Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

	Basic Course Information	
1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Animal, Rural & Environmental Sciences / Brackenhurst Campus
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	MSc Biodiversity Conservation (FT & PT)
4.	Normal Duration:	1 year full-time or 2 years part time
5.	UCAS Code:	N/A

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The MSc in Biodiversity Conservation is designed to meet a growing need for highly skilled conservationists with academic qualifications at Masters level. The course aims to provide you with the knowledge to enable you to work within the environmental and ecological consulting and conservation professions. It will also provide you with the skills required by employers.

You will develop into a researcher with a high level of responsibility, capable of evaluating current research, and advanced scholarship in taxonomic and surveying techniques. This will culminate in completion of a research project.

Half of your taught modules will be taught during the first semesters of the Academic year (start of October to end of January) with the remainder starting in the second semester (February to the end of May).

The course has been developed and will be delivered with input from the environmental consultancy and conservation professions, ensuring that it meets the needs of employers for continuing professional development.

An important and distinctive component of the course is the teaching of Geographical Information Systems (GIS). GIS is rapidly becoming a vital tool in the management of the environment and expertise in its use and application is valued highly by employers.

7. **Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic comprehensive knowledge of taxonomic and survey techniques used by conservation practitioners
- Analyse current biodiversity conservation issues and priorities at local, national, European and global level and critically assess law and policy relating thereto in terms of its doctrinal and practical coherence
- Critically evaluate techniques used to survey specific taxa and extrapolate from existing research and scholarship to identify new or revised approaches to surveying and the analysis of data
- Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in taxonomic and biodiversity studies
- Evaluate the rigour and validity of published research and assess its relevance to new situations
- Demonstrate the ability to recognise, apply and address ethical dilemmas and corporate social responsibility issues, applying ethical and organisational values to situations
- Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences

Skills, qualities and attributes

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate expertise in advanced research, technical, communication and professional skills
- Demonstrate the ability to acquire and analyse data and information, to evaluate their relevance and validity, and to synthesise a range of information in the context of new situations
- Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level
- Show critical awareness of current problems or issues within the discipline

8. Teaching and learning methods

You will experience a mixture of seminars, lectures, workshops, field and laboratory practical exercises and you will also have opportunities to present work to peers and academic staff.

Modules will be delivered in one of the first two semesters (start of October to end of January, and start of February to end of May). The majority of Research Project will take place between May and September. A substantial amount of field work will be used to allow practical identification and field survey techniques to be practised.

The two theory modules, Conservation Priorities and Research Methods and Data Analysis, will involve discussion and workshops to develop skills. For your Research Project you will spend additional time with your dissertation supervisor to enable you to develop a viable project.

During the taught modules you will be practising identification skills, carrying out directed study and research and you will continue to be supported via tutorials, the VLE and e-mail contact. The course is designed to encourage independent learning and is structured to improve your ability to undertake high quality research and critical analysis. At NTU there is a strong culture of e-learning, and the well established NTU Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) will be used extensively to keep in contact and facilitate learning during non contact time for all modules.

Additional learning opportunities will be gained from the detailed formative and summative feedback given on all assessed work and feedback provided by peers.

9. Assessment methods

The course uses a variety of assessment methods to ensure that you can demonstrate your achievement of the course's learning outcomes. Subject knowledge and understanding is tested mainly through examinations, preparation of case studies and student-led seminars. The taught modules are assessed through a range of assessments including the collection of identified specimens and reports that evaluate different techniques used in the industry. There is a strong emphasis on the vocational nature of the course; as such the assessments are designed to be vocationally relevant and foster the advanced report writing skills required in the profession.

Assessed work will take one or more of the following forms:

Research Project thesis

The research project dissertation will demonstrate your ability to research a chosen topic in depth, design and implement a relevant research project and communicate the

findings to an informed audience in a comprehensive scientific report.

Species Collections

You are required to produce collections of flora and fauna for the Protected Species Surveying Module.

Written assignments

These may be one or a combination of the following:

- scientific paper
- case study reports,
- project proposals

These methods of assessment will allow you to demonstrate understanding, objective critical analysis skills and the ability to communicate findings in a scientific manner. This provides you with experience of writing scientific research for journals and wider publication. Case study reports will enable you to demonstrate your ability to apply scientific knowledge in practical situations.

Oral presentation

You will be assessed in in-depth knowledge and oral communication skills. This will take the form of:

- scientific presentations
- leading peer group seminars

You will be assessed on logical and coherent knowledge dissemination, appropriate to the form of communication. You will also be assessed on communication skills, use of aids (handouts, visual aids and use of props) and the ability to answer questions with knowledge and authority.

