MSc Equine Behaviour, Performance and Training (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
MSc Equine Behaviour, Performance and Training

2. Course Code
R0363F, R0363P

3. Awarding Body
University of Portsmouth

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

5. Accrediting Body
None

6. QAA Benchmark Groups
There are no QAA benchmarks for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, food and consumer sciences specifically at postgraduate level but they do provide guidance

7. Document Control Information
July 2016

8. Effective Session
2017 - 2018

9. Author
Lorna Cameron

10. Faculty
Faculty of Science

11. Department
School of Biological Sciences

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

- To provide students with an interesting and challenging environment based on current research within equestrian performance and training focussing upon the principles of Equitation Science
- To further develop a full and in-depth understanding of equestrian behaviour, performance and training
- To develop the students' skills in independent scientific study
- To enhance employability through research training and application
• To provide a logical, systematic and structured education to Masters Degree level within the curriculum of equine behaviour, performance and training

• To develop the intellectual abilities, critical faculties, transferable skills and knowledge of postgraduate students and to contribute to their personal development and career enhancement

• To provide a learning environment and a foundation within which students can extend their intellectual and practical skills and move progressively towards wholly independent study and research in applied Equitation Science

13. Reference Points

• Scholarship and research expertise of academic staff
• University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
• QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education
• Sparsholt College Strategic Plan
• Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
• British Horse Society Register of Instructors (BHS)
• Sports Coach UK
• International Society for Equitation Science (ISES)
• International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE)

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 7

Master’s degrees/Postgraduate Certificates/Postgraduate Diplomas are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

• a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice

• a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship

• originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline

• conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  • to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  • to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

• deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences

• demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level

• continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

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 situations

• the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development
15. Learning Outcomes

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:
A.1 Equine ethology, behaviour and equitation science (ISES)
A.2 The horse-rider-coach triad (SCUK, ISES, BHS)
A.3 Equestrian learning theory (ISES, BHS)
A.4 Horse, rider and coach psychology (ISES)
A.5 Advanced equine and rider physiology (ISES)
A.6 Advanced performance monitoring of horse and rider (SCUK, ISES)
A.7 Current and emerging equestrian training techniques (BHS, ISES)
A.8 Experimental ethics and design (ISAE)

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:
B.1 Critically evaluate literature, experimental methods and data to prepare written reports on research programmes (ISES)
B.2 Design, plan, execute and report upon a novel piece of research
B.3 Design and implement independent analysis, critical evaluation, reasoning and creative responses
B.4 Utilise information and argument effectively in a self-reflective manner, and critically evaluate alternative theories from the literature
B.5 Critically evaluate peer-reviewed research, identify research needs and design suitable research methods to pursue them (ISES)

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:
C.1 Critically evaluate and implement a level 7 research proposal
C.2 Perform a variety of research methods and synthesize these to answer a research question
C.3 Carry out a literature review
C.4 Carry out detailed equine behavioural studies (ISES)
C.5 Critically analyse a range of equestrian training methods (BHS, ISES)
C.6 Undertake detailed performance analysis techniques (SCUK, ISES, BHS)

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:
D.1 Deploy effective time management
D.2 Critically reflect on academic and practical skills through self-reflection and formative feedback, making improvements where required
D.3 Solve complex academic, practical and research problems with minimum supervision
D.4 Effectively communicate complex scientific knowledge in both written and oral forms
D.5 Work effectively as a team member when required, yet be distinctively individual and self-motivated
D.6 Independently manage one’s own learning

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Knowledge and understanding of these subjects will be promoted via didactic lectures (learning outcomes A1 - A8), seminars/tutorials (learning outcomes A1 - A8), practical research work (learning outcomes A1 - A7) and fieldwork observations (learning outcomes A1, A2, A4 – A7). Sparsholt College Moodle VLE will support all areas listed through interactive, blended learning. The Dissertation and Research Methods units enable students to demonstrate knowledge of experimental ethics and design (learning outcome A8).

Opportunities to develop cognitive skills are identified by guidance and study material sent to new students prior to the start of the course (learning outcomes B1 - B5). These cognitive skills are further developed by directed study, VLE web discussions and by seminars between students and tutors when assessed work is in preparation (learning outcomes B1 - B5).

Lectures will be delivered on research methods, literature reviewing and critical analysis of literature (learning outcomes C1 - C6). Practical experimental classes will allow students to apply data
collection skills, perform a variety of methods and interpret complex data (learning outcomes C1 & C2). Successful completion of the dissertation unit will lead to achievement of learning outcomes C1 - C3. All practical, professional or subject skills will be further supported by the integrated use of Moodle Virtual Learning Environment to engage students with in the existing research and professional communities surrounding the subject areas.

