

Coleg y Mynydd Du  Black Mountains College

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# A GUIDE TO BLACK MOUNTAINS COLLEGE



# WELCOME



There is nothing quite like Black Mountains College: a college founded as a direct response to the transformative changes that are happening to our climate, our ecosystems and to us as humans who live as part of them. We are dedicated to empowering you to develop relevant and necessary skills to create systems change with others, in response to the need for climate action and adaptation, whatever your background or talents and whichever career you pursue.

Offering higher education, further education and short courses, BMC is not just an academic institution; it's a dynamic platform for fostering sustainable and regenerative futures. Black Mountains College is open to all. Join us and help pioneer more sustainable futures.

Climate breakdown affects all sectors of societies and economies and cannot be addressed through the lens of one subject. That is why our innovative higher education programme consists of a single degree – **BA (Hons) Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology and Systems Change**, with optional pathways to allow you to shape your own learning journey. From the arts to agroecology, from neuroscience to new approaches to economics. Combining insights from arts and sciences, political economy, and creative and professional practice, with opportunities to learn at different venues and professional placements in the Bannau Brycheiniog.

Our vocational NVQ offerings in **Coppicing and Greenwood Trades, Regenerative Horticulture, Nature Recovery, and Regenerative Farming & Agroecology** provide students with practical skills in real-life contexts. These each include a core programme that links questions of equity and diversity with neuro-diversity and different ways of learning and knowing as well as broader concepts of environmental and economic justice.

Black Mountains College is a proudly Welsh institution, and our degree is informed by the Welsh language and culture, historic environment, and Wales's reputation as a trailblazer on sustainability. With the choice between two campuses, you'll be learning in nature and in the community of Talgarth in the heart of the national park, or in the mining town of Treherbert, Rhondda Cynon Taff.

We are delighted that you are considering joining us here at Black Mountains College. We can't wait to help you unleash your potential to build more sustainable futures.

**Ben Rawlence**

*CEO of Black Mountains College*

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# ABOUT US

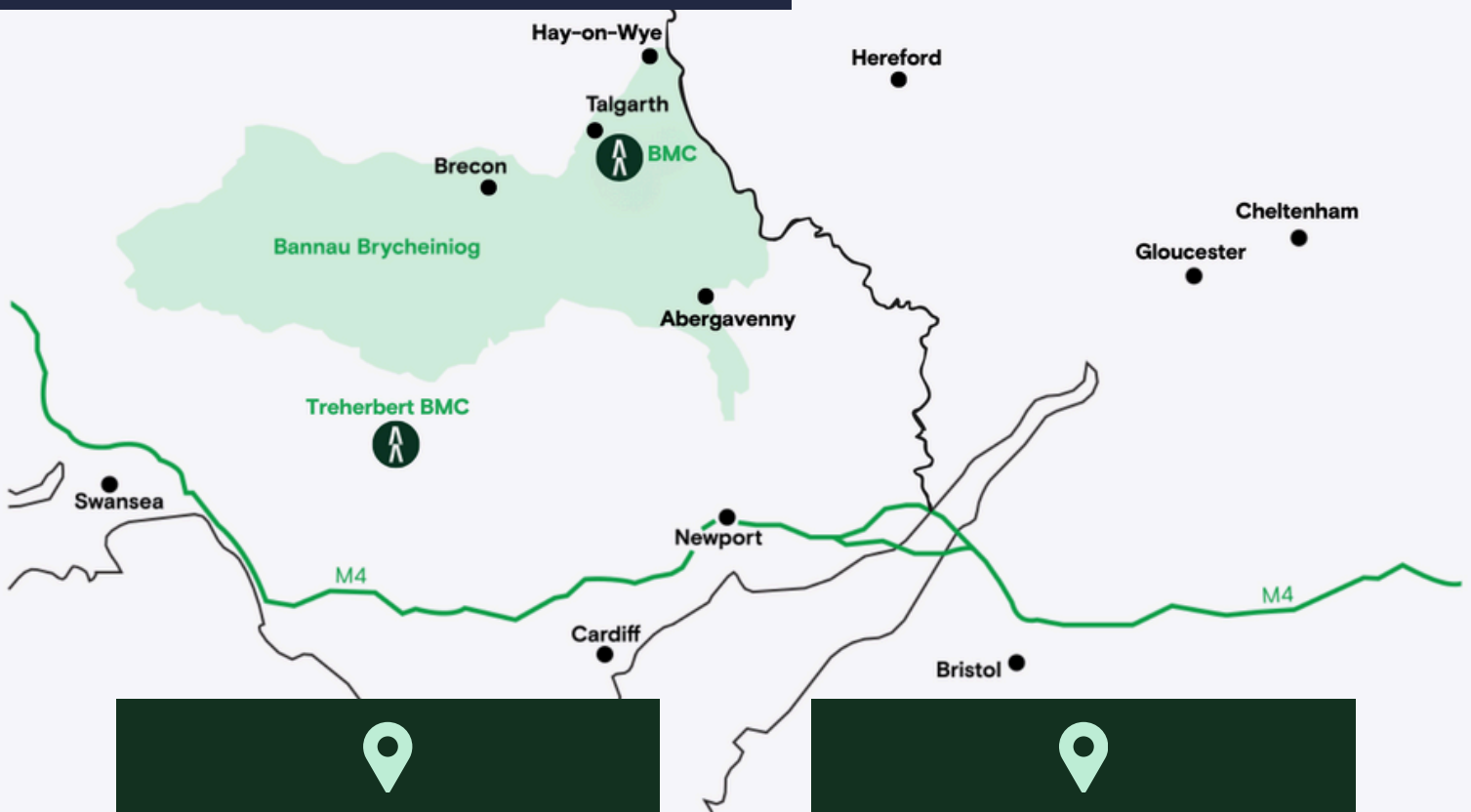
Black Mountains College believes in education that empowers people to build resilience in the face of the climate and ecological crisis.

