	PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION	Newcastle University

1	**Awarding Institution**	Newcastle University
2	**Teaching Institution**	Newcastle University
3	**Final Award**	BSc (Hons.)
4	**Programme Title**	Rural Studies
5	**UCAS/Programme Code**	D452
6	**Programme Accreditation**	None
7	**QAA Subject Benchmark(s)**	Agriculture. forestry, agricultural science, food science and consumer science
8	**FHEQ Level**	Honours
9	**Date written/revised**	October 2007

10	**Programme Aims**

1. To provide students from varied educational backgrounds with an opportunity to study a range of social science subjects applied to rural development and rural resource management.

2. To produce graduates with:

(i) a knowledge and understanding of a range of social sciences pertinent to rural development and rural resource management;
(ii) a full repertoire of graduate key skills and the ability to utilise information from a variety of disciplines in a flexible and integrated way;
(iii) the ability to analyse problems and issues, synthesise potential resolutions and criticise alternatives.

3. To provide a flow of well-motivated graduates with the subject specific and key skills required by a range of employers both within and outside of the rural economy.
4. To provide a programme which meets FHEQ requirements at Honours level and which takes appropriate account of the subject benchmark statements in agriculture, forestry, agricultural sciences, food sciences and consumer sciences.

11	**Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Agriculture. forestry, agricultural science, food science and consumer science.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should be able to demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of:

A1 the economic, social, political, cultural and legal environment which provides the context for rural development in the UK.
A2 the key organisations and institutions involved in rural development and rural resource management in the UK.
A3 rural and agri-environmental policy at UK and European level and its application to key social, economic and environmental problems in the UK countryside.
A4 the natural, historical and cultural factors that contribute to the character of the UK countryside.
A5 the rural economy of the UK and the economics of rural resource management.
A6 the management of public and private sector organisations.
A7 contemporary issues, policies and mechanisms for land use planning in the UK.
A8 the causes and consequences of conflict in rural communities in the UK.

Teaching and Learning Methods
The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding is through lectures. These are supplemented by seminars, field classes and group discussion. Understanding of economic, social, legal, planning and policy context as relevant to rural areas (A1, A3, A5, A7, A8) is imparted through lectures and seminars and supported by guided reading. Classroom-based learning on the organisational context of the countryside (A2) and landscape character (A4) is developed through fieldwork and site visits. Key issues in rural policy and planning (A7) are given a currency by the involvement of academic staff who play a role in the development of national strategies. The principles of business management (A6) are developed through lectures and case study material applied to a variety of sectors and issues. Optional modules at all stages allow students to develop interests in management and marketing and their application to the rural economy. Students are encouraged to supplement taught material through independent reading, with extensive reading lists provided. Students also enhance their learning through participation in student-centred project work and through exercises focusing on contemporary or developing countryside issues and reflecting material that have been exposed to through their lectures and reading.

Assessment Strategy
Knowledge and understanding of this subject primarily assessed by a combination of unseen examinations (essay-type questions, short answer questions, problem solving, and multiple choice questions) and partly by way of coursework and case studies (A1-A8). Most modules include coursework, thus encouraging an element of formative, as well as summative, assessment.

Intellectual Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: B1   critically evaluate arguments and evidence. B2   critically analyse relevant contemporary literature. B3   integrate knowledge from a variety of disciplines and apply it to rational decision making in the rural economy. B4   solve problems.

Teaching and Learning Methods
Encouraging students to consider information critically and justify their interpretation develops intellectual skills (B1). Literature review (B2) is introduced and practiced at stage 2 and developed in the stage 3 Special Study (ACE3093). This is done through tutorials, fieldwork and lectures. The Introduction to Rural Studies module (ACE1007) encourages an early focus on understanding rather than on learning facts, and an emphasis on problem solving is then developed in key modules at stages 2 and 3 (B4) especially through exercises focusing on countryside-related problems. The ability to handle and interpret information from a variety of disciplines (B3) in a decision making context, is an integral element of the course and is particularly developed in the countryside management module at stage 3. Students learn through participation in problem-solving exercises, research projects, data handling and discussion. Students are encouraged to justify opinions through discussion, oral presentations and in their special study research projects (ACE3093) where they practice the production of reasoned arguments and logical conclusions. Literature reviews are practised at stages 2 and 3.

Assessment Strategy
Intellectual skills are assessed by unseen examinations (B1, B3, B4), assignments (B1, B3, B4), oral presentations (B2), case studies (B3, B4) and the stage 3 special study (B1, B2, B3). Literature reviews (B2) are produced in stages 2 and 3 to enable both formative and summative assessment.

Practical Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: C1   develop and critically appraise management strategies for a range of public good issues in rural areas.

