

Higher education qualifications in arboriculture and forestry

Ted Wilson,
Silvicultural Research
International, looks
at what's on offer



The educational sector has never been more vibrant, with a wide range of exciting courses and flexible learning options now available for new entrants and established professionals wishing to enhance their qualifications in arboriculture and forestry.

My recent survey of higher education taught courses in arboriculture and forestry (see below) demonstrates that there is a wide range of options and routes to professional roles in the sector. Many colleges offer courses closely linked to professional practice, especially **Foundation Degrees (FdSc)** and **Higher National (HN) qualifications** that involve significant practical and work-based experience. **Top-Up** degrees are one-year courses that enable holders of an FdSc or HN qualification to complete a BSc (Hons) degree in arboriculture or forestry.

Traditional **BSc (Ordinary and Honours)** courses cover the essential scientific and business elements of professional practice. Those courses awarded at the Honours level also include an individual research project leading to the completion of a dissertation. Most undergraduate courses encourage students to take a sandwich year placement to hone practical skills and gain essential work-based experience.

More variety and flexibility

Recently, there have been a number of exciting new developments in arboriculture and forestry education, with the emergence of a range of new courses and delivery modes. Among these is the new integrated masters degree in forestry (MFor) at Bangor University. This is a 4-year course that extends the undergraduate curriculum on to advanced studies and research at the postgraduate level. Integrated masters courses have become popular for a number of scientific and engineering disciplines. The more traditional route to postgraduate qualifications has been to complete an honours degree and continue on to a 12-month taught MSc degree (or research degrees, not covered in this article). These courses typically involve two semesters of

course work, followed by a 3-4 month individual research project leading to the submission of a dissertation.

A number of delivery routes are now possible, including full-time, part-time and distance learning options, offering candidates more flexibility and choice. This may be of interest to those already in full-time employment but wishing to enhance their formal qualifications. Among recent or new courses appearing in the educational marketplace are the Distance Learning MSc in Forestry at Bangor and the new MSc Forestry Management at Harper Adams University. These join a range of established courses at Aberdeen, Bangor, Harper Adams and Myerscough.

Many courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate level are now accredited by the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF). Points are awarded based on curriculum and course content. This information will be important for anyone considering onward progression to full membership of the ICF, and attainment of the MICFor credential.

ted.wilson@silviculture.org.uk
www.silviculture.org.uk

Higher Education Courses in Forestry, Arboriculture and Urban Forestry in the United Kingdom¹ (2015-2016 Entry)

The information in this table is based on a survey of colleges and universities in January-February 2015. Details can change at relatively short notice, so it is advisable to consult individual college and university websites for up-to-date information on courses, content, delivery mode and fees. Information in this note was last updated on 4 March 2015.

Undergraduate Courses			Taught Postgraduate Courses		
Institution	Course(s) and Delivery Mode	ICF points*	Institution	Course(s) and Delivery Mode	ICF points*
Askham Bryan College	FdSc Arboriculture ^{1,2}	NA	University of Aberdeen	MSc Forestry ¹	6
Professional Tree Surgery and Management			School of Biological Sciences	PGDip Forestry ¹	5
University of Aberdeen	BSc (Ord) Forestry ¹	7	Bangor University	MSc Environmental Forestry ¹	6
School of Biological Sciences	BSc (Hons) Forestry ¹	8	School of the Environment, Natural Resources and Geography (SENRGY)	MSc Agroforestry ¹	5
	BSc (Ord) Forest Sciences ¹	7		MSc Sustainable Forest and Nature Management (SUFONAMA) (Erasmus Mundus course) ¹	NA
	BSc (Hons) Forest Sciences ¹	8		MSc Sustainable Tropical Forestry (SUTROFOR) (Erasmus Mundus course) ¹	NA
Bangor University	BSc (Hons) Forestry ¹	8		MSc Forestry ²	5/6
School of the Environment & Natural Resources	BSc (Hons) Conservation with Forestry ¹	6		MSc Tropical Forestry ³	5
	MFor (4-year Master of Forestry degree) ¹ (New 2014)	TBC	Harper Adams University	MSc Forestry Management ^{1,2} (New 2015)	TBC
University of Cumbria	BSc (Hons) Forest Management ¹	TBC	Department of Crop and Environmental Sciences	MSc Conservation and Forest Protection ^{1,2}	NA
National School of Forestry	BSc (Hons) Woodland Ecology and Conservation ¹	TBC			
	BSc (Hons) Forestry (Top-Up) ^{1,3}	TBC	Myerscough College	MSc Arboriculture & Urban Forestry ^{1,2,3}	6
	FdSc Forestry ^{1,2}	TBC	Uni of Central Lancashire	PGDip Arboriculture & Urban Forestry ^{1,2,3}	NA
Inverness College UHI	BSc (Ord) Sustainable Forest Management (with Forest Conservation) ^{1,2}	7			
Scottish School of Forestry	BSc (Ord) Sustainable Forest Management (with Arboriculture & Urban Forestry) ^{1,2}	7			
	HNC Arboriculture & Urban Forestry ^{1,2}	NA			
	HND Arboriculture & Urban Forestry ^{1,2}	5			
	HNC Forestry ^{1,2}	NA			
	HND Forestry ^{1,2}	5			
Moulton College	FdSc Arboriculture ^{1,2}	5			
University of Northampton					
Myerscough College	BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Urban Forestry ^{1,3}	8			
Uni of Central Lancashire	FdSc Arboriculture ^{1,3}	5			
Pershore College	FdSc Arboriculture ¹	5			
University of Worcester	BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management (Top-Up) ¹	8			
Plumpton College	FdSc Arboriculture ^{1,2}	5			
University of Brighton	FdSc Forestry & Woodland Management ^{1,2}	5			
Sparsholt College	BSc (Hons) Woodland Conservation Management ^{1,2}	6			
University of Portsmouth	FdSc Woodland Conservation Management ^{1,2}	5			

Notes:

a. Course Accreditation (ICF Points*)

Many Forestry and Arboriculture courses are accredited by the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF). Points are awarded based on curriculum and course content: a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 points can be awarded to individual courses. Points are credited as partial fulfilment of the requirements for Professional Membership Entry (PME) to the institute. Several new or re-validated courses require assessment from ICF and point scores are to be confirmed (TBC). Several others are not accredited (NA) by ICF. Further information about course accreditation and the PME process is available from ICF: www.charteredforesters.org/membership

b. Course Delivery Modes

Professional Forestry and Arboriculture courses are offered in three delivery modes: full-time, part-time and distance learning. For many of the full-time courses there is an additional option to complete an industry/work-based placement (sandwich-year). It is important to check with each institution for information about course content, options and delivery, all of which can change at relatively short notice. The codes used to designate delivery mode are as follows:

1. Full-time study (FT)
2. Part-time study (PT)
3. Distance Learning (DL)