

University of Plymouth
Academic Registry, Partnerships

Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College



Programme Specification

BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour Welfare and Conservation Top Up
8039/8040

Start Date: September 2025

Date of First Award:
2026 Full Time
2027 Part Time

Date of Approval
May 2025

1. Programme Overview

Programme Title:	BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour Welfare and Conservation Top Up
Exit Award(s):	BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour Welfare and Conservation
Faculty/school/Partner:	Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College
Delivery location:	Kingston Maurward campus
Mode of delivery:	Taught, face to face, full time and part time
Level of qualification:	Level 6
Programme duration: Full/Part-time	Full time: 1 years/ Part time: 2 years
Programme Entry Points:	Level 6
QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s):	QAA Subject benchmark statement for Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2019)
UCAS code:	D401
HECOS code(s):	100518, 100522, 101318

[The QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)
[OfS Quality and Standards](#)

2. Brief description of the programme (max 2 paragraphs):

This Level 6 Honours Top-Up programme will specifically provide progression for Foundation degree and HND students to prepare them for employment in a range of professional contexts requiring graduate level skills within the animal industry, locally, within the UK and abroad.

Unlike many Level 6 there is a high level of practical or applied skills within this programme. Practical skills include field skills for behavioural observation and experimental design to assess animal cognition. There are also applied animal industry skills in education and marketing in developing well-managed animal collections.

It provides a potential route for 'non-traditional' students drawn from a variety of academic backgrounds to progress from a Foundation degree or HND to a full Honours degree in a subject area often oversubscribed. The programme is taught at the Kingston Maurward campus, Dorchester with access to two animal collections (one open to the public) including large animal, small mammal, aquatics, avian species and exotics across 80-90 species. The campus includes a 750 acre estate with working farm, as well as teaching laboratories that form part of programme delivery as well. Theory lessons are taught in a state-of-the-art University Centre with dedicated teaching and study space for higher education learners.

3. Professional Accrediting Body (if applicable, and date of accreditation renewal):

N/A

4. Teaching and Learning (indicate how a range of teaching and learning methods are used, related to learning outcomes):

5.

The design and delivery of this programme aims to meet the strategies aims of both Weymouth Kingston Maurward College and that of University of Plymouth. Kingston Maurward campus has a mission to inspire its students 'to achieve their potential and thrive in a challenging but caring environment, enjoying exciting learning and high quality facilities within a vibrant commercial rural estate.' This programme is designed to provide a practical, land-based degree level programme that develop real industry skills. It also allies strongly with University of Plymouth's Education and Student Experience Strategy to support transformative, multi-disciplinary and inclusive learning. The programme is a key provision for the local Dorset population to access higher education within the county, where they might not otherwise have opportunity. As noted in section 2, the programme provides practical and applied skills for the animal industry for fieldwork, scientific investigation and collections operational management. The programme delivery is both academic and practical with opportunities for a high variety of teaching methods, including a high degree of applied and practical learning.

Knowledge and Understanding

Core knowledge and understanding is acquired through lectures, practical sessions, and tutorials: A1-A5. There will be frequent industrial visits throughout the year (A2, A3, A5) which will include visits to local and distant animal enterprises and using the College campus estate as a resource. Students will also be expected to use published sources to investigate a range of key concepts: A1-A5.

The programme takes distinct steps to integrate application of knowledge and understanding with practical learning to meet learner needs. A highly varied approach is taken in all lessons to use group and individual work, alongside discussion and active research to develop a distinctly inclusive learning environment.

Assessments take a variety of forms, but still along an applied or practical theme. Reports are linked to fieldwork or investigations, that may also be evidenced with video or photo diaries. Wider skills and as well learning outcome are evidenced in portfolio work, and some assessment develops verbal presentation skills. The research Dissertation is the key source of development in academic writing.

Intellectual skills

Intellectual skills are acquired through the teaching and learning methods outlined above. At this level self-directed learning and independent reading are

fundamental to academic progression and development. This is fostered within the seminar/academic tutorial framework that supports formal lectures.

