"I like the fact that the classes are small and that the lecturers are enthusiastic about their own research area."

The Master’s programme in Ecology & Evolution is a joint master’s programme of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of Amsterdam. The track offers the same programme to students of both universities. Lecturers from VU and UvA participate in each course. Students of both universities are automatically registered as a ‘bijvakstudent’ (external student) at the other university.

### Time table of the programme (with course location in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Semester 1</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st Internship (VU/UvA)</td>
<td>Scientific Writing In English (VU)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Employability, Skills &amp; Career</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Semester 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>September-June</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature thesis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research specialization: 2nd Internship</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other specializations: Communication, Science in Society, Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exchange option: International Master of Biodiversity Ecology and Evolution (IMABEE)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other MSc courses: e.g. Metropole Ecology (VU), Marine Biol. &amp; Oceanogr. (NIOZ)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Masterclasses in Ecology and Evolution (VU/UvA)</td>
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</table>

The two-year programme is full-time, covering 120 ec. Courses are mainly scheduled in the first semester. The remainder of each year is spent on two research projects and a literature thesis. The programme has the following four components:

1) **Compulsory courses (18 ec in total)**
   The following courses are compulsory for all students starting in the programme (between brackets the principal organizer and study load):
   - Current Trends in Ecology & Evolution (VU, 6 ec)
   - Ecological Data Analysis (VU, 6 ec)
   - Masterclasses in Ecology & Evolution (UvA, 3 ec)
   - Scientific Writing in English (VU, 3 ec)
   - Employability, Skills & Career (0 ec)

2) **Elective ecological courses (12 to 18 ec in total)**
   Students of both universities take at least 12 and at most 18 ec of elective ecological courses. If they choose to take 12 ec the total time spent on research projects will be expanded by 6 ec. Elective courses offered in the Ecology and Evolution curriculum are:
   - Cooperation & Conflict in Nature (VU, 6 ec)
- Environments through Time (UvA, 6 ec)
- Plastic & Chemical Pollution (VU, 6 ec)
- Global Ecology & Biodiversity (UvA, 6 ec)
- Tropical Ecology (VU, 6 ec, given in 2021)
- Invasions & Conservation Biology (UvA, 6 ec)
- Ecosystem Services & Scientific Advocacy (VU)

Other options include:
- Metropole Ecology (VU, 6 ec)
- Microbial Genomics (VU, 3 ec)
- Grand Challenges of Human-Ecosystem Interactions (VU, 6 ec)
- Biotic Interactions (UvA, 6 ec)
- Microbial Ecology (UvA, 6 ec)
- Benthic Ecosystems (UvA, 6 ec)
- Coral Reef Ecology (UvA, 6 ec)

3) Research projects (72 to 78 ec in total)
Students carry out two research projects/internships. Depending on the number of credits (ec) the student obtains in elective courses, both internships together will cover 72 or 78 ec. The minimum duration of a research project is 30 ec.
The first internship has to be carried out under the supervision of a VU or UvA lecturer. Though not obligatory, students are encouraged to complete the second internship elsewhere, at another university or research institute in Amsterdam, elsewhere in The Netherlands or abroad. Both projects focus on an ecological and/or evolutionary subject, which can range from using a molecular, ecophysiological, behavioural to theoretical or ecosystems approach, or a combination thereof. Societally oriented projects performed elsewhere, dealing with an ecological problem are accepted, provided that they include sufficient academic level, clear research questions and proper supervision.

4) Literature thesis (12 ec)
Students are required to write a literature thesis of 12 ec. The literature thesis can focus on a fundamental ecological question, but may also take a more applied or societal approach. You can plan your Literature Thesis, which should ideally take up two months whenever you have space in your programme, for example when you are not following courses and not doing your internship. Your master coordinator will help you to plan your choices by making a personal 'masterplan' with you.

Possible extra-curricular components in other programmes
Students are allowed to take ecological courses from other master’s programmes instead of the elective courses offered in the Ecology and Evolution programme. These must be ecological courses or courses otherwise fitting to their profile (and may need approval by the Examination Board); examples include:
- Marine Biology and Oceanography (NIOZ, 4 ec)
- Applications in GIS and Remote Sensing (UvA, 6 ec)
- Ecological Water Management (UvA, 3 ec)
- Biological Oceanography (UvA, 6 ec)

International Master in Biodiversity, Ecology and Evolution (http://www.imabee.eu)
Double degree, meaning you will receive a diploma from VU MSc Ecology as well as the partner university MSc. The first year (60 ec) you follow the regular programme at VU, the second year (60 ec) you do courses and an internship at either:
- University of Århus (Denmark),
- University of Göttingen (Germany)
- University of Rennes (France)

Other specializations
After the 1st year (60 ec) of the regular MSc Ecology & Evolution programme at the VU, 2nd year specializations are possible in the following directions:
- Communication specialization (60 ec elective)
- Science in Society specialization (60 ec elective)
- Education specialization (60 ec)

MSc Ecology Coordinator: Joris Koene (VU), joris.koene@vu.nl, 020-5987095
Department: http://www.amsterdamecology.nl; MSc Programme information: http://www.vu.nl/ecology