



MSc Sustainable Mountain Development

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Modules

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Academic Year 2023/24 Modules (Mountain Course)

Semester	Module	Code	Module contact	Core/Optional module
Semester One Starts 4/9/23	Environmental and social issues in mountain areas	UF811101	Rosalind.bryce.perth@uhi.ac.uk	Core
	Policy analysis	UL411983	eilidh.macphail@uhi.ac.uk	Core
	Communities and nature	UF811100	david.skene04@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
	Research methods and techniques <i>(If you are planning to continue to dissertation level, we strongly advise you to take this module)</i>	UN811989	steven.timoney.perth@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
	Sustainable land use and renewable energy	UF811104	bobby.macaulay.perth@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
	Water Resources in a Changing Climate	UF711984	richard.gosling.perth@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
Semester Two Starts 22/1/24	Sustainable development	UF811102	rebecca.smith@uhi.ac.uk	Core
	Local economic development	UL111100	michael.smith@uhi.ac.uk david.skene04@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
	Developing communities	UL411984	eilidh.macphail@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
	Biodiversity management	UC111959	matthew.curran.ic@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
	Sustainable deer management	UD411980	Rosalind.bryce.perth@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
	Sustainable tourism	UN811990	duncan.bryden.perth@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
	Developing potential through placement	UX111923	katrina.macintyre.perth@uhi.ac.uk	Optional
Semester One/Two	Research Dissertation	UF811103	Rosalind.bryce.perth@uhi.ac.uk eilidh.macphail@uhi.ac.uk	MSc level

- To complete to PgCert level: 3 core modules (60 credits)
- To complete to PgDip level: 3 core modules & 3 optional modules (120 credits)
- To complete to MSc level: 3 core modules, 3 optional modules & dissertation (180 credits)
- All modules are 20 credit modules, apart from the Research Dissertation (60 credits)
- **All optional modules run subject to sufficient numbers of students enrolling**

Core Modules

Environmental & Social Issues in Mountain Areas

Module code: UF811101

Semester One

Core module – MSc Sustainable Mountain Development

Module Leader: [Rosalind Bryce](#)

The aim of this module is to develop an understanding of the environmental and societal systems of mountain areas, and to explore the links between these systems, their co-evolution, and drivers of change in different European mountain regions. It is a foundation for all aspects of the mountain MSc, designed to ensure broad understanding of the various elements of the environmental and societal systems of mountain areas, especially in Europe. The integrated understanding of these elements and their interactions is an essential basis for all aspects of sustainable mountain development, which relates to not only mountain areas, but also regions downstream.

Learning outcomes:

1. Understand the fundamental elements and processes of the environmental and societal systems of European mountain areas.
2. Identify and evaluate key interactions between these processes, and drivers of change as a basis for fostering sustainable development in these areas.
3. Analyse and discuss relevant case studies, which illustrate these processes and drivers of change in the context of sustainable mountain development.

Assessment 1: 2000 words (40%)

Assessment 2: 2500 words (45%)

Assessment 3: Weekly Discussions (15%)



Policy Analysis

Module code: UL411983

Semester One

Core module – MSc Sustainable Mountain Development

Module Leader: [Eilidh Macphail](#)

The aim of this module is to explore the complex process of developing and implementing public policy, particularly in rural, remote and mountain areas. It provides an introduction to policy analysis, from identifying problems and generating and evaluating alternative policies, to implementing policies and evaluating their impacts, as part of the policy cycle. The differing values and goals of different groups, and links between social, economic and environmental policies, will be explored.

Learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the policy analysis process, from problem definition to policy implementation.
2. Identify and evaluate the main challenges and opportunities in formulating and implementing policies.
3. Critically assess and discuss the complementarities and tensions between environmental, social, and economic policies at different scales relating to rural, remote and mountain regions.

Assessment 1: Essay 2000 words (40%)

Assessment 2: Report 2000 words (40%)

Assessment 3: Continual assessment, 500 words (20%)

Sustainable Development

Module code: UF811102

Semester Two

Core module – MSc Sustainable Mountain Development

Module Leader: [Rebecca Smith](#)

The aim of this module is to provide a bridge between the theory and practice of sustainable rural development at scales from the local community to the region. It considers the concept of sustainable development and global and national policy frameworks for its promotion and relates these to appropriate management tasks at regional and local planning levels. There is a focus on tools and indicators designed to enable community involvement when managing for sustainable development at the local to regional level.

