MSc in Conservation Science
Department of Life Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences

Conservation Science is a rapidly growing area of interdisciplinary research, which informs policy decisions regarding the management of the biodiversity and ecosystem services upon which humans depend. The MSc in conservation science has been designed in order to give students a broad yet rigorous knowledge base that a career in this sector requires. The course is genuinely interdisciplinary and teaches methodologies and concepts derived from both the natural and social sciences.

The course is run jointly with The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, The Zoological Society of London and Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. The MSc combines teaching modules at each of the three partner organisations, so that students are able to understand how the concepts and practices they are introduced to throughout the course are implemented by conservation organisations.

Course Overview

This unique one year full-time MSc course will give you the skills required for success in the highly competitive field of international conservation.

The taught course component of the course will include guest lecturers from these organizations as well as a wide range of leading professionals from the wider conservation community. Students' six-month research projects are linked to ongoing conservation programmes.

Entry Requirements

We are looking for highly motivated and committed people who can show either substantial field experience in a relevant area or evidence of academic ability (or both). In practice this means that you should have a good upper second class Honours degree plus at least six months of relevant work experience for the academic route, and very substantial relevant experience otherwise.

Applicants must also meet the College’s English language requirements which for students outside the English speaking world are: IELTS 6.5 (plus writing and speaking 6.0); TOEFL Internet 100 (plus writing and speaking 24).

How to apply

Applications are made online at: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/pgaf

For additional information about the course please email the course director.

Contact us

Course Director:
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Our website:
http://www.iccs.org.uk

Department Website:
http://www.imperial.ac.uk/lifesciences
Taught Elements

The course runs for two terms. The coursework is taught interactively through seminars, workshops and discussion of the literature to stimulate active learning and critical thinking.

- Framework for analysis
  In this section, we develop a broad understanding of interactions between biodiversity loss and human society including the biological and social processes leading to biodiversity loss and the spatio-temporal scale at which they occur. We also look at the difficult issues surrounding conservation, including trade-offs between the values held by different people.

- Techniques in conservation science
  This section focuses on the skills needed to gather and analyse data, both quantitative and qualitative. We emphasise the skills required to use collected data in order to make defensible decisions in a rigorous manner, even when information is lacking. We also look at new techniques that are starting to revolutionise the practice of data collection and analysis.

- Implementing conservation action
  Looking at the practicalities of implementing conservation action we consider how to set conservation priorities when both funding and information are limited. We also consider how to manage the relationships between people who are affected by conservation, so that a consensus for conservation can be built.

- Case studies in conservation
  Case studies not only give insight but also allow the students to evaluate the progress of conservation through the steps of information gathering, problem definition, developing intervention plans, action and then monitoring, learning and adaptive management. We show how the general framework developed through the course can be adapted by students for the issue of particular interest to them.

Research Project

Students complete a 23 week research project. The project is designed to give practical experience of desk-based or field research and provide the opportunity to learn a wide range of skills that build upon those taught earlier in the course. The project will be supervised by a full-time member of staff from Imperial College or one of the three partner institutions. The projects may be conducted, in part or in whole, at external research institutions or agencies in the UK or overseas. In this case, students may also have an external supervisor based at the external institution. Fully desk-based projects are also available.

Further Study/Employability

This course aims to give graduates the skills required for success in the highly competitive and very broad field of international conservation. About a third of recent graduates have gone on to PhDs, another third to working as programme or project managers for international and national conservation NGOs in the UK or overseas, and another third into consultancies, policy think tank or government. The vast majority are working in conservation within 12 months of graduating.