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.

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# 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: ....................................................................... 4
   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 ............................................................... 6
19. Employability Statement ................................................................................................................. 6

Course Management ............................................................................................................................. 7

20. Support for Student Learning .......................................................................................................... 7
21. Admissions Criteria ............................................................................................................................ 7
   A. Academic Admissions Criteria ......................................................................................................... 7
   B. Disability ....................................................................................................................................... 8
22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching ...................... 8
   A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation ....................................................................................... 8
   B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation ............................................................................... 8
   C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback .................................................................................... 9
   D. Staff Development Priorities ......................................................................................................... 9
23. Assessment Regulations .................................................................................................................... 9
24. Role of Externals ............................................................................................................................... 9

25. Indicators of Standards and Quality ................................................................................................. 10
   A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition ......................................................................................... 10
   B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent) .................................................................................... 10
   C. Quality Assurance Agency .......................................................................................................... 10
   D. Teaching Excellence Framework ................................................................................................. 10
26. Further Information .......................................................................................................................... 10

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Course Details

1. **Named Awards**
FdSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design

2. **Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)**
R0387F, R0387P

3. **Awarding Body**
University of Portsmouth

4. **Teaching Institution**
University Centre Sparsholt at Sparsholt College, Hampshire

5. **Accrediting Body**
None

6. **QAA Benchmark Groups**
Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2009)
Foundation Degree qualifications benchmark statement (2010)

7. **Document Control Information**
July 2018

8. **Effective Session**
2018-19

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 FdSc 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
• Understand how production systems can be manipulated and managed
• Apply knowledge appropriately to planning, design and management decisions

13. Reference Points
• University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document (2016)
• UK Quality Code for Higher Education
• Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
• QAA Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2009)
• Foundation Degree qualifications benchmark statement (2010)
• Sector Skills Councils’ (Lantra) Strategic Policy
• The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 4
Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:
• knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
• an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:
• evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
• communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
• undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment

And holders will have:
• the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility
Level 5

Foundation Degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making

15. Learning Outcomes

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

The FdSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design Programme:

- Discuss key aspects within the discipline of Horticulture
- Apply techniques of analysis appropriate to Horticulture
- Research topics and to devise and sustain arguments related to Horticulture
- Discuss current research and scholarship related to Horticulture
- Demonstrate technical skills necessary to underpin practical competences in the work place
- Take responsibility for individual time management and personal development (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

A.1 Demonstrate some familiarity with the science and management of sustainable production systems within the socio-economic and environmental contexts required by society (A)
A.2 Recognise the needs and requirements of society and be able to identify how industry has responded to these (A)
A.3 Demonstrate some understanding of the scientific factors affecting production
A.4 Understand how production systems can be manipulated
A.5 Understand plant terminology, nomenclature and classification systems used in botany and horticulture
A.6 Formally identify a range of common plants used in horticulture and be able to justify planting choice and design for any given area
A.7 Apply soil science techniques and appreciate sustainable substrate management for effective crop production (A)
A.8 Apply acquired knowledge to a variety of real-life situations (A)
A.9 Apply concepts, theories and methods of a range of quantitative and qualitative analytical methods
A.10 Design and conduct individual experiments adhering to standard academic convention, and to appreciate ethical considerations (A)
A.11 Apply a limited range of statistical analysis
A.12 Consider and apply theories of design in a range of horticultural situations
A.13 Appraise the roles and responsibilities of regulatory and advisory bodies

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

B.1 Demonstrate some understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles (A)
B.2 Demonstrate ability to define and solve routine problems
B.3 Collate, summarise and analyse information
B.4 Integrate lines of evidence from a limited range of sources to support findings and hypotheses (A)
B.5 Demonstrate some ability to consider issues from a range of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives
B.6 Source academic literature and extract relevant points
B.7 Suggest, plan, conduct and present a small, independent investigation

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

C.1 Plan, conduct and present the results of a small-scale independent investigation with guidance (A)
C.2 Relate investigations to some prior work and reference it appropriately
C.3 Use appropriate laboratory and field equipment safely
C.4 Apply a range of methods to solve problems (A)
C.5 Use technologies to address problems
C.6 Collect and record information or data in the library, laboratory or field and summarise it using appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative techniques (A)
C.7 Interpret, analyse financial and other management information and use it in decision-making (A)
C.8 Present results from investigation in a number of formats

