



Level 3 Diploma in

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**THE MANAGEMENT OF ZOO  
AND AQUARIUM ANIMALS (DMZAA/CMZAAV)**

# LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ZOO AND AQUARIUM ANIMALS (DMZAA/CMZAAV)

## THE NATIONAL ZOO ACADEMY

Sparsholt College Hampshire has been established for over 100 years, and has evolved into one of the largest land-based colleges in the UK. We have strong connections with wildlife and conservation organisations, and have worked with British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) since April 2002 when the course was launched.

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

- The DMZAA course is delivered in partnership with the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA), and is for those currently employed in a full-time role at a licensed zoo or aquarium, in a keeper or aquarist role.
- People volunteering, at least 1 day a week, in a keeper or aquarist role can apply to join the Certificate (CMZAAV). Course delivery, assignments, materials and support are the same as the DMZAA, but volunteers do not complete all units. Volunteers who gain a paid keeper/aquarist role in a collection either during or after the course may apply to 'top-up' and complete the Diploma.
- The Level 3 course (equivalent to A Level) is 2 year self-directed distance learning – teaching resources and assignments being delivered through LEDGE, our Virtual Learning Environment.
- Students are supported by a Regional Coordinator who is responsible for tutorials and is the first point of contact for information and support.
- Successful completion of the course requires students complete 16 – 18 units, each assessed by a written assignment. Each assignment takes approximately 30 hours to complete. BIAZA approved handbooks are provided for each unit as a starting point for students to then continue their self-directed learning.
- Written assignments are assessed by a panel of industry experts and taxonomic specialists, who provide constructive detailed feedback.
- Course content and outcomes are guided by BIAZA, thus remain relevant to the Industry. The course is mapped to the European Professional Zookeeper Qualification Framework (EPZQF) developed with the European Association of Zoo and Aquarium (EAZA), with emphasis being put on training and skills in welfare monitoring.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

### Essential

- Working/volunteering (at least 1 day a week) in a keeper/aquarist role for duration of the course
- IT literate with reliable access to a computer and internet connection
- GCSE English at grade C/4 or above or Level 2 equivalent
- GCSE Maths at grade C/4 or above or Level 2 equivalent
- Ability to produce written work in the English language at Level 3 standard (A Level equivalent)

### Desirable

- GCSE Science at grade C/4 or above or Level 2 equivalent
- Understanding of basic research and referencing (Harvard system)

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## FEES

Please see the table below for details of the tuition fees. Tuition fees are payable prior to start of the course. If paying the fees yourself, a 10% deposit is payable at point of confirmation (usually in June), and the remainder payable from September. Details of how to pay and set up a payment plan will be available after application.

DMZAA (UK and EU)		DMZAA (Non-EU)		CMZAA (Volunteer)		CMZAAV (Volunteer Non-EU)	
Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
£1722	£1500	£2268	£2025	£1722	£1100	£2268	£1960

### Please note:

- Fees are subject to change
- Year 1 fees include City & Guilds registration fee
- Additional fees may be payable for Residential Week if on-site accommodation is booked

## COURSE DELIVERY

### Year 1

All students must attend an Induction with the Course Manager via Microsoft Teams, in which course content is explained, course materials provided and key personnel identified. This Induction takes place in mid-August and dates/times will be shared in the application form.

Students employed with a UK or Irish collection, must attend a Residential Week at Sparsholt Campus in September. This week plays host to industry experts, who deliver a series of lectures and workshops that help guide and reinforce learning more difficult to deliver at a distance. The residential is optional but recommended for volunteers. There are two identical weeks offered to allow students and collections to pick the week that works best with their schedule. These dates are on the application form and students select which week they would like to attend during the application process. On-site accommodation is limited and is on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you wish to book on-site accommodation for the residential week, you will do so on the application form.

All students must complete ten mandatory units – each assessed by written assignment. At end of year 1, all students will sit a National Test. This is in two parts, the first covering units 1 – 5 and the second covering units 6 – 10. The date for this test will be shared during the online induction in August. It usually takes place end of August or early September before the start of the second year of studies.

### MANDATORY UNITS

- 1 Introduction to the Role of Zoos and Aquariums
- 2 Research in Zoos and Aquariums
- 3 Education and Learning in Zoos and Aquariums
- 4 Conservation and Collection Planning in Zoos and Aquariums
- 5 Enclosure Management in Zoos and Aquariums
- 6 Principles of Breeding in Zoos and Aquariums
- 7 Animal Transfers, Records and Health in Zoos and Aquariums
- 8 Nutrition in Zoos and Aquariums
- 9 Horticulture in Zoos and Aquariums
- 10 Ethics and Welfare in Zoos and Aquariums

## Year 2

All students must attend an induction with the Course Manager via Microsoft Teams, in which the year 2 course content is explained and course materials provided.

**DMZAA** students must complete **three mandatory units and five optional units**. In addition to written assignments, students must carry out a research project (unit 11) in a subject of their choice, and which can be recommended for industry publication if appropriate. They must also keep a portfolio (unit 31) to demonstrate their skills and knowledge as a keeper or aquarist.

**CMZAA** students must complete **five optional units and unit 32**. **CMZAAV** students can take the additional two units (11 and 31) if they secure a paid full-time role as a keeper at a licensed zoo or aquarium, thus topping-up to the DMZAA qualification.

### MANDATORY UNITS

- 11 Animal Research Project in Zoos or Aquariums\*
- 31 Specialist Husbandry Portfolio in Zoos or Aquariums\*
- 32 Training and Enrichment in Zoos and Aquariums

\* Only for DMZAA students

### OPTIONAL UNITS

- 12 Management of Invertebrates in Zoos and Aquariums
- 13 Management of Freshwater Fish in Zoos and Aquariums
- 14 Management of Live Food Culture in Zoos and Aquariums
- 15 Management of Marine Fish in Zoos and Aquariums
- 16 Management of Elasmobranchs in Zoos and Aquariums
- 17 Management of Coral Reef Aquariums in Zoos and Aquariums
- 18 Management of Aquatic Mammals in Zoos and Aquariums
- 19 Management of Chelonia and Crocodylians in Zoos
- 20 Management of Snakes and Lizards in Zoos
- 21 Management of Amphibians in Zoos and Aquariums
- 22 Management of Aviary Birds in Zoos
- 23 Management of Aquatic Birds in Zoos
- 24 Management of Raptors in Zoos
- 25 Management of Paddock Birds in Zoos

- 26 Management of Primates in Zoos
  - 27 Management of Small Mammals in Zoos
  - 28 Management of Carnivores in Zoos
  - 29 Management of Ungulates in Zoos
  - 30 Management of Elephants in Zoos
  - 33 Transportation in Zoos and Aquariums
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## FURTHER INFORMATION

Applications are available from January 2025 and are due by June 30th, 2025. On application, applicants must provide the contact details for a line manager at the collection who can confirm their status as either a keeper/aquarist or volunteer keeper/aquarist. For an application form and general enquiries, please email [dmzaa@sparsholt.ac.uk](mailto:dmzaa@sparsholt.ac.uk)

Please quote your full name and the collection with which you are affiliated so we can direct your enquiry to the Regional Coordinator if appropriate. The deadline for applications is **30 June 2025**.

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For information on BIAZA, their work and collections near you please see:  
<https://biaza.org.uk/>