C2	gather and interpret qualitative and quantitative data.
C3	use suitable techniques to analyse qualitative and quantitative data.
C4	apply techniques of strategic management to inform planning and decision making.
C5	apply techniques of countryside interpretation to communicate with rural stakeholders.
C6	describe, evaluate and categorise landscape character.
C7	use economic and qualitative techniques to evaluate a range of rural and environmental policies.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Skills are introduced through lectures and developed through a variety of approaches. Data handling (C2) is introduced in lectures and tutorials and developed through exercises and tutorial sessions, while the development and appraisal of management strategies (C1) is supported through case studies and appropriate exercises. Economic analysis (C3) and strategic management and decision making (C4) are introduced through lectures from stage 1 and practised in individual and group-based case studies and problem solving exercises. Countryside interpretation (C5) and landscape assessment (C6) are developed through field visits and where appropriate supported by case study exercises. Policy evaluation (C7) is introduced in the context of landscape and environmental impact assessment and particular economic and qualitative approaches are introduced in a specialist stage 3 module delivered by an active researcher in this field.

Students acquire skills (C1-C7) through hands-on practical experience, a variety of problem or case-study based exercises, and through application of appropriate techniques to their Special Study. The latter presents a less-structured and more creative learning opportunity that requires greater exercise of judgement on the part of the student.

Assessment Strategy

Practical skills are assessed is by way of examinations (C1-C3, C7) and coursework (C1-C7), including applied case studies (C2 and C4), oral presentations (C5) and field class exercises (C4 and C6).

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

D1	communicate in writing and orally in a manner appropriate to the target audience.
D2	work independently, through managing own learning, time management, showing initiative and adaptability.
D3	work successfully as a member of a team.
D4	use library resources and information technology effectively.

Teaching and Learning Methods

These are introduced to students through the induction programme and skills sessions within modules. IT and library (D4) skills are introduced early in programme within skills or knowledge-based modules and may be further developed and practised in other modules later in the course. Oral communication skills (D1) are explicitly developed by employing a professional storyteller to develop that element within a skills module (ACE2011) and practised through a range of individual and group presentations at stages 2 and 3. Written communications skills (D1) are developed through essays and coursework exercises. Teamwork skills (D3) are developed through group-based exercises and assignments beginning in the first induction week. The final year special study develops the ability to work independently (D2), requiring students to develop time management skills, and requiring them to show initiative and adaptability. Students have the opportunity to develop further work and study skills through optional modules offered in conjunction with the Careers Service and by attending extra-curricular sessions organised by the careers service and promoted in careers sessions included in lectures at stages 2 and 3.

Students learn through the production of essays, case study exercises, and critiques of written materials. Oral presentations are required from students at stages 2 and 3. Emphasis is placed on effective study habits and time management throughout the programme.

Assessment Strategy

These skills are assessed through the production of coursework (D1-D4) and the stage 3 special study (D1, D2, D4). Oral presentations, sometimes using powerpoint or posters test

the ability to communicate in a variety of media (D1) and in a manner appropriate to the target audience. Teamwork skills (D3) developed in group exercises are assessed formatively through tutorial debriefs. Independent working and time management (D2) are assessed summatively in the stage 3 special study. Library and IT skills (D4) are assessed through coursework exercises and also in the development of special studies at stage 3.

12   Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

BSc Rural Studies is a three year degree programme delivered over three stages (1,2 and 3) within each of which students are expected to study modules to a total of 120 credits. At each stage students must study some compulsory and some optional modules, with the balance weighted towards the former in a ratio of either 70:50 or 80:40.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

This programme comprises a distinctive mix of modules taken from the social and natural sciences. Particular features of the programme include:

- modules introduced specifically for countryside management and rural studies students;
- a range of field visits and practical work related to rural areas;
- the chance to meet and talk with experienced countryside professionals;
- the opportunity to develop and practice skills in landscape character assessment and management planning;
- opportunities to participate in work-related learning at stages 2 and 3;
- a module in qualitative data collection and analysis;
- the opportunity to study business management and marketing at all three stages;
- the opportunity to study aspects of policy relevant to the rural economy;
- the opportunity to study estate and land management;
- the opportunity to undertake an individual research project in a school active in rural research.

If students study the appropriate optional modules at stage 1 they can transfer to BSc Countryside Management at Stage 2.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2007-2008/programme/d452.php

13   Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

A Levels: BBB/BBC GCSE Mathematics (minimum grade C) required.

Scottish Qualifications: AABB/BBBBB at Higher Grade. Mathematics required at grade 2 Standard Grade (or Intermediate 2 equivalent). Combinations of Highers and Advanced Highers accepted.

International Baccalaureate: Minimum of 30 points in the IB Diploma with Mathematics grade 5 at Standard Level if not offered at Higher Level.

Irish Leaving Certificate: BBBBB at Higher Level. Orinary Level Mathematics required at grade A if not offered at Higher Level.

