

BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design (Top-Up) (University Centre Sparsholt)

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose

Course management and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of units and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to units and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a unit or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

Copyright

The contents of this document are the copyright of the University of Portsmouth and all rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior consent of the University of Portsmouth.

Contents

Course Details	1
1. Named Awards.....	1
2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)	1
3. Awarding Body	1
4. Teaching Institution	1
5. Accrediting Body	1
6. QAA Benchmark Groups	1
7. Document Control Information.....	1
8. Effective Session.....	1
9. Author	1
10. Faculty.....	1
11. Department	1
Curriculum	1
12. Educational Aims.....	1
13. Reference Points.....	2
14. General Learning Outcomes.....	2
15. Learning Outcomes	3
A. Knowledge and Understanding of:	3
B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:.....	3
C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:.....	4
D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:.....	4
16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods.....	4
17. Assessment Strategy.....	5
18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements.....	5
19. Employability Statement	6
Course Management	6
20. Support for Student Learning.....	6
21. Admissions Criteria	7
A. Academic Admissions Criteria.....	7
B. Disability	7
22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching	7
A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation	7
B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation	8
C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback	8
D. Staff Development Priorities.....	8
23. Assessment Regulations	9
24. Role of Externals	9
25. Indicators of Standards and Quality	9
A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition.....	9
B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent).....	9
C. Quality Assurance Agency	9
D. Teaching Excellence Framework	10
26. Further Information	10

Course Details

1. Named Awards

BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

R0388F, R0388P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College, Hampshire

5. Accrediting Body

None

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2009)

7. Document Control Information

July 2018

8. Effective Session

2018/2019

9. Author

Chris I. Bird

10. Faculty

Faculty of Science

11. Department

School of Biological Sciences

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

The Mission Statement of the College is “*to inspire learners to recognise and achieve their full potential*”. In response, the general aims of the programme are to:

- Provide a challenging and stimulating study environment while providing a flexible framework for a coherent programme of study
- Provide courses that ensure equality of opportunity, encourage access and participation and to respect diversity

- Provide a high level of industrial analysis and improve the employability profile of all graduates
- Equip graduates with the practical, technical and academic skills to function in their specific industry through contextualised institution based analysis and work placement case studies
- Provide a systematic, coherent and balanced education that equips graduates with necessary transferable skills for lifelong learning, employability and flexibility in the context of changing labour markets

Specifically, the BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design programme aims to provide students with the opportunity to develop appropriate skills and knowledge to enable them to:

- Successfully enter employment within the field of Horticulture
- Communicate effectively with horticultural professionals about the industry and to recognise opportunities and threats the industry faces on a global, national and local level
- Be aware of, and apply some of, the scientific factors affecting production
- Apply knowledge appropriately to planning, design and management decisions

13. Reference Points

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- QAA Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2009)
- Sector Skills Councils' (Lantra) Strategic Policy
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 6

Bachelor's degrees/Bachelor's degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline
 - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline)

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
- the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature

15. Learning Outcomes

Reference to QAA benchmark statements for Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences 2009 in brackets (A)

The BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design Programme:

- Critically evaluate the key aspects of the discipline area of Horticulture
- Apply techniques of analysis appropriate to Horticulture
- Research topics and to devise and sustain arguments related to Horticulture which are topical, relevant and at the cutting edge of current understanding
- Analyse and critically discuss current research and scholarship related to Horticulture
- Demonstrate technical skills necessary to underpin practical competences in the work place
- Take responsibility for managing their time and aspects of their own learning in Horticulture (A)
- Communicate information in a manner appropriate to the subject and the intended audience (A)
- Demonstrate the common, transferable skills needed to operate effectively in the working environment from understanding production techniques related to socio-economic conditions to utilising design concepts to enhance industrial practice (A)

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

Students at threshold level will be able to

- A1. Demonstrate understanding of the science and management of sustainable production systems within the socio-economic and environmental contexts required by society (A)
- A2. Demonstrate knowledge of the literature and creative application of such knowledge
- A3. Understand the policy and socio-economic factors which form systems and be able to identify how industry has responded to these (A)
- A4. Demonstrate understanding of the scientific factors affecting production
- A5. Demonstrate how production systems can be manipulated
- A6. Understand plant terminology, nomenclature and classification systems used in botany and horticulture
- A7. Formally identify a range of common plants used in horticulture and be able to justify planting choice for any given area
- A8. Apply and evaluate a range of specific scientific and technological processes (A)
- A9. Justify, apply and evaluate acquired knowledge to a variety of real-life situations
- A10. Critically evaluate concepts, theories and methods of a range of quantitative and qualitative analytical methods
- A11. Design and conduct individual experiments adhering to standard academic convention, and to justify ethical considerations (A)
- A12. Evaluate a range of methods for problem evaluation and amelioration
- A13. Consider and apply theories of design in a range of horticultural situations
- A14. Describe and evaluate the roles and responsibilities of regulatory and advisory bodies

