



MSc Project Management

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 Project Management

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C0911F, C0911P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

Association for Project Management (APM)

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

QAA benchmarks for masters awards in business and management – specialist masters degrees

7. Document Control Information

October 2018

8. Effective Session

2018/19

9. Author

John Terry

10. Faculty

Business and Law

11. Subject Group

Operations and Systems Management

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

- Provide a challenging and stimulating framework of study for full time students that facilitates personal, academic and professional development as accredited by the Association for Project Management
- Develop a systematic understanding of relevant knowledge and a critical awareness of current issues at the forefront of project management and their application to all aspects of organisations commissioning, managing or delivering projects

- Enable students to apply project management principles in a strategic and business management context
- Enable students to develop high-level knowledge in a range of project related disciplines that will enable the development of a project management culture
- Provide successful candidates with the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with complex project management issues as practitioners
- Provide students with the means and skills to transfer the concepts and experience gained from the course into work place situations
- Facilitate the formulation, planning and execution of a research project in the field of project management
- Develop critical evaluation and assessment skills of the literature, research and knowledge gained in the course
- Enable students to demonstrate the ability to analyse data, make decisions and plan both critically and objectively, and to present results and conclusions in the form of coherent arguments with an assessment of future needs and consequences

This is an interdisciplinary degree providing students with the knowledge to act as effective project management professionals in any size or type of organisation. It is also instructive to managers of other disciplines who need to understand how to manage projects that their organisation may undertake. This programme seeks to provide students with appropriate knowledge and understanding to enable them to make an effective contribution to the implementation of the practices of project management. Knowledge and understanding is developed in relation to the strategic, tactical and operational project management with appropriate academic rigour in university taught units.

13. Reference Points

The following reference points have been consulted in the development of this course to demonstrate that the programme has currency and relevancy within the academic, professional and employer communities:

- The research and scholarship interests of staff expected to develop and deliver the course units
- External stakeholders as represented by the employers consulted in the development of the programme
- QAA Benchmark Statements for specialist masters awards in business and management
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- The UoP Curriculum Framework Document (September 2016)
- Association for Project Management, Body of Knowledge (APM BoK)

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 The key strategic factors and processes in a project management environment
- A.2 The methodology of project time and quality planning and their evaluation
- A.3 The nature of project finance and financial budgeting for projects
- A.4 The management of complex commercial aspects of project contracts and procurement
- A.5 The identification, assessment and management of project risk and corporate risk
- A.6 The application of key project leadership and problem solving skills in work related projects
- A.7 Working with and developing project teams in organisations and developing project leadership
- A.8 The nature and application of project systems and methodologies such as SSM and PRINCE2
- A.9 The application of research methods and specialist knowledge for undertaking a dissertation

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

- B.1 Analyse and interpret data and information from a variety of sources to identify project problems
- B.2 Analyse complex issues and make sound judgements based on available data
- B.3 Critically evaluate the relevance of theories of project finance, planning, monitoring and control
- B.4 Apply and adapt theories of project management for use within multidisciplinary projects
- B.5 Demonstrate creativity and decision analysis in applications for project management solutions
- B.6 Evaluate the implications of decisions and interventions when managing projects

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

- C.1 Undertake independent study through research, both primary and secondary
- C.2 Select and apply relevant models to support high quality analyses and decisions
- C.3 Construct reports and assignments coherently, evaluating alternatives and recommendations
- C.4 Access, critically evaluate, synthesise and present information from a variety of sources
- C.5 Influence the implementation of successful project management in organisations

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

- D.1 Work effectively individually and in group settings to achieve set goals
- D.2 Communicate effectively in writing and through graphical representations in professional and academic settings
- D.3 Apply appropriate mathematical techniques in analysis and problem solving
- D.4 Assess problem domains and formulate appropriate problem solving strategies

D.5 Build on previous experience in order to generalise

D.6 Use appropriate information technology to handle text, data, simulation, design and testing

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

This programme intends to widen access to qualifications by offering a variety of learning opportunities to suit the learning style of many students by providing a programme that can link with work-based practice that makes both a contribution to learning and benefits employers. Taught units comprising interactive seminar sessions and workshops identified through A1-A9 will allow the exploration of good global practice and research. Taught input will be delivered by staff competent in the project management disciplines. Teaching and learning will be embedded in project management experience and will include seminars, presentations, lectures and visiting speakers from commerce and industry. Students will be encouraged to engage in individual projects in order to pursue their own interests within the broader framework of the programme (A9).