The intellectual skills are assessed through verbal examinations, presentations and coursework, where students will need to critically analyse and evaluate data, either from sources or from their own data collection projects. B1 will be extensively assessed through specific modules such as the research dissertation and modules that will need to include broader perspectives. This will include the Role of Modern Collections, Advanced Collections Management and Wildlife Population Recovery. The dissertation unit develops aspects of B2-B5, but opportunity to apply these for these is also gained through applied subjects such as Behavioural Ecology and Animal Ecology, where student will need to complete individual or group projects leading to analysis and evaluation.

Practical skills

Practical skills on this programme are often industry skills in novel areas such as marketing and presentation skills in collections management. This also includes developing engaging educational materials and activities. In Animal Cognition learners will need to summarise and justify arguments (C5, C6)

Dissertation and project work in Animal Cognition and Behavioural Ecology will meet C1-C5 through practical investigations *in-situ* and *ex-situ*. Practical industry skills are evidenced through assessment using the creation of engaging educational materials and marketing presentations designed to influence stakeholders in collections management.

Analytical and data interpretation skills

Analytical and data interpretation skills are developed through the range of teaching and learning strategies outlined above. Students are required to undertake an analytical approach to the data and information they find and present in assessment. Regular feedback on assignments and in tutorials in addition to the seminar process allows students to develop both their understanding and ability to communicate their ideas.

The independent Research Dissertation and the project work in Behavioural Ecology and Animal Cognition are key to developing data analysis skills developed at Level 5, but there is scope for data analysis (C5) in all assessments to evidence critical evaluation of prior research.

Communication skills

All teaching, learning and assessment used in the programme will contribute to the students' skills in this area. However, the assessment of the Research Dissertation includes all elements of written and oral presentation in its assessment. The other units all use aspects of summarising and presenting in written and verbal forms. These may include industry-based documents (e.g. grant proposal), or marketing or educational activities (C1, C6).

Digital Literacy and social media skills

The course has clear expectation on the submission of coursework using digital techniques and software. All submissions are completed electronically and feedback is given via VLE platforms. The VLE is also a platform that provides supporting information to subjects and students are expected to use this as a resource to inform their learning and assessment. Access to journal and research articles is predominantly accessed through on-line search engines and libraries and students would develop skills in accessing and using these on-line sources during the programme. The use of social media has particular application to the dissertation as many students complete research using technology and digital platforms that are often made accessible through social media for marketing presentations and educational activities.

Interpersonal and Teamwork Skills

The independent research dissertation will require interpersonal skills to work with a supervisor appropriately to support their project aims. The nature of some projects may require working with others such as key contacts in industry bodies, or technical staff in the college and other collections for access to records, animals or other resources. Other modules with project work e.g. Behavioural Ecology, Animal Cognition require skills in team work and leading others in tasks towards skills in this area (D1, D2). The subject areas across the programme include a high level of concepts and ethical constructs that will lead students to need to respect and recognise the view of others (D3).

Self-management and professional development skills

Ethical and moral issues linked to animal welfare are a fundamental part of the course, but also the Research Dissertation must be conducted under ethical protocols, and also any professional codes of conduct applicable. This is also a key part of conducting fieldwork for Behavioural Ecology and Animal Cognition (D4). At Level 6 there is a clear expectation for independent learning in all subjects (D1, D2, D4) but the Dissertation unit requires independent project work and supervision provides guidance towards setting goals and constructing timescales to ensure that this project is achieved successfully and in a timely fashion. Supervision of project work will aim to identify personal strengths and weaknesses to enable students to effectively manage their time to meet project goals (D1, D4)

Teaching involves predominantly task-oriented lessons where learners are encouraged to critical thinking. A part of this process may involve activities whereby learners are provided with challenges in advance of the lesson, to have the opportunity to think and research before discussing amongst peers. Teaching may therefore involve elements of online activities for a blended learning style (where suitable to do so).

In modules, where independent learning is the focal intent, such as the Dissertation, Behavioural Ecology and Animal Cognition, the teaching takes a mentor/coaching approach to steer learners towards self-actualisation.

Lessons are also encouraged to focus on real-world application for authenticity, and where possible, engage in practical activity. Learners are encouraged to reflect on their current skills and direction they wish to take their learning due to the broadness of the programme (e.g. learners could focus on, but are not limited to, exotics, domestics, animals in the wild, or animals in captivity).