Written exam

This is a formal examination that requires you to draw from prior taught aspects of the module, and to demonstrate written communication, critical analysis and evaluation skills.

10. Course structure and curriculum

To achieve the award of MSc Biodiversity Conservation a total of 180 Credit Points (CP) must be achieved.

The course comprises the following modules:

- Research Methods and Data Analysis (20CP)
- Conservation Priorities (20CP)
- Geographical Information systems (20CP)
- Protected Species Surveying (20CP)
- Environmental Assessment and Consultancy (20CP)
- Species Recovery: Theories, Methods and Techniques (20CP)
- MSc Research Project (60CP)

The Fallback award of Postgraduate Certificate in Conservation is available to those

students who successfully completed 60CP at level 7 and met the associated outcomes, and who do not wish to proceed further on the course of MSc.
The interim award of PGDip Biodiversity Conservation is available to those who have completed 120 CP at level 7 and met the appropriate learning outcomes.

11. Admission to the course

The specific requirements normally required for entry on post graduate Biodiversity Conservation courses are:

- A minimum of 2:2 or equivalent honours degree.

In the absence of the above requirement, applicants will be considered according to the following criteria:

- Mature students with non-traditional qualifications at degree level and a minimum of 5 years experience in survey work and report writing, likely to be gained in biological records centre or ecological consultancy type work. Ideally a member of Institute of Ecology and Environmental Managers .

The assessment of these criteria will be via interview by the course leader, accompanied by the submission of a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate your prior experiential or certificated learning. The interview will be used to ascertain whether you have a sufficient background in appropriate academic areas to benefit from the course and whether the aims of the course are compatible with your aspirations.

If your first language is not English you must be competent in written and spoken English up to the following standard: IELTS 6.5 (minimum 6.0 in reading and writing), Paper-based TOEFL 560 (to include 5 or above in the Test for Written English [TWE]), Internet-Based TOEFL (IBT) 83 (with a writing score of 24).

12. Support for learning

You will be invited to attend an Induction event at the beginning of your course and all students at Nottingham Trent University have full access to Student Support Services. In addition, School-based pastoral support networks are in place to offer students support, guidance and advice on academic and personal issues. Where necessary, the Course team will liaise with University Student Support Services. Academic support will be available through the VLE as well as via tutorials.

Your progress will be formally monitored at two Examination Boards per year. You will also be regularly advised by your Project Supervisor. Supervisors will guide your progress throughout your course. For example, you will participate in research team

meetings (potentially across disciplines), individual meetings with research project supervisors and other contact or communication as appropriate.

University Accommodation Officers will provide you with information, guidance and continuing support regarding accommodation issues, such as halls of residence, private rented accommodation and the Landlord Approval Scheme. The Accommodation Services can be accessed through www.ntu.ac.uk.

You will be provided with a Student Handbook at the start of your course, which will provide an exhaustive list of useful contacts, course information and advice.

We want you to feel part of a learning community and every effort will be made to uphold this aim to the highest standards.

13. Graduate destinations/employability

The demand for high calibre conservationists has increased rapidly during the last decade and career opportunities exist within that discipline in the field of conservation.

Possible destinations for MSc students include:

Private Sector e.g.
Environmental and Ecological Consultancies
Engineering, landscaping and development firms
Employed as:
Environmental and Ecological Consultant
Biological surveyor
Ecologist
Media representative

Statutory e.g.
DEFRA
Natural England
Environment Agency
National Park Authorities

Employed as:
Biological recorder
Ecological advisor
Reserve warden and ranger
Biodiversity Officer
Species Officer

Charities e.g.
Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, National Trust,
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group,
Mammal Society, Peoples Trust for Endangered Species, Froglife, Butterfly Conservation, Plantlife.

Employed as: Conservation Officer, Reserve warden and ranger
Media representative

Education
Natural Environment Research Council, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research, Rothamstead Research, Field Studies Council

Employed as:
Research assistant
Environmental Education Officer

Alternatively, you may wish to continue in the field of research by seeking MPhil or PhD scholarships.

Staff in the School are actively involved in liaising with external agencies and industry to ensure the relevance of the course to the world of work. The University's Careers Service has an enviable reputation for finding our graduates employment and offers individual consultations.

14. Course standards and quality

Standards and quality are ensured on this course by a variety of different mechanisms. These include:

1. A course committee meeting which meets 3 times a year (Induction review, mid-year review and end of year review meetings), all of which include a student representative. One of the key tasks of this committee is to monitor student feedback on module delivery.
2. A system of student feedback attached to all of the modules
3. One external examiner who oversees all aspects of the course, including curriculum design and assessment of student work, culminating in an annual report on the standards and quality of the course.
4. A proportion of all student work submitted is double marked by and academic member of staff and read by the external examiner.
5. Annual course standard and quality reports (PSQR) is produced, and external examiners report is considered, and where changes to the course are detailed.
6. Application of NTU's Periodic School Review process.

