

HE/FE Transition Q&As

1. Where will HE programmes be run when the zoo closes to the public?

In the current 2021-2025 Bristol Zoological Society Operating Plan, student numbers are projected to be 500 in the 2022/23 intake. It is our priority to ensure students receive the same high-quality learning experience that we are renowned for.

As such, we intend to continue to run our courses from the Conservation Education Centre at Bristol Zoo Gardens until towards the end of the academic year 2023/24.

Certain animal species will still remain on site and we are carefully considering a well-planned blend of animal opportunities for students. We will also plan some activity days for relevant modules at Wild Place Project, so that students can include these important species as part of their learning.

2. When will HE programmes officially be launched at the new site?

We will develop a clear, coherent, and comprehensive plan for higher education delivery (for students and staff) between the closing of Bristol Zoo Gardens to the public and the opening of the new Conservation Learning Centre (CLC), Conservation Medicine Centre (CMC) and Conservation Breeding Centre (CBC) at the new Bristol Zoo, for the 2024/25 academic year.

3. Will we still be able to study the animals when the zoo closes?

Certain animal species will still remain on site at Bristol Zoo Gardens post-closure to the public, and we are carefully considering a well-planned blend of animal opportunities for students. We will also plan some activity days for relevant higher education modules at Wild Place Project, so that students can include these important species as part of their learning.

4. How will students get into the zoo?

We expect that access to learning facilities will remain the same as now for all students.

5. Will there still be catering options for students on site when the zoo closes to the public?

We understand the importance of our catering offer for students at Bristol Zoo Gardens and are currently looking into options to ensure food and drinks remain available. In addition, students will continue to have access to the existing kitchen facilities on the ground floor of the CEC as normal.

6. If there are a reduced number of staff on site, how will you ensure students are safe in an emergency?

The safety and welfare of students are of top priority. Post-closure we will ensure that security for emergencies such as escaped animals, and staff trained in first aid remains on site.

7. Where will students be able to park their cars when Bristol Zoo Gardens closes?

We have undertaken a survey of our current students' parking requirements to understand how many are reliant on parking on site. Results have shown around 35 per cent are parking in the zoo car park each week of the academic year.

As the North Car Park will close at the end of 2023, Bristol Zoological Society will explore requirements and options for student parking from 2024 onwards.

We were very encouraged to learn from the survey results that the majority of students are travelling to site either using public transport or by cycling or walking. We encourage the use of sustainable travel wherever possible.

8. Where will students be able to lock up their bikes when the zoo closes? Currently, they use the bike racks at the main entrance in the North Car Park?

We anticipate that the bike racks will still be available for students choosing to cycle to the site after it closes to the public on September 3, 2022. We encourage the use of sustainable transportation, wherever possible. Electric scooters, which can currently be found at Guthrie Road/College Road, are also available for hire.

9. Will Wild Place be used for teaching to make up for having fewer animals in the closed zoo?

Module leaders are currently planning activity days for relevant modules at Wild Place Project so that students can engage/observe those animals as part of their learning.

During this time we will provide transportation for students who require it and we are in discussions with local transportation partners.

10. Will research projects on the animals still be possible at Bristol Zoo?

It is our top priority to ensure we create and enable a well-planned blend of opportunities that includes both Bristol Zoo Gardens and Wild Place Project animals as part of the learning offer. Our courses are carefully being designed to ensure students have the same level of exposure to animals.

11. Will there be any change in the number of lecturers during this time?

We do not anticipate any change in the number of lecturers during this time. Student numbers are projected to increase and we are also working on a new MSc in Conservation Leadership with UWE Bristol, which (if approved), will launch in the 2023/24 academic year.

12. Will the Conservation Education Centre (CEC) remain fully open and accessible for HE students, including Common Room, Library, Computer Room, Meeting Room, Lecture Theatres, etc?

All learning rooms and facilities within the CEC will remain accessible. However, the Vet building is expected to close at the end of 2023 and as a result, the Bristol Zoological Society is exploring requirements and options for veterinary teaching beyond December 2023.

13. How will the teaching team ensure we can still observe the animals as part of our lessons when the zoo closes to the public?

Certain animal species will still remain on site at Bristol Zoo Gardens post-closure to the public, and we are carefully considering a well-planned blend of animal opportunities for students.

We will also plan some activity days for relevant higher education modules at Wild Place Project during this process so that students can engage/observe these important species as part of their learning.

We will plan mitigations for the smaller number of social species available at Bristol Zoo Gardens post-closure to the public.

14. How will students be expected to travel to Wild Place Project during this transition period?

We recognise that public transport options to Wild Place Project are currently limited and, as such, will be providing transportation to Wild Place Project for students who have mandatory sessions there. We are in discussions with local travel partners and will announce plans as soon as an agreement is in place.

15. Will there be any disruption at Bristol Zoo Gardens during the transition period?

Our plan is to transfer the wider Bristol Zoo Gardens site to the purchaser in early 2024; the start of any building works will only be known once they have developed their construction programme.

The purchasers will be confirmed in 2023, and we will work with the relevant internal teams to ensure that any potential disruption is identified and mitigated.

Ends