Our approach is built on rethinking traditional learning to foster the skills, creativity, and systems thinking needed for a more sustainable future. We must adapt to the challenges of our time, and adjusting to the fluctuations that entails for systems, society, and our soils.

Our countryside-based campus is a living classroom, with access to biodiverse landscapes that inspire and challenge our students to connect deeply with nature.



# OUR CAMPUSES



## TALGARTH

Our Talgarth campus is home to our main base, Troed yr Harn farm, where we offer NVQs in Agroecology, Regenerative Horticulture, Coppicing and Greenwood Trades, and Nature Recovery. This is the only location you can study our Degree, BA (Hons) Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology and Systems Change. Many short courses take place in Talgarth.

## TREHERBERT

Our Treherbert campus is spread across the local community. Here, you can study our NVQ Level 2 in Coppicing & Greenwood Trades. We make use of various community buildings, and local woodlands. Look out for workshops, community events, sessions and short courses organised by Black Mountains College and Welcome to our Woods in this area!



# STUDENT SUPPORT

Our student support services include advice, guidance and direct support and our team can help with a wide variety of aspects of student life, whether these are related to your studies, your career aspirations or something more personal. This includes:

- ▶ Careers advice and guidance about progression
- ▶ Personal tutoring
- ▶ Financial advice and hardship support
- ▶ Accommodation support
- ▶ Wellbeing / counselling / health advice
- ▶ Language study support
- ▶ Accessibility services

Higher education students have the opportunity to engage with Cardiff Metropolitan University's full range of student services, and further education students are able to make use of NPTC Group's range of support options too.

## ACCOMMODATION

For students enrolled in Talgarth-based courses, BMC offers a range of accommodation options, from shared spaces to self-contained housing. Living in the historic-market town provides the chance to form a tight-knit community with like-minded peers and engage in collaborative learning outside the classroom.

[REVIEW OUR ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS HERE](#)

## STUDENT FINANCE

We are committed to making education as accessible and affordable as possible. Whether you're enrolling in our Higher Education programme, or Further Education courses, there are a range of financial support options to help you manage the cost of your studies.

If you need personal guidance, feel free to reach out to our [Student Support team](#)—we're here to help.

