

Introduction to Honours at the School of Biological Sciences (BSc Honours Environmental Sciences)

April 2022

Welcome

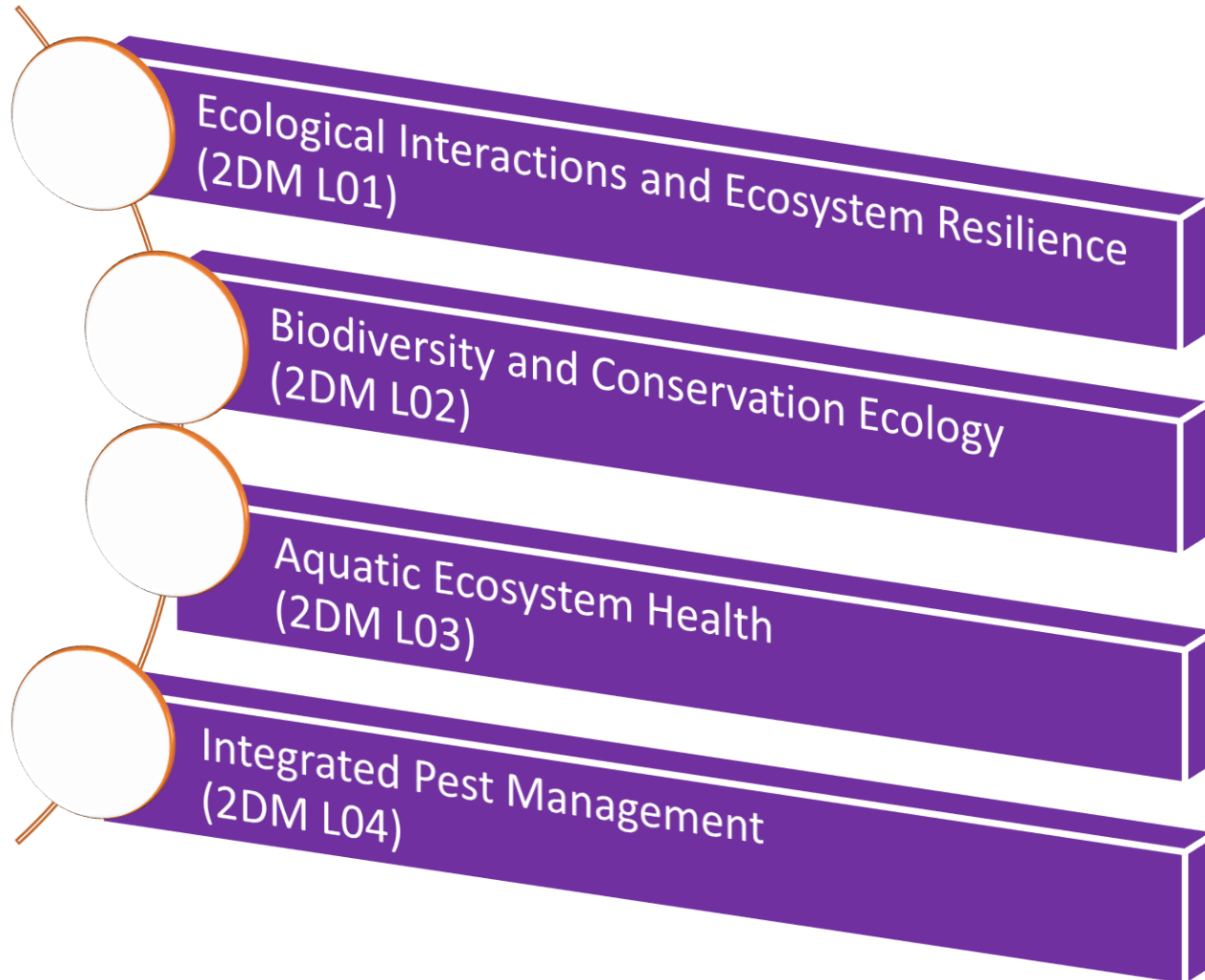
- This stage of your academic career will
 - Be the beginning of your journey as a scientist
 - Open the doors to higher level postgraduate studies
 - Broaden your skillset