The programme has optional modules, though learners are welcome to attend sessions and activities for a holistic learning experience.

6. Assessment methods (indicate how a range of assessment methods are used to enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes):

The assessment strategy is designed for authenticity and engagement in learners. In some cases, there will be the traditional report, presentation, or poster format. However, there is an emphasis for assessments to mirror industry tasks/ documentation or to analyse the outcomes of practical tasks or investigations. Module leads are challenged to be creative, and, liaise with industry for ideas, to develop assessments. The use of authentic assessment is used to develop industry skills, and also negate the impact of emerging technology such as AI in student assessment.

A key distinctive feature of the programme is the practical nature of some modules, and the use of 'authentic' assessments. These features prepare graduates for entry into the animal management industry with experience of both practical elements of the subject and experience of industry standard documentation or formats. Examples include:

- Grant Proposals
- Business/ marketing plans
- Preparing forms used for surveying or assessment in industry
- Educational materials
- Academic Posters
- Portfolios of evidence demonstrating industry standards

Alongside the practical nature of some elements of the programme the programme still retains key elements of a science degree. Several modules promote and assessment skills in scientific investigation and data analysis. These activities include:

- Data collection through field work and desk based studies
- Analysis of direct data collections, including statistical testing
- Application of a range of scientific methods in conservation and behaviour
- Application of literature reviews to plan investigations

The programme is designed to allow students on the programme to select modules to follow career routes for both employment and preparation for postgraduate study.

The option modules allow pathways in Collection Management or an Animal Behaviour route. Students can select options from either pathway but it is expected that students will aim to follow particular routes. The options are as follows:

Collection Management	Animal Behaviour
Advanced Collection Management	Animal Cognition

Assessment design follows University of Plymouth's Assessment Policy and Guidance. This is met by the following elements of assessment design:

- Use of authentic assessment that reflect industry tasks, documents or skills
- Elements of choice in assessment such as electing to use preferred or elected species or habitat or techniques.
- Choice in evidence in some assessments, such video or image diaries, or flexibility in reflective portfolio presentation
- There is a clear procedure for reasonable adjustments to adapt assessments as appropriate
- There are summative and formative feedback processes in place to allow verbal feedback as well as written via Turnitin/ MS Teams if appropriate
- All modules include 1-1 opportunity for students for formative feedback on assessment with their delivery.
- Clear expectation on teaching staff to provide pre-assessment guidance to clarify what is required

7. Admissions Criteria:

Applicants should confirm their ability to study on a Foundation Degree by presenting evidence of:

- a) achievement of 240 credits to Level 5 in a suitable subject or qualification:
 - I. Foundation degree in Animal Behaviour Welfare and Conservation, or equivalent
 - II. HND in Animal or Equine Management
 - III. 240 credits to Level 5 achieved in suitable subjects such as Animal Behaviour, Welfare and Conservation. At least 120 Credits should have been achieved at Level 5.

International students required to meet IELTS (Academic) 6.0 or above (with minimum 5.5 in each component)

b) Potentially suitable students may be interviewed so that their interest, motivation and academic suitability can be assessed.

Any additional requirements to be listed below:

Potentially suitable students may be interviewed so that their interest, motivation and academic suitability can be assessed

8. Programme structure diagrams*

* the diagrams below can be amended but will need to include the information shown.

Full-time Course Structure:

Module code	Module title	Stage of study	Credits	Level	semester
WEYM3009	Independent Research Dissertation	3	40	6	1 & 2
WEYM3007	Animal Cognition	3	20	6	1
WEYM3011	Wildlife Population Recovery	3	20	6	1
WEYM3010	The Role of Modern Collections	3	20	6	1
WEYM3008	Behavioural Ecology	3	20	6	2
WEYM3006	Advanced Collections Management	3	20	6	2

Part-time Course Structure:

Module code	Module title	Stage of study	Credits	Level	semester
WEYM3009	Independent Research Dissertation	4	40	6	1 & 2
WEYM3007	Animal Cognition	4	20	6	1
WEYM3011	Wildlife Population Recovery	3	20	6	1
WEYM3010	The Role of Modern Collections	3	20	6	1
WEYM3008	Behavioural Ecology	3	20	6	2
WEYM3006	Advanced Collections Management	4	20	6	2

9. Programme Aims:

The primary aim of this programme is to provide a clear progression route from the FdSc Animal Behaviour Welfare Conservation at Kingston Maurward to a full honours degree.