Review the options that may be available for your course on our website:

[READ MORE ABOUT STUDENT FINANCE HERE](#)



# STUDENT LIFE

At Black Mountains College (BMC), student life is as unique and transformative as the education itself. Whether you're studying for a degree in **Sustainable Futures** or completing a vocational **NVQ**, your time here will be connected to nature, community, and hands-on learning.

You will join like-minded students and staff who will also bring new ideas to challenge and develop your thinking. The college is set within its context; we are part of the communities of Talgarth and Treherbert in and around the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, both of which offer a range of opportunities for you to learn and explore.

Classes are small, fostering strong relationships between students, lecturers, and support staff. Whichever course you choose, you'll find yourself working on group projects, participating in discussions, and developing solutions together.



## EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Our campuses offer the opportunity to live and learn in some of the most beautiful regions in the UK. The outdoors is your classroom, with lessons and projects often involving working directly with the land, with integrated walks, practical tasks and workshops.



Life at BMC goes beyond lessons. You can participate in community-led initiatives and groups such as local projects, community orchard or woodland groups, therapeutic horticulture groups, book clubs, or join our student society.

There are also regular opportunities to attend workshops, talks, and skill-sharing or volunteering events that support personal development and community resilience.

Once you are a student, you'll receive updates from us via email or on our Facebook Group page with details of any local events, work or volunteer opportunities.

# FURTHER EDUCATION



NVQ L2 DIPLOMA  
**COPPING &  
GREENWOOD TRADES**

📍 Talgarth or Treherbert



NVQ L2 DIPLOMA  
**REGENERATIVE  
HORTICULTURE**

📍 Talgarth or Treherbert



NVQ L2 DIPLOMA  
**NATURE RECOVERY**

📍 Talgarth or Treherbert



TRAINEESHIP LEVEL 3  
**REGENERATIVE FARMING &  
AGROECOLOGY**

📍 Talgarth

# NVQ LEVEL 2 DIPLOMA COPPICING & GREENWOOD TRADES



**Our Coppicing and Greenwood Trades NVQ will help you to develop skills and knowledge for a successful and rewarding career in the trees and timber sector.**

A hands-on vocational course designed to equip you with practical skills in traditional woodland management and greenwood crafts. This unique programme allows you to work directly with the land, learning environmentally conscious methods of managing woodlands with minimum impact, improving biodiversity, and honing your craft skills with sustainable greenwood use.

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## LOCATION

Talgarth or Treherbert

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## TUITION TIME

3 Days Per Week

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## COURSE LENGTH

1 Year from September - July

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## MINIMUM AGE

16 Years Old

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## WHAT IS COPPICING?

Coppicing is an ancient form of woodland management that uses nature's ability to regenerate continually to harvest wood from a living tree. It involves periodically cutting trees down to ground level which promotes vigorous regrowth, creating a sustainable supply of wood which can be used to produce both products and energy.

Coppicing is also fantastic for increasing the lifespan of trees, improving tree health and promoting biodiversity!





## WHAT WILL I LEARN?

We will resurrect old coppice woodlands by restoring them, and plant trees to create new ones! Modules covered include the following, each will have a particular focus on sustainability:

- Sharpen and Maintain edged hand tools
- Carry out maintenance of chainsaw and cutting system
- Cut, process and extract coppice
- Identify tree species and their properties
- Fell and process trees up to 380mm
- Control pollution incidents
- Process coppice materials and greenwood products
- Plant Trees
- Cross-cut timber using a chainsaw
- Monitoring and maintaining health and safety
- Prepare and produce charcoal
- Produce wood fuel in a woodland or forest (Treherbert ONLY)
- Site and install site furniture and structures (Treherbert ONLY)
- Hedgelaying (Talgarth ONLY)

Within this NVQ, students will also undertake a Chainsaw Maintenance and Felling Training Course, providing you with an additional, sought-after licence.