Students will be required to reflect on their individual skills development needs and progress during personal tutorials, facilitated by a structured personal development plan utilising a Personal Development Planner delivered through Mahara (learning outcomes D1 - D6). This Personal Development Planner will allow the student to plan, execute and reflect upon their assessments, both formative and summative, throughout the programme of study. The management of the Personal Development Planner will be supported via postgraduate workshops.

17. Assessment Strategy

Assessments include a variety of formats to include extended essays (learning outcomes A1, A4, & A7), seminar presentations (learning outcomes A2, A4, & A7), posters (learning outcomes A1, A3), course work (learning outcomes A1 - A8), project work (learning outcomes A5 & A6) and examinations (learning outcomes A1, A2, A3, A4, & A7). Throughout the programme the emphasis is on individual work, although elements of group work are included if appropriate to the unit’s subject area (learning outcomes A1 - A8). The wide variety of assessments used has been specifically chosen to develop a broad range of defined skills expected within the equine industry (learning outcomes A1 - A8). The research proposal and dissertation thesis will be used to assess the student’s attainment of all learning outcomes (A1 - A8). Each unit has elements of formative assessment within the teaching and assessment to provide a variety of feedback opportunities for students throughout the programme.

Cognitive skills will be assessed through examination (learning outcomes B3 & B4), oral and poster presentations (learning outcomes B2, B3, B4, & B5) and completion of the literature review, research proposal and dissertation (learning outcomes B1 - B5). The dissertation will be formatively assessed in parts, designed to aid the student in the development of his/her project and receive feedback from formative assessment during the planning, design and execution of the project. The Research Methods unit will be assessed in part via a literature review which will have two draft submission dates to allow for formative feedback to support the development of the students’ critical analysis skills. The Equestrian Performance unit will be partially assessed by an oral examination, where each student will be afforded a formative examination prior to the summative assessment with opportunities for peer and tutor feedback. Online support via Moodle will assist in the achievement of these outcomes.

The students’ practical skills will be assessed by observation of their conduct in practical data collection and project work and by submission of practical reports and dissertation (learning outcomes C1 - C3). The students’ ability to apply critical analysis and interpretation will be assessed by the completion of the literature review and dissertation thesis (learning outcomes C1 to C3). Detailed equine behavioural studies as formative assessments will provide data for completion of the poster assignment (learning outcome C4), practical formative assessments of equestrian performance will form the basis of an oral presentation (learning outcome C5) and ongoing performance analysis tasks will support completion of an oral examination (learning outcome C6).

These skills will be assessed indirectly through a varied range of assessments which require these skills to produce a good quality assessment artefact (learning outcomes D1 - D6). The ability to reflect on personal skills will be assessed via the Personal Development Planner on Mahara with formative assessment of the Personal Development Planner throughout the programme (learning outcome D2 & D3) and some assessments will require group-work (learning outcome D5). Reports, oral presentations, poster presentations, oral examinations, dissertation and written examinations will allow the student to demonstrate effective communication of complex scientific knowledge in both written and oral forms (learning outcome D4).

The assessment approaches include a variety of coursework such as research proposals, reports, essays, and oral and poster presentations. These have been selected to enable students to practice a systematic, coherent and balanced education within the curriculum of equine behaviour,
performance and training, developing key intellectual abilities, critical analysis, transferable skills, in-depth knowledge and application that contribute to the student’s personal development and career advancement. Written assessments develop the student’s ability to express and communicate complex scientific concepts, developing competent and effective scientific communication.

Students will be required to utilise high-level skills in analysis, synthesis, judgement and critical evaluation along with a comprehensive knowledge of behaviour, performance and training of the horse and rider. The dissertation unit will assess the time management, critical thinking, evaluation, analysis, independence and communication of the student in all relevant areas. These skills equip the student as an effective and competent scientist and will enhance career prospects within the management of both horse and rider and scientific disciplines beyond the equine industry.

