

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BSc (Hons.)
4	Programme Title	Rural Studies Rural Studies with Placement
5	UCAS/Programme Code	D452 1452U
6	Programme Accreditation	None
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Agriculture, forestry, agricultural science, food science and consumer science
8	FHEQ Level	6
9	Last updated	September 2024

10 Programme Aims

- 1 To provide students from varied educational backgrounds with an opportunity to study a range of social science subjects applied to rural development and rural resource management.
- 2 To produce graduates with:
 - (i) a knowledge and understanding of a range of social sciences pertinent to rural development and rural resource management;
 - (ii) a full repertoire of graduate key skills and the ability to utilise information from a variety of disciplines in a flexible and integrated way;
 - (iii) the ability to analyse problems and issues, synthesise potential resolutions and criticise alternatives.
- 3 To provide a flow of well-motivated graduates with the subject specific and key skills required by a range of employers both within and outside of the rural economy.
- 4 To provide a programme which meets FHEQ level 6 requirements which takes appropriate account of the subject benchmark statements in agriculture, forestry, agricultural sciences, food sciences and consumer sciences.

For students on the Placement Year programme:

- 5 Provide students with the experience of seeking and securing a position with an employer.
- 6 Facilitate independent self-management and proactive interaction in a non-university setting.
- 7 Provide a period of practical work experience that will benefit current academic study and longer term career plans.
- 8 Enable students to ethically apply their knowledge and skills in the work place, reflect upon their development and effectively evidence and articulate their learning in relevant future settings.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for agriculture, forestry, agricultural science, food science and consumer science.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should be able to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of:

- A1 the economic, social, political, cultural and legal environment which provides the context for rural development in the UK.
- A2 the key organisations and institutions involved in rural development and rural resource management in the UK.
- A3 rural and agri-environmental policy at UK and European level and its application to key social, economic and environmental problems in the UK countryside.
- A4 the natural, historical and cultural factors that contribute to the character of the UK countryside.
- A5 the rural economy of the UK and sustainable resource management.
- A6 the management of public and private sector organisations.
- A7 contemporary issues, policies and mechanisms for land use planning in the UK.
- A8 the causes and consequences of conflict in rural communities in the UK.

For students on the Placement Year programme:

- A9 Apply personal and professional development strategies to prioritise, plan, and manage their own skills development and learning.
- A10 Research, select and apply relevant knowledge aimed at enhancing their own skills and effectiveness in specific duties at their placement.
- A11 Demonstrate an understanding of a work environment, how it functions and their contribution to it.
- A12 Relate their work based learning to other areas of personal development, including academic performance.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding is through lectures. These are supplemented by seminars, field classes and group discussion. Understanding of economic, social, legal, planning and policy context as relevant to rural areas (A1, A3, A5, A7, A8) is imparted through lectures and seminars and supported by guided reading. Classroom-based learning on the organisational context of the countryside (A2) and landscape character (A4) is developed through fieldwork and site visits. Key issues in rural policy and planning (A7) are given a currency by the involvement of academic staff from the Centre for Rural Economy who play a role in the development of national strategies. The principles of business management (A6) are developed through lectures and case study material applied to a variety of sectors and issues. Optional modules at all stages allow students to develop interests in management and marketing and their application to the rural economy.

Students are encouraged to supplement taught material through independent reading, with extensive reading lists provided. Students also enhance their learning through participation in student-centred project work and through exercises focusing on contemporary or developing countryside issues and reflecting material that have been exposed to through their lectures and reading.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding of this subject primarily assessed by a combination of unseen examinations (essay-type questions, short answer questions, problem solving, and multiple choice questions) and partly by way of coursework and case studies (A1-A8). Most modules include coursework, thus encouraging an element of formative, as well as summative, assessment

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 critically evaluate arguments and evidence.
- B2 critically analyse relevant contemporary literature.
- B3 integrate knowledge from a variety of disciplines and apply it to rational decision making in the rural economy.
- B4 solve problems.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Encouraging students to consider information critically and justify their interpretation develops intellectual skills (B1). Literature review (B2) is introduced and practiced at stage 2 and developed in the stage 3 Special Study module. This is done through tutorials, fieldwork and lectures. The Investigating Rural Landscapes module encourages an early focus on understanding rather than on learning facts, and an emphasis on problem solving is then developed in key modules at stages 2 and 3 (B4) especially through exercises focusing on countryside-related problems. The ability to handle and interpret information from a variety of disciplines (B3) in a decision making context, is an integral element of the course and is particularly developed in the countryside management module at stage 3.

Students learn through participation in problem-solving exercises, research projects, data handling and discussion. Students are encouraged to justify opinions through discussion, oral presentations and in their special study research projects (ACE3093) where they practice the production of reasoned arguments and logical conclusions. Literature reviews are practised at stages 2 and 3.