The programme aims to building on the core learning from the foundation degree. The programme intends to allow students to develop:

- Application in concepts in the three core areas of Welfare, Behaviour and Conservation
- practical and professional skills with underpinning knowledge within the animal industries, particularly collections management and conservation;
- scientific concepts and sound knowledge of animal science that can be applied in practical contexts.

The programme intends to develop wider skills to include:

- The ability to synthesise objective opinions, recommendations and solutions from prior learning in response to new situations and challenges;
- Demonstrating skills and knowledge for further academic study at post graduate level;
- Displaying communication and managerial skills that can be applied within the animal industry;
- Using ICT skills to use a variety of platforms and methods successfully;
- marketable and transferable skills to seek alternative employment in related industries.

10. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

Under “Module Code(s)” list the modules or modules in which each learning outcome is primarily assessed.

A. Knowledge and Understanding			
LO	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code(s)	Module Learning outcomes
A1	Critically analyse the relationship between environmental and evolutionary pressures and the subsequent impact of each on the development of species-specific behaviours;	WEYM3007 WEYM3010 WEYM3008	1 1 1,2
A2	Relate underpinning knowledge of the study of animal behaviour, welfare and conservation	WEYM3009 WEYM3010 WEYM3007 WEYM3008 WEYM3011	1 1,2,5 1,2,3 1 2
A3	Critically evaluate the role of field research and animal collections in conservation including captive breeding and reintroduction	WEYM3010 WEYM3008 WEYM3011	1,2,3,5 1 1
A4	Apply a critical understanding of animal cognition and self-awareness principles of animal behaviour, welfare, and conservation in non-human species	WEYM3007 WEYM3008	1 2
A5	Critically evaluate techniques to successfully manage animal collections to meet their diverse aims and objectives alongside welfare and husbandry considerations.	WEYM3006 WEYM3010	1,2 1,2

B. Cognitive and Intellectual skills			
LO	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code(s)	Module Learning outcomes
B1	apply knowledge based well beyond the directly taught programme	WEYM3009 WEYM3010 WEYM3011	1,2 2 1,2,3
B2	demonstrate thorough understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles as well as in-depth understanding of more specialised areas	WEYM3009 WEYM3006 WEYM3010 WEYM3008 WEYM3007	1,2,3 2 5 1,2 2,3
B3	demonstrate the ability to define problems, devise and evaluate possible solutions, and to solve both routine and unfamiliar problems confidently	WEYM3009 WEYM3006 WEYM3010 WEYM3008 WEYM3007	1,5 3,4 4,6 3 2,3,4
B4	seek out, analyse, synthesise, summarise and critically evaluate information	WEYM3009 WEYM3006 WEYM3010 WEYM3011	4,8 3 3 3,4
B5	show a well-developed ability to integrate lines of evidence from a wide range of sources to formulate and test hypotheses	WEYM3009 WEYM3008 ACOG WEYM3011	2,3 2,3 2,3 4,5
C. Practical and Employment related skills			
LO	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code(s)	Module Learning outcomes
C1	suggest, plan, conduct and present an independent investigation using appropriate support from a supervisor	WEYM3009 WEYM3007 WEYM3008	1,5 3,4,5 3
C2	relate investigations to prior work, be aware of recent research developments and reference it appropriately	WEYM3009 WEYM3010 WEYM3008 WEYM3007 WEYM3011	3,4 3,4,5 3 2,3,4 4,5,6
C3	Demonstrate practical competence in a range of fieldwork and monitoring techniques using relevant equipment and demonstrating safe working practices	WEYM3009 WEYM3007 WEYM3008	2 4,5 3,4,5
C4	describe clearly and record accurately both in situ and ex situ	WEYM3007 WEYM3008	4,5 4

