

The Royal Agricultural University

Programme Specification:

FdSc Equine Management

2025-26

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/26]

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Module descriptors.

Section 1 – Material Programme Information

Validating body	The Royal Agricultural University
Teaching Institution	The Royal Agricultural University
Subject Area	Agricultural Science and Practice
Entry Award(s)	FdSc Equine Management
Final Award and exit route(s)	FdSc Equine Management Certificate of Higher Education
Programme title	FdSc Equine Management
Location(s) of study	Cirencester
Delivery type	In Person
Full time study	2 Years
Part-time study	4 Years
Language of study	English
Programme start month	September
Period of validation	September 2024 to August 2029
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not applicable
Type of Accreditation	Not applicable
Accreditation due for renewal	Not applicable
Entry requirements (this should be the standard University entry requirements unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board, and include UCAS entry profile for UG programmes and IELTS)	<p>GCSE minimum five GCSEs at Grade C/4 including English Language and Mathematics (or Maths Numeracy for Welsh applicants) plus satisfactory level 3 qualifications: A-Level: (example grades CD) – minimum of 56 UCAS tariff points (points to include at least one full A-Level or equivalent qualifications)</p> <p>C&G Advanced Technical/BTEC - Level 3 Extended Diploma (1080) at Merit-Pass-Pass International Baccalaureate: 24 points Access to Higher Education: 45 credits at level 3 of which minimum of 15 must be awarded at Merit or higher. (Pass in Functional Skills level 2 are accepted in lieu of GCSE English & Mathematics)</p> <p>Other level 3 qualifications will be considered.</p>
UCAS Code	D453
Quercus Code	EMF
HECos Code	100519 - Equine Studies, 100518 – Animal Management
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points	<p>Characteristics Statement: Foundation Degree (2020) Agriculture, Rural Environmental Sciences, Animal Studies, Consumer Science, Forestry, Food, Horticulture and Human Nutrition (April 2024) Biosciences (March 2023)</p> <p>QAA Subject Benchmark Statements</p>
Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 4 & 5

Approval at AQSC	AB 16 May 2024 AQSC 13 Dec 2024 v2
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Section 2 - Programme Structure

Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Optional	Semester	
Level 4					
1314	Equine Anatomy and Physiology	4	15	Core	1
1440	Academic Skills and Practice	4	15	Core	1
1452	Practical Equine Management	4	30	Core	1 + 2
1443	Business Finance and Accounts	4	15	Optional	1
1450	Introduction to Equine Nutrition	4	15	Core	2
1447	The UK Equine Industry	4	15	Core	2
1448	Introduction to Equine Health and Disease	4	15	Core	2
1247	Equine Breeding and Genetics	4	15	Optional	2
	Certificate of Higher Education		120		
Level 5					
2388	Sustainable Forage and Turf management	5	15	Core	1
2032	Marketing Management	5	15	Optional	1
2320	Bloodstock Production	5	15	Optional	1
2385	Equine Veterinary Science	5	15	Core	1
2390	Equine Facility Management	5	15	Core	1
2384	Equine Sports Physiology and Nutrition	5	15	Core	2
2378	Research and Evidence	5	15	Core	2
2389	Applied Equine Practice	5	15	Core	2
2387	Equine Behaviour and Welfare Applications	5	15	Core	2
	Total credits: FdSc Equine Management		240		

The structure of all University awards complies with the University's [Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes](#) which includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a programme;
- Consequences of failure for referrals, compensation and exist awards;
- Calculation and classification of awards.

FdSc Equine Management (240 credits)

Module code	Module title	Level	Credit value	Core/ Optional	Semester
1452	Practical Equine Management	4	30	Core	1 + 2
1440	Academic Skills and Practice	4	15	Core	1
1447	The UK Equine Industry	4	15	Core	2

Level 4- Year 2					
1443	Business Finance and Accounts	4	15	Optional	1
1314	Equine Anatomy and Physiology	4	15	Core	1
1450	Introduction to Equine Nutrition	4	15	Core	2
1448	Introduction to Equine Health and Disease	4	15	Core	2
1247	Equine Breeding and Genetics	4	15	Optional	2
	Certificate of Higher Education		120		
Level 5- Year 1					
2388	Sustainable Forage and Turf management	5	15	Core	1
2390	Equine Facility Management	5	15	Core	1 +2
2384	Equine Sports Physiology and Nutrition	5	15	Core	2
2387	Equine Behaviour and Welfare Applications	5	15	Core	2
Level 5- Year 2					
2385	Equine Veterinary Science	5	15	Core	1
2032	Marketing Management	5	15	Core	1
2320	Bloodstock Production	5	15	Optional	1
2378	Research and Evidence	5	15	Core	2
2389	Applied Equine Practice	5	15	Core	2
	Total Credits: FdSc Equine Management		240		

Section 3 – Programme overview and Programme aims

The horse industry is facing an existential staffing crisis (BETA 2023)*, with all areas of the sector reporting shortfalls in suitably qualified staff to take on practical and managerial challenges. Graduates of this programme provide a timely solution, offering employers the blend of skills and knowledge that the industry demands for its survival and sustainable development.