All assessment artefacts are subject to Sparsholt College Internal Verification Policy to ensure that all assessments appropriately test the required learning outcomes. The assessment schedule is formulated to allow extensive use of formative feedback by the students to improve future performance. Formative assessment is used in all units throughout the programme and linked to each student’s Personal Development Planner to support the development of higher order skills.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements
See Unit Web Search\(^1\) for full details on the course structure and units

The MSc Equine Behaviour, Performance and Training will run as a one year full-time or two year, part-time programme with four core units comprising 120 credits (30 credits per unit) and a 60 credit Dissertation unit. Full-time study will complete all core units and a dissertation within a year, part-time study will complete 90 credits in Year 1 and 90 credits in Year 2 (to include the 60 credit dissertation unit). Successful completion of all units will lead to the achievement of 180 Level 7 credits and the award of an MSc Equine Behaviour, Performance and Training, achievement of 60 credits awarded Postgraduate Certificate in Equine Studies and achievement of 120 credits awarded Postgraduate Diploma in Equine Studies. Standard University regulations apply.

19. Employability Statement
The MSc Equine Behaviour, Performance and Training course is designed to enhance employability by developing the ability to become an independent equestrian scientist and practitioner. Emphasis will be placed on a variety of key skills including time management, communication skills, independent critical thinking and creative problem solving. All units have been developed with the aim of delivering in-depth knowledge and up-to-date understanding of the training and performance of both horse and rider within a variety of equestrian environments, responding to a flexible and dynamic industry. After successful completion of this MSc, the subsequent career progression could be PhD study entry or employment in the equestrian performance sector (consultancy, industry, self-employed training, Non-Government Organisation or university based sectors). The research projects may also develop relationships with key organisations which will provide invaluable experience of the equestrian industry. Students may also access Purple Door Careers and Recruitment advice through www.port.ac.uk/careersandrecruitment and independent careers advice at Sparsholt College. Industry experts will provide guest lectures throughout the programme and study visits will be undertaken developing the students’ network of industry contacts. Students will also be encouraged to further their British Horse Society (BHS) qualifications, achieve United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) accreditation (if appropriate) and to investigate any further industry specific qualifications deemed appropriate to them through their Personal Development Planner.

\(^1\) www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch
Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Tutor
- Induction programme introduces the student to the University of Portsmouth, Sparsholt College and their course
- Each student is allocated a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance
- A dedicated Student Services Team
- Excellent library facilities both at University Centre Sparsholt at Sparsholt College and through University of Portsmouth
- Excellent laboratory facilities supported by technical staff
- Dedicated Equine Centre with a range of equestrian facilities and competitions
- A range of research technologies for laboratory and field investigations
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and College/University regulations and are available electronically to all students
- Dedicated Higher Education/Postgraduate Moodle platform
- Written feedback is provided for all assessments both formative and summative
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards
- E-learning support will be provided and course specific web-based Moodle sites, allowing students access to key resources both on and off site
- Excellent Learning Support facilities on site
- Dedicated Moodle classrooms for each unit to facilitate self-directed study and support development of academic skills

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

Candidates from a range of academic disciplines, including, but not limited to, equine science, management or studies, animal science or management and animal behaviour are encouraged to apply. Standard College rules apply and this will normally mean that candidates are in possession of an honours degree with at least a classification of 2.2 in a relevant discipline. However, professional experience and qualifications may be taken into consideration for students not meeting this requirement through the University of Portsmouth Recognition of Prior Experience and Learning (RP(E)L) process. Applicants will be required to complete a successful interview and if appropriate complete an equestrian skills assessment.

Students must also possess English as a first language or have a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 with no sub-component less than 6.0.

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 Sparsholt 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)

2 www.port.ac.uk/accessstoinformation/policies/accreditationofpriorlearning/filetodownload,11037,en.pdf
• 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
• 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 Student/Staff Consultative Committee and Board of Studies
• HE Student Council (for Academic quality matters)
• Learner Voice meetings (for non-academic matters)
• Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires
• Sparsholt College HE Student Survey (online)
• University participates in external student surveys, e.g. Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

D. Staff Development Priorities
• Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance
• Annual staff appraisals and identify development needs
• Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes
• All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy Fellowship
• Existing course management staff encouraged to achieve Higher Education Academy Senior Fellowship
• Academic staff new to teaching required to undertake APEX programme.
• Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and 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](http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/CollaborativePartnerships/document/RegulationsandHandbooks/filetodownload,188676,en.pdf)).

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 available at present

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

The most recent Periodic Collaborative Partnership & Programme Review took place in January 2014 receiving confirmation of the continued validity and relevance of the curriculum for all programmes.

**C. Quality Assurance Agency**

Sparsholt College: 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

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

**D. Others**

None.
26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- University of Portsmouth\(^5\) and Sparsholt College\(^6\) websites

\(^5\) www.port.ac.uk/
\(^6\) http://www.sparsholt.ac.uk/