Teaching and learning is through a combination of lectures, seminars and workshops (B1-B5). Academically sourced materials as well as source material from external commercial, business and project management contributors will be used. Cognitive skills will be developed by encouraging students to reflect on the experience of their projects in order to embed the successful principles involved. Tutorials, lectures, workshops and reports will encourage critical evaluation and comparison of established principles and theory in the literature and global best practice.

As part of the development of practical skills, all students will be provided with an instruction to key sources of information (including electronic) during the course induction (C2, C1). Coursework and presentations will require students to adapt and apply relevant models, organise and control resources, critically evaluate their effectiveness and produce reports and recommendations (C3, C4).

The acquisition of skills is integral to all activities within the course programme. Students will develop skills in the use of Information Technology or collecting, analysing and presenting information and data in a number of units, in particular, Research Methods. Planned and reflective learning identified in specific units provides a means of developing all key skills with a particular emphasis on communication skills and working with others. The skills of application of number and problem solving will be emphasised within the research methods unit and students will be encouraged to monitor and improve their own learning and performance throughout the course through the self-reflective process. These, together with learning to work both individually and in groups are essential elements of effective project management.

17. Assessment Strategy

Assessment is through the demonstration of successful application of theory to practice through assignments which will be linked to organisations (A1-A8). Assessment of the dissertation will indicate achievement at masters level in the research study (A9). Coursework includes case studies, essays and reports. The assessment strategy will encourage a demonstration of project management through reports, written assignments and a final dissertation. This range of techniques will facilitate the assessment of the specified learning outcomes in the curriculum. In addition, coursework assignments will require that knowledge be applied in a real world context.

All cognitive skills (B1-B5), in particular higher-level cognitive skills are assessed by means of related coursework assignments, all of which necessitate the use of creative thinking, application and critical evaluation.

Project management based assignments will be used to assess practical skills (C1, C2, C3, C4). These and all other practical skills will be assessed within coursework assignments. As part of the coursework, students will be required to present and justify complex arguments (C3, C4) and to influence the management of projects in organisational contexts (C5).

All assessments will contribute towards the assessment of skills and competence in accordance with the APM BoK.

Formative and summative assessment modes are used on the programme. These approaches have been selected to enable students to develop a systematic understanding and mastery of the academic theories, and its application to the project management discipline. Case studies, subject specific competence and project management applications are assessed through coursework assignments.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

The MSc Project Management programme offers a full-time and a part-time route for students of varying backgrounds.

The programme comprises four taught units and all are 30 credit units at FHEQ level 7, and all assessed by coursework. These units are not dependent upon each other but follow a predefined sequence of study. Successful achievement of the assessed coursework in two units (60 credits at FHEQ level 7) entitles the student to an award of PgCert. Successful achievement of the assessed coursework in four units (120 credits at FHEQ level 7) entitles the students to an award of PgDip. The MSc Project Management requires the achievement of 180 credits at FHEQ level 7. It should be noted that the PgCert and PgDip awards are 'exit awards' where students leave the programme and do not complete the MSc dissertation phase.

19. Employability Statement

Students will be employed in business and/or related project teams; however, graduates from this programme should prove very attractive to employers and are likely to be in demand by organisations within any sector. Typical employment destinations could include defence and aerospace, technology focussed organisations, engineering and the built environment in both the private and public sectors.

The emphasis is on the holistic approach in the study of project management and its support from and interfaces with other disciplines. Hence, the programme provides the students with the skills and knowledge to meet personal and organisational objectives.

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader
- An 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
- 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

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

This programme has been designed to meet the requirements of graduates in any discipline who want to develop their project management knowledge and skills as project managers or as project management specialists in preparation for employment in organisations that operate or aim to operate in both public and private sectors. The programme accepts students from a broad range of backgrounds. It is not necessary to have studied project management or related subjects at first-degree level however students are expected to have numerical ability and both written and spoken communication. Ideally, students will have a first degree but mature applicants with relevant management experience may be considered. The overriding focus is the ability to succeed on the programme and the potential to achieve the academic award.

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.

22. 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 Subject Group'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
- 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
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 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 the APEX programme to develop excellence in academic professionalism
- 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

23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations will apply to this programme (see [Assessment and Regulations²](#)).

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

The Association for Project Management (APM) has accredited the programme as complying with the APM Body Knowledge (APM BoK).

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The PBS Specialist Masters Periodic Review, May 2014, assessed the MSc Project Management programme as '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 2015³](#)*).

² www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/assessmentandregulations/

³ www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf

D. Others

The Department achieved the award of 'Centre of Excellence' from the CQI.

The university received a Gold rating in the 2017 TEF.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth](#)⁴ and [Operations and Systems Management](#)⁵ websites

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ www.port.ac.uk/operations-and-systems-management/