

# FdSc Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (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.

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## Course Details

### **1. Named Awards**

FdSc Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

### **2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)**

R0418F, R0418P (UCAS Code D445)

### **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, forestry, agricultural science, food sciences and consumer sciences (2009)

Earth sciences, environmental sciences and environment studies (2014)

Biosciences (2007)

Foundation Degree qualifications benchmark statement (2010)

### **7. Document Control Information**

July 2018

### **8. Effective Session**

2018/19

### **9. Author**

Matthew Norris-Hill

### **10. Faculty**

Science

### **11. Department**

Biological Sciences

## Curriculum

### **12. Educational Aims**

Generally, the aims of the programme are:

- To develop students' ecological and conservation skills to competent field practitioner level

- To provide training appropriate for a wide variety of current employment opportunities in the conservation industry
- To develop the potential and knowledge platform for students' progression to L3 BSc (Hons) Ecology & Conservation Management
- To equip graduates with the scientific and ecological understanding and knowledge underpinning conservation management, and the ability to construct effective solutions to practical ecological problems

Also:

- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment
- To provide a framework allowing students to follow a flexible coherent programme of study
- To provide a high level of work-based learning
- To develop technical and work specific skills underpinned by academic learning
- To equip students with the necessary transferable skills for lifelong learning, employability and flexibility in the context of changing labour markets
- To provide students with the skills and knowledge required to maximise career opportunities
- Following the QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark (May 2010), the programme will endeavour to allow learners to develop knowledge, understanding and skills, specific to foundation degrees:
  1. To benefit from the interpretation of ideas and the experience of practice, within the wider context of employment and one in which knowledge, understanding and skills are clearly integrated
  2. Learning outcomes that are explicitly relevant to employers and professional needs
  3. Knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles in their field of study and the way in which those principles have developed
  4. Successful application in the workplace of the range of knowledge and skills learnt throughout the FdSc Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
  5. Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were studied and the application of those principles in a work context
  6. Ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in their field of study and apply these in a work context
  7. Use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis in their field of study and in a work context
  8. 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 in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
  9. Undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume responsibility within organisations
  10. Have qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment and progression to other qualifications requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making

### 13. Reference Points

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document (2016)
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- QAA Foundation Degree qualifications benchmark statement (2010)
- QAA Benchmark Statement for Agriculture, forestry, agricultural science, food sciences and consumer sciences (2009).
- QAA Benchmark Statement for Earth sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environment Studies (2014)

- QAA Benchmark Statement for Biosciences (2007)
- University of Portsmouth Code of Practice for Work-based and Placement Learning (2015)
- Sector Skills Councils' (Lantra) Strategic Policy

## 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

Students will be able to demonstrate ability, at a threshold level, to:

- Discuss the key aspects of the subject areas associated with Wildlife Ecology and Conservation and sustainable land use
- Apply appropriate techniques of analysis to the subject areas of Sustainable Land Use and Management
- Research topics and to devise and sustain arguments related to the specific subject area
- Discuss current research and industry development related to Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
- Discuss the current limits of knowledge in specific topic areas including Sustainable Resource Management and Global Biodiversity and Land Use Management
- Take responsibility for their own learning in a Foundation degree programme (FD)
- Apply a variety of methods of investigation, recording and analysis appropriate to Wildlife Ecology and Conservation and the ecological sciences
- Carry out an extended piece of independent enquiry into a specific subject area related to Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (FD)
- Communicate information in a manner appropriate to the subject and the intended audience
- Show initiative and be able to make and justify decisions
- Demonstrate practical and/or transferable skills in addition to developing cognitive skills while undertaking a period of Work Placement Learning
- Demonstrate, through practical application, knowledge and skills of the physical, biological, economic and sociological principles and processes that underpin forestry

Those cross-referencing to QAA Subject Benchmark Statements are shown with (A) for Agriculture, forestry, agricultural sciences and consumer sciences or (A-RS) for specific reference to subsections in Rural Studies, (A-F) to subsections in Forestry and the QAA Benchmark Statement for Earth sciences, environmental Sciences and environment studies (E); (FD) illustrates QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark (May 2010).

