UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

Course Specification

Published Date:	01-May-2026
Produced By:	Multi Type Usr Record For All Personnel
Status:	Validated

Core Information

Awarding Body / Institution:	University of Wolverhampton		
School / Institute:	School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences		
Course Code(s):	AB033S01UM AB033S31UM	Full-time Part-time	1 Years 2 Years
UCAS Code:			
Course Title:	HNC Animal Behaviour and Wildlife Conservation		
Hierarchy of Awards:	Higher National Certificate Animal Behaviour and Wildlife Conservation		
Language of Study:	English		
Date of DAG approval:	14/Sep/2026		
Last Review:	2025/6		
Course Specification valid from:			
Course Specification valid to:			

Academic Staff

Course Leader:	Dr Christopher Young
Head of Department:	

Course Information

Location of Delivery:	University of Wolverhampton
Category of Partnership:	Standard Provision (Not delivered in partnership)
Teaching Institution:	University of Wolverhampton
Open / Closed Course:	This course is open to all suitably qualified candidates.

Entry Requirements:

Entry requirements are subject to regular review. The entry requirements applicable to a particular academic year will be published on the University website (and externally as appropriate e.g. UCAS

- 56 UCAS points.
- A-levels: Grade profile of CD including at least one Science subject, preferably Biology.
- BTEC: Grade profile of MPP in Applied Science or Animal Management.
- Access to HE Diploma (60 credits) of which a minimum of 45 must be at Level 3 and 18 Level 3 credits must be in Science (56 UCAS point equivalence, minimum 45 credits at pass).
- T-Level: Pass grade with a core component profile less than D in a Science related subject.
- Tariff: Other Level 3 qualifications are accepted for entry. A minimum of 56 UCAS Tariff points will be required.

Use the UCAS Tariff calculator to check your qualifications and points.

Students must usually have studied for a minimum of two years post GCSE level. However, we will consider applications from mature students who do not have two years of post-16 study, where they have relevant work experience. Please see http://wlv.ac.uk/mature for further information.

If you've got other qualifications or relevant experience, please contact The Gateway for further advice before applying.

International entry requirements and application guidance can be found at http://www.wlv.ac.uk/international/apply

English language requirements also apply.

Distinctive Features of the Course:

The HNC in Animal Behaviour and Wildlife Conservation is designed to develop your interest, knowledge and understanding of the behaviour of animals and the issues that affect their conservation. The course focuses on animals in their natural environments but we also explore important aspects of managing animals in captive settings. Whichever elements of the course you prefer, at the end of your studies you will be able to use the knowledge of the behaviour, ecology and biology of animals in order to contribute effectively to their protection and conservation.

Importantly, you will have lots of opportunities to develop your practical skills in behavioural observation, species survey and habitat assessment. Although the emphasis is often on wildlife species and their conservation in the UK there is a distinct international perspective to your studies as we draw on examples from around the world. To support this we have field visits and residential fieldwork that is integral to the course across your studies.

The species you will encounter cover the entire range from the animals found in your immediate environment, such as garden birds and butterflies, through to the large, charismatic mammals such as wolves, tigers and elephants. Your studies will provide you with the opportunity to study these species first hand through participation in our residential field courses (currently Aberystwyth and the Lake District), as well as through engagement with zoos, aquaria and wildlife parks.

The mix of field-based information collection and recording, practical activity and class-based work you will do is unmatched in most other subject areas. The degree will allow you to pursue your passion for animals, behaviour and conservation and give you a head-start in securing your ideal career, as well as giving you experiences that will last a lifetime.

Educational Aims of the Course:

Intakes:

September

Major Source of Funding:

Office for Students (OFS)

Tuition Fees:

Tuition fees are reviewed on an annual basis. The fees applicable to a particular academic year will be published on the University website.