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

- B1. Demonstrate thorough understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles as well as in-depth understanding of more specialised areas

- B2. Demonstrate the ability to define problems, devise and evaluate possible solutions and to solve both routine and unfamiliar problems (A)
- B3. Seek out, analyse, synthesise, summarise and critically evaluate information
- B4. Show a well-developed ability to integrate lines of evidence from a wide range of sources to formulate and test hypotheses (A)
- B5. Demonstrate the ability to consider issues from a range of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives and to draw on appropriate concepts and values in arriving at a critical assessment
- B6. Demonstrate critical appraisal of academic literature and other sources of information (A)
- B7. Design an experiment, investigation, survey or other means to test a hypothesis or proposition (A)

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

- C1. Relate investigations to prior work, be aware of recent research developments and reference it appropriately (A)
- C2. Use appropriate laboratory and field equipment highly competently and safely
- C3. Select, justify and apply a range of appropriate methods to solve challenging problems (A)
- C4. Select and use appropriate technology to address problems effectively
- C5. Describe adequately and record accurately in the field and laboratory
- C6. Interpret practical results perceptively
- C7. Present research findings perceptively and effectively in a number of formats (A)

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:

- D1. Communicate effectively and engagingly to a variety of audiences in written, graphical and verbal forms on a range of horticultural issues (A)
- D2. Contribute constructively to group discussions
- D3. Listen to, respect and evaluate the views of others and respond effectively (A)
- D4. Evaluate individual and group performance and identify areas for personal and group improvement
- D5. Use the internet critically and imaginatively for communication and information retrieval and be able to handle computer-based information confidently and competently using appropriate techniques and software
- D6. Analyse personal strengths and weaknesses and take account of them (A)
- D7. Manage a responsible, adaptable and flexible approach to study and work
- D8. Identify and work towards ambitious targets for personal, career and academic development
- D9. Choose appropriate techniques to process data and interpret them effectively (A)

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Core knowledge and understanding is conveyed through a combination of formal lectures, group student led seminars, and workshops supporting (A1-A14). Practical techniques are delivered in the *Propagation and Production Techniques* unit (A5), allowing students to become technically competent in plant production while being aware of the wider management issues. The *Planting Design and Innovations* unit anticipates that students justify planting decisions based on sound understanding (A6).

Cognitive skills (B1-B7) are developed through guided reading exercises, student led seminars, workshops and tutorials. Specifically, the *Dissertation* unit affords the student the opportunity to investigate an area of individual interest under accepted academic conventions (B1-B4, B7). The *Sustainable Horticultural Practice* unit expects the student to engage with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives (B5-B6) relating to socio-economic paradigms.

Practical horticultural skills (C1-C7) will be delivered through a combination of seminar presentations, laboratory work, plant propagation workshops and case studies.

Transferable skills (D1-D9) will be delivered through a combination of practical exercises, case studies and written assignments.

17. Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and Understanding (A1-A14) is assessed through formative and summative assessments including seminar presentations, vocationally relevant case studies, written assignments and formal exams.

Cognitive skills (B1-B7) at Level 6 are assessed via the Dissertation (B1-B4, B7), other written assignments, seminar presentations and formal examinations. Specifically, the case studies in *Sustainable Horticultural Practice* and *Planting Design and Innovations* allow students to contextualise their learning in reference to their specific area of interest (B2) while reports allow students to develop skills relating to processing, synthesising and presenting information clearly (B4).

Practical skills are assessed through seminar presentations, scaled plan presentations, written assignments and vocationally relevant case studies. In particular, the *Dissertation* unit provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate practical skills related to their specific area of interest (C1-C7). The *Planting Design and Innovations* unit expects students to provide a scaled plan with supporting documentation justifying plant selection and placement specific to their area of interest (C3) while the *Historical Design and Conservation* unit requires students to conduct a presentation (C7).

Transferable skills (D1-D9) will be assessed through a combination of seminar presentations, written assignments and formal exams.

