Course Summary: March 27, 2026

Marine Biology BSc Honours

- UCAS code: **C161**
- Full time
- 3 years

Our Marine Biology degree offers an understanding of all the exciting marine ecosystems on our planet. You'll study the biology of marine life from microbes through to whales, and consider climate change and marine conservation.

You are currently viewing course information for entry year: **2026**

Next start date:

- September 2026

Tuition fees (Year 1)

- Home: **£9,790**
- International: **£31,500**

Entry requirements and offers

- A-Level: **ABB**
- IB: **32 points**

UCAS Institution name and code:

- NEWC / N21

Undergraduate Open Day

Start your university journey. Find where you belong. Friday, June 26 (9:00-16:00) Saturday, June 27 (9:00-16:00)

Book your place now

Course overview

The planet cannot survive without its oceans. Our mission is to nurture and train you as a marine biologist with the skills to solve global challenges.

You'll explore all marine life, from invertebrates, fish, seabirds and marine mammals to plants, algae and bacteria.

This programme is ideal if you are interested in understanding the complex interactions between marine life and their environments. It prepares you for careers in ecology, marine science and environmental management.

You'll address key challenges of today including:

- climate change
- marine pollution
- sustainable use of our marine resources
- loss of marine biodiversity
- marine conservation

Your course and study experience - disclaimers and terms and conditions
Please rest assured we make all reasonable efforts to provide you with the programmes, services and facilities described. However, it may be necessary to make changes due to significant disruption, for example in response to Covid-19.

View our Academic experience page, which gives information about your Newcastle University study experience for the academic year 2025-26.

See our terms and conditions and student complaints information, which gives details of circumstances that may lead to changes to programmes, modules or University services.

Quality and ranking

Professional accreditation and recognition

All professional accreditations are reviewed regularly by their professional body.

Modules and learning

Modules

The information below is intended to provide an example of what you will study.

Most degrees are divided into stages. Each stage lasts for one academic year, and you'll complete modules totalling 120 credits by the end of each stage.

Our teaching is informed by research. Course content may change periodically to reflect developments in the discipline, the requirements of external bodies and partners, and student feedback.

Optional module availability
Student demand for optional modules may affect availability.

Full details of the modules on offer will be published through the Programme Regulations and Specifications ahead of each academic year. This usually happens in May.

To find out more please see our terms and conditions

You'll cover a broad range of topics to provide you with a solid foundation of knowledge in Marine Biology. This foundation will help you understand more complex challenges and solutions as you progress in your degree.

You'll also be introduced to standard laboratory procedures, experimental design, sampling methods, field observations, and recording, analysing and displaying scientific information.

Modules

You will take the following compulsory modules:

Compulsory modules	Credits
Genetics and Evolution	20
Ecology and Conservation	20
Marine Biology	20
Animal Life	20
Introduction to Marine Sciences (previously called The Marine Environment)	20
Skills for the Biosciences	20

You'll develop a deeper understanding of marine ecology. You'll also learn how your marine biology skills apply to many different areas. These can include industrial, biotechnology and food production.

You'll develop your skills and knowledge through laboratory practicals, workshops, field trips and a residential field course.

Modules

Compulsory modules

You will take the following compulsory modules:

Compulsory module	Credits
Biodiversity, Ecology and Conservation	20
Tropical Marine Ecology	20
Contemporary Oceanography (previously called Oceans and Climate I)	20

Compulsory module	Credits
Professional Skills for Bioscientists (previously called Academic and Employability Skills)	20
Field skills for Marine Science	20

Optional modules

You will take one of the following optional modules:

Optional module	Credits
Evolution and Behaviour	20
Vertebrate Biology and Ecology	20
Deep Sea and Polar Biology	20

With the approval of the Degree Programme Director, alternative optional modules to those listed above may be selected.

In Stage 3, you'll complete your marine research project either in the UK or overseas. As part of your project, you'll submit a scientific paper and present your findings to staff and students. This experience is invaluable as writing research papers is a core requirement in the field.

You'll also study advanced marine biology and zoology and learn more about current research in ecology or zoology. You'll choose an optional module from a range that allow you to tailor your learning to your interests. Options may include topics such as biodiversity, environmental impact assessment, physiological zoology, or global marine science.

Compulsory modules

You will take the following compulsory modules:

Compulsory modules	Credits

Global Challenges & Solutions	20
Research Project	40

You will choose whether to take either one or both modules from the following list:

Optional modules	Credits
Current Research in Ecology	20
Current Zoology	20

If you chose one optional module from the previous section, you will take two optional modules from the following, or if you chose both optional modules from the previous section, you will take one optional module from the following:

Optional modules	Credits
Environmental Impact Assessment	20
Biodiversity Science and Management	20
Physiological Zoology	20
Global Marine Science	20

With the approval of the Degree Programme Director, alternative optional modules to those listed above may be selected.

Teaching and assessment

Teaching methods

During the course, you'll be taught via a variety of methods, including:

- lectures and seminars
- laboratory practicals
- research vessel practicals
- field work
- research project
- small group tutorials

Assessment methods

You'll be assessed through a combination of:

- Assignments – written or fieldwork
- Coursework
- Dissertation or research project
- Essays
- Examinations – practical or online
- Group work
- Interviews
- Practical sessions
- Presentations
- Projects
- Reflective report/journal
- Reports
- Seminar tasks/exercises

Skills and experience

Practical experience

With miles of coastline and the North Sea on your doorstep, you'll enjoy a unique learning experience at Newcastle.

