Module Specification

Tropical Expedition

Version: 2025-26, v5.0, Approved

Contents

Part 1: Information

Module title: Tropical Expedition

Module code: USSK59-15-3

Level: Level 6

For implementation from: 2025-26

UWE credit rating: 15

ECTS credit rating: 7.5

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School of Applied Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Field: Applied Sciences

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: Life on Earth 2025-26

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: Yes

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module examines the ecology of ecosystems in biodiversity hotspots, and the field and analytical methods used to survey and assess these ecosystems. When possible, students will have the choice of going either on an expedition to e.g. Cuba, Madagascar or Greece. Students will attend workshops and tutorials relevant to their particular expedition. Taking part in a scientific expedition to the a biodiversity hotspot provides students with a unique opportunity to work in a difficult environment with local experts.

Pre-requisites: Students must have passed USSK5C-30-1 Life on Earth before starting this module.

Features: This module is available as CPD.

Educational aims: This module examines the ecology of ecosystems in biodiversity hotspots, and the field and analytical methods used to survey and assess these ecosystems. The module aims to develop practical skills and knowledge of the techniques used to study biodiversity hotspots.

Outline syllabus: The ecology and environments of international biodivesrity hotspots, including the ecology of populations of reptiles, birds, fish and mammals and the methods and techniques used to study them.

Techniques in floristic identification, collection and monitoring diversity . Assessment of species distribution and abundance in difficult, international conditions. Introduction to forest dynamics.

Techniques in faunistic identification, collection and monitoring diversity. Assessment of animal species distribution and abundance in biodiverity hotspots. Factors affecting the diversity and distribution of animals. Biological interactions and community structure. Symbiotic relationships.

Threats to hotspot ecosystems and conservation measures. Examples may include coral reef conservation and reef health or conserving threatened primates or reptiles through tropical forest restoration.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: In terrestrial circumstances, students will be trained in plant identification and the techniques used to describe and map trees within standard areas. A variety of survey methods will be introduced and used to assess animal populations. Techniques may include mist-netting of birds; transect techniques for reptiles, electronic monitoring of bat activity, tracking lemurs and

species identification and insect identification and surveys. Additional lectures and practical training will be conducted in the evenings by staff from UWE and partner organisations. These sessions will allow students to develop their taxonomic skills, discuss the day's activities, complete field notes and collate and analyse data.

All participants on the expedition to Cuba will be required to hold an SSI Open Water diving certificate, or an equivalent qualification, before leaving the UK. An appropriate training programme will be organised beforehand by the module team using qualified instructors. In Cuba, the field work programme will be divided into two discrete sections. Five days will be based in an area of dry deciduous tropical forest and five days will be based on diving on coral reefs. Students will be expected to become proficient in the identification of corals and coral reef fish and be able record data accurately and efficiently.

All participants on the expeditions to Greece and Madagascar will be expected to familiarise themselves with the taxonomy and identification features of forest fauna and flora. Students will spend approximately 10 days at the forest field site and undertake a range of surveys to examine spatial and temporal differences in forest environments and the impact of restoration programmes. Students will actively engage in community based conservation projects and work alongside local students and researchers.

The cost of running the trip will be met by the students themselves.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Evidence and critically evaluate the skills and knowledge of the techniques used to study biodiversity hotspots.

MO2 Demonstrate a critical awareness of the role and responsibilities of international reseachers in the implementation of conservation projects which may impact indigenous communites.

Hours to be allocated: 150

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 46 hours

Face-to-face learning = 104 hours

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/ussk59-15-3.html

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: Assessment: Report (2000 words)
The ability to record notes and collect accurate data in the field is assessed through a comprehensive field log which showcases species descriptions and methods learned. The field log also evidences the development of graduate skills such as endurance, tolerance, team working, organisation and time management. A reflective element of the logbook requires the students to contemplate feedback that they have received about their performance in the field, the importance of pre-expedition preparation including in species identification and how the experiences on the expedition have affected their professional goals and approaches.

Students are supported with lectures prior to the trip as well as workshops and 1-2-1 formative feedback during the expedition.

Assessment tasks:

Report (First Sit)
Description: Field Report (2000 words)
Weighting: 100 %
Final assessment: Yes
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

Report (Resit)
Description: Field Report (2000 words)
Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science [Zoo] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science {Foundation} [Zoo] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Biological Sciences [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2023-24

Biological Sciences [Frenchay] MSci 2023-24

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science [Frenchay] MSci 2023-24

Environmental Science [Frenchay] MSci 2023-24

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science [Zoo] BSc (Hons) 2023-24

Environmental Science [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2023-24

Integrated Wildlife Conservation {Top-Up} [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2025-26

Environmental Science {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Environmental Science {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][6yrs] MSci 2021-22

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][6yrs] MSci 2021-22

Biological Sciences {Foundation} [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Biological Sciences [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Biological Sciences {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][6yrs] MSci 2021-22

Biological Sciences {Foundation} [Frenchay] MSci 2022-23

Biological Sciences [Frenchay] MSci 2022-23

Biological Sciences {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Zoo][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science [Frenchay] MSci 2022-23

Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Science {Foundation} [Frenchay] MSci 2022-23

Environmental Science {Foundation} [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Environmental Science [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Environmental Science {Foundation} [Frenchay] MSci 2022-23

Environmental Science [Frenchay] MSci 2022-23