Learning outcomes:

1. Critically reflect on the meaning and value of sustainability.
2. Develop an understanding of the historical context of sustainable development.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the ladder of sustainability and the different examples of weak and strong sustainability.
4. Critically reflect on the main operational problems and opportunities which occur in the support of sustainable development.

Assessment 1: Essay, 2500 words (50%)

Assessment 2: Reflective report of continuous discussion board activities, 2500 words (50%)

Optional Modules

Communities and Nature

Module code: UF811100

Semester One

Module Leader: [David Skene](#)

This module explores the importance of rural areas by investigating the inter-relationship between humans and the natural environment. The way we think about the natural environment influences the way in which we manage the natural environment, and in turn the strength of our links to the natural environment influences the ways in which we think about it. This module emphasises the inter-relatedness of the physical, social, and cultural links with the natural environment and the implications of this for what we mean by the term “rural development”.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand and explain the various definitions of rural areas.
2. Understand the fundamental linkages between the environmental, social, economic, and social equity aspects of rural communities.
3. Identify and evaluate the main operational problems and opportunities in implementing sustainable development in rural areas.
4. Analyse and discuss relevant case studies which illustrate key aspects in the theory and practice of human ecology.

Assessment 1: Essay, 2500 words (50%)

Assessment 2: Oral presentation (50%)

Research Methods & Techniques

Module code: UN811989

Semester One

Note: if you are planning to continue to dissertation level, it is strongly recommended you take this module

Module Leader: [Steven Timoney](#)

The module is designed to develop students' awareness, knowledge and skills in how to formulate research questions, develop effective research design, select and implement appropriate research methods. It covers both quantitative and qualitative approaches relevant to science and social research areas. Emphasis is placed on developing students' ability to apply the most appropriate method to address research questions and understand how to analyse, interpret and present results. Research case studies are used throughout the module as methodology demonstration tools.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Critically examine and understand the development of research strategy, research design and formulation of research questions.
2. Be able to critically choose and apply a range of research methods (qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods).
3. Effectively analyse, interpret and present research results.

Assessment 1: Research proposal, 2000 words (40%)

Assessment 2: Report, 2500 words (50%)

Assessment 3: Weekly Discussions (10% of Total)

Sustainable Land Use and Renewable Energy

Module code: UF811104

Semester One

Module Leader: [Bobby Macaulay](#)

This module provides an overview of land use and renewable energy concepts and activities which relate to sustainable development in rural and mountain communities. Module material focuses on opportunities for improving the sustainability of 'traditional' rural land uses and new opportunities for renewable energy generation and distribution.

Specific reference is made to recent developments in land reform and community ownership, as well as debates around the role of land use, renewable energy and rural communities in enacting a 'Just Transition' to a net-zero society.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Gain an awareness and critical understanding of the policy context and key drivers for sustainable land use and renewable energy as they relate to community development.
2. Demonstrate a broad understanding of the key concepts which relate to sustainable land use and renewable energy in rural Scotland.
3. Critically discuss and present key ideas about sustainable land use and renewable energy, including analysis of case studies.
4. Come to own informed conclusions of the overall relevance of key renewable energy opportunities to sustainable rural development.

Assessment 1: Essay, 2000 words (40%)

Assessment 2: Essay, 2500 words (45%)

Assessment 3: Weekly Discussions (15%)

Water Resources in a Changing Climate

Module code: UF711984

Semester One

Module Leader: [Richard Gosling](#)

This module is delivered by a tutor with over 18 years combined experience in water resources regulation, flood management and climate change impact assessment. The course explores the way our water use has been managed up to now and looks at how, under a changing climate, adaptation strategies are being developed to cope with an increasingly variable resource.

