

Student Hub: Plans for Summer? Build Your Practical Ecology Skills

Putting theory in to practice can be a challenge whilst you are studying, as can identifying what skills you will need once you graduate and start looking for employment. Using a mixture of available resources from CIEEM and making the most of the long summer days to build your practical ecology skills, puts you on the path to becoming a well-rounded ecologist or environmental manager.

Practical Experience with Organisations

If you are looking for practical experience, consider joining one or more of your local wildlife groups for their walks and talks. These groups include:

- Wildlife Trusts
- Mammal Society
- Bat Conservation Trust
- Natural History Societies
- RSPB
- The Conservation Volunteers

CIEEM Section Events – The Chartered Institute's Geographic Sections cover the whole of the UK and Ireland and organise talks, workshops, seminars, field trips and social events. They also provide numerous opportunities for members to network, share knowledge and skills as well as providing peer-to-peer member support. If you are studying in one place but living in another, it's a great opportunity to attend different events which are often very low cost or free.

"I volunteered with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust on a placement year from Harper Adams University. I volunteered at least 3 days, often 5 days every week from July 2017 to August 2018. It was a fantastic experience! I had the opportunity to work with the reserve management team, the biological record centre and many of the teams working with different groups

of people with limited access to the countryside. I gained skills and experience in land management including tool use and DIY. I learnt basic GIS and the delicate workings of biological records and I was privileged to work with a group of excellent, enthusiastic and dedicated nature lovers."

Andrew Barrett, CIEEM student member



CIEEM's Toolkit

Technical Guidance Series

CIEEM has developed various publications available to download from the website (www.cieem.net). In particular, CIEEM published a Competencies for Species Surveys (CSS), which covers the UK and Ireland and sets the criteria for the knowledge, skills and experience required by ecologists undertaking a range of species survey work in a professional capacity.

How do you know what you need to improve upon? Using the Competency Framework

Take a closer look at CIEEM's Competency Framework which enables you to identify the skills (both technical and transferable) required for Graduate, Associate and Full membership as well as roles within the profession. It's widely used by employers to help with the recruitment and development of staff. You can see what skills, knowledge and abilities are required for entry level (basic) competencies, enabling you to better plan your career progression.

Use the framework to your own advantage by mapping your own suitability and effectiveness for roles and build a portfolio to show how you are gaining the skills. Work out what skills you are already strong at, or not, and start building up some evidence and examples by getting some practical experience. Not only will you gain skills required for CIEEM membership but also skills you'll need to demonstrate on a CV and any future job applications. So familiarise yourself with it!

Theme	Surveying	
Competency	S1: Habitat/species survey design, planning and fieldwork	S2: Species identification, handling and evaluation
Basic Has some knowledge with an understanding of terminology and concepts. Has some experience of practical application. Would be able to carry out standard tasks to the required standard under the supervision.	Aware of the principles of ecological survey and relevant good practice guidelines. Can identify survey objections 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 and awareness of, and follows, biosecurity protocols.	Has a basic knowledge of taxonomy and classification and can identify some common species. Carries out standard species surveys under guidance using simple descriptive techniques. Is developing a knowledge of species surveying and species handling by working with/ showing others. Is aware of legal and biosecurity issues and standard biosecure protocols.