*Modules may differ slightly depending on your chosen location*

## WHY STUDY SUSTAINABLE COPPICING AND GREEN WOOD WORK SKILLS?

Students will study in beautiful and unique woodland settings. This course is ideal for students who want to further their experience of working in forestry to increase their ability and confidence, or for anyone with a passion for nature, craft, and sustainability.

After this course, students may be able to:

- Move into a Level 3 course in Green Woodworking and Coppicing
- Use transferable skills for employment opportunities in the trees and timber sector
- Start a career as a self-employed or salaried tree surgeon or woodworker
- Use this qualification towards entry to the BMC undergraduate course
- Move on to other higher education courses such as Forestry or Arboriculture

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

Warm waterproof clothing and shoes for working outdoors, and chainsaw safe trousers, boots, helmet, and gloves.

# NVQ LEVEL 2 DIPLOMA REGENERATIVE HORTICULTURE



**Our Regenerative Horticulture NVQ will help you to develop skills and knowledge for a successful and rewarding career in this sector.**

This practical course encompasses organic, permaculture and no-dig principles, which work in harmony with nature for a sustainable future.

Practical, outdoor learning is backed up with classroom theory covering botany, soil science, food production, and ornamental horticulture.

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## LOCATION

Talgarth or Treherbert

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## TUITION TIME

3 Days Per Week

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## COURSE LENGTH

1 year from September - July

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## MINIMUM AGE

16 Years Old

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## WHAT WILL I LEARN?

Our focus is on sustainability and ecology, with an emphasis on the soil biome—understanding the critical role of soil ecology and why no-dig methods (biomimicry) are essential for preserving and enriching this environment.

Dive into permaculture, keyline design, agroforestry, organic principles, and four-season vegetable production. Cover the basics of plant science, including plant evolution, hormone functions, and morphology. These aspects, along with the official modules, form the bedrock of sound practices and are crucial in addressing climate challenges by helping the land sequester more carbon.



Modules covered include the following, each will have a particular focus on sustainability:

- Assess soil texture & condition
- Prepare ground or area for planting
- Apply fertilisers to plants
- Plant trees
- Plant out plants in rows by hand
- Propagate plants indoors from seed
- Prune free standing fruit trees in winter
- Propagate plants by stem cuttings
- Identify damage caused by plant pests
- Identify plant diseases and disorders
- Carry out a site survey in 2-dimensions

*Modules may differ slightly depending on your chosen location*

## WHY STUDY REGENERATIVE HORTICULTURE?

This course is ideal for students who want to further their experience of working in horticulture to increase their ability and confidence. You will study in beautiful, real-life training settings.

After this course, students may be able to:

- Move into a Level 3 Horticulture course
- Start a career as a self-employed or salaried gardener or landscaper/garden designer
- Set up or work in a market garden or plant nursery, or work in parks/green spaces
- Find work in plant science & technology, or go down the route of a horticultural teaching assistant or technician yourself!
- Use this qualification towards entry to the BMC undergraduate course
- Move on to other relevant higher education courses such as Garden Design, Plant Science, Ethno Botany, Agriscience or Arboriculture

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

Warm waterproof clothing and shoes for working outdoors, and a pair of wellies.



# NVQ LEVEL 2 DIPLOMA NATURE RECOVERY



**This course involves a combination of classroom-based learning, practical fieldwork, and assessments to ensure competency in various conservation tasks. This includes designing and carrying out a practical conservation project from start to finish.**

We aim to support each learner to prepare for and mitigate the effects of climate change in relation to building resilience into the natural environment. This course is aimed at individuals interested in starting a career in conservation, looking to enhance their existing skills in environmental stewardship, or make a difference to the world.

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## LOCATION

Talgarth or Treherbert

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## TUITION TIME

3 Days Per Week

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## COURSE LENGTH

1 year from September - July

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## MINIMUM AGE

16 Years Old

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## WHAT WILL I LEARN?

Nature is under threat from climate change and pressures from unsustainable land use practices. Nature Recovery Level 2 is designed to equip learners with the foundational knowledge and practical skills necessary for contributing to nature recovery and conservation efforts.