It can help those with an interest in water management understand the background against which the regulation of the water environment has been set and explores the way all stakeholders have a role to play in securing the benefits we get from a healthy water environment both now and in the future as we adapt to climate change.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the basic components and processes of the water cycle and the different methods used to monitor and analyse these in terms of both water resource quantity and quality
2. Understand what is meant by water resources and gain detailed knowledge on the range of water resource issues common within the rural and mountain environments such as pollution, floods and droughts.
3. Understand the projected impacts of climate change on water resources and demonstrate a critical awareness of how moving to Net Zero is expected to influence our use of water.
4. Using relevant case studies, critically assess the potential of tools used in water management and climate change adaptation

Assessment 1: Essay/report/critique, 2000 words (35%)

Assessment 2: Essay/ report/ critique, 2000 words (55%)

Assessment 3: Discussions (10%)

Biodiversity Management

Module code: UC111959

Semester Two

Module Leader: [Matthew Curran](#)

The aim of the module is to enable students to understand the practice and principles of biodiversity conservation and to recognise its potential role in achieving sustainable development. Significant proportions of rural and, particularly, mountain areas are designated as sites for biodiversity conservation. However, land primarily managed with this objective is inevitably adjacent to land managed for other purposes; and much land of importance for biodiversity conservation is also managed for other objectives. Biodiversity conservation also provides both direct employment and indirect employment, e.g., through tourism. This module will explore the links between biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, the methods by which biodiversity conservation can be achieved, and the theories that underpin these methods.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the scientific principles underpinning biodiversity management.
2. Evaluate the methods employed for biodiversity conservation as management tools contributing to sustainable development.
3. Understand and discuss the nature of the mechanisms (strategy and policy) that are devised and implemented at local, national and international levels to facilitate biodiversity management.
4. Critically analyse the implications of developments in biodiversity management for sustainable development, particularly in rural and mountain areas.

Assessment 1: Essay, 2000 words (35%)

Assessment 2: Case study report, 2500 words (50%)

Assessment 3: Weekly Discussions (15%)

Developing Communities

Module code: UL411984

Semester Two

Module Tutor: [Eilidh Macphail](#)

The aim of the module is to explore concepts and mechanisms that encourage the processes of community development, and to provide an understanding of social, cultural, political and economic perspectives in the pursuit of sustainable development of rural communities. It is an important component in bridging the conceptual and practical approaches to the facilitation of community participation in the development of rural communities. The module explores different models in the search for sustainable development in local and regional situations, with a view towards strengthening social capital for rural development.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Critically reflect on the meaning and value of community
2. Develop an understanding of theoretical concepts within community development, including social capital and network theory.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the different approaches in community development models and evaluate their effectiveness;
4. Critically reflect on the main operational problems and opportunities which occur in the support of sustainable community development.

Assessment 1: Essay, 2500 words (50%)

Assessment 2: Reflective report of continuous discussion board activities, 2500 words (50%)

Developing Potential through Placement

Module code: UX111923

Semester Two

Module Leader: [Katrina Macintyre](#)

This module requires participants to identify a topic which is relevant to their own professional development and seek a solution by undertaking a placement in another organisation. It is designed to develop the skills of investigation, analysis and reflection by asking participants to undertake a comparative and analytical examination of an appropriate topic which is relevant and valuable and which has been identified by them, in negotiation with the tutor. Students are required to self-identify and contact their chosen placement.

Students are required to undertake a five-day placement, either as consecutive days or over a period. The student incurs these costs.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Clarify a complex problem and identify ways in which it may be investigated through a study of practice in a comparable organisation in the light of current debate.
2. In discussion with the host organisation and the tutor, plan and negotiate the aims and objectives of a placement and list the anticipated outcomes.
3. Analyse their findings from the placement experience and suggest recommendations for their own organisation and/or for their own professional development.
4. Reflect critically on their professional development and identify future development needs for themselves and/or for their organisation.

Assessment 1: Proposal, 1000 words (25% of total)

Assessment 2: Reflective Report, 2000 words (50%)

Assessment 3: Organisational Report, 1000 words (25%)

Local Economic Development

Module code: UL111100

Semester Two

Module Leader: [Michael Smith](#)

Module Tutor: [David Skene](#)

The aim of this module is to provide students with an understanding of both theoretical and practical issues relating to local economic development throughout the UK and Europe. It recognises the importance of contextualising the historical context of economic development within the UK and other European regions. Consideration will be given to key concepts such as participation, empowerment, capacity building, sustainability and dealing with climate change and their role in facilitating and stimulating local economic development.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand the primary theory context and key stakeholders in local economic development (LED).
2. Understand the planning processes essential to successful delivery of LED projects in the UK and EU
3. Appraise different understandings of local economic development and the meaning of development.
4. Utilise and understand key terminology and how it applies to the theory of LED.
5. Prepare a robust argument to aid the development of key funding applications.

