

BSc (Hons) Marine Environmental Science

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose:

Course management, monitoring 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 and believes it to be correct. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification but reserve the right to change the content, timetabling and administration of the course whilst maintaining equivalent academic standards and quality.

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Programme Specification

1. Named Awards

BSc (Hons) Marine Environmental Science

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

Course Code: C0594S

UCAS Code: F912

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

Institution of Environmental Sciences

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies

7. Document Control Information

July 2016

8. Effective Session

2016-17

9. Author

Dr Mike Fowler

10. Faculty

Science

11. Department

School of Earth and Environmental Sciences

12. Educational Aims

The BSc (Hons) Marine Environmental Science course is designed to offer an integrated approach to the scientific study and analysis of the marine environment, backed-up with a good awareness of current marine environmental issues and concerns. The course aims to provide a stimulating learning environment to enable students develop a range of academic and generic skills to help them find good quality employment on graduation, and provide the basis for a lifetime of learning. The course embraces the integrated nature of marine environmental science, drawing on marine biology, oceanography, chemistry, physics and geology to allow students to interpret the pressures on our marine environment and point to ways in which we can act to manage these more successfully. Elements of the course can be chosen so as to follow either a broad or focused range

of topics, including environmental forensics, hydrology and freshwater systems and climate change. There is the opportunity to specialise and numerous opportunities for fieldwork. In the final-year Project/Dissertation, students are able to choose their own area in which to conduct a substantial environmental investigation to produce a report to a professional standard.

The course aims to equip students to work as marine environmental scientists or within alternative employment. In general, the course aims to:

- Develop knowledge of the variety of strategies needed to work in the field of marine environmental science.
- Train marine environmental scientists with a specialist knowledge of a specific aspect of environmental science, such as marine ecology, marine environmental chemistry or marine environmental physics.

In addition, and more specifically, the course aims to:

- Provide a stimulating, wide ranging, yet integrated programme in the marine environmental sciences.
- Develop a range of key skills through opportunities provided in the study units, including critical, analytical, practical, professional, research and communication skills, to prepare students for postgraduate study and/or professional qualifications.
- Provide a challenging, stimulating and self-rewarding study environment.
- Provide a framework whereby individual study paths may be forged based on choice from a range of options.
- Accommodate student needs in relation to maximising their career potential by enabling them to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in their chosen subject area.
- Train students in a professional manner such that it will enhance their employability prospects and help them towards a satisfying career in environmental science.
- Develop the skills necessary for life-long independent learning and acquisition of knowledge.

13. Reference Points

The BSc (Hons) Marine Environmental Science course has been developed taking into account a number of reference points. The degree has professional accreditation from the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES), and conforms to their requirements. The course design therefore takes careful note of the relevant subject benchmark statements (SBS) and in many cases the programme learning outcomes are derived directly from the SBS and are denoted by the abbreviation [B] after the learning outcome in the section below. Many other programme outcomes are modified versions of those in the SBS, adapted to suit the specific requirements and focus of this course.

The course makes excellent use of the specialist professional, analytical, and fieldwork skills of staff who are actively involved in research and knowledge transfer activities, and provides students with access to a wide range of analytical facilities. The course is sponsored by Planet Ocean, major suppliers of oceanographic equipment..

The course conforms to the University of Portsmouth undergraduate curriculum, as outlined in the University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document, as well as the QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education, and is designed for students to develop a wide range of key transferable skills, including personal development planning and employability skills, ensuring students are prepared for a wide range of potential careers.

14. Learning Outcomes

Programme learning outcomes derived directly from the SBS and are denoted by the abbreviation [B] after the learning outcome.

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

A1. The need for a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to acquire and advance knowledge and understanding of the Earth's environmental systems, particularly the marine environment [B 2.3.1].

A2. The processes that shape the marine environment at different temporal and spatial scales and their influence on and by human activities. [B 3.2.1].

A3. The human causes and consequences of environmental impacts, and solutions and controls of impacts [B Appendix 2b].

A4. The methods of observing, acquiring, interpreting and analysing marine environmental information, with a critical understanding of the appropriate contexts for their values and use [B 3.2.1].