You'll learn key skills for a career promoting environmental recovery and resilience, studying habitat management, wildlife identification and monitoring, countryside access and surveying.



Modules covered include the following, each will have a particular focus on sustainability:

- Introduction to Nature Recovery and its importance
- Habitat management, restoration and maintenance
- Wildlife identification, surveying and monitoring
- Conservation practices
- Environmental legislation and policy
- Community engagement and public access
- Health and safety in conservation work
- Undertake practical conservation projects

Through conservation projects, students gain practical experience in land restoration and design, alongside essential health and safety practices for fieldwork. Learn to solve real-world problems in relation to conservation and prepare for a career after your course.

Emphasis is also placed on teamwork and communication skills, promoting sustainable public access and environmental stewardship.

*Modules may differ slightly depending on your chosen location*

## WHY STUDY NATURE RECOVERY?

Students will study in beautiful real-life countryside settings. Whether you are new to countryside, nature, and environment work, or have some knowledge and basic skills, this course will help you to develop a successful career and make a real difference in national parks, local authorities, and wildlife trusts.

After this course, students may be able to:

- Move into a Level 3 course in Environmental Conservation
- Start a career working with a National Park, Wildlife Trust, or in nature restoration or land management companies
- Use this qualification as an introduction to careers such as: Countryside Ranger, Conservation Officer, Nature Recovery Advisor, Surveyor, Ecologist, or Environmental Consultant
- Use this qualification towards entry to the BMC undergraduate course, BA (Hons) Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology, and Systems Change

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

Warm waterproof clothing and shoes for working outdoors, and a pair of wellies.



LEVEL 3 TRAINEESHIP

# REGENERATIVE FARMING & AGROECOLOGY



**This course is ideal for students who want to further their experience in agroecology, agroforestry, soil science, and social and economic elements of regenerative approaches to land management and agriculture.**

You will study in real-life training settings, within the Black Mountains on the border of Wales and England. Alongside your studies, you will undertake an optional work-based placement to enhance your employability skills and embed your learning.

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## LOCATION

Talgarth

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## TUITION TIME

3 OR 5 Days Per Week

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## COURSE LENGTH

1 year from January - December

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## MINIMUM AGE

16 Years Old

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## WHAT IS AGROECOLOGY?

The world of farming and food production is changing. The challenges of climate change and fluctuating economic environments ask farmers to diversify for resilience. Agroecology is a strategy that could help us with these challenges. Informed by traditional global practices, agroecology explores the use of natural systems to promote good food for everyone, forever.

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

Warm waterproof clothing and shoes for working outdoors, and a pair of wellies.



## WHAT WILL I LEARN?

Our traineeship offers an authentic opportunity on a working farm, market garden or managed woodland and includes the following:

- Introduction to Regenerative Agriculture
- Soil and Plant Ecology
- Business Planning and Financial Forecasting
- Agroforestry
- Work experience is integrated across the year for all students (0.5 days per week)
- An optional year-long farm placement is offered for those who would like additional work-based training (an additional 2 days per week). A placement is guaranteed for those who would like it.

## WHY STUDY REGENERATIVE FARMING & AGROECOLOGY?

You will be further supported by our partnerships with the Real Farming Trust and the Apricot Centre. Gain a real and authentic experience about what it is to be a grower, livestock farmer or woodland manager.

The traineeship will prepare you to:

- Work in regenerative farming or small-holding type settings;
- Work in community supported agriculture or the circular food economy;
- Work in regenerative land-based systems;
- Progress into higher education courses such as our BA (Hons) in Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology and Systems Change

## WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

We have partnered with a wide variety of local farms, where your optional work experience will take place for an additional 2-days per week. These may include:

<b>Troed yr Harn, Talgarth</b>	<b>Moor Park Garden,</b>
<b>Ciliau Farm, Erwood</b>	<b>Crickhowell</b>
<b>Lower Genffordd, Talgarth</b>	<b>New House Farm, Monmouth</b>
<b>Fern Verrow, Herefordshire</b>	<b>Penpont Organic Farm,</b>
<b>Hill Farm, Powys</b>	<b>Brecon</b>
<b>FARMERS' Welsh Lavender, Builth Wells</b>	<b>Ty Mawr, Brecon</b>
<b>Llwynberried, Llanigon</b>	<b>Wye Organic, Ross on Wye</b>
<b>100% Hay @ Glanwye Farm</b>	<b>Greenfields Farm, Cusop</b>

All trainees on placement are eligible for reimbursement of training related expenses (food, transport, accommodation) at £75 per week. Note that the cost of providing accommodation can be deducted from this amount.