### A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 Underlying principles of the physical, biological, sociological and economic principles to the sustainable management of habitat for the benefit of society (A)
- A.2 Development of integrated, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches of both land management as a whole and specifically within Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (A)
- A.3 Critical analysis of concepts, theories and methods used for sustainable economic and environmental appraisal of habitat management and conservation (A & E)
- A.4 Concepts, theories and methods underpinning the processes that control the structure and function of ecosystems (A & E)
- A.5 Critical analysis of the main features of environmental policy for the UK and identify current gaps in current knowledge and development of the environment (E)
- A.6 Critical understanding of global, regional and local context of environmental and land management and conservation (A)
- A.7 Understanding of current gaps and future developments in sustainable land use and management (A)
- A.8 A holistic view of the present and past interactions between components of the Earth system, including the effects of extra-terrestrial influences on these interactions (E).
- A.9 Scientific examination of the implications of sustainability and sustainable development (E)
- A.10 Terminology, nomenclature and classification systems used in Environmental Sciences (E)
- A.11 Issues concerning the availability and sustainability of resources, particularly in respect to Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (E)
- A.12 Critical analysis of current research and concepts at the cutting edge of technology
- A.13 Experimental design and ethics
- A.14 Surveying and measurement both in the field and laboratory, and using quantitative and instrumental techniques

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

- B.1 Recognise and use appropriate theories, concepts and principles from disciplines associated within land management (A)
- B.2 Evaluate different aspects of problems and discuss them in a balanced way (A)
- B.3 Demonstrate critical awareness of the ambiguity often present in a scientific discipline and articulate the issues involved
- B.4 Design an experiment, investigation, survey or other means to test a hypothesis or proposition (A)
- B.5 Demonstrate creativity and innovation in thinking and problem solving
- B.6 Critically review the moral and ethical issues of investigations and appreciating the need for professional codes of conduct (E)
- B.7 Knowledge and understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles (E)
- B.8 An ability to analyse, synthesise, summarise and critically evaluate information (E)

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

- C.1 Plan, conduct and report on investigations, including the use of secondary data (A&E)
- C.2 Collect and record information or data in the library, laboratory or field and summarise it using appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative techniques (A)
- C.3 Devise, plan and undertake field, laboratory or other investigations in a responsible, sensitive and safe manner, paying due diligence to risk assessment; ethical and data protection issues; rights of access, relevant health and safety regulations, legal requirements and sensitivity to the impact of investigations on the environment (A&E)
- C.4 Develop practical management skills relevant to the environment and conservation industries including personnel management skills (A)
- C.5 Demonstrate environmental, social, cultural and economic awareness and responsibility within Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (A)
- C.6 Reference work in an appropriate manner (E)
- C.7 Participate in a range of activities designed to disseminate information
- C.8 Prepare, manipulate and interpret data using appropriate techniques (E)
- C.9 Use appropriate technologies in addressing problems effectively (E)

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

- D.1 Evaluate issues of sample selection, accuracy, precision and uncertainty during collection recording and analysis of data in the field and laboratory and the difficulties of incomplete information (A&E)
- D.2 Prepare, process, interpret and present data and solve problems using appropriate qualitative and quantitative, computer based and non-computer based techniques and packages. (A)
- D.3 Communicate accurately, clearly, concisely, confidently and appropriately to a variety of audiences, in both an academic context and with employers and industry contacts (A&E) Section
- D.4 Contribute constructively to group discussions and listen to, appreciate and evaluate the views of others (A)
- D.5 Use the internet critically as a means of communication and a source of information (A&E)
- D.6 Demonstrate competence in the use of computer-based information handling and data processing tools (A)
- D.7 Analyse and discuss how the views and opinions of other team members affect the working of the team - extrapolate this to relationships in the workplace (A)
- D.8 Critically evaluate the moral, ethical and social issues related to the subject, both in an academic and industrial context (A)
- D.9 Demonstrate the capacity for considered and independent action through planning and completion of a range of assignments, portfolios and projects
- D.10 Good interpersonal communication skills to enable effective team working (E)
- D.11 Demonstrate an awareness of the importance of risk assessment and relevant legislation (E)
- D.12 Identify and work towards targets for personal, career and academic development (E)
- D.13 Reflect on the process of learning and to evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses (E)

## 16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Core knowledge and understanding is conveyed through a combination of lectures, visits, seminars, practical fieldwork, workshops and guided independent study (A1-A14). In addition, periods of Conservation Work Practice in stage 1 (level 4) and Conservation Site Management in stage 2 (level 5) in both full and part time options will reinforce all elements of above, in particular A14. Students will engage in independent and/or specific group projects in order to pursue more advanced knowledge and understanding.

Cognitive skills are conveyed through a combination of lectures, seminars, practical fieldwork, industrial placement tutorials and group work (B1-B8).

