University of Plymouth

Faculty of Science and Engineering

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Science

Programme Specification

**Master of Science (MSc)
in
Environmental Consultancy - 3607**

September 2021

1. **MSc Environmental Consultancy**

   Final award title: MSc Environmental Consultancy

   Intermediate awards
   Level 7 Intermediate award title(s)
   Completion of 60 credits: Postgraduate Certificate

   Level 7 Intermediate award title(s)
   Completion of 120 credits: Postgraduate Diploma

   UCAS code   -
   JACS code: F751

2. **Awarding Institution:**   University of Plymouth

   Teaching institution(s):   University of Plymouth

3. **Accrediting body**(ies)
   n/a

4. **Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience**
The distinctive features of the MSc Environmental Consultancy are:
- **Professional experience:** The programme incorporates a compulsory, substantial (typically eight week) work placement in the environmental sector, enabling students to develop the specialist skills and competencies required for their future in professional practice. Students benefit, in securing placements, from the programme team's links with national consultancies, regulatory bodies and environmental sector employers
- **Focussed curriculum**: The programme is highly specified to ensure that students are prepared effectively for employment. Students select two specialist areas and also choose the two important elements of the work placement and the research project.
- **Authentic assessment** the programme is entirely assessed by coursework (excepting a single optional module), designed to reflect the outputs required by the environment sector
- **Contemporary knowledge and skills** the curriculum encourages a critical analytical and intensive investigation of issues in contemporary environmental consultancy, such as environmental law and, depending on the choice of optional modules, habitat restoration, contaminated land and water, and waste management, and the acquisition of industry-relevant skills, such as geographical information systems, environmental impact assessment, and marine surveys.

- **Experiential learning** the programme emphasises learning through fieldwork in the local area and through use of the University's high specification equipment and laboratories, including analytical equipment for environmental monitoring and Falcon Spirit, the University's research vessel, for marine sampling.
- **Individual research**: Students carry out an independent research project, under the supervision of a member of academic staff, in which they are able to investigate, in depth, a topic of interest and to apply the skills learnt through the taught programme.
- **Professional recognition**: Students are supported and encouraged to join the appropriate chartered institute to support their professional requirements, typically the IEEM or IEMA.

5.   Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)
n/a

6.   Programme Structure

		GEES519 (20 credits)	**GEES515** (20 credits)	***Optional module** (20 credits)
	Semester 1	Environmental Knowledge : from field to stakeholder	Professional Practice in the Environmental Sector	one module from list below

		GEES517 (20 credits)	***Optional module** (20 credits)
	Semester 2	Environmental Assessment	One module from list below
		ENVS5004 Professional experience in environmental management (20 credits) ; this can be extended in to the summer semester where necessary	

GEES520 MSc Dissertation

*Optional modules Semester 1	*Optional modules Semester 2
ENVS5003 Ecological Survey and mitigation	ENVS5002 Investigation and assessment of contaminated environments
MATH513 Big Data and social network visualisation	GEES506 Climate Change (science and policy)

[*2] Semester 2 is 15 weeks long and includes the Easter vacation. The taught element of each of the modules shown is completed by the start of the Easter vacation, allowing the work placement element to occur, without interruption, in at least part of the vacation and the second part of the semester.

7. Programme Aims

The aim of the MSc Environmental Consultancy programme is to offer a relevant and contemporary curriculum in environmental consultancy, enriched by the scholarly activity and professional experience of staff with particular emphasis on students:

1. gaining an understanding of the environmental threats and opportunities associated with development
2. gaining an understanding of the statutory framework within which environmental assessment is undertaken
3. developing knowledge of a wide variety of research methods, assessment techniques and consultation practices relevant to environmental consultancy
4. becoming competent in designing environmental monitoring and assessment programmes

8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

8.1.   Knowledge and understanding

On completion, a graduate should be able to demonstrate

- a critical awareness of current problems and new insights in environmental consultancy, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic discipline.
- an awareness of ethical issues and an ability to conduct research in an ethically sound manner
- a comprehensive understanding of quantitative & qualitative research and environmental assessment methods, and the ability to apply these methods to their own work

8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills

On completion, a graduate should be able to demonstrate the cognitive and intellectual skills of:

- **Analysis:** ability to undertake analysis of complex, incomplete, or contradictory findings or theories in environmental science, and to effectively communicate the outcome of such analyses
- **Synthesis:** ability to synthesize theory and research in environmental science in a manner that may be innovative, utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of environmental science
- **Evaluation:** ability to critically evaluate research from a methodological and theoretical perspective
- **Application:** ability to apply theory and research methods to solve problems, including the ability to generate novel hypotheses based on previous research and theory

8.3. Key and transferable skills

On completion, a graduate should be able to demonstrate the key and transferable skills of:

- **Group working:** ability to work effectively with a group as leader or member
- **Information searching:** ability to use full range of learning resources, including internet and library
- **Self-evaluation**: ability to reflect on progress and identify areas for improvement
- **Problem-solving:** ability to identify problems and develop strategies for solving them, using the range of available resources
- **Management of information:** ability to competently undertake research, monitoring and assessment tasks with minimum guidance
- **Autonomy:** ability to be an independent and self-critical learner, managing own requirements for CPD
- **Communication:** ability to engage confidently in academic and professional communication with others, including specialist and non-specialist audiences

8.4. Employment-related skills

On completion, a graduate should be able to demonstrate the employment-related skills of:

- Designing and conducting original research and monitoring programmes relevant to environmental consultancy
- Awareness of issues involved in research with human participants, including research design, issues of validity and reliability, and ethical considerations
- Using reflection to explore knowledge, skills and attitudes which inform and facilitate independent research and practice in environmental consultancy

8.5. Practical skills
On completion a graduate should be able to demonstrate the practical skills of:
- **Applying skills and knowledge:** ability to operate in complex and unpredictable and/or specialised contexts
- **Autonomy in skill use:** ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in professional consultancy practice
- **Technical expertise:** The learner performs with precision and can adapt skills and design or develop new skills and/or procedures for new situations

9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements
The Programme Leader (who is also responsible for admissions) uses the criteria below to guide their admissions decisions. Wherever possible, established relationships or equivalencies to other international qualifications will be used in making decisions.