Assessment 1: Essay, 2500 words (50%)

Assessment 2: Essay, 2500 words (50%)

Sustainable Deer Management

Module code: UD411980

Semester Two

Module Leader: [Rosalind Bryce](#)

This module explores the role and position of deer in the Scottish Highlands and further afield from sustainable rural development and integrated land management perspectives. Deer are a keystone species in shaping the ecology of mountain environments. They are also a national resource. 'Sustainable deer management' is essential to optimise the multiple public and private benefits associated with deer, whilst minimising negative impacts. Sustainable deer management means managing wild deer by taking account of the full range of environmental, social and economic factors. This module explores the montane ecosystem context for deer management planning and deer ecology and behaviour. The module also explores deer population modelling and cull target setting as well as maximising the economic benefits of deer through paid stalking, eco-tourism and venison marketing. Practical elements of the course will explore monitoring, culling, extraction and venison processing.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Critically assess and understand the processes and scientific principles which underpin the concept of sustainable deer management.
2. Evaluate and critically assess processes and techniques relating to deer management planning, from both theoretical and practical perspectives.
3. Critically analyse the objectives for deer management in relation to sustainable land management, particularly in rural and mountain areas.

Assessment 1: Essay - 2000 words (40%)

Assessment 2: Report - 2000 words (50%)

Assessment 3: Weekly Discussions (10%)

Sustainable Tourism

Module code: UN811990

Semester Two

Module Leader: [Duncan Bryden](#)

This module recognises the central importance of tourism activities for many rural and mountain areas and places this in a development perspective. The module explores in a global context the importance of good planning and practice as essential to the development and management of a sustainable tourism product and reflects on practical aspects affecting the industry.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify the purposes and evaluate the outcomes of sustainable tourism from a global to a local scale.
2. Identify and demonstrate a sound knowledge and critical understanding of best practice in sustainable tourism.
3. Explain how development management policies and strategies define the role and effectiveness of sustainable tourism.

Assessment 1: Essay - 2500 words (50% of total)

Assessment 2: Report - 3500 words (50% of total)

Research Dissertation

Module code: UF811103

Over two semesters

Module contact for Mountain students: [Rosalind Bryce](#)

Module Leader: [Eilidh Macphail](#)

This module aims to provide students with an opportunity to undertake a sustained, rigorous and independent investigation of some aspect of professional practice in relation to their own work, their organisation, their discipline or field of study or their profession as a whole.

The dissertation must consist of original work. It should be informed by the theoretical and practical knowledge and expertise that the participant has developed through other modules and/or in previously accredited learning related to professional development. It should focus on a theme, topic or problem that is relevant to the professional concerns of the participant; the participant's own organisation and/or profession. The resulting dissertation should not only present and interpret the research findings but also critically evaluate the research design and methodology employed, and identify the outcomes of the research in terms of actual or planned developments and changes.

In addition, it is also intended that the experience of carrying out the research and writing up the results will provide participants with opportunities:

- to demonstrate their capability for analysis and reflection on practice;
- to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for lifelong professional development;
- to acquire the confidence and capability to progress to an MPhil or PhD in their academic discipline or field of study on completion of the Masters programme.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify a research topic and present a written and verbal proposal for detailed discussion.
2. Clearly identify an appropriate research methodology and gather data systematically for further analysis and interpretation.
3. Submit a written dissertation on the research thesis that clearly presents the background, research methodology, results, analysis & interpretation, conclusions, and bibliography within an agreed framework and style of presentation.

Assessment 1: project proposal - oral presentation (20%)

Assessment 2: 15,000-word Dissertation (80%)

Further information

For further information on individual modules, please contact the Module Leader/Tutor

For general information, please contact angela.paterson.perth@uhi.ac.uk

Updated 04/12/23