A5. The issues concerning the finite re-use, availability and sustainability of resources [B 3.2.1].

A6. The terminology, nomenclature and classification approaches drawn from the natural and social sciences, and developed within each individual discipline [B 3.2.1].

A7. The major Earth systems involved in the cycling of energy, water and matter, and the complexity and inter-relatedness of them [B appendix 2b]

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Subject knowledge and understanding is acquired through a range of lectures, seminars, practical, field, laboratory and coursework exercises, together with group-work sessions as appropriate to the units. In addition to specialist units focusing on the marine environment, such as Oceanography, Marine Organisms and Ecosystems, and Coastal Ecosystems, more generalist units also provide opportunities for students undertaking the Course to focus on the marine environment, such as Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills, Environmental Auditing and Assessment, and the final year Project/Dissertation unit. Specifically, acquisition of **A1** is through the Environmental Systems and Introduction to Oceanography units at level 4 and many other units at levels 5 and 6, including Oceanography and Hydrology and Freshwater Ecosystems. **A2** is developed through the Planet Earth, Introduction to Oceanography, Marine & Terrestrial Ecology, Marine Organisms and Ecosystems, and Coastal Ecosystems units. **A3** is developed through a range of units, starting with Environmental Systems at level 4 and then through a range of pollution and other units relating to human activity and its impact on the environment, including Oceanography, Energy Resources, and Coastal Ecosystems. **A4** is delivered by a range of units covering mathematics and computing, including Quantitative Methods, Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills, Environmental GIS and Data Analysis, Environmental Geochemistry and Analytical Techniques, Scientific and Technical Diving Techniques, Climate Change, and Environmental Auditing and Assessment, as well as through a variety of fieldtrips and the final year Project/Dissertation unit. **A5** is developed through the Environmental Systems unit leading to other units such as Energy Resources and Hydrology and Freshwater Ecosystems. **A6** is embedded in all units, particularly through level 4 units such as

Marine & Terrestrial Ecology, Introduction to Oceanography and Planet Earth, and is further developed through a range of units depending on the student's chosen specialization. **A7** is developed in the Planet Earth, Environmental Systems and Introduction to Oceanography units and further explored in a number of other units at later stages, including Environmental Geochemistry and Analytical Techniques, Oceanography, and Environmental Sciences Study Tour.

Assessment

Assessment of the learning outcomes **A1-A7** is through a combination of unseen examinations, in-class tests and assessed coursework that takes the form of essays, coursework reports and portfolios, laboratory reports, and oral and poster presentations, as appropriate to the units studied. Assessment is also through the final year Project or Dissertation report.

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

B1. Plan, conduct and report on a programme of original research at undergraduate level including the formulation and testing of hypotheses [B 3.3.5].

B2. Critically consider, select and apply appropriate mathematical, scientific, laboratory and computer-based methods and principles in the analysis and solution of marine environmental problems.

B3. Be creative and innovative in the analysis and solution of marine environmental science problems.

B4. Work with confidence from basic principles to apply essential marine environmental science techniques to unfamiliar situations.

B5. Estimate and scope the scale of marine environmental problems and their potential consequences.

B6. Integrate and evaluate relevant information from a variety of sources and recognise legal, moral, ethical and other social issues [B 3.3.4].

B7. Contribute to topical debate on marine environmental issues and use specialist knowledge to propagate informed views [B 3.3.6].

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Intellectual skills are embedded throughout the programme and are developed through the teaching and learning programme described in section 14A above. In particular, **B1** is specifically developed during the final year Project or Dissertation. **B2** is developed through a range of units including Quantitative Methods, Oceanography, Environmental Sciences Study Tour, Environmental Geochemistry and Analytical Techniques and Environmental GIS and Data Analysis. **B3** is developed through many units, including Climate Change, Waste Management and Environmental Pollution, as well as the final year Project or Dissertation. **B4** is primarily developed through the Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills, Environmental Geochemistry and Analysis, Environmental Auditing and Assessment, and Climate Change. Other units, including the final year Project/Dissertation units also contribute to achieving this learning outcome. **B5** is demonstrated within Environmental Systems, Environmental Auditing and Assessment, and Coastal Ecosystems. **B6** is developed through most units, including Environmental Systems, Energy Resources and Environmental Auditing and Assessment units, as well as the Project or Dissertation units. **B7** is treated explicitly in the Environmental Systems unit and further developed other units, including Marine Organisms and Ecosystems, Oceanography, Energy Resources, and Climate Change.