Access Qualifications: For applicants offering Access to HE courses, modules in science and social science-related subjects are desirable (three modules at Merit/Credit grade for HEFC).

BTEC National Diploma: BTEC National Diploma in a land or environment-related subject at overall DMM.

BTEC Higher National Diploma: BTEC Higher National Diploma in a land-related subject to include at least 8 units at Merit grade. Students may be admitted to Stage 2 of the degree programme provided that they have passed suitable units.

PARTNERS - A Levels: CCC/CCD GCSE Mathematics (minimum grade C) required.

PARTNERS - BTEC National Diploma: BTEC National Diploma in a environment- or land and environment-related subject at overall MMM/MMP.

Admissions policy/selection tools
All applicants will be invited to attend an Open Day usually held in late February or early March.

Non-standard Entry Requirements
Any applicant with non-standard entry requirements will be considered on the merits of their application. Such applicants may be asked to attend an interview with the selector.

Additional Requirements
None

Level of English Language capability
For applicants whose first language is not English, an IELTS score of 6.5 or an equivalent qualification is usually required.

14	Support for Student Learning

Induction
During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support
Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid.

Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre.

Academic support
The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support
All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions/workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues eg. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Union Society operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities
The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources
The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-sessional language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

15	**Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

Module reviews
All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews
The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports
External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations
All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback
Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms
The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

16	Regulation of assessment

Pass mark
The pass mark is 40 (Undergraduate programmes)
The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements
Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations and Undergraduate Examination Conventions. In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage. Limited compensation up to 40 credits and down to a mark of 35 is possible at each Stage and there are resit opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Weighting of stages
The marks from Stages 2 and 3 will contribute to the final classification of the degree
The weighting of marks contributing to the degree for Stages 2 and 3 is 25:75

Common Marking Scheme
The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Undergraduate Examination Conventions, namely

	Modules used for degree classification (DC)	**Modules not used for degree classification**
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent

Role of the External Examiner
An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:
    See and approve examination papers
    Moderate examination and coursework marking
    Attend the Board of Examiners
    Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/ or http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality

Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Compulsory in Bold)
A1	**ACE1007, ACE1014, LAW2053, ACE3016, ACE3017,** ACE1003, ACE1004, ACE3042, BUS2012, LAW2008, MST2003
A2	**ACE1007, ACE2003, ACE3016, ACE3017**
A3	**ACE1007, ACE1014, ACE3016, ACE3017**
A4	**ACE2003, BIO2002,** ACE1008, ACE2032, GSC1102
A5	**ACE3016, BIO2002,** ACE2032, ACE3042, GEO2030, GEO3069
A6	**ACE1004, ACC1003**, ACE2002, ACE3002, ACE3011, BUS2012
A7	**ACE1007, ACE3017,** ACE3026, ACE3042
A8	**ACE1007, ACE3017**
B1	**ACE2003, ACE2009, AC33013, ACE3016, ACE3017, ACE3093.** ACE1008, ACE1026, ACE1028, NCL2201, NCL2202, ACE3026, ACE3042, GEO3069
B2	**ACE2011. ACE3017, ACE3093**
B3	**ACE3016, ACE3093,** ACE1008, MST2003, ACE3009
B4	**ACE2009, ACE3016, BIO1003, BIO1006, BIO2002, LAW2053, MAS1401**, ACE1026, ACE1028, ACE1008, GSC1102, ACC1003, GEO2030, MST2003, ACE3009, ACE3026, ACE3039, ACE3042
C1	**ACE2011, ACE3013, ACE3016, ACE3017**, MST2003
C2	ACE2009, ACE2011, BIO1006, BIO2009, BIO2002, MAS1401, ACE1003, ACE1010, ACC1003, BIO3025
C3	**ACE1003, ACE2009, MAS1401,** ACE2016
C4	**ACE1004, ACE3016,** ACE2002, ACE3002
C5	**ACE2011, ACE3016**
C6	**ACE2003**
C7	**ACE2003, ACE3013,** ACE3042
D1	**ACE2009, ACE3016, BIO1003, BIO1006, BIO2002,** ACC1003, ACE2002, ACE2032, ACE3011, ACE3039, BUS1005, BUS2012, COM2010, FRE1065, FRE1066, GER1062, GER1063, NCL2001, NCL2002, NCL2201, NCL2202
D2	**ACE2011, ACE3093**, ACE1008, ACE2002, ACE3026, ACE3009, ACE3011, BUS1005, BUS2012, COM2010, GEO2032, NCL2001, NCL2002, NCL2201, NCL2202
D3	**ACE2011, ACE3016, BIO1006, BUS1005,** ACE3019, ACE3042, COM2010, GSC1102, MST2003, NCL2001, NCL2002
D4	**ACE2011, BIO1003, BIO1006, MAS1401,** ACC1003, ACE2002, ACE3011, BUS1005, COM2010, GEO2030 GSC1102