Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

1	**Programme Title**	Environmental Science with Foundation Year
2	**Programme Code**	GEOU98
3	**JACS Code**	F750
4	**Level of Study**	Undergraduate
5a	**Final Qualification**	Bachelor of Science (BSc)
5b	**QAA FHEQ Level**	Final Qualification at FHEQ Level 6 – this programme specification relates solely to the Foundation Year delivery at University of Sheffield Undergraduate Foundation Level 0 (broadly equivalent to FHEQ levels 2-3), which guarantees progression to University of Sheffield Undergraduate Level 1 (FHEQ Level 4) at a mark threshold of 60.
6a	**Intermediate Qualification(s)**	Students who pass the Foundation Year at Level 0, but do not achieve the specified progression threshold of 60, will be entitled to the award of an Higher Education Achievement Record documenting and explaining their achievements on the Foundation Year. They would also be entitled to transfer onto any appropriate Certificate in Higher Education offered by the Department for Lifelong Learning at the University of Sheffield.
6b	**QAA FHEQ Level**	See above.
7	**Teaching Institution** (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	**Faculty**	Board for Extra-Faculty Provision
9	**Department**	Department for Lifelong Learning (DLL)
10	**Other Departments involved in teaching the programme**	The Department for Lifelong Learning will be responsible for delivery of all Foundation Year provision. The Department of Geography is responsible for all higher levels of programme delivery and will also contribute to the delivery of an Extended Project module and the facilitation of departmental visits and student mentoring arrangements.
11	**Mode(s) of Attendance**	Full-time or Part-time at Foundation Level within the Department for Lifelong Learning. Full-time at higher levels of study within Department of Geography.
12	**Duration of the Programme**	One year full-time or two years part-time at Foundation Level, plus three years on full-time degree within Department of Geography. For further details, see programme specifications for GEOU211.
13	**Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body**	None
14	**Date of production/revision**	January 2016 / March 2018 / November 2019

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The BSc Environmental Science with Foundation Year at the University of Sheffield provides students with non-standard entry qualifications with a thorough and supportive academic preparation for successful degree level study. The degree is carefully designed to build confidence in student's abilities, develop essential academic and study skills, and provide the subject specific knowledge essential for success.

We work closely with students to ensure that their chosen degree is the most appropriate one for them, offering a range of stimulating learning opportunities through which to explore the different career and study opportunities open to them, and introducing them to all the learning and assessment methods they are most likely to encounter during their degree.

The foundation year is taught within the Department for Lifelong Learning, where we have nearly forty years'

experience working with adult learners to unlock their potential to succeed through the offer of accessible foundation courses leading to full- and part-time degree level study. Students will learn alongside other students studying for a number of different degrees, typically in small class-sizes, supporting one another to develop and succeed. This foundation year also includes a range of opportunities to become involved in the life of the Department of Geography, to which students will progress following successful completion of their foundation year with an overall grade of 60 or above, including a grade of 60 or above in the core Maths and Statistics module.

The University of Sheffield prides itself on the preparedness of all its graduates to excel in the world of work, developing a wide range of skills which can be applied in whatever career students ultimately choose to pursue. On the Foundation Year, students will be introduced to the full range of attributes of the Sheffield Graduate, in readiness for a successful and enjoyable undergraduate career.

Further information can be found at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/till/foundation

16. Programme aims

This Foundation Year pathways aims to:

1. Provide students with subject based knowledge and skills of the required standard for a successful undergraduate career at the University of Sheffield.
2. Develop students' familiarity with different methods of learning, teaching and assessment employed at the University of Sheffield.
3. Build confidence in students' academic ability and develop understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses.
4. Develop students' ability to adapt knowledge and skills in new situations.
5. Increase students' awareness of the opportunities as well as the challenges of studying as an undergraduate student throughout the University year.
6. Provide strategies for managing the conflicting demands placed upon mature students.
7. Provide information and guidance relating to students' chosen degree programme.
8. Develop students' awareness of the key attributes of the Sheffield Graduate.
9. Encourage students' enthusiasm and motivation for future degree level study.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
K1	Knowledge and understanding of Academic English of a standard necessary for successful progression to Level 1 HE study.
K2	Knowledge and understanding of Mathematics and descriptive statistics of a standard necessary for successful progression to Level 1 HE study.
K3	Subject knowledge and understanding of two specific subject areas chosen from Biology, Chemistry and Geography, sufficient for successful progression to Level 1 within BSc Environmental Science.
K4	Knowledge and understanding of the opportunities as well as the demands placed on students by university style methods of learning, teaching and assessment.
K5	Knowledge of personal study strengths and weaknesses.