15. Assessment regulations

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its Academic Standards and Quality Handbook). Any course-specific assessment features are described below:

The course complies with the University Common Assessment Regulations for taught postgraduate courses.

16.	**Additional Information**	
	Collaborative partner(s):	
	Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	
	Course recognised by:	
	Date this course specification approved:	April 2011
	Any additional information:	

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

	Basic Course Information	
1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Animal, Rural & Environmental Sciences / Brackenhurst Campus
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	MRes Biodiversity Conservation (FT & PT)
4.	Normal Duration:	1 year full-time or 2 years part time
5.	UCAS Code:	N/A

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The MRes in Biodiversity Conservation is designed to meet a growing need for highly skilled conservationists with academic qualifications at Masters level. The course aims to develop independent scientific researchers and to facilitate in-depth research to increase knowledge and application of the taxonomy and surveying of biodiversity conservation. The MRes course provides you with the opportunity to specialise in depth in one research area, to combine advanced research and academic skills with complementary applied science skills. It will also provide you with the skills required by employers within the environmental and ecological consulting and conservation professions.

You will develop into an independent researcher with a high level of responsibility, capable of critical thinking and of evaluating current research and advanced scholarship in biodiversity conservation.

7. Course outcomes

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic comprehensive knowledge of taxonomic and survey techniques used by conservation practitioners for their chosen specialist subject.

- Analyse current biodiversity conservation issues and priorities at local, national, European and global level and critically assess law and policy relating thereto in terms of its doctrinal and practical coherence
- Critically evaluate techniques used to survey a particular taxon and extrapolate from existing research and scholarship to identify new or revised approaches to surveying and the analysis of data
- Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in taxonomic and biodiversity studies
- Evaluate the rigour and validity of published research and assess its relevance to new situations
- Demonstrate the ability to recognise, apply and address ethical dilemmas and corporate social responsibility issues, applying ethical and organisational values to situations
- Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Skills, qualities and attributes
By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Demonstrate expertise in highly specialised and advanced research, technical, communication and professional skills
- Demonstrate the ability to acquire and analyse data and information, to evaluate their relevance and validity, and to synthesise a range of information in the context of new situations
- Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level
- Show critical awareness of current problems or issues within the discipline

8. **Teaching and learning methods**

You will experience a mixture of seminars, lectures, workshops, field and laboratory practical exercises and you will also have opportunities to present work to peers and academic staff.

Modules will be delivered in one of the first two semesters (October to January or February to May), and exact timetabling will depend on your optional module choice. The majority of Research Project work will take place between May and September. A substantial amount of field work will be used to allow practical identification and field survey techniques to be practised.

The two theory modules, Conservation Priorities and Research Methods and Data Analysis, will involve discussion and workshops to develop skills. For your research project you will spend additional time with your supervisor to enable you to develop a viable project.

Depending on the taught modules you choose, you will be carrying out directed study and research and you will continue to be supported via tutorials, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and e-mail contact. The course is designed to encourage independent learning and is structured to improve your ability to undertake high quality research and critical analysis. At NTU there is a strong culture of e-learning, and the well established NTU VLE will be used extensively to keep in contact and facilitate learning during non contact time for all modules.

Additional learning opportunities will be gained from the detailed formative and summative feedback given on all assessed work and feedback provided by peers.

9. Assessment methods

The course uses a variety of assessment methods to ensure that you can demonstrate your achievement of the course's learning outcomes. Subject knowledge and understanding is tested mainly through examinations, preparation of case studies and student-led seminars. The taught modules are assessed through a range of assessments including the collection of identified specimens and reports that evaluate different techniques used in the industry. There is a strong emphasis on the vocational nature of the course; as such the assessments are designed to be vocationally relevant and foster the advanced report writing skills required in the profession.

Assessed work will take one or more of the following forms:

Research Project

The research project dissertation will demonstrate your ability to research a chosen topic in depth, design and implement a relevant research project with some original aspects and communicate the findings to an informed audience in a comprehensive scientific report.

In addition, as an MRes student you will be required to defend your work in a Viva voce

Species Collections

You will be required to produce collections of flora and fauna if you choose to study of the optional Protected Species Surveying module .

Written assignments

These may be one or a combination of the following:

- scientific paper
- case study reports
- project proposals

These methods of assessment will allow you to demonstrate understanding, objective critical analysis skills and the ability to communicate findings in a scientific manner. This provides you with experience of writing scientific research for journals and wider publication. Case study reports will enable you to demonstrate your ability to apply scientific knowledge in practical situations.