Year	Status	Mode	Amount
2020/1	H	Full Time	£8600.00
2020/1	Overseas	Full Time	£12250.00
2020/1	H	Part Time	£3050.00
2020/1	Overseas	Part Time	£6125.00
2021/2	H	Full Time	£8600.00
2021/2	Overseas	Full Time	£12950.00
2021/2	H	Part Time	£3100.00
2022/3	H	Full Time	£8600.00
2022/3	Overseas	Full Time	£13450.00
2022/3	H	Part Time	£3120.00
2023/4	H	Full Time	£9250.00
2023/4	Overseas	Full Time	£14450.00
2023/4	H	Part Time	£4625
2024/5	H	Full Time	£9250.00
2024/5	Overseas	Full Time	£14950.00
2024/5	H	Part Time	£4625.00
2025/6	H	Full Time	£9535.00
2025/6	Overseas	Full Time	£15995.00
2025/6	H	Part Time	£4768.00
2026/7	H	Full Time	£9790.00
2026/7	Overseas	Full Time	£17600.00
2026/7	H	Part Time	£4895.0

PSRB:

None

Course Structure:

September (Full-time)

Full time and Sandwich Undergraduate Honours students normally study 120 credits per academic year; 60 credits semester 1 and 60 credits semester 2.

Part time students study alongside full time students. However, they do not study more than 80 credits in each academic calendar year.

Module	Title	Credits	Period	Type
4AB032	Animal Behaviour and Wildlife Conservation	30	SEM1	Core
4AB035	Succeeding at University in Animal Behaviour and Wildlife Conservation	30	SEM1	Core
4AB034	Ecology: Concepts and Field Techniques	30	SEM2	Core
4AB033	Diversity of Life	30	SEM2	Core

Please note: Optional modules might not run every year, the course team will decide on an annual basis which options will be running, based on student demand and academic factors, to create the best learning experience.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Regulations Exemption:

None.

Reference Points:

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Qualifications and Credit Frameworks

Subject Benchmark Statements

University Policies and Regulations

Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK

QAA (2023) Subject Benchmark Statement: Biosciences. Available at https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-biosciences

QAA (2024) Subject Benchmark Statement: Agriculture, Rural Environmental Sciences, Animal Studies, Consumer Science, Forestry, Food, Horticulture and Human Nutrition. Available at https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-agriculture-rural-environmental-sciences-animal-studies-consumer-science-forestry-food-horticulture-and-human-nutrition

EAZA (2023) EAZA code of Ethics and Welfare. Available at: https://strapi.eaza.net/uploads/2023_04_EAZA_Code_of_Ethics_and_Conduct2_9b75c78e1c.pdf

Sato, Y., & Tomonaga, M. (2010). WAZA (World Association of Zoos and Aquariums) Ethical Guidelines for the Conduct of Research on Animals by Zoos and Aquariums. *Japanese Journal of Animal Psychology, 60*(2), 139–146. https://doi.org/10.2502/janip.60.2.4

BIAZA ethical guidelines and policy for working with zoos and aquaria. Full list accessible here: https://biaza.org.uk/policies-guidelines

ASAB Ethical Committee/ABS Animal Care Committee (2024). Guidelines for the ethical treatment of nonhuman animals in behavioural research and teaching. *Animal Behaviour*, *207*, pp.I-XI. DOI: 10.1016/S0003-3472(23)00317-2

Mammal Society position statement on fieldwork in the curriculum (May 2025) On behalf of most UK NGOs and Statutory bodies. Available at: https://mammal.org.uk/press-hub/cross-sector-concerns-about-decline-of-fieldwork-opportunities-in-uk-life-science-courses?rq=fieldwork

Overview of Assessment:

As part of the course approval process, the course learning outcomes were mapped to each of the modules forming the diet of the programme of study. This process confirmed that all course learning outcomes can be met through successful completion of the modules. This mapping applies to the final award as well as to all of the intermediate awards.

Learning Outcomes	Modules
HNC01 Apply key behavioural, ecological, and conservation principles relevant to the study of animal behaviour and wildlife conservation (Knowing) .	
HNC02 Locate and interpret scientific literature and data, in accordance with an understanding of basic theories and concepts within the field of animal behaviour and wildlife conservation (Knowing) .	
HNC03 Carry out behavioural and conservation data collection using suitable methods and interpreting findings using appropriate analytical techniques (Doing).	
HNC04 Communicate scientific information to diverse audiences using appropriate written, visual, verbal, and multimedia methods (Doing).	
HNC05 Demonstrate the qualities, subject skills and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility in animal behaviour and wildlife conservation and related sectors (Being).	
HNC06 Be reflective and considerate of future goals while being ethically responsible practitioners of animal behaviour and wildlife conservation (Being).	

Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy/(Learning and Teaching):

Level 4 is designed to bring everyone up to the same level of core understanding of the topics required for the study of ABWC. Moving from fundamentals of the subject in Semester 1 through to starting to apply the knowledge gained both in the field and in different geographical contexts by the end of level 4.

Throughout the course, activities are designed to integrate with course teaching and provide different learning opportunities. This ranges from in-class practical activities through to field courses experiencing how professionals apply knowledge in a range of different settings. This is part of a structured developmental approach which supports the relevant skills moving from first principles through to professional level application of these skills. For example, level 4 modules emphasise the importance of core academic and transferable skills delivered through the module topic content.

As such from the start of level 4 the focus is on real-world application of skills and knowledge. This is delivered in-class through the experience of the academic staff and invited tutors but also through applied field courses where you are exposed to a range of different work-place experiences. These range from zoo-based visits exploring the management of captive animals through to field courses where you are exposed to research activity and lived field experience.

These real-world skills include significant exposure to the use of digital resources and their relationship to the production of work and professional use across level 4. Like subject and generic skills these are developed across the level and are integrated into suitable modules where needed.

Assessment Methods/Assessments:

Assessments link strongly to the development of knowledge and skills at level 4. To help with this, formative work is included in modules via structured submissions through a VLE or else through more informal in-class discussion of work and ideas. This varies significantly from module to module both in the volume and type of feedback. So, at level 4 it is likely to be more formal general feedback to the class or to individuals.

Across the ABWC award there are applied assessments of different type and complexity relating to field experience and field data collection, groupwork and basic problem-solving. The field-based focus of the subject and the link this provides between observation, analysis and communication of this information provides many opportunities for you to develop these skills.

While there is a range of different assessments, we ensure that there are options provided where necessary for students to participate in all of the assessment activities in ways that are responsive for their learning needs. Over the evolution of the subject and the team’s experience of teaching and assessment in different contexts we have many examples where assessment has been adapted to a student’s requirements while still addressing module and course outcomes.

Part of this is being able to personalise course assessments which often have a direct choice (e.g. select from a list of options) or have an explicit element of choice (e.g. undertake the assessment but select the taxonomic group of your choice). Some assessment relates to direct application of knowledge gained in applied field situations and some are designed to replicate real-world scenarios.

Further Information for Student:

You are well supported in adapting to university via direct support from a named Personal Tutor, formal classes in semester 1 that explore adapting to university life, e.g. in time management, basic study skills etc. as well as the subject-related content.

Our level 4 is specifically designed to ensure that all students from different academic and cultural backgrounds are brought up to the same level of skills and knowledge. The course explicitly builds in subject-focused skills and support sessions. We also have a strong and positive relationship with our students developed from our practical activities and fieldwork allowing us to understand the requirements of all our students and help them as individuals through the whole academic process.

Assessments use a range of class-based activities, revision and assessment sessions, formative work and clear rubrics to help you navigate the assessment process, from first principles (assessment unpacking and discussion) through formative submission in some instances and pre-submission assessment workshops. Such activities are tailored to the level of study and the assessment type. All of these provide opportunities for working with other students, engaging with academic staff and getting feedback in various forms to help improve your work ahead of deadlines.

Most of our (Animal Behaviour and Wildlife Conservation) ABWC modules are applied in nature and are therefore shaped by exposure to real-world conservation and behavioural work through field visits, residential field courses, practical activities and targeted assessments. As a result, even just at level 4 you will get a rounded experience of the activities and topics that we believe are important to you across your studies and into the workplace.

Student feedback through both formal and informal channels allows us to inform our practice to help deliver the best student experience. As we have a positive working relationship with the different student cohorts we encourage you to talk to us directly if any issues arise so we can respond quickly as needs arise.

