

## Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

<b>Basic Course Information</b>		
1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	Brackenhurst
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	BSc (Hons) Agriculture (FT and SW)
4.	Normal Duration:	3 years (FT) / 4 years (SW)
5.	UCAS Code:	D

### 6. **Overview and general educational aims of the course**

Agriculture is an essential industry providing food, fuel, fibre and energy for a growing global population. The BSc (Hons) Agriculture is an interdisciplinary course designed to provide you with the skills and knowledge required to work in the agricultural industry. The course prepares you to use innovative approaches to meet the challenges facing agriculture caused by environmental degradation, resource depletion and rising global demand for food.

You will develop a strong foundation in scientific, environmental, legislative and business principles involved in modern agriculture. You will be expected to work with stakeholders and to experience work-related activities as part of the curriculum and additional opportunities available. This course is specifically designed to enable students to make personalised study choices to open up career routes.

The BSc Agriculture aims to:

- provide you with the skills and knowledge to work within agriculture in a range of related roles
- develop your scientific, management and technical skills and knowledge to allow you to thrive in an exciting and varied industry, providing you with a competitive edge in an area with increasing career choice.
- provide you with an innovative and exciting course of study that offers numerous opportunities to experience industry practice.
- enable you to identify sustainable practice and seek innovative solutions to complex problems
- develop your expertise in research methods, data analysis and encourage critical thought and a problem-solving approach.

### 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:

1. Demonstrate thorough knowledge of crop and livestock production methods and of the underpinning scientific, technological, environmental, legislative and business principles involved in modern agriculture. **B**
2. Identify technological, economic, environmental, social and ethical problems encountered in agriculture and use creativity and innovation to find solutions. **B**
3. Evaluate new techniques of crop and animal production and assess their application in commercial practice. **B**
4. Address the issue of sustainability and the conflicting demands of commercial production, wildlife conservation and cultural value in a diverse landscape, recognising the broad environmental, social and political issues affecting management of landscapes. **B**

### **Skills, qualities and attributes**

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

5. Demonstrate the ability to communicate with a range of stakeholders in written, graphical, electronic and verbal forms, effectively responding to the views of others. **B**
6. Demonstrate personal, academic and career development skills for lifelong learning by effective use of reflective practice. **B**
7. Demonstrate appropriate independent research skills, an evidenced-based approach, the capacity for critical thought and self-directed learning for the investigation and problem-solving of issues in agriculture. **B**

**QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Science (2016) has been used to inform course learning outcomes identified with B.**

### **8. Learning and teaching methods**

The teaching and learning in the first year of the course is designed to support all levels of practical skills and knowledge, with group activities, farm visits, guest speaker sessions, seminars and work-related learning to build confidence and experience. To support all learners, a number of opportunities have been embedded within the curriculum, including practical lambing and calving experience, volunteering on the farm and in the research facilities, speaker and networking events with industry stakeholders.

In all modules, lectures are supported by group exercises, seminars and discussion. Group exercises emphasise the importance of acquiring competence in the application of the fundamental scientific principles, farm management practices and the development of the skills and capabilities required to work within the agricultural sector. These are focused around problem-solving and are student-led and focused on particular issues facing the profession and these may be structured as debates and discussions with stakeholders.

Work Related Learning (WRL) features throughout the course including farm management planning and consultancy projects where you utilise information from real farms to e.g analyse breeding records, produce farm accounts and fertiliser regimes, meeting the standards expected in the agricultural industry. You will visit farms and agricultural research stations, guest speaker events and you will be expected to organise a mini-conference in year 2. These activities will help broaden your practical experience, improve key 'transferable skills' commonly referred to as team working, communication and problem solving and help to develop self-efficacy, employability and career management skills.

You will be gathering data for various purposes from the field, laboratory and farm; these are used across all levels of the course and will give you experience in hypothesis testing, experimental design, data collection and interpretation. A final year individual research project allows you to specialise in an area of agriculture that particularly interests you. Often, research is undertaken on the University farm or other farms where there is access to the site for data gathering and analysis. The course team have been in discussion with employees of the National Trust and they are keen to allow NTU students access to data from their farms, and potentially you may be allowed to make decisions about the management of a National Trust farm.