Oral presentation

You will be assessed in in-depth knowledge and oral communication skills. This will take the form of:

- scientific presentations
- leading peer group seminars

You will be assessed on logical and coherent knowledge dissemination, appropriate to the form of communication. You will also be assessed on communication skills, use of aids (handouts, visual aids and use of props) and the ability to answer questions with knowledge and authority.

Written exam

This is a formal examination that requires you to draw from prior taught aspects of the module, and to demonstrate written communication, critical analysis and evaluation skills.

10. Course structure and curriculum

To achieve the award of MRes Biodiversity Conservation a total of 180 Credit Points (CP) must be achieved. This will comprise the two core modules (C), the Research Project, and a choice of one optional module (O)

The course comprises the following modules:

- Research Methods and Data Analysis (C, 20CP)
- Conservation Priorities (C, 20CP)
- Geographical Information systems (O, 20CP)
- Protected Species Surveying (O, 20CP)
- Environmental Assessment and Consultancy (O, 20CP)
- Species Recovery: Theories, Methods and Techniques (O, 20CP)
- MRes Research Project (120CP)

The Fallback award of Postgraduate Certificate in Conservation is available to those students who successfully completed 60CP at level 7 and met the associated

outcomes, and who do not wish to proceed further on the course of MRes.
The interim award of PGDip Biodiversity Conservation is available to those who have completed 120 CP at level 7 and met the appropriate learning outcomes.

11. Admission to the course

The specific requirements normally required for entry on MRes post graduate Biodiversity Conservation courses are:

- A minimum of 2:1 or equivalent honours degree.

In the absence of the above requirement, applicants will be considered according to the following criteria:

- Mature students with non-traditional qualifications at degree level and a minimum of 5 years experience of survey work and report writing, likely to be gained in biological records centre or ecological consultancy-type work. Ideally a member of Institute of Ecology and Environmental Managers.

The assessment of these criteria will be via interview by the course leader, accompanied by the submission of a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate your prior experiential or certificated learning. The interview will be used to ascertain whether you have a sufficient background in appropriate academic areas to benefit from the course and whether the aims of the course are compatible with your aspirations.

If your first language is not English you must be competent in written and spoken English up to the following standard: IELTS 6.5 (minimum 6.0 in reading and writing), Paper-based TOEFL 560 (to include 5 or above in the Test for Written English [TWE]), Internet-Based TOEFL (IBT) 83 (with a writing score of 24).

The overriding consideration will be the extent to which you are likely to succeed on the course and benefit from it.

12. Support for learning

You will be invited to attend an Induction event at the beginning of your course and all students at Nottingham Trent University have full access to Student Support Services. In addition, School based pastoral support networks are in place to offer students support, guidance and advice on academic and personal issues. Where necessary, the Course team will liaise with University Student Support Services. Academic support will be available through the VLE as well as via tutorials.

Your progress will be formally monitored at two Examination Boards per year. You will

also be regularly advised by your Project Supervisor. Supervisors will guide your progress throughout your course. For example, you will participate in research team meetings (potentially across disciplines), individual meetings with research project supervisors and other contact or communication as appropriate.

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We want you to feel part of a learning community and every effort will be made to uphold this aim to the highest standards.

13. Graduate destinations/employability

The demand for high calibre ecologists has increased rapidly during the last decade and career opportunities exist within that discipline in the field of conservation and surveying.

Possible destinations for MRes students include:
Private Sector e.g.
Environmental and Ecological Consultancies
Engineering, landscaping and development firms
Employed as:
Environmental and Ecological Consultant
Biological surveyor
Ecologist
Media representative

Statutory e.g.
DEFRA
Natural England
Environment Agency
National Park Authorities

Employed as:
Biological recorder
Ecological advisor
Reserve warden and ranger
Biodiversity Officer
Species Officer

Charities e.g.
Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, National Trust,
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group,
Mammal Society, Peoples Trust for Endangered Species, Froglife, Butterfly Conservation, Plantlife,

Employed as: Conservation Officer, Reserve warden and ranger
Media representative

Education
Natural Environment Research Council, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Institute for Grassland and Environmental Research, Rothamstead Research,
Field Studies Council

Employed as:
Research assistant
Environmental Education Officer

Alternatively, you may wish to continue in the field of research by seeking MPhil or PhD scholarships.

Staff in the School are actively involved in liaising with external agencies and industry to ensure the relevance of the course to the world of work. The University's Careers Service has an enviable reputation for finding our graduates employment and offers individual consultations.

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	Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	
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	Date this course specification approved:	April 2011
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