a suitable balance of students within the Advocacy and Policy themes and

to suggest an alternative degree at UoP if their aims and priorities are not so suitable for this programme. The application process will close early (May in each year), when students will be offered a place, a reserve place or rejected (pointed towards other UoP courses). Those given an offer will be expected to formally accept by June and will then be processed by the university for accommodation, etc. where relevant.

Non-UK qualifications will also be considered and can be crosschecked with universities and by consulting the ENIC –NARIC network and central admissions staff to determine the suitable level for entry. Such candidates will also be required to demonstrate their proficiency in English (e.g. IELTS score of 6.5+).

Given the primary thrust of the programme is to develop over the year a working relationship with programme partners, including within the extended Marine Conservation in Practice module, part-time routes will not normally be available for this programme. However, part-time study will be considered on a case-by-case basis, particularly if due to unforeseen circumstances students have to move to part-time during the course after registering initially as full time.

UoP aims to be fully compliant with the National SENDA requirements for the accommodation of disabled students within its degree programmes. All applications will be assessed on academic criteria as described above. Provision will be made for disabled students by reasonable adjustments where safety and educational standards are not prejudiced. If a student has a particular disability which means that they are disadvantaged by specific assessment tasks, alternatives will be considered where appropriate. The University's Disability Service will liaise with the course or module leader to identify actions which need to be taken. The Disability Service offers the use of computers, readers, amanuenses and other support mechanisms which may be used where appropriate.

## **10. Progression Criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards**

The MSc in Marine Conservation award requires a minimum of 180 credits and is categorised into grades:

### ***MSc with Distinction:***

This award is achieved by a student gaining an overall average mark on the programme of study of 70% and above, and the mark for the project module is not less than 70%.



***MSc with Merit:***

This award is achieved by a student gaining an overall average mark on the programme of study of between 60% and 69.95%, and the mark for the project module is not less than 60%.

***MSc:***

This award is normally achieved by a student gaining an overall average mark between 50% and 59.95%.

***Exit award titles:***

Post Graduate Certificate on completion ( $\geq 50\%$ ) of 60 credits. Post Graduate Diploma on successful completion ( $\geq 50\%$ ) of 120 credits.

To pass a postgraduate module a student needs to comply with University academic regulations and achieve at least 50% in the overall module mark.

**11. Exceptions to Regulations**

None

**12. Transitional Arrangements**

None required

**13. Programme Specification Mapping (PGT): module contribution to the meeting of Award Learning Outcomes**

Tick those Award Learning Outcomes the module contributes to through its assessed learning outcomes. Insert rows and columns as required.

Module	Credits	C core E elective	Award Learning Outcomes contributed to (for more information see Section 8)																				Compe nsation Y/N	Assessment element(s) and weightings [use KIS definition] E1 - exam E2 - clinical exam T1 - test C1 - coursework A1 - generic assessment P1 - practical
			Knowledge & understanding					Cognitive & intellectual skills			Key & transferable skills					Employment related skills			Practical skills					
			1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	2	3	4		
MAR513	20	C							X					X	X			X					Y	C1 80% P1 20%
MBIO505	20	C	X			X	X						X										Y	C1 100%
MAR532	40	C								X	X		X		X			X		X	X		N	C1 50% P1 50%
MAR530	20	C	X				X		X														Y	C1 100%
MAR507	20	E	X						X									X					Y	T1 60% P1 40%
ANIM5007	20	E	X						X									X					Y	C1 100%
<b>60 credit exit award will have mixed ALOs depending on modules passed</b>																								
<b>Learning Outcomes 120 credits</b>			X			X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X			
MAR533	60	C		X	X	X		X				X			X	X	X		X	X		X	N	C1 70% P1 30%
<b>Learning Outcomes 180 credits</b>			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
<b>Confirmed Award LOs</b>			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		

**14. Operational Specification: mapping of Award Learning Outcomes. Insert rows and columns as required.**

Module Code	Level	Credits	C – core, E - elective	Award Learning Outcomes (for more information see Section 8 of the Programme Specification) Please map where a module does one or more of the following:  I – ALO is introduced A – ALO is assessed																			
				8.1 Knowledge & understanding					8.2 Cognitive & intellectual skills			8.3 Key & transferable skills					8.4 Employment related skills			8.5 Practical skills			
				1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
MAR513	7	20	C		I	I	I		I	IA		I	I		IA	IA	I		IA	I	I	I	I
MBIO505	7	20	C	IA			IA	IA	A	I	I			IA							I	I	
MAR532	7	40	C			I		I	I	A	IA	IA	I	IA	I	IA	I	I	A	I	IA	IA	I
MAR530	7	20	C	IA	I			IA		A													
MAR507	7	20	E	IA				I		A											A		
ANIM5007	7	20	E	IA						A											A		
MAR533	7	60	C		A	A	A		A								A	A		A	A		IA