MCA Management of Conservation Areas
a department of ICEB | unesco Chair

MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM (CE)

MANAGEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

Lead the future of protected areas
International | Part-time | 120 ECTS

WHY MANAGEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS?

Conservation areas play a crucial role in protecting biodiversity, supporting climate resilience and fostering sustainable regional development worldwide. This Master´s program equips professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to manage these areas effectively.

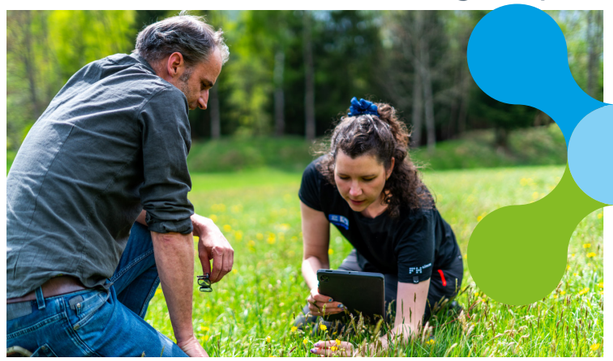
What Makes This Program Unique:

- International learning environment: participants from all over the world
- Field-based teaching: learning directly in conservation areas
- Strong institutional network: links to global organizations (e.g. IUCN, UNESCO context)
- Interdisciplinary approach: combining ecology, management and social sciences
- Focus on terrestrial ecosystems, with emphasis on mountain regions

What Participants Will Gain:

- Practical skills to manage conservation areas in complex environments
- Ability to work in international and intercultural contexts
- Expertise in stakeholder engagement and communication
- Tools to develop solutions for real-world environmental challenges

From monitoring to impact.



The ICEB – Interdisciplinary Center for Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity at Carinthia University of Applied Sciences investigates the complex relationships between biodiversity and ecosystem services, develops and applies digital and monitoring tools to make them measurable, and creates practical solutions for sustainable development.
The MSc program Management of Conservation Areas is one of its key educational programs.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing the program, participants will be able to:

Analyze and Understand

- Roles, functions and governance of conservation areas
- International frameworks and policy contexts

Plan and Implement

- Design and manage conservation areas and related projects
- Apply appropriate tools, methods and technologies

Work Across Disciplines

- Integrate ecological, social and economic perspectives
- Apply interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches

Manage Processes

- Facilitate stakeholder dialogue and participation
- Balance conservation objectives with regional development needs

PROFESSION & CAREER

The management of conservation areas requires expertise across legal, administrative and technical domains. The demand for qualified professionals in this field is continuously growing.

Typical Fields of Work:

- National parks, biosphere reserves and protected areas, OECMs
- International organisations and NGOs
- Consulting, planning and research
- Public sector

Typical Roles:

- Conservation area managers and directors
- Project or program managers
- Advisors for sustainable development

>> further information: furthereducation@cuas.at

ADMISSION

Requirements

- A relevant bachelor's degree (minimum 180 ECTS Credits or equivalent)
- Very good command of English
- Strong interest in and commitment to the field

Application Process

- Online application via www.cuas.at/mca
- Submission of CV and letter of motivation
- Interview (online)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Academic title:
"Master of Science (MSc) – Management of Conservation Areas" CE (Continuing Education)

Organization:
4 terms, 120 ECTS Credits

Mode of study:
Part-time

Start and Deadline for Application:
For details see our homepage www.cuas.at/mca

Language of instruction:
English

CURRICULUM

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The Study Program Will Be Organized as Follows:

The duration of the master's program is 4 terms (2 years), with a total workload of 120 ECTS Credits.

Each semester, we meet in person for 2–3 weeks. The rest of the training is provided via e-learning. This allows participants to combine the training with ongoing employment.

In-presence courses will take place in various conservation areas across Central Europe. Internationally recognized experts contribute to the program, supported by innovative teaching and training formats.

Course title	Course Days	ECTS Credits
Introduction to the course of study and basic information on the topic	2	4
Introduction to categories and institutional frameworks of conservation areas	3	6
Introduction to scientific foundations of the management of conservation areas	4	8
Reflection I: Transdisciplinarity, group dynamics and trans-cultural learning	2	2
Principles of development cooperation, development planning and development research	4	8
Thesis I: Introduction to topic / conducting a scientific study	2	2
Principles of management, public management and business administration	3	6
Conservation methods & technologies: tools and devices	3	6
Principles of strategic planning and interactive communication designs	4	6
Reflection II: Transdisciplinarity, group dynamics and trans-cultural learning	3	4
Thesis II: Contents, methods, exposé	4	8
Methods for the integrated and participative planning of conservation areas	5	8
Methods for the integrated and participatory management of conservation areas I: Internal process	5	10
Reflection III: Transdisciplinarity, group dynamics and trans-cultural learning	3	4
Thesis III: Supervised empirical work	4	8
Methods for the integrated and participatory management of conservation areas II: External processes	5	8
Methods for the integrated management of buffer zones, corridors and conservation area networks	4	8
Thesis IV: Analysis, results, editorial work	3	11
Final exam (commission)	1	3

THE TEAM

The program is delivered by an experienced international team and supported by a strong professional network.

Conservation areas are treasure chests of our planet. Our MSc program provides tools, technologies, and international best practice to support and inspire professionals to shape the conservation areas of the 21st century."
Michael Jungmeier, Scientific Director and Holder of the UNESCO Chair on Conservation Areas

We bring together international experts and motivated participants who want to make a real difference for protected areas and nature conservation."
Elisabeth Wiegele, Courses Director

We are committed to providing a supportive and international learning environment that enables students to grow academically and professionally."
Alexandra Liegl, Administrative Director

Our program equips future leaders with the skills to manage protected areas in a rapidly changing world. We combine scientific knowledge with practical experience to prepare graduates for real-world impact."
Fabian Smolnik, Program Coordinator

ADVISORY STRUCTURE

Institutional Board
Provides access to international organisations and current policy developments.

Scientific Board
Ensures academic quality and links to latest research.

Austrian Experience Pool
Offers practical insights, case studies and field-based learning opportunities.

CARINTHIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
CU ACADEMY

IN COOPERATION WITH
E.C.O. INSTITUTE FOR ECOLOGY

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UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas
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