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

D.1 Communicate to a variety of audiences in written, graphical and verbal forms on a range of horticultural issues (A)
D.2 Make contributions to group discussions and listen to, and respect, the views of others
D.3 Listen and respond to others (A)
D.4 Reflect on individual and team performance
D.5 Use the internet for communication and information retrieval (A)
D.6 Recognise personal weaknesses and strengths and be able to identify personal targets for career and academic performance
D.7 Be adaptable and have a flexible approach to study and work
D.8 Identify targets for personal, career and academic development (A)
D.9 Process and interpret data
D.10 Describe and apply professional standards and responsibilities in relation to the horticultural industry

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Core knowledge and understanding is conveyed through a combination of lectures, visits, seminars, practical laboratory work, workshops and guided independent study (A1-A13). In addition, the
Introduction to Business in Horticulture in level 4 and the Work Practice unit in level 5 will reinforce all elements of the above, tailored and contextualised to the student's individual and specific area of interest. Students engage in independent and/or specific group projects in order to pursue more advanced knowledge and understanding. The Investigative Project in Level 5 will allow the student to demonstrate the ability to think critically and analytically, interpreting and applying knowledge to a range of real-life situations (A8-A11).

Cognitive skills (B1-B7) are conveyed through a combination of lectures, seminars, practical fieldwork, industrial placement tutorials and group work. B7 will be guided through personal and group tutorials.

Practical horticultural skills (C1-C8) will be delivered through a combination of practical exercises, laboratory work, plant identification tests and case studies.

Transferable skills (D1-D10) will be delivered through a combination of practical exercises, case studies and written assignments.

17. Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding (A1-A13) will be assessed using a combination of seminar presentations, vocationally relevant case studies, written assignments, poster presentations, plant identification tests and formal exams.

Cognitive skills (B1-B7) at Levels 4 and 5 are assessed primarily through examinations and coursework, including laboratory investigations, assignments, presentations, seminars, creation of management plans and through an Investigative Project.

Practical skills are assessed through seminar presentations, scaled plan presentations, written assignments and vocationally relevant case studies. The Level 4 Plant Classification and Nomenclature unit will ask students to investigate plant relationships related to taxonomy (C1-C3), while the Level 5 Plant Identification and Use unit will expect students to apply this information to various horticultural situations relevant to their area of interest (C4-C7).

Transferable skills (D1-D10) will be assessed through a combination of seminar presentations, written assignments and formal exams. Specifically, the Level 4 Introduction to Business in Horticulture will contain a number of formative seminar presentations and expect students to provide constructive feedback and evidence their response to this (D1-D5). The Design Influences unit contains summative presentations that utilise feedback from other units to demonstrate personal management (D6-D9). The Level 5 unit Work Practice 2 requires students to identify and contextualise professional standards within their specific area of interest while the Landscape Management unit provides a more holistic overview of standards governing land use anticipating that students utilise and embed their knowledge in a management plan for an area relating to their interest (D10).

Assessment will be both formative and summative throughout the programme. Formative assessments throughout the duration of studies will allow for skill development and the potential for learners to develop both research and study skills as well as technical and subject specific knowledge. The FdSc will be assessed with a high proportion of work related assessment.

Level 4

The assessment strategy for all the units at Level 4 is to use a combination of assessment methods including: visual poster displays such as in Plant Biology and Processes; portfolio such as in Academic Skills; seminar presentations such as in Plant Classification and Nomenclature; design exercises such as in Design Influences; essays such as in Introduction to Business in Horticulture; and formal examinations to introduce the students to a range of assignment/assessment methods and to encourage students to explore the subject matter of the various units in a diverse manner.

Level 5

The progressive assessment strategy for all the units at Level 5 is to build upon the student’s achievements and the experience gained through the assessment process at Level 4 and to further develop the student’s ability to organise their own work and study regime through the development
of greater self-reliance in terms of study, research and assignment completion. Assessment methodology at this level is therefore directed more towards: Individual, time-constrained case studies such as in *Landscape Management*; extended seminar presentations (*Horticulture Enterprise & Management*), scaled plans (*Plant Identification & Use*); time constrained design exercises and an investigative project. Various formative assessments throughout the academic year, including mock examinations, are geared towards helping students meet summative assessment criteria and are an inherent aspect of the delivery of the course.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](https://www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch) for full details on the course structure and units

The FdSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design is offered as a 2-year full-time programme (240 credits) and may also be completed as a part-time course of 3 years duration. One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning. Each level comprises a maximum of 120 credits with all units being 20 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 such as personal development topics and careers guidance are developed through the individual and group tutorial system.