Team work is a fundamental part of any working activity and is developed in a number of modules, for example Contemporary Issue in Agriculture, Farm Business Performance and Land Use Ecology modules at level 5, and Business Management at level 6. The course emphasises independent learning and is structured to facilitate

greater learner autonomy by the final year. You are encouraged to undertake independent reading to supplement and consolidate what is being taught.

You can personalise your course through the options you choose, and a number of the assessments which allow you to choose a topic, allowing you to focus on specific aspects of the industry that interest you, including the choice of dissertation topic.

The modules are designed to facilitate personal and career development and you will be encouraged to recognise and link your own motivations, interest and competencies and demonstrate your career management skills. There is a strong emphasis on reflective practice built throughout the course and you will record and reflect on the range of activities undertaken in an eportfolio which is submitted as a formative assessment at the end of years 1 and 2 and towards the end of the course as the summative synoptic assessment.

## 9. **Assessment methods**

You will be provided with an assessment and feedback schedule at the start of each academic year. This is presented during induction alongside library and tutorial sessions on assessments. All the detailed assessment briefs and the module assessment scheme is provided on the NOW module learning room.

A range of assessment methods has been selected to allow you to demonstrate your level of attainment appropriate to the learning outcomes. Methods include: examinations; dissertation; individual and group projects (with individual submissions); posters; scientific reports; analysis and presentation of numerical and graphical information; farm accounts and a farm business plan.

Knowledge acquisition at Levels 4 and 5 is assessed partly through examinations, but at each level there is independent project work to encourage critical thought.

At Level 6 assessments involve a greater emphasis on independent research and critical evaluation in order to develop research proposals and management recommendations. These are used to develop skills and to differentiate between the levels of attainment of individual students. The synoptic assessment forms part of the Dissertation module in the final year.

The research skills are assessed in each year of the course, with secondary research using farm data at Level 4 during Livestock Reproduction and Genetics, then at Level 5 in Experimental Design and Analysis. The course ultimately increases the level of autonomy and difficulty leading to the research project at Level 6 in the form of the Dissertation.

Formative assessments are used to support you to achieve in summative assessments. Examples such as practice reports, seminar presentations and farm costings exercises will help develop your numerical, study and communication skills without contributing to the module grades. Each module is assessed through both formative and summative assessment, where the formative assessment is designed to allow you to develop your skills and to contribute to improved summative performance. You will be provided with valuable feedback in the form of a matrix, and you may also be provided with audio files with verbal feedback to support understanding. Feedback is provided within three weeks of the submission date for both formative and summative assessment.

## 10. **Course structure and curriculum**

### **Course Structure**

#### **Level 4**

Livestock Production Systems (20 credits)

Crop Production Systems (20 credits)

Plant and Soil Science (20 credits)

Applied Anatomy and Physiology (20 credits)

Introduction to the Agricultural Industry (20 credits)

Livestock Reproduction and Genetics (20 credits)

**Level 5**

Contemporary Issues in Agriculture (20 credits)

Experimental Design and Data Analysis (20 credits)

Livestock Nutrition and Health (20 credits)

Crop Nutrition, Health and Protection (20 credits)

Land Use Ecology (20 credits)

**Plus choice of one module from:**

Farm Business Performance (20 credits)

Applied Habitat Management (20 credits)

GIS and Spatial Analysis (20 credits)

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**Industrial Placement Option**

36 weeks placement leading to a *Placement Diploma in Professional Practice* taken between Level 5 and Level 6.

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**Level 6**

Dissertation (40 credits)

Sustainable Management of the Agricultural Environment (20 credits)

Advances in Livestock and Crop Production (20 credits)

**Plus choice of two modules from:**

Business Management (20 credits)

Global Agriculture and Food Security (20 credits)

Ecosystem Ecology (20 credits)

Innovations in Energy (20 credits)

Remote Sensing (20 credits)

(Please note that occasionally we may not be able to offer an option in a given year.)

**Industry Placement**

You are encouraged to undertake the industrial placement opportunities between Levels 5 and 6, and to work in the industry during holidays and at weekends (either paid or voluntarily).

The placements focus on developing employment skills and a deeper understanding of the chosen sector of industry. You will acquire transferable skills through placement work, as well as the chance to achieve a professional development qualification.

Students who complete at least 36 weeks of supervised work experience will be eligible for a Placement Diploma in Professional Practice award. Students who satisfactorily complete between 6 and 35 weeks of supervised work experience will be eligible for a Placement Certificate in Professional Practice.