Students admitted to the MSc programme are expected to have a good Honours degree in a relevant discipline e.g., environmental science, geosciences, geography, biological sciences. The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that applicants have, through prior learning (acquired by formal study and/or experience) in the critical subject areas, developed the requisite knowledge, understanding and skills required for successful participation in this programme. Candidate suitability is assessed through a combination of the written application, evidence of formal qualifications, personal references and candidate interviews (where appropriate).

In compliance with the University's policies of equality and diversity, and disability, all appropriately qualified applicants will be given equal consideration during the selection process. The University welcomes applications from people with disabilities and the support available is described here.

Entry requirements (in summary):
1. An honours degree (upper second class or better) in a relevant discipline (e.g., BSc Geography, Environmental Science, Geological Sciences, Biological Sciences) OR overseas equivalent.
2. A minimum grade C in English Language at GCSE level OR a minimum overall score of 6.5 in IELTS with no less than 5.5 in any component

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)
Students can exceptional apply for exemption from any modules through APEL or APCL, following standard University procedures, as described in the current University regulations on admissions. This decision will be made by the Programme Leader.

10. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards

Successful completion of the final and intermediate awards, including the award of the MSc with Merit and Distinction, is as set out in the University's current [academic regulations](#)

11. Exceptions to Regulations

12. Transitional Arrangements

None

13. Mapping and Appendices:

13.1. ILO's against Modules Mapping

Map of programme aims, intended learning outcomes and modules.

Programme Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes and Skills Profile	Aim	Assessed in
Development of knowledge and understanding		
A critical awareness of current problems and new insights in environmental consultancy, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic discipline.	1, 2	GEES519, GEES520 Optional modules
B an awareness of ethical issues and an ability to conduct research in an ethically sound manner.	1	GEES519, GEES520
C a comprehensive understanding of quantitative & qualitative research and environmental assessment methods, and the ability to apply these methods to their own work	3, 4	GEES519, GEES520, GEES517
Cognitive and intellectual skills		
D **Analysis:** ability to undertake analysis of complex, incomplete, or contradictory findings or theories and to effectively communicate the outcome of such analyses	3, 4	GEES519, GEES520
E **Synthesis:** ability to synthesize theory and research information in a manner that may be innovative, utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of environmental science	4	GEES519, GEES520
F **Evaluation:** ability to critically evaluate research from a methodological and theoretical perspective	1, 2, 3, 4	GEES519, GEES520

			Optional modules
G	**Application:** ability to apply theory and research methods to solve problems, including the ability to generate novel hypotheses based on previous research and theory	3, 4	GEES519, GEES520 optional modules

Programme Learning Outcomes		Aim	Modules
Key and transferable skills			
H	**Group working:** ability to work effectively with a group as leader or member	4	GEES517
I	**Information searching:** ability to use full range of learning resources, including internet and library	1, 2	all modules
J	**Self evaluation:** ability to reflect on progress and identify areas for improvement	1	GEES516, ENVS5004
K	**Problem solving:** ability to identify problems and develop strategies for solving them, using the range of available resources	1, 2, 3,4	GEES519, GEES520, GEES517
L	**Management of information:** ability to competently undertake research, monitoring and assessment tasks with minimum guidance	3, 4	GEES519, GEES520, ENVS5004
M	**Autonomy:** ability to be an independent and self-critical learner, managing own requirements for CPD	3, 4	GEES520
N	**Communication:** ability to engage confidently in academic and professional communication with others (specialist and non-specialist audiences)	4	All modules
Practical skills			
O	**Applying skills and knowledge:** ability to operate in complex and unpredictable and/or specialised contexts	3	GEES519, GEES520, ENVS5004, optional modules
P	**Autonomy in skill use:** ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in professional consultancy practice	2, 3	GEES516
Q	**Technical expertise:** The learner performs with precision and can adapt skills and design or develop new skills and/or procedures for new situations	3, 4	GEES519, optional modules
	Employment-related skills		
R	Designing and conducting original research and monitoring programmes relevant to environmental consultancy		GEES519, GEES520, GEES517
S	Awareness of issues involved in research with human participants, including research design,		GEES519

	issues of validity and reliability, and ethical considerations		
T	Using reflection to explore knowledge, skills and attitudes which inform and facilitate independent research and practice in environmental consultancy		GEES516, GEES519, GEES520

13.2 Assessment against modules

Module Code	Module Title	Generic	Exam or Test	Prac.	Course work
		A1 P/F	E1 or T1	P1	C1
GEES519	Environmental Knowledge from Field to Stakeholder				100%
GEES515	Professional Practice in the Environmental Sector	✓			100%
ENVS5003	Ecological Survey Evaluation and Mitigation			40%	60%
MATH513	Big Data and Social Network Visualisation			40%	60%
GEES517	Environmental Assessment				60%
ENVS5002	Investigation and Assessment of Contaminated Environments				100%
ENVS5004	Professional Experience in Environmental Management,				100%
GEES506	Climate Change (Science and Policy)				100%
GEES520	Dissertation (60 credits)				100%