In year 1, students develop horse care essentials such as stable care, tack and rug maintenance and fitting as part of the 30 credit module, Practical Equine Management (1452). As students' progress through year 2, more advanced activities are introduced in modules such as Applied Equine Practice (2389), including health assessment and preparation of the horse for transport. At the Royal Agricultural University we are fortunate to have our own 91 stable livery yard (Fossehill Equestrian Centre), which forms a focal point for these teaching activities. On average, our students enjoy around 12 hours of face to face tuition per week, and approximately 3 hours of this will be spent developing practical skills at Fossehill. Although students are responsible for arranging their own transport to this establishment, it is in walking distance of the main campus (25 minutes) or can be easily accessed by car in approximately 10 minutes.

In addition to industry specific practical skills, other modules featured in year 2 such as Equine Facility Management equip learners with the wherewithal to contribute positively to the day to day management of an equestrian establishment. For example, students will gain hands on experience of employee supervision. This is accomplished using a system

whereby second year students, plan and supervise the activities of the first year cohort. Of course, this process is closely monitored by suitably trained members of the RAU teaching team.

The FdSc Equine Management will cover both the theoretical knowledge and the applied practical skills required for the British Horse Society Qualifications (BHSQ) Level 3 Groom qualification. This qualification is made up of five separate units, each one requires completion of a skills record, and attendance at a practical examination held by the British Horse Society at venues around the country. Students will have received tuition in all required aspects for this professional qualification and will have the opportunity to have their skills record signed off by an accredited professional. Students will also be prepared for the BHS practical assessments if they wish to sit them. The British Horse Society qualifications are internationally recognised, and completing these assessments will improve the employability of graduates in practical roles within the equine industry all around the world.

A truly unique feature of the RAU equine experience is the unsurpassed industry links, to globally renowned establishments such as Cheltenham Racecourse and Tweenhills Stud. Visits to these establishments in modules such as The UK Equine Industry, provide learners with insights into the breadth and diversity of the UK equestrian sector. In addition, valuable networking opportunities are presented which boost the employability of our graduates.

The programme is available to all learners irrespective of horse handling experience, although less experienced candidates may be required to commit to additional sessions to meet the required standard. These will be provided as part of the induction programme for new students, and will be supplemented with additional learning activities at the Fossehill Equestrian centre dependent upon individual needs.

Alongside the standard tuition fees, new students will be expected to provide personal protective equipment including riding hat (to at least the PAS015:2011 standard), sturdy footwear and gloves. Finally, students would need to wear an RAU branded polo short and sweatshirt while completing practical yard duties at the Fossehill Equestrian Centre, leading to an additional expense of approximately £300

*BETA (2023) The National Equestrian Survey. BETA publications.

Section 4 – Programme Sustainability

All courses and activities of the Royal Agricultural University are unified and driven by 3 guiding principles:

QUALITY: A global reputation for excellence and leadership

REACH: A growing, diverse and inclusive community of students

SUSTAINABILITY: A showcase for sustainable and resilient management

With reference to sustainability, this foundation degree programme is fully mapped to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 (see table 1 for examples).

Module	Aligned With which SDG?	Alignment Characteristics
1447 The UK Equine Industry	SDG 15- Gender Equality	Challenges of gender equality in stud management are explored
1452 Practical Equine Management	SDG 12- Responsible Consumption and Production	Responsible approach to single use plastics and recycling
2387 Equine Behaviour and Welfare	SDG 3- Good Health and Wellbeing	The importance of horses to good human health
2388 Sustainable Forage and Turf Management	SDG 13- Climate Action	Sustainable grazing systems which promote carbon sequestration

Table 1. Programme alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

Students will leave equipped with vital skills that enable them to contribute positively to the Sustainable Development Goals, and allied to this a mind-set which recognises the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity in the equestrian sector. For example, module 2378 Research and Evidence, provides learners with the analytical skills required to recognise instances of inequality, and to design strategies for the remediation of these. In addition, Equine Facility Management promotes a balanced and sensitive approach to work allocation and staff supervision that considers gender, race and aptitude of the workforce.

Section 5 – Programme intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

Unlike other equine programmes at the Royal Agricultural University, this foundation degree is designed to instil and assess practical horse handling and facility management skills that are lacking within the UK equestrian sector. Dimensions of practical aptitude are reflected in the 'Programme Specific Skills' section below (outcomes 2-6). Successful demonstration of these outcomes will lead to the development of graduates that are capable of filling the skills gap that the industry is facing. In this respect, students who leave with a foundation degree in Equine Management, will be equipped to contribute positively to the economic development of a range of equestrian businesses.

Finally, several of the learning outcomes below test the students' knowledge and understanding of matters relating to environmental sustainability (Knowledge and Understanding outcome 2) and inclusivity in the workplace (Programme Specific Skills outcome 3). These outcomes are mapped to modules including Sustainable Forage and Turf Management, which feature education for sustainable development in key areas such as grazing systems that promote carbon sequestration.

Knowledge and Understanding

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Describe the UK equestrian industry and its subsidiaries	1447, 1116
2.	Manage horse husbandry practices for health, wellbeing and environment sustainability	2387, 1436, 1448, 1450
3.	Discuss equine structure, function, health and disease	1314, 1448
4.	Explain equine nutrition, training, behaviour and welfare	2254, 2387, 2255
5.	Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of breeding and genetic science as applied to the horse	1247, 1448, 2320
6.	Understand business accounts and financial principles that apply to equine and agricultural businesses	1116, 1447
7.	Apply marketing principles and the use of market intelligence for effective business management and development	2032, 1116
Intellectual, Professional, Key skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Apply industry recognised practical skills to the day to day management of horses	1452, 2389, 2390
2.	Demonstrate aptitude in problem solving within work based situations	1452, 2389, 2390
3.	Employ the principles of research design to undertake projects and display the resultant data	2378
4.	Demonstrate clear and effective communication through a range of mediums	1447, 2378
5.	Apply self-reflection to academic and professional practice	2378, 2390
6.	Utilise key skills relating to the proficient use of information technology to both academic practice and work-based situations	1440, 1413
7.	Apply knowledge of industry / subject specific technology to academic practice and work-based situations	2387, 2390
Programme specific skills		
LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s
1.	Apply laboratory based findings to horse management situations	11448, 253
2.	Supervise the safe and effective working practice of employees and volunteer work forces	2390
3.	Create schedules of work, and working practices that are sensitive to the aptitude, culture and race characteristics of the work-force	2389, 2390, 1440
4.	Demonstrate competency in basic horse husbandry techniques such as feeding, mucking out and grooming	1452, 2389, 1440

5.	Perform more advanced practical tasks such as presentation of horses for veterinary inspection and transport	2389, 2390
6.	Apply business theory to yard management scenarios	1443, 2032
7.	Apply financial, ethical and sustainable reasoning to hypothetical business development plans	1443, 1447

Section 6 – Approach to Learning and Teaching delivery

General Approach to Learning Teaching and Delivery

All full-time academic programmes at the RAU are constructed using a selection of modules, each of which requires engagement with a variety of learning activities. Successful completion of module assessments will result in the award of credits, and students are required to achieve a total of 120 credits for each year of a full-time programme.

The credit system is used to ensure a balanced workload across each programme, with each credit point representing a notional learning time of 10 hours of student work. Thus a 15-credit module will require a notional input of 150 hours of work, and a complete academic year of 120 credits will require 1200 hours of work, or approximately 40 hours per week.

Within this total time, students can expect to participate in formal timetabled activities; such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical's and visits; for approximately one third of the total time – usually around 3 hours per week for a 15-credit module studied over 12 weeks of the year. Thus the majority of module activities; such as reading around the subject, preparing for tutorials and seminars, preparing for, and completing, module assessments, and revision for and sitting examinations; will take place outside of these scheduled activities, but are an essential part of a student's learning journey. Learning and assessment materials are provided via a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) called Gateway. Electronic materials are generally made available to students 48 hours in advance of the learning activity.

Students attempting to short-cut their learning activities may find themselves experiencing difficulties as each module progresses, and as the level of assumed understanding increases. Thus, it is vitally important that new students establish an effective routine for their studies as soon as possible. Maintaining a balanced workload from the start of the programme will help to avoid intense periods of activity, and ensure knowledge and understanding gradually develop throughout the year in readiness for the assessment periods.

Academic Support at RAU

Students have access to the Academic Support Tutor (AST) programme which provides high quality academic support for students. This programme provides timetabled group tutorials, and individual support for students who may be experiencing problems with academic progress. Group tutorials focus on providing high quality academic support at the appropriate academic level; advice and guidance in relation to the course; and advice

about making study choices on the course Individual support focus on student continuation and may be in person or online.

In addition to the AST system, each member of academic staff at the Royal Agricultural University is available for 2 'Academic Support Hours' every week. These are drop in sessions whereby any student can obtain support for assessments, or obtain advice regarding their academic choices or progress. Details of these sessions can be found within the Gateway Virtual Learning Environment. Academic support hours will also be fully explained and signposted during the University induction process.

Specific Support for Foundation Degree Students

It is likely that the strengths and values of a foundation degree student lie in the domain of practical horse management. To make sure that learners are fully supported as they engage in course elements that are more theory-based, all modules contain formative (non-graded) assessments that provide practice for the summative (graded) elements. In addition, for many modules, students will be a part of a much broader learning community including those studying on Bachelor of Science (BSc) honours degree programmes. In this respect, foundation degree students can benefit from peer support in assessments that involve group learning. For example, module 1010 Equine Industry is assessed via a group presentation. Alongside a formative practice task, foundation degree students will be mixed with BSc students for the group presentation, such that peer to peer support is available.

Section 7 – Approach to Assessment

Overall, the programme is assessed via a variety of assessment styles to encourage the application of knowledge in ways appropriate to the industry or to develop core graduate skills. Many of the assessments occur via coursework rather than traditional examinations. Coursework exercises include (but are not limited to) written essays, reports and oral presentations which may also include using audio visual media. Where examinations are utilised, these are generally 'seen' scenarios whereby the paper is made available to students 2 weeks before the assessment date or open book where students can take their course notes into the exam room. The open book or seen exams are looking for students to analyse, evaluate and apply, rather than just to retain knowledge.

This programme is designed to equip students with the practical horse management skills demanded by many sectors of the equestrian industry. To ensure that students leave the University with these skills, modules such as 1452, Practical Equine Management, features three 'Skills Observation' assessments during which students will be required to demonstrate their horse management aptitude to a member of the teaching team. The practical assessments are designed to mimic the testing environment featured in the British Horse Society examination series, thereby equipping students to take these exams during or after the course should they wish.

Overall, the programme is assessed through*:

	Learning and Teaching			Assessment		
	Directed	Independent	Placement	Exam	Practical	Coursework
Year 1	28.10%	71.90%	0.00%	7.50%	27.50%	65.00%

Year 2	25.83%	71.67%	2.50%	12.50%	12.50%	75.00%
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Section 8 – Course work grading and feedback

Assessment is an integral part of the learning experience of students. All University programmes are assessed by a range of assessment activities, each developed to provide the most appropriate means of demonstrating the student's achievement of a specified learning outcome. An assessment may assess more than one learning outcome.

The University operates standard pass criteria which can be found in the RAU Academic Regulations; (paragraphs 137 – 153).

The normal basis for awards will be the overall average score in the final assessment, graded as follows:

Distinction	70% and above
Merit	60% - 69%
Pass	40% - 59%
Fail	Below 40%

In addition to assigning a percentage mark to the work, the tutor adds comments; usually about the strengths and weaknesses of the piece as well as advice about improving the work. All assessment decisions are subject to internal moderation and external scrutiny by the programme's External Examiners. Students must ensure they retain all coursework in case the External Examiner(s) wishes to see it.

Section 9 – Work Based Learning

All students perform 30 days of work-based learning in an equine enterprise between year 1 and the start of year 2. The Practical Equine Management module (1452), designed to prepare students for a range of placement roles that include a dimension of practical horse management. This way learners are fully equipped to operate safely and, in an industry approved fashion, as soon as they arrive at the placement destination.

Overall, the work experience period enables learners to 1) apply skills obtained in the first year and 2) obtain a solid foundation upon which the reflective element of the Equine Facility Management module (2390) in year two is based.

A full database of previous work-based learning providers will be provided to guide students in making their choice, although students may also wish to either utilise their existing contacts or source new destinations at their discretion. Whichever method of provider selection is followed, full support in making a suitable choice will be forthcoming from the Student Placements team.

Throughout the work-based learning period, RAU staff will be available to offer support, although students will also be required to develop their own skills of problem solving and negotiation, to solve any matters that may arise in the first instance. At some point (normally midway) through the 30-day span, a member of RAU staff will visit the student and speak to the placement provider to gauge progress, offer support and ensure individuals are properly prepared for the next year of study.