Some valuable links

- School of Biological Sciences – Honours
 - [Information page](#)
 - [Online application link](#)
 - Be certain to include all relevant and required documents
 - [Postgraduate Yearbook 2022](#)
- Opening date: 1 May 2022
- Closing date: 30 September 2022
- Important:
 - Please apply after you have results for the first semester
Otherwise the information will be incomplete

BSc Honours in Environmental Sciences Potchefstroom Campus



BSc Honours in Botany or Microbiology Mahikeng Campus



BSc. Honours in Microbiology
(2ES L01)

BSc. Honours in Biology:
Specialisation field Botany (2EL L01)

Extremely daunting – what to choose??



The journey: how to choose?

- **Choose a programme that excites you**
- **See a variety of people**
- **Keep channels of communication open**
- **Make sure that you will be able to learn a variety of different skills**
- **Potential projects within the programmes are typically communicated during the introduction week at the start of the year**

How do I apply?

- Before you begin
 - Assemble all required documents before starting the process
 - The most important of these are the academic record
 - The selection committee will only evaluate what they received
 - Incomplete submissions (i.e. missing or incorrect documents) will only disqualify yourself
 - Consult the postgraduate yearbook regarding qualifying criteria
 - Closing date: 30 September 2022

How do I apply?

- The admission process:
 - [Online site and link](#)
 - Admission office contacts:
 - Potchefstroom: 018 285 2692
 - Keith Boer (29936233@nwu.ac.za)
 - Nandi du Plessis (Nandi.DuPlessis@nwu.ac.za)
 - Mahikeng: 018 389 2252 or 018 389 2272
 - Vanderbijlpark: 016 910 3640
 - School of Biological Sciences contact
 - Mr Glenville Fransman
 - Telephone: 018 299 2329
 - Email: Glenville.Fransman@nwu.ac.za

How do I apply?

- You have completed the application. Now what?
 - Applications will be screened:
 - Suitable subject combinations
 - Average for main subjects of $> 65\%$
 - After screening of applications you might be provisionally accepted if you have not already obtained a B.Sc. Degree
 - Non-NWU students need to supply their final marks obtained; along with proof that the degree will be awarded
 - First semester marks will be the main evaluation criteria for preliminary acceptance; Final marks will only confirm
 - In cases of high number of applicant final acceptance will be based highest scoring candidates

How do I apply?

- Your application was successful. The next steps.
 - Please ensure that correct contact information accompanied your application
 - You will be notified via email of your final acceptance into BSc Honours in Environmental Sciences.
 - At this stage any further logistics will also be communicated

Some important dates and information:

- For applications:
 - 30 September 2022
 - Please wait until you have all your first semester marks before applying as they form an important part of the application process
- Selection (Round 1)
 - Approximately 31 October 2022
 - You will be notified by email if successful
 - If you do not receive such an email by this date, the application was not successful
 - You need to indicate at this stage whether you will be accepting the position

Some important dates and information:

- Final Selection (Round 2)
 - Approximately December 2022/January 2023
 - Final acceptance will be communicated by email
- Please note the following:
 - If you require more than two subjects to complete your qualification, your application will be rendered unsuccessful
 - Your student record must indicate that the degree has been successfully completed/obtained

Frequently asked questions

Why is the selection process mainly reliant on the first semester marks?

- Mainly to allow for timeous processing of applications
- First and second semester marks usually correlates
- This allows the majority of applicants to be prefiltered based on provisional marks and appropriate subject combinations
- Pre-Covid19:
 - Final marks for students typically available by early December due to “earlier” final exams. (After examination committee)
 - As a result final selection/approval could be done in December and notifications emailed to students
 - Students would then have enough time to make arrangements for accommodation etc.

Why is the selection process mainly reliant on the first semester marks?