C5	interpret practical results perceptively and present research findings effectively in a number of formats	WEYM3009 WEYM3007 WEYM3008	8 4,5,6 4,5
C6	demonstrate effective practical skills to create engaging presentations, and industry relevant marketing and educational materials	WEYM3009 WEYM3006 WEYM3010 WEYM3007	7,9 2,3,4,5,6 4,6 6
D. Key and Transferable skills			
LO	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code(s)	Module Learning outcomes
D1	demonstrate proficiency in project planning, including the ability to plan and implement fieldwork for successful completion;	WEYM3009 WEYM3006 WEYM3007 WEYM3008	1,5,6 3,6 4,5 3
D2	select, justify and apply a range of appropriate methods to solve challenging problems in an authentic manner	WEYM3009 WEYM3006 WEYM3010 WEYM3007 WEYM3008 WEYM3011	5 4,5 6,7 4,5 5 5,6
D3	Synthesise actions to affect change within industry with consideration for issues from a wide range of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives	WEYM3009 WEYM3007 WEYM3010 WEYM3011	1,2 6 3,4,5,6,7 4,5,6
D4	manage their own motivation, tasks and behaviour in enterprising, innovative and professionally appropriate ways	WEYM3009 WEYM3006 WEYM3010 WEYM3007	5,6 5,6 6,7 4,5

11. Placement Opportunities (if applicable):

n/a

12. Any additional costs:

There will be an additional cost towards industry visits and study tours.

Day tours from £10 - 20

Study Tours can range from £200 to £300 per person

Students should ensure they have a device they can regularly bring to college to support their studies as part of the University Centre Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy.

Students will also be required to have access to suitable PPE for practical classes. This includes cargo trousers and polo top or similar, or overalls, and Steel Toe boots.

Students should ensure that piercings can be removed or covered during practical classes.

Students may wish to purchase some textbooks and a reading list is provided for each module. It is not a requirement to obtain these texts and they are available via the Learning Resources Centre (LRC). The LRC, and other areas of college have printing/ photocopying facilities to students can use. However, there are charges for these services of 5p per A4 B&W page/ 8p per A3 B&W page/ 18p per A4 Colour page/ 35p per A3 Colour page.

Students should bring their own stationery for classes, but the LRC does hold a small stock of stationery items for purchase if needed.

13. Non-standard regulations and date approved:

The Independent Research Dissertation module is 40 Credits in weighting.

14. Progression opportunities:

This programme is designed as the primary route for progression from the FD in Animal Behaviour Welfare Conservation at UCKM

There is eligibility for other foundation degrees in related subjects, as well as progression for students on Pearson BTEC HND in Animal Management.

Progression from the programme, outside of employment, will be into appropriate postgraduate study such as taught or research masters programmes. Subjects could include Animal Welfare, Animal Behaviour, Wildlife and Conservation and Anthrozoology.

15. Transitional arrangements for existing students (if applicable):

Students currently completing an HND at Level 5 in 2024-25 are expected to be candidates for the first cohort for this programme in 2025-26, as they still meet entry criteria.

Any students on the existing BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour Welfare Conservation Top Up (validated by the OU) that are required to resit any assessment to complete their award, will be able to do so on their current programme as per OU regulations to complete any awards in September 2025.

Any students that are required to repeat any modules from the current BSc (Hons) Top Up listed will be considered for transfer on a case-by-case basis. There is considerable parity between the BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour Welfare Conservation Top Up (validated by the OU) and this version to allow this. The [University of Plymouth Academic Regulations](#) will be followed in these instances, as follows, in summary:

Where a student fails one or more taught modules the Award Assessment Board may:

- award compensation in a maximum number of credits (as set out by the regulations), and make an award based on the aggregate mark achieved.
- allow the student to be referred in the module(s), in whole or in part of each element of assessment, at the next available opportunity; a student may be referred in up to 60 credits
- allow the student to repeat the module(s), with or without attendance, by a date to be determined by the Board. **If attendance is required, learners will be able to infill with relevant modules.**
- require the student to withdraw from the programme and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements;
- require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented them from making academic progress in the previous session, to interrupt studies or withdraw from the programme.
- require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent them from meeting the learning outcomes of their programme to transfer to an alternative programme, or withdraw from the programme and be granted the appropriate exit or aegrotat award.

16. Additional points

n/a