Assessment will be both formative and summative throughout the programme. Formative assignments will form an integral aspect of Level 6 programmes, for example in *Propagation and Production Techniques*, as well as the step-wise development of the *Dissertation*, as they will guide and inform summative assessments, demonstrating the ability to develop research skills and critically discuss literature. They also provide excellent opportunity to enhance communication skills (presentations in *Planting Design and Innovations* and *Historical Design and Conservation*) and teamwork opportunities, essential for a career that involves an aspect of people management.

The progressive nature of the programme aims to build on student's achievements on the previous programmes and experience. The PDP provides the roadmap for further development of the students' ability to organise their own work and study regime through the development of greater self-reliance in terms of study, research and assignment completion.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](#)¹ for full details on the course structure and units

The BSc (Hons) Level 6 top-up element of the Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design programme is offered as a 1-year full-time programme (120 credits) and may also be completed as a 2-year part-time course. One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning. The course comprises a maximum of 120 credits with all units being of either 20 or 40 credits value. Standard University rules apply - the regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.

Each student will prepare a Personal Development Plan (PDP) to underpin successful completion of their studies and transition into their future career.

Initial assessment during induction is used to produce a profile of each student for the personal tutor, and a group profile for the course team. Where appropriate, students are referred to the Learning Support Advisors for diagnostic testing and support. Each student and tutor set aims and objectives as part of an individual Personal Development Plan (PDP), which is developed and monitored through the individual tutorial system during the course. Study skills are incorporated into the curriculum of the units through to the completion of the Dissertation. Other study skills, personal development topics and careers guidance are developed through the individual and group tutorial system.

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

Upon successful completion of 120 credits at Level 6 (360 credits when combining with the 240 on entry credits), students will be awarded BSc (Hons) Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design. Students can also exit with BSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design should they achieve 60 credits at Level 6 (300 credits when combining with the 240 on entry credits).

19. Employability Statement

Students progressing onto the BSc programme will be developing specific critical analysis of the industry, better preparing them for employment and aligning their skill set to a typically managerial career. The programme will produce graduates with a demonstrated capacity to research, interpret and present a variety of data; work to deadline; communicate effectively on a range of industry related topics; be aware of technical standards for managing a variety of horticultural areas.

Sparsholt College is one of the largest providers of land-based further and higher education programmes in the UK. As such, it is well recognised locally, regionally and nationally as a centre of excellence for delivering high quality teaching by staff with a high degree of subject expertise. Industrial relationships are reinforced by close associations with professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Horticulture, the Royal Horticultural Society and the Society of Garden Designers.

Horticulture contributes £9b annually to the national economy and employs over 300,000 people in a variety of sectors from production to retail. The industry is currently experiencing a national skills shortage that is highlighted by the RHS who produced *Horticulture Matters* (RHS, 2013). This report describes a general skills shortage in all aspects of the industry. The report highlights that 72% of all employers cannot find skilled candidates at any level, a figure reflected by our jobs board, which regularly advertises 150 jobs ranging from landscapers to managers, well above the figure from other curriculum areas.

The close proximity of the College to major plant nurseries, national heritage sites and other horticultural industries allows for a variety industry visits, enhancing the student experience and contextualising learning. The College has developed close relationships with a range of employers in the area, all of whom have highlighted a local shortage of employees with the technical skills and competencies that allow them to progress.

Employability skills will be embedded throughout the course. In particular, the *Dissertation* unit allows students to research a topic of their choice under accepted academic standards, providing the opportunity for developing time management and communication skills. The unit *Propagation and Production Techniques* will enhance technical skills required by industry and provide the opportunity for students to contextualise learning into their chosen field. The unit entitled *Sustainable Horticultural Practice* will develop student's conceptual understanding of sustainability and related issues preparing them for issues the industry faces in terms of production, management and conservation. The *Historical Design and Conservation* unit allows students to explore issues related to innovation theory related to both technological solutions to production and larger models and paradigms accounting for economic responses to these innovations.

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Tutor
- The Partner Academic Contact and Partner Administrative Contact
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University of Portsmouth, University Centre Sparsholt and their course
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance
- College support services include careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.