Subject-specific practical skills are developed through a combination of lectures, laboratory practical's, practical fieldwork, guided independent work, industrial placement, tutorials and group work (C1-C8). Work practice placements also contribute to the development of professional practical skills (C5-9).

Transferable (graduate and employability) skills are developed through computer-based and non-computer-based workshops, field and laboratory practicals, group work; independent guided learning, development of Personal Development Plans and individual tutorial support.

## 17. Assessment Strategy

Level 4 and 5 work is assessed primarily through examinations and coursework including assignments, presentations and seminars. Level 5 assessment will also include an industry linked independent research project (A1-A14). Work practice placements will be assessed by production of a portfolio at level 4 and assignment at level 5. Employers will submit a placement report, but will not 'grade' students.

Cognitive skills at Levels 4 and 5 are assessed primarily through examinations and coursework, including laboratory investigations, assignments, presentations, seminars, creation of management plans and through the Applied Industrial Research project (B1-B8).

Practical skills at Levels 4 and 5 are assessed primarily through coursework, including assignments, field studies, presentations and seminars (C1-C4). Essays and reports will allow students to reflect on their learning (C8, 9). Work placements will also be formatively assessed through employer feedback on conduct and performance (C5-9), but employers will not grade placements.

Assessment of transferable skills is evidenced through coursework, presentations, and group laboratory and field investigations.

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 following the QAA Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmarks (May 2010). The units 'Conservation Work Practice' and 'Conservation Site Management' increase the practical skill level of the learners both being assessed within the college and through work experience; this follows the benchmark which requires the application in the workplace of the range of knowledge and skills learnt at college. Such elements can be achieved through APEL if the learner is already working in the industry. The inclusion of the 'Applied Industrial Research' unit allows learners to apply concepts and principles assimilated from their studies to a work context and to foster the ability to critically analyse information in a work context. It is proposed that the Foundation Degree will be assessed with a greater emphasis of work based application and skill reflection, with less emphasis on closed examinations, and therefore have a greater technical application.

### Level 4

All subjects taught at Level 4 will be assessed summatively, supported by formative assessment, through written assignments and project based work, linked with practical field work and laboratory sessions and closed examinations. For example, assessment by assignments will feature in all units, with a lab practical book in 'Fundamentals of Science', essays in 'Fundamentals of Science' and 'Introductory Ecology', and assessment by presentation in 'Global Ecosystems' and

'Conservation Work Practice'. There will be a closed book examination in 'Global Ecosystems' to both assess cognitive learning and to aid progression to the next level. In both stages of the course work practice/placements will be assessed by production of a portfolio. Employers will submit a placement report, but will not 'grade' students.

Formative assessment starts in the first two weeks of term during the induction programme when students are set initial essays to assess their level of written work. Each unit will have a structure for subject-specific formative assessment, for example a field based identification project in 'Habitat and Species Identification' and practice time-constrained assessments in 'Global Ecosystems' and 'Introductory Ecology'.

### Level 5

As with Level 4, the units taught will be assessed through written assignments and project based work, linked with practical field work and laboratory sessions and closed examinations. Assessment by assignments will feature in all units, for example by a case study in 'Countryside Law and Policies' and essays in 'Conservation Land Management' and 'Applied Ecology'. Assessment through application of practical and technique knowledge and skills will be assessed in the 'Conservation Site Management' and 'Applied Industrial Research' units. There will be a closed book examination in 'Applied Ecology' to both assess cognitive learning and to aid progression to the next level.

Each unit will have a structure for subject-specific formative assessment, for example a field based project in 'Field Ecology Techniques' and practice time-constrained assessments in 'Conservation Land Management' and 'Applied Ecology'.

## **18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements**

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

The Foundation Degree in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation is taught in parallel to the BSc degree course but with a greater emphasis of assessment through coursework rather than examination. There is a provision for successful learners to progress onto the Level 6 BSc (Hons) in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (Top-up) course to extend their award to full honours status. This is an ideal degree programme for those working in the industry who would like to improve their knowledge and skills base. There will be emphasis on industry involvement and delivery of the programme will include continuing relationships forged between Agriculture, Conservation, Game and Wildlife organisations and both local and national industries, for example Natural England and county Wildlife Trusts.

The units of this Degree programme are taught over two academic years, full time or three years part-time. Each year is made up of 120 credits (one credit = 10 hours learning) full time or 80 credits part time. Alternatively, credit can be gained via a process of APL or APEL of previous relevant employment and/or experience.