You'll be challenged to put theory into practice out in the field.

Field trips are vital as you explore the marine biology of different environments. For any residential field course activity a student contribution will be required. These include:

- exploring the marine environment on the Isle of Cumbrae
- overseas residential field course in locations such as Portugal, Mexico, or Malaysia

Business skills

You'll gain industrial experience through:

- work placements
- study abroad opportunities
- industrial visits

You'll also develop key skills, including:

- writing proposals
- designing experimental studies
- writing scientific reports and papers
- delivering presentations

Research skills

Research is at the heart of what we do. You'll learn about the latest research from our school and your lecturers. They have a diverse range of expertise and work alongside policymakers, conservation organisations, and industry experts to deliver innovative solutions to real-world problems. This research-led approach to teaching makes sure your studies are accurate and relevant.

Recent discoveries include a new species of sawshark (Pliotrema kajae) and microplastics in deep sea systems.

You'll develop your research skills in the laboratory and out at sea. You'll have access to our outstations on the coast and complete fieldwork in the North East.

Some recent student dissertation titles:

- Metal pollution concentrations in sediment and organisms from the Tyne estuary compared to conditions 11 years ago.
- Variation in fish abundance and diversity, in the wind farm off Blyth in the North Sea, and in highly fished areas.
- A historic comparison of coral reefs surrounding Utila

Opportunities

Study abroad

Gain a global perspective, enhance your academic profile and open doors to exciting new experiences by studying abroad for one semester or a full academic

year at one of our partner universities overseas. Study abroad usually takes place in stage 3 of your studies and extends your degree by one year.

You'll have the choice to study at a leading international university, including:

- Monash University
- University of Hong Kong
- University of Pittsburgh

You can also opt for short-term global opportunities like summer schools, virtual exchanges or internships that usually take place over the summer months.

Find out more about study abroad

Work placement

During your degree you can apply to spend 9 to 12 months on an industry placement, in the UK or abroad. Your work placement is a great opportunity to gain practical experience, acquire key business skills and make industry contacts. You'll get University support from our dedicated team. Work placements usually take place between Stages 2 and 3 and extend your degree by a year.

Find out more about work placements

Facilities and environment

Facilities

The Ridley 2 Building is the home of Marine Biology and Marine Zoology and is located on our city-centre campus. It's based in the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences.

Located within are ten modern research-ready laboratories with specialist facilities where you'll gain hands-on experience including computer-controlled force gauge, molecular biology suits, spectrophotometers and air-sea gas exchange tanks. We also have our controlled-environment aquaria here.

Our outstanding Marine Science facilities, where you'll study live marine animals, include:

- the Dove Marine Laboratory on the coast, with a live aquarium on-site
- Blyth Marine Station and Research vessel, The Princess Royal, a floating laboratory with activities like oceanographic characterisation of river plumes to remote camera surveys of offshore habitats
- the on-campus Great North Museum with a wide range of important biological collections

You'll gain hands-on experience to prepare you for an exciting future career.

Support

We take your health and wellbeing seriously and are committed to supporting you throughout your studies so you can fulfil your potential at university. This support includes

- a personal tutor who is an academic member of staff who can help you with academic and personal issues throughout your degree
- a peer mentor scheme which pairs you with a current student from your course to help you navigate your first year at university

- a staff-student committee, to give you an opportunity to have a say in how your degree works
- support, treatment and guidance on mental and physical health from our wellbeing team

Your future

Our graduates have a strong reputation in the industry. They've secured jobs with:

- Ocean Ecology
- Natural Power
- BBC Natural History Unit
- Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Cefas

By the end of your course, you'll have a range of transferable skills that are useful in various careers. Our graduates have built successful careers in fields as diverse as computing and finance.

Industry links

Join our network of confident and successful graduates. They've benefitted from our industry links with:

- Marine Management Organisation
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- Natural England
- Greenpeace
- National Trust
- BBC Natural History Unit
- Lindisfarne Natural Nature Reserve

Enterprising students

Careers support

Our Careers Service is one of the largest and best in the country, and we have strong links with employers. We provide an extensive range of opportunities to all students through our ncl+ initiative.

Visit our Careers Service website

Recognition of professional qualifications outside of the UK

If you're studying an **accredited degree** and thinking about working in Europe after you graduate, the best place to find current information is the UK Government's guidance on recognition of UK professional qualifications in EU member states. This official resource explains whether your profession is regulated in another country, what steps you need to take, and which organisation you should contact.

Find out more...

- Go online for information about our full range of degrees: **www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate**
- Watch videos about student life in Newcastle by visiting our YouTube channel at **www.youtube.com/@newcastleuni**
- Watch a virtual tour of our campus at **https://youtu.be/vJUfHcqB7l8?si=8IUrf7kTxXbgdfr1**
- Book for an Open Day to come and see us in person **www.ncl.ac.uk/openday**
- Contact us online at **www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries** or phone +44 (0)191 208 3333

This brochure is created from web content and is up to date at the time of creation (see the first page for creation date). If you are on screen you are able to use the live links that are highlighted in blue. If reading in print, the URLs provided above will help you to navigate back online. Full details of the University's terms and conditions, including reference to all relevant policies, procedures, regulations and information provision, are available at: **https://www.ncl.ac.uk/student-welcome/student-contract/**