- Learning Support and Disability Advisors provide DSA assessments and required learning support
- Excellent library facilities at both University of Portsmouth and University Centre Sparsholt at Sparsholt College
- A well-equipped teaching block, the Sainsbury Building, with a lecture theatre, laboratories and other teaching facilities is available
- Student, course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University/College regulations etc.
- Feedback is provided for all assessments, both summative and formative
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards
- Group and individual briefings are given prior to all placements with employers and students receiving handbooks to support the learning whilst on placement
- University's Academic Skills Unit (ASK)

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

Entry requirements are:

- Academic judgement that the student will benefit from the programme and successfully complete the course

This will be evidenced by:

- Foundation Degree in Garden Design, or a related subject
- Higher National Diploma (HND) in Garden Design, or a related subject
- Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Garden Design together with additional, post-qualification, vocational experience
- Equivalent/professional qualifications
- RPEL portfolio - If appropriate, prior learning may be assessed and accredited through the [University of Portsmouth Recognition of Prior Experience and Learning \(AP\(E\)L\) process](#)
- International students will be expected to demonstrate an IELTS score of 6.5 in proficiency in English language (with no sub-section score less than 6.0) and have a qualification commensurate with the qualifications outlined above

B. Disability

University Centre Sparsholt make no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at the College on a course of their choice.

22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Boards of Study (University and Head of Department's ASQER to be reported to the BoS)
- Curriculum Area Annual Self-Assessment report
- Unit and Course Level feedback considered at Exam Boards
- Unit Assessment Board (UAB) consideration of student performance for each programme
- University Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Report
- Partner Academic Contact's Annual Standards and Quality Report
- Periodic Programme and Partnership Review
- Student Representatives, HE Student Council/ Cross-college Learner Voice

- Staff Appraisals and Performance and Development Review
- Peer Review, including Teaching and Learning observations
- Ethics and Research Standards Group's Annual Report
- External Examiner's report to be submitted to the BoS

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit co-ordinators for unit content and delivery
- Course tutor for day-to-day running of course
- Partner Institution Academic Contact (HE Development and Quality Manager)
- Board of Studies
- Learning Manager, Horticulture and Garden Design
- Ethics and Research Standards Group
- Head of Faculty
- Assistant Principal of Higher Education, University Centre Sparsholt
- University Contact
- Associate Dean (Academic)
- Associate Dean (Students)
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on the Governing Board
- Student Representation on the Boards of Study
- HE Student Council and Learner voice meetings
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires
- Sparsholt Learner Surveys
- Student forums on course VLE (Moodle) and the HE student Moodle space (HE4U)
- National Student Survey

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support, guidance and professional certification
- Annual Teaching observations inform CPD requirements
- Annual staff appraisal reviews match development needs
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes
- New academic staff required to undertake PTTLS, or equivalent, initially (Staff teaching in both FE and HE are required to undertake PGCE-PCET equivalent)
- All academic staff are required to seek Higher Education Academy Fellowship and/or participate in the University of Portsmouth APEX programme
- Academic staff new to teaching required to undertake New Teaching Staff Induction
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in a variety of areas including specific IT packages

23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations for Collaborative Partners will apply to this programme (see [Regulations and Handbooks²](#)).

24. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- Oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards
- Review unit assessment strategy
- Sample assessment artefacts
- Present report to Unit Assessment Boards

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- Oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards
- Scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment
- Ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom

25. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

None

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The course will be subject to normal monitoring and review policy and procedures.

A review of the partnership took place in January 2014 when the annual monitoring and review processes were found to be effective and the fitness of the partnership arrangements were confirmed for a further six years.

The key strengths of provision were as follows:

- The college is clearly responsive to feedback received from the external examiners, students and the University
- Clear evidence of critical and evaluative reviews of the provision to enhance the student experience
- Wide breadth of curriculum to reflect the complex and diverse sector areas
- Having practitioners on the teaching team is clearly advantageous to students

Extensive, effective and proactive student engagement in enhancing quality

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Institutional Audit, December 2008, 'broad confidence' (for full report see [QAA Institutional Audit: University of Portsmouth 2008](#)).

Sparsholt College Hampshire – QAA HE review, March 2014 (for full report see [Higher Education Review: Sparsholt College, March 2014](#)). The report confirms that:

- The maintenance of the threshold academic standards of the awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding bodies meets UK expectations
- The quality of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations
- The quality of the provider's information about learning opportunities meets UK expectations

²

[www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/CollaborativePartnerships/documentat
ion/RegulationsandHandbooks/](http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/CollaborativePartnerships/documentat
ion/RegulationsandHandbooks/)

- The enhancement of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations

D. Teaching Excellence Framework

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is the UK Government's first assessment of teaching excellence in higher education. University Centre Sparsholt was awarded a 'Gold' TEF rating in May 2018.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- Assessment Regulations
- [University of Portsmouth](#), [School of Biological Sciences](#) and [Sparsholt College](#) websites