

Module code: MOD010093	Version: 2 Date Amended: 11/Apr/2025
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1. Module Title
Animal Behaviour

2a. Module Leader
Jonathan Amory

2b. School
Writtle School of Agriculture, Animal and Environmental Sciences

2c. Faculty
Faculty of Science and Engineering

3a. Level
7

3b. Module Type
Standard (fine graded)

4a. Credits
15

4b. Study Hours
150

5. Restrictions			
Type	Module Code	Module Name	Condition
Pre-requisites:	None		
Co-requisites:	None		
Exclusions:	None		
Courses to which this module is restricted:			

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

6a. Module Description

This module is designed to provide you with both a strong theoretical foundation and advanced research skills in the study of animal behaviour. You'll engage in three key phases; observing animals, collecting data and analysing data. A significant component of the module is delivered through practical research exercises involving live animals on the farm, at the zoo and within ARU Writtle's Animal Unit.

These practical sessions are supported by theory-based sessions that explore the motivation underlying developmental and complex behaviours in a range of wild and domestic species. Together, these elements support the key concepts of animal welfare and conservation that are central to this MSc programme.

Throughout the module, you'll learn how to identify an area of research, plan a research project and conduct a behavioural study. You'll develop techniques in observing and recording animal behaviour and study different experimental designs and technologies used in the field. An important aspect of this module will be the development of scientific communication skills, both in written work and oral presentation.

6b. Outline Content

BEHAVIOUR Review the concepts in behavioural studies such as innate, learning and complex behavioural patterns. Examine the evolution and motivation of wild and domesticated animal behaviour including reproductive strategies, social interactions, individual vs. group dynamics.

METHOD AND ANALYSIS We discuss standard and innovative methods used in behavioural observation for wild and captive animals including new technological approaches. Workshops will allow skills development in a range of behaviour data analysis techniques.

6c. Key Texts/Literature

The reading list to support this module is available at: <https://readinglists.aru.ac.uk/>

6d. Specialist Learning Resources

None

7. Learning Outcomes (threshold standards)

No.	Type	On successful completion of this module the student will be expected to be able to:
1	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Critically evaluate the motivation and concepts for animal behavioural patterns.
2	Knowledge and Understanding	Evaluate methods of recording animal behaviour.
3	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Collect, analyse, evaluate and present behavioural data.

8a. Module Occurrence to which this MDF Refers				
Year	Occurrence	Period	Location	Mode of Delivery
2026/7	ZZF	Template For Face To Face Learning Delivery		Face to Face

8b. Learning Activities for the above Module Occurrence			
Learning Activities	Hours	Learning Outcomes	Details of Duration, frequency and other comments
Lectures	36	1-3	Lectures and Workshops - Directed reading, exercises, tutorials, discussion of concepts, seminars, visits.
Other teacher managed learning	0	None	None
Student managed learning	114	1-3	Reading and development of concepts.
TOTAL:	150		

9. Assessment for the above Module Occurrence					
The assessment for some modules includes a presentation (see below for details on how this particular module is assessed). We recognise that presenting, especially to a large group, can cause significant anxiety or distress for some students. If this may affect you, please contact your Module Leader or the Disability and Neurodiversity Service as early as possible. We will work with you to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments. Depending on your individual needs, these might include, for example, presenting to a smaller group or presenting only to a member of academic staff.					
Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
010	Coursework	1-3	50 (%)	Fine Grade	40 (%)
Project - Integrated assignment to include analysis and presentation of animal behaviour data. These data could be collected from zoological collections, farm animals or companion animals. The reduced word count tariff for the abstract is to offset the extra observation time (12 hours recommended) required for the research. For students unable to access animal resources, the alternative assessment is a 1500-word literature review of animal behaviour research contributions to either animal welfare or conservation science.					
Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
011	Practical	1-3	50 (%)	Fine Grade	40 (%)
Presentation (10 Minutes) - 10-minute conference-style oral presentation of the work reported in the abstract.					

In order to pass this module, students are required to achieve an overall mark of 40% (for modules at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (for modules at level 7*).

In addition, students are required to:

- (a) achieve the qualifying mark for each element of fine graded assessment as specified above**
- (b) pass any pass/fail elements**

[* the pass mark of 50% applies for all module occurrences from the academic year 2024/25 – see Section 3a of this MDF to check the level of the module and Section 8a of this MDF to check the academic year]