Assessment

Learning outcomes **B1-B4** are assessed through the formal assessment by examinations and coursework tasks of taught units. **B5** is predominantly assessed by the Environmental Auditing and Assessment unit. Assessment of learning outcomes **B1-B7** culminates in the assessment of the Project or Dissertation research proposal, the poster presentation and finally the Project/Dissertation report.

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

C1. Plan, conduct and report on scientific investigations, including the use of secondary data [B 3.3.5].

C2. Collect, record and analyse data using appropriate techniques in the field and laboratory [B 3.3.5].

C3. Undertake field and laboratory investigations in a responsible and safe manner, paying due attention to risk assessment, rights of access, relevant health and safety regulations, and sensitivity to the impact of investigations on the environment and stakeholders [B 3.3.5].

C4. Reference work in an appropriate manner [B 3.3.5].

C5. Identify and work towards targets for personal, academic and career development [B 3.3.9].

C6. Develop an adaptable and flexible approach to study and work [B 3.3.9].

C7. Develop the skills necessary for self-managed and lifelong learning [B 3.3.9].

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Laboratory classes involving all aspects of **C1-C3** are a feature of many units within the Environmental Science Programme. **C1-C3** are particularly stressed in Environmental Systems, Environmental Geochemistry and Analytical Techniques, Oceanography, Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills, Environmental Auditing and Assessment, and the final year Project or Dissertation. **C4** is developed in all units, particularly where units are assessed by fully referenced reports or presentations. Students are encouraged to critically read and cite primary literature and are taught and required to use the prescribed APA format. Specific examples of such units are Environmental Systems, Introduction to Oceanography, Oceanography, Energy Resources, as well as the final year Project /Dissertation units. **C5-C7** are stressed explicitly within the tutorial system (particularly at levels 5 and 6), and in the Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills unit, as well as throughout a number of other units where site visits and guest speakers and provide students with experience and understanding of the work place, such as Oceanography, Environmental Forensics, and Waste Management and Environmental Pollution. Fieldwork in a number of units, particularly Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills, Environmental Sciences Study Tour, and the final year Project or Dissertation, further develop **C6**.

Assessment

Practical and professional skills covered in learning outcomes **C1-C7** are assessed through the many laboratory and fieldwork-based tasks and professional style reports, appropriate to the chosen units and pathway, including the final year Project/Dissertation reports and poster presentation.

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

- D1.** Communicate appropriately to a variety of audiences in written, verbal and graphical forms, using information from a variety of sources [B 3.3.6].
- D2.** Appreciate issues of sample selection, accuracy, precision and uncertainty during collection, recording and analysis of data in the field and laboratory [B 3.3.7].
- D3.** Use the Internet critically and professionally as a means of communication and a source of information [B 3.3.7].
- D4.** Identify individual and collective goals and responsibilities and perform in a manner appropriate to these roles [B 3.3.8].
- D5.** Recognise and respect the views of others and evaluate performances as an individual and a team member [B 3.3.8].
- D6.** Solve numerical problems using both computer and non-computer based techniques [B 3.3.7].

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

D1 is developed in the tutorial programme and a number of units where students are required to undertake group discussions, and give oral and poster presentations to staff and their peer group, including Environmental Systems, Environmental Geochemistry and Analytical Techniques, Hydrology and Freshwater Ecosystems, Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills, and the final year Project/Dissertation unit. In some units, external visitors may also be present at the presentations. Written communication skills are developed in all units. **D2** is addressed in a number of units where laboratory or fieldwork is undertaken. The concept of sample, accuracy, precision and uncertainty during collection, recording and analysis of data is introduced in Environmental Systems, Introduction to Oceanography, Quantitative Methods, and Marine & Terrestrial Ecology and further developed at later stages in units such as Environmental Geochemistry and Analytical Techniques, Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills, Environmental GIS and Data Analysis, Oceanography, Hydrology and Freshwater Ecosystems, Environmental Forensics and the final year Project or Dissertation. **D3** is first addressed in units such as Quantitative Methods, Introduction to Oceanography and Environmental Systems, and reinforced throughout the tutorial programme.