The units on the degree will follow the degree classification grading criteria to aid in formative assessment but units will be reported as PASS at exam board if students achieve 40% or more in an individual unit. (See Examination and Assessment regulations for University Centre Sparsholt at Sparsholt College re: Merit and Distinction classifications.) To achieve an overall pass, 240 credits must be passed with no greater than 120 of these at level 4.

There are two exit awards:

- Certificate of Higher Education requiring 120 credits
- FdSc requiring 240 credits

The units at Level 4 will develop an understanding of Fundamental Science, Global Ecosystems and Habitat and Species Identification. This is supported through development and integration of

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<sup>1</sup> [www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch](http://www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch)

the transferable and vocational skills. The Work Practice unit appraises the technical and commercial aspects of industry.

The second year builds on this with the introduction of specialist units relevant to the ecology and conservation industries. These units are Applied Ecology, Conservation Land Management and Field Ecology Techniques. Such units are fundamental for the basic skills required in conservation management. Again, these are supported by both transferable skill development and applied research skills. The work place learning through Conservation Site Management and the Applied Industry Research increases the industry application and credit. Work placements are offered countrywide by most of the main conservation employers, and by many smaller ones. Practical conservation tasks are undertaken at a variety of external sites, arranged in conjunction with and part supervised by staff of conservation organisations.

Initial assessment during induction includes an on-entry learning style assessment (for example, VARK). The results of these are 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 Centre for diagnostic testing and support. Each student and tutor set aims and objectives as part of an individual Professional Development Plan (PDP), which is developed and monitored through the individual tutorial system during the course. Study skills (e.g. report writing, presentations, information searching) are assessed formally in the Academic Skills unit and developed in all units by formative assessment. University Centre Sparsholt operates a 'flying start' programme for students to insure developmental formative assessment, with feedback, occurs within the first two weeks of the academic year. Other study skills, personal development topics and careers guidance are developed through the group and individual tutorial systems and with the development of Personal Development Plans.

The college recognises formative assessment as an integral and required element of the learning process. Penalties for non-completion of formative assessment may range from grade penalties on summative assessments to withdrawal of services. See Sparsholt Policy on Higher Education Student Performance.

Careers guidance is also supported by inviting guest speakers and representatives from both the forestry and related industries. The programme links with employers include lectures, visits, practical classes and placements.

## 19. Employability Statement

The College has provided higher education courses focused on the needs of the environmental, wildlife and conservation sector since 1995. The provision is well recognised by both industry and students who acknowledge the appropriateness of the content. There is, however, recognition that since the inception of the current course offer, there have been major changes and shifts in the social, political and economic external environment in which the current courses operate. This was highlighted in the College's Higher Education Strategic Plan (January 2010) where emerging skills needs were identified in countryside interpretation, sustainability–food security, leisure (lifestyle) management, and heritage (conservation) management.

The recent Defra White Paper *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature* highlighted the need for protecting and improving the natural environment, growing a green economy, reconnecting people and nature, and the wider International and EU agenda. Reference is made within the White Paper for a new understanding of ecosystems. This is articulated as 'ecosystem services' which are the natural systems from which people derive benefits; ecosystems are seen as providing: provisioning services, regulating services, cultural services and supporting services.

Defra's *Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystems services* identifies a need to adopt a more integrated large-scale approach to conservation, put people at the heart of biodiversity policy, reduce environmental pressures and improve knowledge. The need to reduce environmental pressures focuses on agriculture, forestry, water management and planning and development which reflects the need for a more holistic and coherent approach to Wildlife Ecology and Conservation.

Although, as mentioned, the current higher education courses have met industry needs the changing external operating environment is setting an agenda, which the College is addressing through this course development to meet future industry and employment needs.

Lantra (the land-based sector skills council) has identified that environmental conservation embraces the management of landscapes, habitats and species alongside countryside and coastal access, recreation and interpretation to promote awareness, understanding and enjoyment.

Lantra have also identified that in the next ten years (2010 to 2020) forecasts estimate that the environmental conservation industry will need a minimum of 36,000 more people. The largest need for people is expected to be for skilled trades occupations (7,000), managerial occupations (6,000), sales and customer service occupations (6,000) and elementary occupations (5,000). Over the period 2010–20, it is estimated that the following number of people will be needed:

2,000 at qualification Level 5 (postgraduate)

7,000 people at Level 4 (graduate) (FHEQ levels 5 and 6) 8,000 people at Level 3 (A Level)

9,000 people at Level 2 (GCSE A-C) 7,000 people at Level 1 (GCSE D-G)

(Forecasts also suggest that 4,000 people without qualifications will be needed)

Lantra have identified 15 critical skills that are in short supply. Many of these are high level skills: computer modelling (of coastal, climate and soil systems); multi-discipline expertise in data management; numeracy; translating research (into plain language for the wider community to understand); fieldwork; risk and uncertainty; taxonomy and systematics; soil science; environmental epidemiology; sustainability science and planning; microbiology; food supply; energy supply; and freshwater science.