Those students who do not undertake a formal placement will be able to undertake work on farms during the course of their studies, this may be within modules or in the form of shorter placements out of term time or by part time work.

## 11. Admission to the course

### Entry requirements

Applicants should have 112 UCAS tariff points from 3 A level equivalents ( including a science) which will normally include:

- A-Levels at BBC

or

- BTEC Extended Diploma MMP,

or

- 112 UCAS Tariff points from three A level equivalents

and

- GCSE Grade 4 and above in Mathematics and English where not covered at Advanced level.

Applicants without A level will have their qualifications assessed for subject compatibility. Prior experience of relevant employment or study not leading to formal qualification is considered on an individual basis.

### International students:

Qualifications which would normally qualify for access to Higher Education in the country of residence will be considered by the admissions team. English language competency is a requirement of all NTU courses, equivalent to:

- IELTS 6.0 (Minimum writing score 6.0)
- TOEFL 520 (minimum writing score 5.0)
- IBT 83 (minimum writing score 24)

### NTIC Progression

The course will be included in the suite of courses that have been approved as progression routes from the Life Sciences pathway delivered by NTIC.

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

## 12. Support for learning

### Comprehensive induction

The academic year begins with a pre-teaching induction week (Welcome Week), which includes induction to the course at the start of the first year. This gives an overview of the way the course runs and includes introductions to IT and library resources and to the range of student support services. When fully enrolled, you will have electronic access to the University's Virtual Learning Environment (NOW), which gives you access to comprehensive current information on both module support and University regulations.

The course facilitates early social integration to support peer relations and a sense of course community through a series of Welcome Workshops and Course Team sessions, coordinated by the Collaborative Engagement and Retention Team (CERT). These workshops are run by trained professional, academic staff and student mentors and evidence suggests that the Welcome Workshops have a significant effect on students' sense of community, agency and awareness of University support systems, especially for those from the most disadvantaged groups.

### Support for students

Students are able to seek academic support from both module leaders and their personal tutor through electronic communication and during office hours, which allows one to one contact between the students and tutors. Study skills are delivered through library sessions and these can also be developed in tutorials at each level. The University Student Support Services offer extensive advice and guidance on a

range of issues, e.g. financial problems, learning needs and disability and personal problems.

### **Personal Tutorials**

You are allocated a personal tutor from the first week. The personal tutor will meet with you on an individual basis twice in the first term, and once a term after that. The personal tutor will support your learning, giving you advice on where to go to access specific help and they will also check that you are settling into student-life whether in halls of residence or elsewhere. The high quality mentoring system is designed to provide you with increasing confidence to tackle a range of challenges during your time here at Nottingham Trent University. Your tutor will encourage you to set realistic academic goals and to review your assessment feedback to ensure that you make the most of the formative assessment enabling you to progress successfully through the course, and achieve your potential.

Personal tutors provide clear and effective links with NTU Student Support Services at the outset so that those students with Statements of Access can be given appropriate support alongside their studies. The personal tutor will also signpost further advice and guidance on a range of issues, e.g. financial, support for learning, disability and mental health.

### **CERT Mentors**

During the first term of your study you will also have access to student CERT mentors whose role is to be a friendly face, helping you to feel part of NTU.

### **Assessment Feedback**

Tutors provide written feedback on all assessed coursework. Where appropriate, this may be supplemented by oral feedback. Individual feedback will be provided within 3 weeks of the submission of assessments.

## **13. Graduate destinations/employability**

Graduates from the course could be employed in a range of jobs, these include farm managers, researchers, precision agriculture technology specialists and farm conservation advisors.

Throughout the course, you are engaged in work-related learning and career development learning to help you acquire knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes which will equip you to manage your career in the agriculture sector. The course has been carefully designed to enable you to explore a range of opportunities and develop specialist knowledge in relevant industry areas.

Work Related Learning (WRL) features throughout the course including farm management planning and consultancy projects where students utilise information from real farms to e.g analyse breeding records, produce farm accounts and fertiliser regimes, meeting standards expected in the agricultural industry. Students will experience visits to farms and agricultural research stations, guest speaker events and they will be expected to organise a mini-conference. These activities will help broaden the students' practical experience, improve key 'transferable skills' commonly referred to as team working, communication and problem solving and help to develop self-efficacy, employability and career management skills.

The Employability team based at Brackenhurst work closely with the course team and they will fully support you with a range of workshops, personal and professional development opportunities and support work experience and placements.