Students are encouraged to critically assess the use of the internet as a source of information throughout the entire course, particularly when researching and preparing coursework. Group work

plays an important role in many units, and thus, **D4** and **D5** are addressed in a number of units, including Environmental Systems, Environmental Geochemistry and Analysis, Environmental Fieldwork and Professional Skills, Climate Change, and Environmental Science Study Tour. In addition, the tutorial programme is used to examine Belbin's theory on group formation and dynamics and students take part in group analysis and role play exercises. Students also engage in analysis and evaluation of their team and individual roles throughout the course, through peer- and self-assessment exercises in a number of units. **D6** is specifically addressed in units such as Quantitative Methods, Science for Earth Systems, Environmental GIS and Data Analysis, Oceanography, Environmental Auditing and Assessment, and Climate Change, amongst others

Assessment

Transferable skill assessment (**D1-D6**) is embedded in the formal assessment of fieldwork notebooks, and in all units through coursework, examination, report writing and both oral and poster presentations, as appropriate.

15. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

The course is the second course developed and offered within the successful Environmental Sciences Programme within the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Portsmouth. It is necessary to achieve 360 credits to be awarded the BSc (Hons) Marine Environmental Science degree. Exit awards of an Ordinary degree (300 credits), a Dip HE (240 credits), a Cert HE (120 credits) are also available. Standard University rules apply and the regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.

Units are offered as 20 credits, with the final year Project or Dissertation being 40 credits. Each credit is equivalent to 10 hours of student learning. Level 4 of the course consists of six core units – this is felt to be necessary as students enter the course from a wide variety of backgrounds and there is a need to bring them all to a common standard. In levels 5 and 6, students have a range of optional units to choose from to enable them to tailor the course towards their individual interests, including the option of taking a language from the University Wide Language Programme.

The degree is offered in full time (3-year) mode or in Sandwich mode (4-year) to allow students to undertake an industry placement or study overseas for a year.

16. Employability Statement

Employability is stressed very strongly throughout both degree pathways in the Environmental Science Programme from Induction Week onwards. During Induction week, new students take part in an Employability Conference, where recent graduates speak about their recent employment experiences in the Environmental Sector. In addition, the Marine Environmental Science pathway is sponsored by the major supplier of oceanographic equipment to the marine science community, Planet Ocean, and the course benefits from site visits and guest speaker from outside organisations, including the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Personal Development Planning (PDP) and career skills are a major component of the tutorial programme. Personal Development Planning is instituted from level 4 with the Individual Learning Profile documents which all students complete, discuss with their tutors and then review together at year's end. At level 5, the tutorial programme includes sessions on CV writing, job applications and interview skills. Students will research jobs (and examine selection criteria) in their chosen field of work to assist in their PDP. Formative feedback will be provided on CVs and mock applications and interviews. Individual tutorials at all levels monitor PDP, academic progress and referral to relevant support service, as appropriate. In addition, career skills are covered explicitly in the Environmental

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

Fieldwork and Professional Skills unit.

Professional body awareness through student-membership of the accrediting body, the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) is strongly encouraged and leads naturally on to Continuing Professional Development (CDP) and PDP for lifelong learning. Graduates are encouraged to progress through membership towards the professional goal of Chartered Environmental Scientist status. Student membership of The Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) is also strongly encouraged.

Through the Sandwich degree, students have the option to take a year out to work in industry or study overseas for a year, after completion of level 5. Many academic members have research and consultancy links with local industry, government and consultancies (including overseas) and a number of graduates from the environmental programme find both project support and/or employment via these contacts each year. The University's careers and recruitment service, Purple Door, can also assist in finding placements and employment for students.

