

CONSULTANT ECOLOGIST SKILLS WHEEL – GUIDANCE NOTE

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Skill	Early career ecologist (1-2)	Assistant ecologist (3-4)	Consultant ecologist (5-6)	Senior ecologist (7-8)	Principal ecologist (9-10)
Habitat and species survey design, planning and fieldwork (HSSDP)	Aware of guidelines for some species and habitat surveys and knowledge of constraints relating to when in the year they can be carried out. May have only a working knowledge but may have planned a site survey as part of a recent study, course or module.	Aware of the principles of ecological survey and relevant good practice guidelines. Can identify survey objectives for 'standard' surveys and select the most appropriate survey technique(s). Understands how they are applied. Can use commonly applied fieldwork techniques consistently effectively whilst under supervision. Demonstrates an awareness of biosecurity protocols.	Designs surveys within their chosen field involving standard methodology and industry-accepted good practice guidelines. Confident on standard survey planning and fieldwork skills relevant to role(s). Identifies and follows relevant biosecurity protocols and encourages / supports others to do the same.	Designs more complex surveys and provides direction and advice to others on survey design. Is proficient in planning and implementing a range of standard and complex fieldwork skills appropriate to their role(s). Provides direction and advice to others on appropriate biosecurity protocols in accordance with good practice guidelines. Likely to be responsible for training and development.	May have developed specialist species and/or habitat surveys within their chosen field. Develops new, innovative and scientifically robust fieldwork techniques that can be applied more widely. Leads on organisational approaches to biosecurity. Likely to be responsible for training and development.
Habitat and species identification and evaluation (HSI)	Identify some commoner species using appropriate aids such as diagnostic keys and applications. May have some experience of undertaking a small number of species or habitat surveys either at university, college or elsewhere, but no extensive experience.	Has a basic knowledge of taxonomy and classification and can identify some common species. Carries out standard species surveys, largely under guidance. Is developing a knowledge of species surveying and species handling by working with/shadowing others. Undertakes accurate population assessment for more common species.	Carries out species surveys, record findings and handle species (where relevant) within their chosen field in accordance with industry accepted good practice guidelines where available. Implements effective biosecurity protocols. Can reliably identify common species within taxonomic groups of their chosen field. Can accurately assess population size/significance.	Can reliably identify common and less common species within taxonomic groups of their chosen field. Confident in species handling techniques relevant to their role(s). Accurately assesses population size/significance for both common and rare species.	Specialist on identification of rarer/cryptic species within chosen field, and broad knowledge outside of chosen field. Proficient in species handling techniques, where relevant. Authority on evaluating population size/status for challenging species. Likely to be responsible for training and development.
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)	Knowledge and understanding of Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) habitat survey, possibly some formal training and/or application during academic studies.	Assist in undertaking a PEA habitat mapping (using Phase 1 and/or UK Habitat Classification System methodology), largely under supervision except for simpler sites.	Regularly undertake PEA without supervision (unless unfamiliar habitat types present) and confident in habitat classification using either Phase 1 and/or UK Habitat Classification System and possibly also some NVC, EcIA and HRA knowledge and experience.	Able to identify assessment requirements and review complex submissions and assess their adequacy. Identifies appropriate recommendations and conditions. Undertakes large-scale and complex PEA, EcIA and HRA ecological assessments in accordance with good practice guidelines.	Acts in the most senior role for reviewing PEA submissions concerning complex or major projects or plans, for or on behalf of a competent authority or other decision-making body. Undertakes highly complex ecological or environmental impact assessments. Likely to be responsible for training and development.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Demonstrates understanding of the purpose and process of BNG assessment techniques.	Has a basic but improving knowledge and experience of appropriate BNG metrics and methodologies to assess impacts on biodiversity,	Can use appropriate BNG metrics and methodologies to assess impacts on biodiversity. May have prepared or assisted in the production of Biodiversity Offsetting Management Plans.	Is competent in using a range of BNG metrics and methodologies to assess impacts on biodiversity and interpret their results using logical reasoning. Will have prepared the production of Biodiversity Offsetting Management Plans or similar plans for a range of clients.	Is highly competent in the training and support for BNG metrics and methodologies for colleagues. Will have prepared the design and review of Biodiversity Offsetting Management Plans or similar plans. Likely to be responsible for training and development.
Ecological policy and legislation (EPL)	A reasonable knowledge of national, European, and International environmental legislation, policy and guidance, but may not have been able to demonstrate to an employer at this stage.	Demonstrates awareness of national, European, and International environmental legislation, policy and guidance and assists others in providing advice.	Demonstrates understanding of and advises on national, European, and International environmental legislation, policy and guidance for their chosen field in straightforward scenarios.	Demonstrates understanding of and advises on national, European, and International environmental legislation, policy and guidance for a range of fields and/or for their chosen field in complex scenarios.	Leads on interpreting national, European, and International environmental legislation, policy, and guidance for range of fields, and in complex scenarios such as major infrastructure developments.