Assessment Strategy

Intellectual skills are assessed by unseen examinations (B1, B3, B4), assignments (B1, B3, B4), oral presentations (B2), case studies (B3, B4) and the stage 3 special study (B1, B2, B3). Literature reviews (B2) are produced in stages 2 and 3 to enable both formative and summative assessment.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 develop and critically appraise management strategies for a range of public good issues in rural areas.
- C2 gather and interpret qualitative and quantitative data.
- C3 use suitable techniques to analyse qualitative and quantitative data.
- C4 apply techniques of strategic management to inform planning and decision making.
- C5 apply techniques of countryside interpretation to communicate with rural stakeholders.
- C6 describe, evaluate and categorise landscape character.
- C7 use economic and qualitative techniques to evaluate a range of rural and environmental policies.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Skills are introduced through lectures and developed through a variety of approaches. Data handling (C2) is introduced in lectures and tutorials and developed through exercises and tutorial sessions, while the development and appraisal of management strategies (C1) is supported through case studies and appropriate exercises. Economic analysis (C3) and strategic management and decision making (C4) are introduced through lectures from stage 1 and practised in individual and group-based case studies and problem solving exercises. Countryside interpretation (C5) and landscape assessment (C6) are developed through field visits and where appropriate supported by case study exercises. Policy evaluation (C7) is introduced in the context of landscape and environmental impact assessment and particular economic and qualitative approaches are introduced in a specialist stage 3 module delivered by an active researcher in this field.

Students acquire skills (C1-C7) through hands-on practical experience, a variety of problem or case-study based exercises, and through application of appropriate techniques to their Special Study. The latter presents a less-structured and more creative learning opportunity that requires greater exercise of judgement on the part of the student.

Assessment Strategy

Practical skills are assessed is by way of examinations (C1-C3, C7) and coursework (C1-C7), including applied case studies (C2 and C4), oral presentations (C5) and field class exercises (C4 and C6).

Transferable/Key Skills
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <p>D1 communicate in writing and orally in a manner appropriate to the target audience.</p> <p>D2 work independently, through managing own learning, time management, showing initiative and adaptability.</p> <p>D3 work successfully as a member of a team.</p> <p>D4 use library resources and information technology effectively</p> <p>For students on the Placement Year programme:</p> <p>D5 Reflect on and manage own learning and development within the workplace.</p> <p>D6 Use existing and new knowledge to enhance personal performance in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate this process.</p> <p>D7 Use graduate skills in a professional manner in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate the personal development that has taken place.</p>
Teaching and Learning Methods
<p>These are introduced to students through the induction programme and skills sessions within modules. IT and library (D4) skills are introduced early in programme within skills or knowledge-based modules and may be further developed and practised in other modules later in the course. Oral communication skills (D1) are explicitly developed by employing a professional storyteller to develop that element within a skills module and practised through a range of individual and group presentations at stages 2 and 3. Written communications skills (D1) are developed through essays and coursework exercises. Teamwork skills (D3) are developed through group-based exercises and assignments beginning in the first induction week. The final year special study develops the ability to work independently (D2), requiring students to develop time management skills, and requiring them to show initiative and adaptability. Students have the opportunity to develop further work and study skills through optional modules offered in conjunction with the Careers Service and by attending extra-curricular sessions organised by the careers service and promoted in careers sessions included in lectures at stages 2 and 3.</p>
Assessment Strategy
<p>These skills are assessed through the production of coursework (D1-D4) and the stage 3 special study (D1, D2, D4). Oral presentations, sometimes using PowerPoint or posters test the ability to communicate in a variety of media (D1) and in a manner appropriate to the target audience. Teamwork skills (D3) developed in group exercises are assessed formatively through tutorial debriefs. Independent working and time management (D2) are assessed summatively in the stage 3 special study. Library and IT skills (D4) are assessed through coursework exercises and also in the development of special studies at stage 3.</p>

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
<p>BSc Rural Studies is a three year degree programme delivered over three stages (1, 2 and 3) within each of which students are expected to study modules to a total of 120 credits. At each stage students must study some compulsory and some optional modules.</p> <p>Students on the Placement Year programme will be on placement year between Stages 2 and 3 of their programme.</p> <p>All placements will be undertaken in line with the University's placement policy http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltas/assets/documents/qsh-workplacement-pol.pdf</p>
Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
<p>This programme comprises a distinctive mix of modules taken from the social and natural sciences. Particular features of the programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modules introduced specifically for countryside management and rural studies students; • a range of field visits and practical work related to rural areas and rural businesses;

- the chance to meet and talk with experienced countryside professionals;
- the opportunity to develop and practice skills in landscape character assessment and management planning;
- opportunities to participate in work-related learning at stages 2 and 3;
- a module in qualitative data collection and analysis;
- the opportunity to study business management and marketing at all three stages;
- the opportunity to study aspects of policy relevant to the rural economy;
- the opportunity to study estate and land management;
- the opportunity to undertake an individual research project in a school active in rural social science research.
- For students taking the route with placement there is an opportunity to undertake a 9-12 month placement between stages 2 and 3.

If students study the appropriate optional modules at stage 1 they can transfer to BSc Countryside Management at Stage 2.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[D452_1452U](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

[Generic Information](#)

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

[Generic Information](#)

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

[Generic Information](#)

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/#subject>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.