If you are successful in your HNC studies you can progress onto our full BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour and Wildlife Conservation award at level 5. W e support you as best we can through the process of adjusting your study expectations and directing you to completing the full degree.

The University provides a wide range of academic and pastoral support to help students succeed in their studies and personal development. This includes access to the Library and Skills for Learning service, student success coaching for students in early stages, and tailored advice from the Careers and Enterprise teams. Students also benefit from 24/7 wellbeing support through WLV Student Life Connect, pastoral care via the Multi-faith Chaplaincy, and assistance from the Mental Health and Wellbeing team. Those living in university accommodation have additional access to Residential Life support, and all students can engage with the Students' Union for advocacy, societies, and further peer-led services.

Currency:

The course is kept up-to-date with current trends in the topics as it uses research-informed teaching as all academic staff are research active and publish regularly. There is also use of external speakers bringing their knowledge to bear. Additionally, staff use experience from the field-based visits with students as part of their teaching so using contemporary examples based on lived experience.

The course itself has sustainability of habitats and communities at its core. Conservation is inherently about protection and management of habitats and species for the long-term and has people and communities as central to this process. Theoretical and applied examples from global wildlife conservation are therefore used across all modules as a matter of course. Some of these link directly to experiences offered to you. As a result, our students have a wide knowledge of not only their subject but what this looks like in a range of different contexts. When this is linked to modules and assessment that are specifically designed to bring together their developed expertise and applied skills, students in ABWC have a strong range of digitally fluent and transferable skills above and beyond their subject.

As a course we encourage you to explore opportunities beyond the course itself to work alongside organisations in voluntary or professional capacities that reflect your interests. It is often the case that ABWC students are significantly invested in the topic anyway and are involved with non-university bodies as well as volunteers or in part-time employment. This is a subject where you are studying your hobby!

Personalisation Opportunities:

You are able to explore a diversity of options within many modules. Although module assessment is often defined by an official title of 'report' or similar, throughout most modules there is choice about the focus of the assessment based on theme, species or habitat. In some instances, there is opportunity to select alternative assessment titles where these are supplied by staff.

Although there is no direct module choice on the award you are encouraged to consider your progression through the award and onward into the workplace. Elsewhere across the HNC in-class and tutor supported discussions take place concerning choices relating to careers or personal interests. Across all levels we have specific sessions provided by the Faculty careers officer which complements the more subject-focused work that can be offered by subject staff.

As a course we have a diverse perspective on what we do as it is central to understanding the relationship between people and wildlife in different physical and cultural settings. As such everything we do ensures we incorporate different viewpoints and perspectives on ethical and cultural attitudes to habitats, animals in both wild and captive settings and the links these have to behaviour and conservation.

For all activities we have a strong inclusivity ethos, and activities, such as fieldwork, are designed as much as possible to include all students. At the heart of what we do is talking to you as an individual to best understand what may affect your participation and adjust activities where we can.

Across the course in both tutorial and more formal taught sessions you have the opportunity to consider individual progress within the context of modules and courses. We also have a subject skills list which is an ongoing working from which you can see development of your individual transferable skills alongside your personal and professional development.

Employability in the Curriculum/Employability and Professional Development:

You have a strong career-focused theme across the award encouraging you to explore a wide range of options on completion of your HNC including progressing onto our BSC (Hons) and onto a graduate-level career. Your HNC is merely the first step in a successful career.

To support this individual growth, you link your activities to an ABWC skills list which outlines the development and accumulation of subject and transferable skills. This builds across your HNC and links directly to the skills required of professionals working in the field and is taught through staff expertise, external speakers and experiential learning.

In addition to these academic and transferable skills, we have a close working relationship with the faculty careers office which inputs to core modules at strategic times of the academic year. We also hold a bi-annual careers fair where we invite subject-specific employers to talk directly with our students and alumni, so providing them with a focused networking opportunity. Many of the employers' representatives are former students or else fellow ABWC-related professionals who work with us across our course in the field or the classroom.