Fieldwork, especially within the Project unit, provides opportunities for students to engage formally with the local community, consultancies, local government and non-governmental organisations to study, monitor, understand and ultimately improve the environment. Recent links with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust have resulted in many students undertaking volunteer work with the Trust and several final year students undertaking their Projects and Dissertations on topics of direct interest and applicability to the Trust's marine conservation work.

Optional units, such as Language Units offered through the IWLP and the Scientific and Technical Diving Skills units are offered at level 5 and provide students with opportunities to broaden their skills base and improve their employability.

17. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader.
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course.
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK).
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC).
- Excellent library facilities.
- World-class, ISO 9001:2008 accredited laboratory facilities.
- The University of Portsmouth has consistently been awarded an excellent rating for student support and guidance in a number of Quality Assurance Agency inspections.
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations etc.
- Feedback is provided for all assessments.
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards.

18. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

The UCAS tariff is 260-320 points, to include two A levels or equivalent, with 80 points from a Science subject (Environmental Science/Studies, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Mathematics or Physics) and GCSE Mathematics, English and Science at grade C or above.

Applications from mature students, international students and students who have undertaken an Access to Higher Education course are encouraged. If appropriate, prior learning may be assessed and accredited.

B. Disability

The University 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 Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

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

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review.
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review.
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies.
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme.
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports.
- Course Accreditation by the Institution of Environmental Sciences.
- Periodic Programme Review.
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees.
- National Student Survey.
- Staff Performance and Development Review.
- Peer Review and Development Framework.
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery.
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course.
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course.
- Head of Department.
- Associate Dean (Academic).
- Associate Dean (Students).
- Quality Assurance Committee.
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners.

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies.
- Student Staff Consultative Committees.
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires, including formative feedback throughout the academic year.
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), and International Student Barometer (ISB).

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance.
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs.
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes.
- New academic staff required to undertake appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching programmes.
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership.

- Academic staff new to teaching required to undertake Initial Professional Development Programme (iPROF).
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages.

20. Assessment Strategy

The assessment approaches for the core units at level 4 include a balanced mix of “examination-type” assessments, such as in-class, online tests and exams; and “coursework-type” assessments, including field notebooks, oral presentations, portfolios, essays, and laboratory-based exercises and reports. These assessments have been selected to assess the learning outcomes at Level 4 and to provide students with an opportunity to gain experience and build confidence in a wide range of assessment types that will be used to test higher-level cognitive skills at Levels 5 and 6. Formative assessment is provided in all units and includes practice online tests throughout relevant units (e.g. Introduction to Oceanography, Science for Earth Systems, & Planet Earth), formative feedback in workshop and laboratory sessions (e.g. Quantitative Methods & Terrestrial & Marine Ecosystems) and formative feedback on individual pieces of coursework, prior to final submission (e.g. Environmental Systems & Introduction to Oceanography). At levels 5 and 6, the majority of the assessment is through “coursework-type” assessments such as oral and poster presentations, professional-style laboratory and field reports, field notebooks, portfolios and essays, as we believe that these assessments test higher-level cognitive skills and are best suited to Levels 5 and particularly 6. Examinations at Levels 5 and 6 typically contain a mix of short answer and calculation-style questions, and essay questions asking students to draw on examples from the primary literature to support their arguments. Optional units provide a range of assessment opportunities and allow students to develop and demonstrate skills in other areas, such as the practical component of the Scientific and Technical Diving Skills units.

21. Assessment Regulations

Standard university rules apply (see [Assessment and Regulations](#)).

22. 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.

23. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

The BSc (Hons) Environmental Science course was re-accredited by the Institution of Environmental Sciences in 2016. The next re-accreditation event is due to take place in 2020.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The BSc (Hons) Environmental Science underwent Periodic Programme Review in 2016 which confirmed the course was fit for purpose.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

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\[1\]](#)).

[1]www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf

D. Others

None.

24. Other Sources of Information

Other sources of information may be found in

- Course Approval Document.
- Student Handbook.
- Course Handbook.
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework.
- University of Portsmouth Undergraduate Prospectus.
- Assessment Regulations.
- University of Portsmouth (<http://www.port.ac.uk/>) and the School of Earth and Environmental Sciences (<http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/academic/sees/>) websites.