University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. Programme specifications are produced and then reviewed annually by the relevant faculty or department and revised where necessary. However, we reserve the right to withdraw, update or amend this programme specification at any time without notice.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for all awards of the University is available online at: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/camdata/archive.html

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

1	**Awarding body**	University of Cambridge
2	**Teaching institution**	Department of Geography
3	**Accreditation details**	None
4	**Name of final award**	Master of Philosophy
5	**Programme title**	Conservation Leadership
6	**JACS code(s)**	
7	**Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)**	None
8	**Qualifications framework level**	7
9	**Date specification was produced/ last revised**	May 2010
10	**Date specification was last reviewed**	May 2010

This programme will deliver a unique and world-class education in Conservation Leadership, based in the Department of Geography, working in collaboration with cognate Departments in the University, and non-University collaborators in the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI). CCI was created in 2007 by eight internationally renowned conservation organisations and the University of Cambridge (http://www.conservation.cam.ac.uk/). All are members of the larger group of organizations in the Cambridge Conservation Forum (http://www.cambridgeconservationforum.org.uk/).

Cambridge has one of the leading departments of Geography in the United Kingdom, with a longstanding, worldwide reputation for excellence. There are five research clusters, three in human geography and two in physical geography (see www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research). Research on conservation is mostly done within the Society, Environment and Development Cluster. The ten academic staff in this cluster work on a wide range of issues across both the developed and developing world, but share major interests in institutions, governance and sustainability. Research addresses issues of conservation and society across a broad front through projects on the institutional politics of natural resource management, environmental governance, the role of science in environmental policy and the social impacts of biodiversity conservation planning and management (http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/sed/ped/).

Aims of the Programme

The programme aims to develop the ability of its students to think creatively about conservation problems and solutions across disciplinary, organisational and political boundaries and economic sectors foster and to develop the leadership potential of its students by promoting their capacity to understand the links among the drivers of biodiversity loss, and by developing their confidence and maturity of judgement to lead the implementation of conservation more effectively than hitherto. The goal is not only to develop conservationists with enhanced research skills and greater awareness of the complex drivers of biodiversity loss, but to develop the ability to act effectively. In particular, the programme will:

- Address the challenges of conservation in an integrated and interdisciplinary manner, focused on an understanding of the root causes of ecosystem change and biodiversity loss.
- Equip conservation leaders with the strategic skills that they need for effective action by their organisations.
- Offer professional management and leadership skills including strategic planning, finance and HR management/planning, innovation, entrepreneurship and the management of change.
- Develop skills in advocacy, communication, lobbying, as an integral part of the learning programme.
- Provide participants with first-hand exposure to conservation leadership challenges in the real world by working in placements alongside conservation professionals, including in developing countries.
- Provide participants with experiential learning through interaction with leaders in conservation organisations, businesses and governments across a wide range of sectors from around the world.

Learning Outcomes of the Programme

Knowledge and Understanding

- Familiarity with debates across the social and natural sciences concerning the root causes of ecosystem change and biodiversity decline, with particular attention to the societal and environmental drivers of change.
- The ability to distinguish between different scientific perspectives that inform policy debates, and to exercise judgement in interpretation of conflicting evidence.
- The ability to apply theoretical insights to creating practical solutions to specific conservation problems.
- The ability to synthesise information from across a range of academic disciplines, and to summarise this in a manner that is accessible to decision makers.
- The ability to frame meaningful questions for further scientific research, and to engage with research scientists and practitioners in developing an understanding of solutions.

Teaching and Learning Methods: Lectures, seminars, workshops, case studies, fieldwork, placements, personal mentoring and supervision.

Assessment Methods: Submitted essays (or alternative exercises), coursework, and placement reports.

Skills

- Reading research papers and synthesising information.
- Writing for both scientific and policy audiences.
- Communication skills, including presentation skills, the use of multimedia resources and media training.
- Time management and working to deadlines.
- The ability to plan, execute and manage an independent project.
- Team working and collaboration.
- Negotiation skills.

Teaching and Learning Methods: Lectures, seminars, workshops, case studies, fieldwork, placements, personal mentoring and supervision.

Assessment Methods: Submitted essays (or alternative exercises), coursework, project work and placement reports.

Programme Structure

The MPhil in Conservation Leadership will be a taught postgraduate course that runs for 11 months. Teaching delivery will be concentrated in the Michaelmas and Lent Terms, with students being taught across five substantive modules spread over these two Terms. They will also spend time during these first two Terms developing their professional placement plans, in collaboration with their supervisor. Assessed essays will be submitted at the end of the Lent Term. Students will undertake their professional placements over the Easter Term and summer (July/August), submitting a placement report at the end of this period.

Michaelmas Term	Teaching on core modules Submission of assessed course work Leadership seminars Conservation mentors programme Preparatory work for professional placement
Christmas Vacation	Completion of essays, projects and other assessed work from Michaelmas Term modules; development of professional placement.
Lent Term	Teaching on core modules Submission of assessed course work Leadership seminars Conservation mentors programme
Easter Vacation	Completion of essays, projects and other assessed work from Lent Term modules; development of professional placement.

Easter Term and Summer (15 June – 31 August)	Submission of assessed logical framework (logframe) for professional placement. Presentation to the Conservation Leadership Placement Forum. Professional placements with Cambridge based organisations and academic departments Completion of placement report

Professional placements: Professional placements are the key element in most business administration courses. The placements in this course will consist of longer (four-month) attachments to a conservation (or conservation-linked research) organization. These will include University Departments associated with the course, as well as non-University members of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative. Students will work on a single project, which could be a professional engagement (developing or managing some aspect of conservation activity) or a research programme (including conventional academic 'dissertation' projects if desired). In either case, the student will submit a 10,000-word report for assessment at the end of the placement. Projects will be formally approved by the Degree Committee and will be based in institutions that will be approved by the Degree Committee. They will be supervised either by a University Teaching Officer, or by staff in host institutions. Placement projects will be developed over the course of the Michaelmas and Lent Terms, and will be executed during the Easter Term and Summer Vacation. Students will be expected to produce a detailed logframe for their placements (which will be assessed), and make a presentation on their proposed work to a forum during the Easter Term.

Assessment Methods

The assessment of all Cambridge MPhils is under the formal control of a Degree Committee, which in this case is the Degree Committee of the Faculty of Earth Sciences and Geography.

1. The scheme of examination for the 11-month Conservation Leadership course for the degree of Master of Philosophy shall consist of:

(a) 4 essays each of not more than 4,000 words in length, or equivalent exercises. Essay topics and exercises will be selected from a list announced by the Degree Committee for the Faculty of Earth Sciences and Geography.
(b) A placement report of not more than 10,000 words in length, on a topic approved by the Degree Committee, and based on work carried out by the candidate in one or more institutions approved by the Degree Committee.
(c) Course-work prescribed by the Degree Committee (which may include written work, group work and class participation).

2. At the discretion of the Examiners examination may include an oral examination on any or all of the assessed components of the MPhil.

The University overall result in the MPhil is either Pass or a Fail. The pass mark is 60 and the mark for a distinction is 75.

Further information

Graduate Employability

Graduates of this course will be expected to play major roles in conservation organisations (both governmental and non-governmental) and to take up leadership positions in a variety of other capacities such as business, law and education in countries around the world. The course will create a body of highly trained and resourceful individuals who will understand the drivers of ecosystem change and biodiversity loss, and have the ability and skills to influence conservation outcomes.

The General Board consider that preparation for any specific branch of employment is not the main objective of most educational courses provided by the University, and takes the view that the requirement to include specific employers' needs and opinions in programme specifications would distort the aims and objectives of many Cambridge courses. Preparation for employment in general is provided in the opportunities for acquisition of relevant transferable skills outlined in programme specifications.
Where programmes with a significant vocational or professional element are accredited by professional or statutory bodies, details are given in the programme specification.
The Careers Service maintains links with relevant employers and takes into account employer needs and opinions in the services which it provides for students. Details of its services can be found at http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk. The Careers Service also allocates a Careers Adviser to each College, Faculty and Department to act as a point of contact.

Managing Teaching Quality and Standards

The Department of Geography participates in the University's quality assurance and enhancement system:

1. External Examining: The MPhil in Conservation Leadership will have an external examiner who will submit a report that is considered by the Department's Graduate Teaching Committee, and the Degree Committee for Earth Sciences and Geography (responsible for graduate matters). Action in response to reports will include, where appropriate, revisions or adjustments to the programme and its delivery.
2. Course approval: The Department, through the Faculty, is required to obtain the approval of the Board of Graduate Studies and the General Board's Education Committee before any significant changes to courses are made.
3. General Board Internal Review: All the Department's activities were reviewed by the University's General Board in 2007. The MPhil in Conservation Leadership would be subject to a similar review upon the next round of Internal Reviews in approximately 2012.
4. MPhil students are represented on both the Department's Graduate Student Staff Consultative Committee and Graduate Teaching Committee where students can raise any issues of concern and improvements to facilities and the course can be considered and acted on.

Student Support

All students are members of a College as well as the Department and have access to learning support from both College and University. Each student will have an overall supervisor who gives advice on planning the year's work. Individual specialists may also help with preparation for essays and progress is monitored through the submission of essays. The College Tutor for Graduates will also play a role in induction, support and guidance.

An MPhil Handbook will be available for all MPhil students as well as a Handbook specific to the MPhil in Conservation Leadership. The Department’s learning resources include computer facilities with a full range of software for graduate students and one of the country's largest Geography libraries. Additionally all students in Cambridge enjoy access to the exceptional bibliographic resources of University and other Departmental libraries.

Indicators of Quality

The Department of Geography was ranked first jointly with the Departments of Geography at the Universities of Bristol, Durham and Oxford in the 2008 RAE Assessment Exercise. The percentages of research assessed were 30% at 4*, 40% at 3*, 25% at 2* and 5% at 1*.