# ABOUT OUR NVQS



Our learning model, applied across all courses, integrates the head, hands and heart, multi-sensory protocols, outdoor learning and multiple hierarchies of knowledge or ways of knowing.

As a part of their course, NVQ students undertake the **Change in Practice module**, which is 1-day per week and incorporates environmental science, where you will learn about earth cycles and ecosystems, as well as communication, research and business skills. These sessions will be supplemented with various activities, day trips, guest lectures, and projects relating to your subject, where you will work with local organisations to complete practical work. You will use your project experience to imagine a venture and create a business plan.

## HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

At Black Mountains College, there are no exams! You will produce a portfolio of evidence throughout the year and be assessed via observations or a brief oral test.

## WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

Black Mountains College is open to all. We have no formal entry requirements, but you will need to complete a short interview demonstrating your passion and potential. Agroecology students generally require access to a car due to the remote locations of work experience placements.

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

NVQ tuition fees are fully covered by the Welsh Government for all UK residents and does not need repaying, regardless of your income! You must only be aged 16+ (with no upper age limit) and a UK resident to be eligible.

Although tuition is fully funded, you will still need to be able to cover your own living expenses for the duration of your study. There may be some options to support you, which are all dependent on household income and attendance.

[READ MORE ABOUT STUDENT FINANCE HERE](#)





# HOW TO APPLY

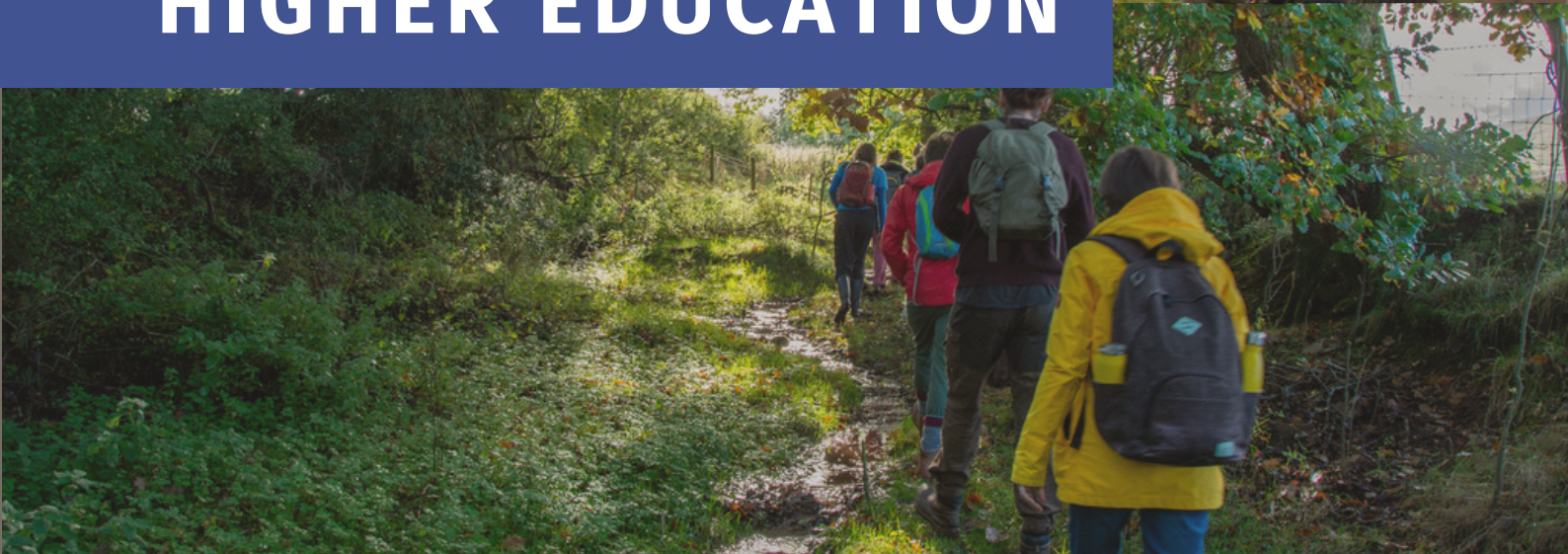
Further education applications open in March each year. You can sign up to our newsletter on our website to be alerted when applications open!