Skills and other attributes:	
S1	Relevant skills in the acquisition, evaluation and use of subject-related information in different circumstances.
S2	Essential skills in oral and written communication.
S3	Problem-solving and presentation skills sufficient to develop and sustain a coherent line of argument.
S4	Ability to participate effectively in group work activities, both assessed and non-assessed.
S5	Ability to carry out small-scale independent study and research.
S6	Familiarity with basic techniques of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.
S7	Information literacy skills sufficient for effective study at Level 1.
S8	Reflective learning skills which promote self-awareness and appropriate responses to feedback.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

1. **Lectures and seminars.** Most modules rely largely upon a mixed lecture/seminar format in order to impart essential subject knowledge, build confidence and encourage individual student participation. The latter is achieved through regular question and answer sessions and the use of small-group work to stimulate discussion on particular issues. The balance between tutor- and student-led discussions varies from subject area to subject area. (K1-3, S1-4).

2. **Problem solving classes.** These are an integral part of the Maths and Statistics, Foundations of Biology and Foundations of Chemistry modules, allowing students to develop their problem solving skills with individual support from tutors where necessary. The work carried out in these classes allows students to apply and practice their theoretical knowledge, as well as their examination technique, in a supportive environment. (K2-3, S1, S3, S6).

3. **Field studies.** Short field study trips to specific landscapes, places or buildings (e.g. museums) are employed in the Introduction to Natural Sciences, Introduction to the Social Sciences and Foundations of Geography modules in order to introduce particular concepts, ideas and techniques best understood in context. These also provide an opportunity to practice basic recording methods in some instances. (K2-4, S1, S4-6).

4. **Independent study.** This is the most important part of the learning process for most Foundation Year students. The extent to which independent study is formally guided by the tutor through the setting of specific weekly "private study tasks" will vary from subject area to subject area. In many natural science based subjects, for example, formal or informal question papers and tasks may be set on a regular basis. In other subjects, the emphasis will be more upon the location, reading and analysis of suitable primary or secondary sources, often in preparation for particular formally assessed essay questions or projects. All students take a core Extended Project module which specifically develops their independent study and research skills. Within this and the Academic Literacy and Communication Skills module, students are also encouraged to monitor and reflect on their learning and performance in a number of different contexts (K3-5, S1-8).

5. **Skills and subject-based tutorials**. These are provided as part of the core Extended Project and Academic Literacy and Communication Skills modules. All students are also assigned a personal tutor for the duration of their studies on the Foundation Year with whom they are encouraged to discuss their progress and degree choice. (K3-5, S8).

6. **Group work**. Throughout the Foundation Year students are encouraged to work together and support one another both within and outside the classroom – sharing knowledge and experience in a creative way in order to develop support networks during their time on the Foundation Year which they can continue to draw upon in their future degree level studies. (K4-5, S4, S8).

7. **On-line activities**. All Foundation Year modules make use of MOLE courses to develop familiarity with the use and potential of virtual learning environments to enhance and structure learning, and as a tool for effective communication. (K1-5, S2, S4, S7-8).

8. **Revision workshops**. All those modules which include substantial summative assessment by formal written examination will include specific workshops tailored to prepare students for this particular form of assessment. This is an area of assessment which mature students often find particularly challenging, but is also a key assessment tool used at level one and above on most degree pathways (K4, S2-3, S8).

9. **Laboratory sessions**. All Foundations of Biology, Chemistry and Geography modules include laboratory classes in which students will practice basic laboratory procedures, skills and techniques, whilst exploring their understanding of subject knowledge through experiment and observation. (K3, S1, S3-6).

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

The assessment on the foundation year of the BSc Environmental Science with Foundation Year is designed to provide experience of all key forms of assessment method which students are likely to encounter at higher levels of study. Early exposure to these different assessment methods, including formative assessments in all "Foundations of" modules, as well as the opportunities provided through feedback and tutorial discussion to reflect on these experiences, helps build students' confidence in their ability to succeed, and to identify strategies for future success.

The assessment methods employed are as follows:

1. Essays. Assessed as part of the Academic Literacy, Geography and Introduction to the Natural Sciences

modules. In preparing for and writing their essays, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1, K3, S1-3, S5 and S7.

2. Oral or poster presentations. Individual and group presentations, supported by Powerpoint or posters, are assessed as part of the core Academic Literacy and Introduction to the Natural Sciences modules respectively. They provide an important opportunity for students to demonstrate to their peers their achievement of all learning outcomes.

3. Reflexivity exercises: these exercises can take various forms (e.g. learning journal, feedback action planning, critical reflection on individual extended project) and are an important element of the Academic Literacy and Extended Project modules. They provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1, K3-5, S1-8.