- During Covid19 (2020-2022)
 - Final examinations only late December; second opportunity early January
 - Marks cannot be regarded as final before examination committee meeting – Meeting typically held in January
 - This makes it almost too late for selection on final marks (and impractical)
 - It is impractical also to wait until this date for the primary selection
 - For this reason, until the timetables normalises to pre-Covid timeframes the first semester marks, the process is mainly reliant on the first semester marks.

I am missing a single subject from my undergraduate studies, can I still apply?

- No, campus rules states that you may not register for more than one NQF level for a particular year.
- In simple terms this means that you cannot register for your 3rd year to complete the missing module and also register for the Honours course

Can a student who did not study Botany, Microbiology or Zoology still apply and get accepted into the BSc honours programs of the School of Biological Sciences?

- No, only students with either one of the following third year majors may apply for the B.Sc. Honours in Environmental Sciences:
 - Botany, Microbiology or Zoology.
- More importantly, when you have identified the program(s) you are interested in, look at the modules within that program as some of the subjects will specify if certain subjects at the undergraduate level are prerequisites

Can I do an Honours in Microbiology, Zoology or Botany at the Potchefstroom Campus

- No, the Honours in Microbiology, Zoology or Botany are not presented at the Potchefstroom campus of the NWU as our postgraduate focus is environmental sciences
- However, the BSc. Honours in Botany and Microbiology is offered at the Mahikeng campus of the NWU
- Refer to the web site for further information

Is a letter of recommendation required for application?

- No, a letter of recommendation is not required when applying

Can one enrol a Masters degree in Botany, Microbiology or Zoology after doing an honours in environmental sciences?

- Yes, upon completion of the Honours in Environmental Sciences you will have the option to continue with a M.Sc. in Microbiology/Zoology/Botany, but the route to do a M.Sc. in Environmental Sciences is also available.

How many applications are accepted?

- This depends on the capacity and availability of study leaders within the School.
- That being said, for the 2021/2022 academic year approximately 60 students were accepted for Honours in Environmental Sciences at the Potchefstroom campus.

How flexible are honours academic hours?

Can one work while studying honours?

- Full-time students:
 - At the start of the respective semesters, timetables will be communicated based on the modules selected. This will allow you to plan your time management.
 - However, it is important to keep in mind that assignments for the various modules, excursions, short courses, etc. will take up time beyond that specified in the timetable.
 - Lastly, the nature of the research project will also impact time you may have available.
 - As such, it is not recommended to work while studying, particularly when doing the Honours full-time.
- Part-time students:
 - For several of the programs, and depending on the module choices, it is indeed possible to work while studying honours.

What can one do with a degree in environmental sciences? What are the work opportunities?

- Environmental sciences are an extremely broad field, and as such employers can be quite varied.
- These may include, but are not limited to:
 - Water boards, municipalities, treatment plants.
 - Private companies, consultancy firms.
 - Agricultural companies.
 - State and parastatal agencies.
 - School teachers, university lecturers.
 - Health institutes, hospitals.

Does the faculty offer bursaries for students?

- Campus and NRF (National Research Foundation) bursaries are the primary bursaries available.
 - Students can find for information on the links supplied on the web page
- Some projects may also have funding for Honours bursaries as well.

What are the funding options for honours projects?

- Projects will be funded by the program.
- Some projects may have additional funding associated with them

What modules do I have to enrol for in the honours?

- Please refer to the subject combinations for each program found at the web address or the Postgraduate yearbook.

How many modules do I have to register for and what is the maximum number of modules allowed per semester?

- A total of 128 credits are required to obtain an BSc Honours in Environmental Sciences
- Refer to the yearbook for the various programs' compulsory and elective modules.
- Students are not allowed to register for more than four (4) modules in the first semester (except for the research project, which is a year module).
- Elective modules are selected according to required knowledge and skills for the research project.
- Selection of elective modules must therefore be approved by the research project mentor, as well as the School Director.

How do I get a supervisor for my honours project?

- Visit the Honours information pages on the NWU website for the various programs and researchers within the various programs.
- Contact the potential study leader(s) for more information.
- Do not worry if a project is not assigned this year, as several projects are assigned during the induction week.
- It is also highly informative to talk to some of the postgraduate students.