It is widely recognised that graduates need to develop employability and career management skills in order to enter and thrive in the workplace (Kumar, 2007) and both in-curriculum and co-curricular workshops have been carefully scaffolded to ensure supportive and timely personal and professional development activities are offered for students at every level of study. 'Emponline' is a bespoke online portal which offers additional employability and students who are off campus may access this through their NTU log in and allows learners to further personalise their career development learning.

In addition to the expertise available within the School, the University offer advice and guidance from 'The Hive', Nottingham Trent University's purpose-built Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise. Their role is to help turn business ideas into a reality through support networks, mentoring and training programmes as well as delivering expert entrepreneurship education.

#### 14. **Course standards and quality**

Quality management is implemented through a number of mechanisms involving the Course Committee, the School Academic and Standards Quality Committee (SASQC), overseen by Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ). Each year SASQC delivers the School Quality and Enhancement Plan, which identifies priorities for the School to drive continuous improvements in the quality of delivery.

Throughout the degree, course standards and quality are reviewed in response to feedback from students, staff, and industry representatives.

- End of module reviews (Evasys) are used to capture feedback from students, with responses provided by the Module Leader on the NOW learning room.
- End of year course reviews are used to capture student feedback at Course level, with a response provided by the Course Leader via NOW.
- Termly Course Committee Meetings, attended by student representatives for each year, the academic teaching team, and representatives from wider support teams, provide an opportunity for feedback and discussion on course delivery and development.
- The course provision, including assessments from Levels 5 and 6, is reviewed annually by the External Examiner. They submit a report commenting on the standards and quality of the course, and the work they have reviewed.
- In addition to these formal systems, tutorials and conversations with students provide a more informal means of gathering student feedback, and enabling staff to address issues as they arise, if appropriate.
- Representatives from industry (for example governing bodies, employers, and research groups) have fed into plans for the FdSc Horticulture course regarding the requirements of graduates, and upskilling of students.

The outcomes of the above inform an annual course standards and quality report. The course is reviewed for currency on a three year cycle, with an action plan developed to ensure relevance and continued high standards and annual interim reports.

Quality Assurance Agency subject benchmarks have informed the course Learning Outcomes, and the development of the desirable attributes of a NTU graduate are fully embedded within the curriculum. Further enhancements or alterations to the course will be discussed with students across the levels and used to inform proposals.

Subject expertise is maintained by staff involvement in areas of research and development within the equestrian industry. Staff are research active, and leaders in their field – presenting at conferences and training events internationally.

The course is run in accordance with the University Procedures. Overall responsibility for Course management will lie with the Head of Department (HoD) for Environmental Sciences with the HoD being supported by the Student Academic Experience Manager and the Course Leader. Module Leaders are responsible for the day-to-day running of each module and work in conjunction with the Course Leader to ensure the provision of a cohesive, relevant and valued Foundation degree course. Student representatives are elected to attend Course Committee meetings and/or provide feedback to the Course Leader. CERT mentors support the course in delivering objectives set by the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences e.g. student induction, tutorials and informal queries. Collectively students, Module Leaders, Admissions Tutor, Course Leader, Student Academic Experience Manager and the HoD strive to provide an environment in which issues and concerns can be addressed.

Moderation of assessments are carried out in line with the NTU Academic Standards and Quality Handbook and the School's Internal Review of Assessment Policy. All exam papers are internally verified and reviewed by the Course team and externally verified by the External Examiner. All assignment briefs are internally verified by members of the Course Team. All summative work is assessed through anonymous marking where possible, and internal moderation of grades is carried out by the

<p>course team, where a minimum of 10 scripts is reviewed. Where there are fewer than 10 students in a cohort, all scripts are reviewed. All modules at Levels 5 and 6 are reviewed by the External Examiner.</p>	
<p>15. <b>Assessment regulations</b></p>	<p>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:</p>
<p>This course is bound by the University Common Assessment Regulations.</p> <p>The award classification will be calculated using 20% of the aggregate mark for level 5 and 80% of the aggregate grade at level 6.</p>	
<p>16. <b>Additional information</b></p>	<p>Collaborative partner(s): <b>None</b></p> <p>Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements: <b>Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Science (2016)</b></p> <p>Course recognised by:</p> <p>Date this course specification approved:</p>
<p><b>Any additional information:</b></p>	