4. Unseen examinations: End of module examinations are an integral part of all 'Foundations of …' and the Introduction to the Natural Sciences modules. In preparing for and sitting examinations, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of K1-3, S1-3 and S6.

5. On-line participation: a small number of modules formally assess students' participation in virtual learning environment activities. This provides the opportunity to develop K1-5 while demonstrating S2, S4 and S7-8.

6. Extended project. The core extended essay/project module gives all students the opportunity to develop their independent research and communications skills, whilst further exploring subject matter relevant to an Environmental Science degree in more depth. The successful completion of this module enables students to demonstrate achievement of all learning outcomes.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

QAA Access to Higher Education Diplomas
http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Documents/Access-Grading-Scheme-Section-B.pdf

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)

Programme specification and paperwork for existing part-time Foundation Programme in Combined Studies, ACEU80H BA/BSc Combined Studies (Foundation)
http://www.shef.ac.uk/calendar/progspec/ace

20. Programme structure and regulations

At Foundation Year level, all students take six 20 credit modules including one core module covering study skills and personal development (Academic Literacy and Communication Skills), and one core module covering basic numeracy and statistical skills (Maths and Statistics).

BSc Environmental Science students also take three further core modules, choosing between Introduction to the Natural Sciences which provides a general overview and introduction to study in the natural sciences or Introduction to the Social Sciences which provides a general overview and introduction to study in the social sciences; the Extended Project module allows students to explore subject matter and specific skills important to their chosen degree in more depth, through researching and writing up an extended essay, project or laboratory-based experiment; and two of the Foundations modules (of Biology, Chemistry or Geography) which provide foundational subject knowledge, skills and techniques in these subject areas.

If students are studying the Foundation Year level part-time, they take the two core Academic Literacy and Maths modules in the first year, plus either the Introduction to the Natural Sciences or Introduction to the Social Sciences modules. In the second year, students will take two of the Foundations modules (of Biology, Chemistry or Geography) and the core Extended Project module.

In all cases, students' personal tutors will be available to discuss the best module options to take to best support successful progression to the BSc Environmental Science.

For an overview of the structure and regulations which apply to subsequent levels of study, please refer to the relevant degree programme specifications listed in the additional information section below.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/.

21. Student development over the course of study

Our Foundation Years are carefully designed to ease transition back into study for people who have often not studied in a formal academic environment for a long period of time. In this respect, the key subject matter and assessments students encounter in the first semester are intended to introduce and refresh key study skills and practices, to build confidence, but also to open up their thinking to the wider field of learning and knowledge which is the life blood of any University degree. We also place a strong emphasis upon group and peer-assisted learning at this stage, through the inclusion of different group tasks and assessments which are designed to ensure students can share and develop skills and support networks together which will serve them well throughout their University career.

As the year progresses (in the second year, for part-time students), the nature of the challenges we present intensify, with an increasing emphasis placed upon those forms of assessment which mature students often find most rewarding (more in-depth project work) or most difficult (end of year exams). Through the project work, departmental visits and other means, we also create a range of opportunities to become increasingly engaged in the life of the Department of Geography, to which students' progress at level one. In this way, we aim to ease students' second critical point of transition from foundation year student attached to Institute for Lifelong Learning to a successful undergraduate student ready to flourish in their new departmental home.

Before the end of the year's study, all students are offered clear advice and guidance around progression options from Foundation Level to Level One, including appropriate careers advice, and through their final pieces of assessment in the Academic Literacy and Project modules, are encouraged to reflect carefully upon their learning over the course of their foundation year, and their preparedness for level one study.
In the case of students who do not achieve the average grade of 60 or better in their Foundation Year required to progress onto year one of the BSc Environmental Science, we provide in depth support, advice and guidance to help them pursue an alternative progression route, either through the Department for Lifelong Learning's own Certificates of Higher Education, or by applying for other degree level study at other Universities.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

All applicants must meet the University of Sheffield's minimum academic entry requirements for English Language (normally demonstrated by GCSE grade C or equivalent). A minimum GCSE grade D in Mathematics (or equivalent) may also be required. In addition, successful applicants will be able to demonstrate evidence of:

- Potential to succeed on their chosen degree programme, evidenced by a combination of work, life-based and prior educational experience;
- Understanding and commitment to the subject-area of their chosen degree programme;
- Preparedness for the demands that undergraduate degree level study will place upon them.

Further information regarding admission to the programme is available from the Department for Lifelong Learning website at http://www.shef.ac.uk/till/foundation.

23. Additional information

For an overview of the structure and regulations which apply to subsequent levels of study, please refer to the programme specifications for GEOU211 BSc Environmental Science which is available at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/progspec/geo

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid