



The institution of
environmental sciences

Department of Health & Environmental Sciences
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Suzhou
China

Thursday 29th August 2024

Dear Dr Lei Han,

Many thanks for submitting your programme for accreditation:

Environmental Science BSc (Hons)

The review panel felt that:

Section A: The Programme

- **Aims of the programme:** The programme is designed to produce future environmental scientists. Students develop a good range of technical, digital and transferable skills. The programme allows students to develop an area of specialism and combine this with ethics, management and leadership.
- **Equality, diversity, and inclusion in programme design and delivery:** The application demonstrates how the programme team have built EDI into the programme design and delivery.
- **Compulsory or core elements of the programme:** The application provides a relevant focus on the rationale for core elements of the programme. The core modules are designed to develop foundational knowledge to support specialisation in the later years of the course and the development of core skills such as field and practical skills. A capstone research project, which allows the students to bring together their knowledge, skills and understanding, is also core to the programme. The core elements of the programme prepare students for both a professional practice and a research career.
- **Optional/elective elements of the programme:** Optional modules are arranged in pathways which allow students to develop depth and specialism. Students are introduced to the pathways via presentations from staff and students in higher years taking these pathways, and additional information is provided to inform the student's decision. Students have the option to change their mind within a short period of the pathway starting. The support for ensuring that students make an informed decision and can change their mind is good practice.
- **Extra-curricular opportunities for learning:** A wide range of extracurricular activities are offered to students. It is good to see that these include paid as well as voluntary opportunities. The extracurricular offering complements the formal curriculum well by providing practical application of the students' learning. It also allows students to develop further their leadership and management skills.
- **Student-led activities and project planning:** All students are required to undertake a final year individual research project. They are appropriately supported in both the selection of the project and its delivery. Compulsory modules in the preceding years underpin this project to ensure the students have the required knowledge of the process and tools needed. Team based projects are embedded across the course and in a range of environments, including field and laboratory.



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- **Summative assessment:** The programme has a clear assessment strategy to ensure that there is no over-assessment and that assessment is authentic and practice based, by removing traditional exams.
- **Formative assessment:** Formative feedback, in a range of forms, is offered through the course. It is clearly scheduled within year to enable students to benefit from it.
- **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in programme design and delivery:** An informative commentary is provided, with useful references to exemplar modules. It is noted that exposure to ESD is influenced by pathway choice. Future applications could reference the role of topics of study in line with the SDGs. For example, ecology study in relation to the broader aims of sustainable development. It is recommended that ESD is embedded more systematically and to a greater depth within the programme.

Section B: Environmental Professional Practice

- **Equality, diversity, and inclusion in preparing graduate for professional practice:** The application demonstrates students are introduced to and develop the skills for EDI in professional practice. There is some misunderstanding about what is meant by awarding gaps. It may be that this data is not available. It is recommended that the programme team explore obtaining this data when applying for accreditation again in the future.
- **Practical skills relevant to professional practice in the environmental science sector:** The programme and its constituent pathways is well designed to develop the range of field, laboratory, and analytical skills that are needed for practice within a range of environmental science fields.
- **Generic skills relevant to professional practice in the environmental science sector:** The programme allows students to develop, practice and gain proficiency in a wide range of generic skills relevant for a career in environmental science.
- **Placements and/or work experience:** A 90-hour minimum work placement is compulsory within the programme. Having this as compulsory ensures that all students have an experience that helps them both decide on career preferences and develop important skills to enhance their employability. Future applications should articulate how students are supported to select a placement that meets their career aspirations.
- **Planning for a career:** The programme offers extensive embedded support for career planning. Employability is strategically integrated into the whole of the programme.
- **Insights to professional practice in the environmental science sector:** The programme provides several opportunities to gain insight to professional practice. As such the programme prepares students well as future professional.
- **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) preparation for professional practice:** The application demonstrates how an understanding of ESD in professional practice is developed in the students.

Decision: Approved for accreditation

The application provides sufficient information to meet the requirements for accreditation. The programme has some key strengths, for example the compulsory placement, career planning and insight into professional practice.

The accreditation will last from 1st September 2024 until 31st August 2029.

Recommendations

We recommend acting on these now, and any reaccreditation application in the future will be expected to have addressed these points.



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Section A

- **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in programme design and delivery:** Future applications could reference the role of topics of study in line with the SDGs. For example, ecology study in relation to the broader aims of sustainable development. It is recommended that ESD is embedded more systematically and to a greater depth within the programme.

Section B

- **Equality, diversity, and inclusion in preparing graduate for professional practice:** There is some misunderstanding about what is meant by awarding gaps. It may be that this data is not available. It is recommended that the programme team explore obtaining this data when applying for accreditation again in the future.
- **Placements and/or work experience:** Future applications should articulate how students are supported to select a placement that meets their career aspirations.

Notifying us of changes

To keep the accreditation, you must make sure that you notify us of any changes to the programme (info@the-ies.org). This includes any: changes to content or assessment in core modules; changes that affect the mapping of the programme against the ES3 Subject Benchmark Statement; and any other changes that would trigger an institutional review of the programme. These changes will be sent to the Accreditation Review Panel, to decide whether the programme requires re-submission for accreditation.

Next steps

I am confident that this award will ensure the continued success and quality of your teaching in the environmental sciences. You have joined the leading scheme in our field and we will strive to ensure positive outcomes for your department and student cohort. You have attained an internationally recognised level of external accreditation.

Your students are now able to apply to be free members of the IES, receiving a range of benefits for the duration of their studies. They can visit www.the-ies.org/joining/student_membership for more information. From this page they can access an online form to sign up for their free student membership. Your validation code to provide to students, which they will need to sign up, is 27645. We will shortly send you an email to distribute to your students.

Congratulations once again on your success!

Yours sincerely,

Adam Donnan
CEO, IES

Michelle Hale
co-Chair, CEDHE

Alison Stokes
co-Chair, CEDHE