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TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Skill	Early career ecologist (1-2)	Assistant ecologist (3-4)	Consultant ecologist (5-6)	Senior ecologist (7-8)	Principal ecologist (9-10)
Health, Safety & Wellbeing (H&S)	No formal responsibilities. May hold a First Aid Certificate.	Will hold a First Aid at Work Certificate and possibly a CSCS card scheme holder and other training, as appropriate for assisting in survey work relating to the company. Will assist in the preparation of risk assessments.	First Aid at Work and likely CSCS hard holder and other appropriate training, with a responsibility for the preparation of risk assessments. May coordinate or possibly supervise subcontractors or volunteers.	Has responsibility for the health, safety, and welfare of others and will review all risk assessments. Will likely hold other formal qualifications relating to the work of the company.	Will likely have further H&S qualifications (such as IOSH training) and will direct others on their training requirements.
Communication (COMMS)	May have produced reports for course work at either university, college or elsewhere but unlikely to have produced or assisted in the production of a report themselves. Little or no experience of providing advice to clients.	With supervision, produces clear, concise, factual and accurate written communications using a good standard of English. Demonstrates an understanding of the needs of different audiences and can suggest ways of adapting their communication style appropriately in order to meet these. Can communicate appropriately with different audiences when required to do so.	Can communicate information confidently and clearly in ways appropriate to the audience. Independently produces written communication to inform and persuade others.	Presents a range of information confidently and clearly both orally and in writing. Adapts communication style and language to meet the needs of the audience. Can use a range of communication strategies to influence and persuade others. Communicates effectively and clearly with stakeholders including the general public.	Presents complex information confidently and clearly both orally and in writing. Demonstrates a wide range of writing styles appropriate to the audience. Consistently demonstrates the ability to be persuasive in influencing conflicting viewpoints. Uses communication skills to inspire and lead others.
Project management (PM)	Assist under close supervision with small/medium complex geographical and short/medium-term timescale ecological projects.	Assist with medium complex geographical and short/medium-term timescale ecological projects under guidance or close supervision.	Lead or supervise (under guidance) medium complex geographical and short/medium-term timescale ecological projects.	Supervise and lead, maybe mentor, complex and/or large geographical and medium/long-term timescale ecological projects.	Design, lead, supervise, and mentor complex and/or large geographical and long-term timescale ecological projects.
Information management (IM)	May have knowledge or experience of using some common software packages at university, college or elsewhere but would have little or no ability to replicate their use without support or additional training.	Demonstrates an understanding of and ability to use a range of common software packages to record, manage and present data and other information and an understanding and use under supervision of relevant specialist software such as GIS.	Confidently uses a range of common and bespoke software packages, GIS and other information technology tools to collect, manage and present data.	Effectively uses GIS and other information technology tools as well as common and bespoke software packages including databases and other information management systems and contributes to the design of new software systems to manage data effectively.	Leads on the use of GIS and other information technology tools or the development of new software systems to manage data effectively for the organisation. Demonstrates a high level of ability in the use of common and bespoke software packages including databases and other information management systems.
People management (PEP)	No formal duties other than working alongside and shadowing line manager and/or colleagues.	Understands management and leadership roles and beginning to recognise good people management and leadership qualities.	Understands management and leadership roles. Demonstrates good people management and leadership qualities, motivating and enthusing others in challenging circumstances and sets example to others through own behaviour.	Leads a team to achieve results consistently. Demonstrates good leadership qualities and sets example to others (internally and/or externally) through own behaviour.	Demonstrates leadership across a team or an organisation and promotes a positive culture. Commands the respect of others and inspires technical excellence and loyalty. Steers organisation through challenging times.