These skills are vital to enable the UK to develop and apply new technologies, respond to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather and improve our knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. Skills-needs across environmental conservation continue to change, and industry organisations currently report an increasing demand for:

- technical and job-specific skills (e.g. species and soil ecology, environmental impact assessment, fund-raising, volunteer management)
- leadership/management skills (e.g. project management; legislative control and compliance)
- essential skills (e.g. literacy, numeracy and communication and customer relations) and information, communication
- technology (ICT) skills (which cannot be taken for granted) and are focused on higher level skills (e.g. data capture systems, GIS mapping, GPS)

The 'Big Society' and localism agenda has also highlighted the need for identifying and generating funding opportunities and volunteer management (although volunteers have been an important part of the conservation 'workforce', these new agendas will place new roles and demands on volunteers).

Analysis of the ecology and conservation employment opportunities also recognises the need for graduate skills in dealing with the public and interpretation skills.

The College maintains close links with lead industry bodies including Natural England, the Wildlife Trusts, Forestry Commission, RSPB, and many local and specialised conservation organisations. These links ensure our courses incorporate the skills and understanding required by the employers. A key strength of the provision at University Centre Sparsholt is the link to employers in developing a higher-level vocational curriculum.

In developing the higher education provision in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, the College has identified the need for both level 6 (BSc Honours) and level 5 (Foundation degree) pathways for both full-time and part-time learners; the latter route being focussed on those who wish to develop the knowledge and understanding with application to their working environment.

Employability skills linked to communication, numeracy and information technology are embedded across the curriculum as is career management skills, and addressed directly for each student in the personal development plan and supporting tutorials.

## Course Management

### 20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Tutor
- Collaborative programmes are managed on a day-to-day basis by the Partner Contact who may or may not be the Course Tutor
- 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

### 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 may be evidenced by:

	A Level	BTEC Extended Diploma	City & Guilds Ext. Diploma	BTEC Diploma	City & Guilds Diploma	Access to HE	International Baccalaureate
<b>All courses</b>	GCSE math & English at Grade C or above or L2 Functional skills in maths and English						
<b>FdSc</b>	2 A level passes, including 1 at Grade C or above - the A level Grade C should be in a Science	MMP	P + 6 units at Merit or above	MM	M	A satisfactory pass in a relevant Access course with 45 credits at level 3	Appropriate IB Certificates considered

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 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\(E\)L\) process](#)<sup>2</sup>.

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.

<sup>2</sup> [www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/accreditationofpriorlearning/filetodownload%2C11037%2Cen.pdf](http://www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/accreditationofpriorlearning/filetodownload%2C11037%2Cen.pdf)

## **B. Disability**

The College makes 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 University Centre Sparsholt 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 of Higher Education, University Centre Sparsholt
- 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 Governing Board
- Boards of Study
- HE Student Council/Cross-College Learner Voice
- Unit, Course and College level student feedback questionnaires
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g., National Student Survey (NSS), Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DHLE) 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 to 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 areas such as specific IT packages

### 23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations for Collaborative Partners will apply to this programme (see [Regulations and Handbooks](#)<sup>3</sup>).

### 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

Not applicable

#### B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

This course specification will be reviewed and re-issued annually. The outcomes from the periodic Review in January 2014 confirmed fitness of purpose of curriculum, it also found the annual monitoring and review processes effective.

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

#### 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

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<sup>3</sup>  
[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 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 College](#)<sup>4</sup>

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 2015](#)*<sup>5</sup>).

#### **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.

#### **26. Further Information**

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth](#)<sup>6</sup>, [School of Biological Sciences](#)<sup>7</sup> and [Sparsholt College](#)<sup>8</sup> websites

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<sup>4</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10006050&.:VR1SfKNwaUk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10006050&.:VR1SfKNwaUk)

<sup>5</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [www.port.ac.uk/](http://www.port.ac.uk/)

<sup>7</sup> [www.port.ac.uk/school-of-biological-sciences/](http://www.port.ac.uk/school-of-biological-sciences/)

<sup>8</sup> [www.sparsholt.ac.uk/](http://www.sparsholt.ac.uk/)