[READ MORE ABOUT OUR FURTHER EDUCATION COURSES](#)





# HIGHER EDUCATION





BA (HONS)

# SUSTAINABLE FUTURES: ARTS, ECOLOGY & SYSTEMS CHANGE

**BA (Hons) Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology and Systems Change is in partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University and you can [apply for 2025 entry here.](#)**

Created as a response to the climate and ecological emergency, the BA (Hons) Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology and Systems Change is designed to foster confidence, creativity, critical thinking and emotional intelligence.

We help you find your talents and then apply them in service of a more equitable world within planetary limits.

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## LOCATION

Talgarth

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## TUITION TIME

3 Days Per Week

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## COURSE LENGTH

3 Years

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## MINIMUM AGE

18 Years Old

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

BA (Hons) Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology and Systems Change is an interdisciplinary programme combining a grounding in theories of change, creative practice based on artistic methods, ecological thinking, political economy and sociotechnical systems.

The foundation of the BA is learning about the natural world and human societies in order to become an agent of change. You will gain the ability to communicate and collaborate with peers in order to imagine – and deliver – fundamental changes to current systems. This involves practical skills and arts-based training in creativity and design thinking alongside traditional activities such as critical reading and academic writing, scientific experiments, and theory.



## YEAR 1

The first year of your three-year programme focuses on the question: How can we learn in a changing world?

You will learn about how humans have treated the Earth historically and imagine alternative futures.

**The first year is composed of six mandatory core modules in three areas:**

- Systems Change
- Learning how to learn
- Creative Practice

## YEAR 2

Focuses on the question: How can we address some of the world's most urgent challenges?

In this year you will consolidate the learning from year one and start to build your specialisms in context and practice.

**In addition to the mandatory modules, you will choose one option from:**

- Agroecology for Food System Transformation
- Sociotechnical Systems for Future Generations
- Creative Practice

## YEAR 3

Will be structured around a question of your choice, arising out of your studies in Years 1 and 2, and the specialisms you have chosen in Year 2.

You will pursue your question through an Individual Research Project and in a module that allows you to undertake a work placement, civic engagement project or create a new venture in a related field.

The module '**What next? Global and Local Systems Change**', will help you frame your aspirations after graduation within the context of global and local developments, and to develop a portfolio (including a CV, social media profile, presentation skills and introduction to relevant networks) that will prepare you for life after your degree

# ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

We have an open admissions policy designed to encourage the widest possible access and participation for those that would like to enter higher education. Admission is based on portfolios and interviews, not grades alone. We look for potential to contribute to change, not prior achievement.

You will need to submit a reference alongside your application – your reference should be provided by someone who knows you academically or professionally (not a friend or relative) and can comment on relevant skills, experiences, and attributes. Forms are available to download on our website.

Interested to learn more? Speak to one of our dedicated [Student Support team](#) members.

## HOW TO APPLY

You can either apply for our Degree directly via BMC at any time during the year, or via UCAS before 29th January.

Find us on UCAS: Cardiff Metropolitan University/Black Mountains College – BA (Hons) Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology, and Systems Change.

[APPLY ON UCAS](#)

### APPLY DIRECT

We can support you in completing your application form directly, or if you're ready and know that BMC is for you please fill in a direct application form

[APPLY DIRECT](#)

[VIEW OUR FULL DEGREE PROSPECTUS](#)