

ECOLOGIST TRAINING

Overview of Training

On appointment, all recruits are provided with objectives based on our understanding of their skill set (from the interview process and an initial meeting with their line manager and office partner). This complements the company induction process (which includes elements of systems, basic consultancy skills and health and safety training and a tour of the four main offices to meet senior staff), and reflects both the needs of the recruit and the requirements of the company. In addition to this training plan, the recruit receives on-the-job training, mentoring and line management as part of their day-to-day work that will inform the refinement of training needs.

Training in Year 1 is focussed on ensuring that the ecologist is equipped to do their job as effectively as possible. In Year 2 the scope of training is broadened to help refine consultancy skills and assist the graduate to develop in relevant technical areas.

Typical training is as follows (a rationale for the inclusion of the training is provided below each numbered item), with most being delivered in-house:

1. **Effective Consultancy 1: the importance of understanding wildlife law and planning policy drivers (focus on England and Wales)**
This is fundamental to what we do and how we present our advice.
2. **Effective Consultancy 2: achieving excellent communication and business behaviour**
To improve and fine tune written and verbal communication in a consultancy context.
3. **Effective Consultancy 3. Contributing to a successful business (effective project delivery and the principles of business development)**
This helps consultants understand from an early stage that being fully effective is about more than species identification, and promotes understanding of their role within the entire practice team.
4. **Effective Consultancy 4: emerging policy and implications for business**
A broad understanding of where policy is taking us is vital to developing business and taking advantage of opportunities (this will cover net gain, wellbeing, ecosystem services, natural capital accounting etc).
5. **Extended Phase 1 habitat survey**
This is the basic unit of consultancy survey. It is important to have a common grounding. The training will involve field time and office-based training.
6. **Great crested newt survey, mitigation and licencing**
All ecologists need to get involved in newt survey, and all should be seeking to become licenced as they can then take responsibility for leading the planning and delivery of work. Understanding the context of surveys is necessary for a thinking consultant, and knowledge of recent policy changes is essential to delivering good advice.
7. **Bat survey, mitigation [data analysis] and licencing**
Bat work is a key service and bats are a potentially significant constraint to developers. We need to promote common understanding, standards and cross practice communication. Data analysis is a very useful skill for an ecologist to possess. Staff need to be aware of mitigation options so that appropriate advice can be offered.
8. **Badger survey, mitigation and licencing**
Badger survey, an understanding of sett classification and knowledge of mitigation are very useful skills that an ecologist can develop quickly.
9. **Reptile survey, mitigation and licencing**
All ecologists are likely to be involved in reptile survey, and all should acquire the ecological and legislative knowledge to allow them to work unaided and ultimately take responsibility for leading the planning and delivery of work and advising on appropriate reptiles-related issues.
10. **Ecological Assessment (covering CIEEM guidance, EIA, sub-EIA assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal).**
Reporting is a fundamental part of a consultancy skill set and we need to promote common standards and understanding of different report types.
11. **GIS**
Introduction to making the most of GIS in your work.
12. **Bat call identification masterclass (Year 2)**
Bringing together all that you will have picked up in the first year and refine your appreciation of bat calls in different circumstances, and to ensure consistency of approach across BSG.

During year 2 technical training becomes more bespoke, with the above courses supplemented with those identified by the graduate in discussion with their line manager. For example, the graduate may want to advance their botanical identification skills through attendance of courses on grasses, sedges and rushes, aquatic plants or moorland plant communities.