Exit awards:
- Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) in Horticulture comprising of 120 credits
- FdSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design comprising of 240 credits

19. Employability Statement

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 Institute of Horticulture, the Royal Horticultural Society and the Society of Garden Designers. 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.

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 College currently delivers a variety of Level 2 and 3 RHS short courses, all of which generate enquiry as to whether a more formal route of study exists. In addition, the Level 3 Extended Diploma

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1 [www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch](https://www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch)
is a two-year full-time course that currently offers no progression route that relates specifically to Horticulture.

Employability skills will be embedded throughout the course. The first year unit entitled *Introduction to Business in Horticulture* introduces key business concepts and allows students to analyse each sector and highlight key issues affecting industry. The second year will expect students to undertake an investigation into *Work Practice 2*, in which they analyse a selected business in terms of supply chain, customer base and marketing opportunities. The units entitled *Plant Biology & Processes*, *Soils & Substrates* and *Plant Classification & Nomenclature* deliver the technical knowledge allowing graduates to converse with industry enhancing their ability to move into employment. The *Investigative Project* unit allows students to research a topic of their choice under accepted academic standards, providing the opportunity for developing time management and communication skills.

**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 at Sparsholt College 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.
- At least 64 UCAS points which may be evidenced by:

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<th>A Level</th>
<th>BTEC Extended Diploma</th>
<th>City &amp; Guilds Ext. Diploma</th>
<th>BTEC Diploma</th>
<th>City &amp; Guilds Diploma</th>
<th>Access to HE</th>
<th>International Baccalaureate</th>
</tr>
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Programme Specification for FdSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship and Design (University Centre Sparsholt) Page 7 of 11
Pre-college experience in an appropriate work area or as a volunteer strongly recommended.

We welcome applications from mature students (over 21 years) with experience or interest in all aspects of land-based industries and we consider each application on an individual basis. If appropriate, prior learning may be assessed and accredited through the University of Portsmouth Recognition of Prior Experience and Learning (RP(EL) process\(^2\).

Applicants wishing to start the course in the autumn after leaving school are expected to have completed 14 years of schooling and normally be aged 18 or over.

International students will be expected to demonstrate an IELTS score of 6.0 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**

- Course Tutor’s Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review (ASQER)
- University Academic Contact’s Annual Standards and Quality Report
- Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review for Collaborative Programmes including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Unit Assessment Boards, Boards of Study and Exam Boards
- Unit Assessment Board (UAB) consideration of student performance for each unit
- Periodic Collaborative Programme Review
- Periodic Collaborative Partner Review
- Student Representatives/Learner Voice/HE Student Council
- Staff Appraisals and Performance and Development Review
- Peer Review including Teaching and Learning observations
- Ethics and Research Standards Group’s Annual Report

**B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Unit tutors for unit content and delivery
- Course Tutor for day-to-day running of course
- Partner Institution Academic Contact
- University Contact
- Board of Studies
- Head of Faculty
- Assistant Principal, Higher Education University Centre Sparsholt

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\(^{2}\) [www.port.ac.uk/accessstoinformation/policies/accreditationofpriorlearning/filetodownload,11037,en.pdf](http://www.port.ac.uk/accessstoinformation/policies/accreditationofpriorlearning/filetodownload,11037,en.pdf)
• Associate Dean (Academic)
• Associate Dean (Students)
• Unit Assessment Boards, Award and Progression Board of Examiners
• Ethics and Research Standards Group for ethical review and project approval

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 Handbooks3).

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

3 www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/CollaborativePartnerships/documentat ion/RegulationsandHandbooks/
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

The College underwent QAA Higher Education Review in 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
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations

The full report is available at QAA report – Sparsholt College4.

University of Portsmouth QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (for full report see Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 20185).

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 has been 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
- Sparsholt College HE Prospectus

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4 www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10006050#.VR1SfKNwaUk
• University of Portsmouth\textsuperscript{6}, School of Biological Sciences\textsuperscript{7} and Sparsholt College\textsuperscript{8} websites

\textsuperscript{6} www.port.ac.uk/
\textsuperscript{7} www.port.ac.uk/school-of-biological-sciences/
\textsuperscript{8} www.sparsholt.ac.uk/