At the end of the work-based learning period, work providers will be invited to complete a simple on-line assessment of student performance. This feedback will then be used as a basis for the reflective element of the Equine Facility Management module in the second year.

Section 10 - Progression

This programme has been developed based upon advice and feedback from industry leaders and experienced academics. They have recommended a blend of science, industry and practical based topics specifically tailored to produce graduates that are qualified to take on and support managerial positions in the sector.

The programme features a 30-day work based learning period, providing real-life experience of the working environment, which further boosts employability. Finally, we are ideally situated to provide an excellent range of visits locations such as Cheltenham Racecourse, and top local trainers such as Fergal O'Brien. Together these provide essential career networking opportunities to our students.

Graduates of this programme will leave with a fully signed off skills record, such that they may apply for BHS exams up to and including the Level 3 Groom's Certificate. Although the completion of these exams is not required to achieve the Foundation Degree award, obtaining these industry recognised qualifications will provide a significant boost to graduate employability. Advice will be given from the teaching team, such that students apply for the most appropriate BHS award, set against existing qualifications and aptitude. More information concerning the BHS exam series including the specific details of how to apply, is available from the BHS website: BHS.org.uk.

Finally, progression onto the final year of one of the RAU equine degree programmes provides an attractive top-up opportunity for graduates seeking a BSc (Hons) qualification. Students wishing to top up onto the BSc (Hons) Bloodstock and Equine Performance Management must take elective modules 1247 Equine Breeding and Genetics and 2320 Bloodstock Production. Students wishing to top up onto BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business must take elective modules 1443 Business Finance and Accounts and 2032 Marketing Management.

For students wishing to top-up to BSc, focus tutorials will be available with the FdSc programme leader following the Easter break in year 2, to guide the transition into level 6 (the third year). Depending on the outcome of these tutorials, students may be set bespoke bridging activities to manage this transition.

Finally, and with reference to career destinations, this foundation degree is designed to provide access to positions such as:

- Assistant Yard Manager of livery yards, racing yards and riding schools
- Technical support at colleges and universities that provide equine education
- Yard Technician at veterinary practices
- Roles with equine industry subsidiaries such as saddlery companies
- Practical positions at equine welfare organisations
- Practical event management roles at larger equine competition venues

If the top-up route to BSc (Hons) Equine Science and Business is followed, the following range of careers are generally available:

- Technical and sales roles within horse feed companies
- Positions in equine science companies
- Roles within equine insurance companies
- Exciting positions within organisations responsible for sporting governance
- Academic positions at colleges and Universities

Roles in the equestrian media, both print and online.

If the top-up route to BSc (Hons) Bloodstock and Equine Performance Management is followed, the following range of careers are generally available:

- Roles at Thoroughbred studs
- Bloodstock agents or consignors
- Roles within sales venues
- Racecourse management
- Roles within racing governance
- Roles in the equestrian media, both print and online

Section 11 – Student support, wellbeing and counselling

The [University](#) is offering a wide range of support to all RAU students including practical advice & guidance as well as emotional support.

Disability & neurodiversity support

We support students with a range of disabilities, learning difficulties, and other health and mental health conditions, helping them to access funding via the [Disabled Students Allowance](#).

When you tell us about a disability, you will be offered support based on your specific needs which can include:

- **Alternative exam arrangements** such as extra time, rest breaks, or a smaller room.

- **Access to support workers** such as study skills tutors, specialist mentors, readers and scribes.

Mental health Support

We are also here to support students with the ups and downs of university life, offering drop-in sessions, providing expert advice and support for students in crisis or with more complex needs, and together the team runs events and campaigns throughout the year to encourage positive wellbeing.

We also can help students to access external counselling sessions and these are generally delivered in collaboration with our long-term partners at Cotswold Counselling.

Academic Support Tutor Programme

Students have access to the Academic Support Tutor (AST) programme which provides high quality academic support for students. ATS provide timetabled group tutorials, and individual support for students most at risk. Group tutorials focus on providing high quality academic support at the appropriate academic level; advice and guidance in relation to the course; and advice about making study choices on the course (commensurate with the supporting AST Handbook). Individual support focus on student continuation (commensurate with The Team around the RAU Student spheres of integration student retention model) and may be in person or online.

Section 12 – Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The programme is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 6 years. This process ensures that the programme engages with the applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All programmes are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Delegates from programme committees
- Feedback from Student-Staff Liaison committees
- Annual Programme Monitoring