

# BA (HONS) AMERICAN STUDIES

## Programme Specification 2016-2017

### **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**

BA (HONS) AMERICAN STUDIES

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

C1585F, T700

To view units and course structures please visit [www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch](http://www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch) and enter the 'C' code above to find the correct course.

## **3. Awarding Body**

University of Portsmouth

## **4. Teaching Institution**

University of Portsmouth

## **5. Accrediting Body**

Not Applicable

## **6. QAA Benchmark Groups**

Area Studies

## **7. Document Control Information**

August 2016

## **8. Effective Session**

2016-2017

## **9. Author**

Janet Bryant, Principal Lecturer, Curriculum Development and Quality Assurance

## **10. Faculty**

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

## **11. Department**

School of Languages and Area Studies (SLAS)

## **12. Educational Aims**

- To enable students to acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of North America and Latin America past and present.
- To provide students with knowledge and understanding of North America and Latin America using a range of appropriate disciplinary or multidisciplinary approaches.
- To enable students to acquire an informed sense of the similarities and differences between areas, thus fostering cross-cultural and international perspectives.
- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment.

- To provide a framework allowing students to follow a flexible coherent programme of study.
- To provide students with the opportunity to develop academic knowledge and skills.
- To enable students to develop specialist interests and knowledge.
- To equip graduates 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 and postgraduate study opportunities.
- The programme provides an opportunity for students to gain experience and skills relevant to employment (or further study) by choosing relevant work placement/work based learning/study options. These include optional study at partner universities in USA or Mexico, and internships in Washington DC.

### 13. Reference Points

#### ***The programme and outcomes have been developed taking account of:***

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
- The Benchmark Statement for Area Studies
- Policy for Placement Learning

### 14. Learning Outcomes

#### **A. Knowledge and Understanding of:**

1. One of more aspects of the history, politics, economics and societies of North America and Latin America via a range of primary and secondary resources.
2. A coherent framework of disciplines and interdisciplinary formations including history, politics, economics, cultural studies (A).
3. The cultures and societies of North America and Latin America gained through primary sources including historical archives, creative media and other resources (A).
4. The similarities and differences between the area studied and the area of the student's normal residence, thus fostering cross-cultural and international perspectives (A)
5. Display specialist knowledge in the area research for the dissertation.

#### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

- Information about the area studied is conveyed through a combination of lectures, seminars, discussion classes or tutorials. This allows for whole-class teaching, small group projects and individual work.
- Lectures are used to communicate information and introduce key themes.
- Discussion classes and seminar sessions offer an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge that they have acquired in order to explain and analyse situations. Students are expected to prepare in advance selected readings which are provided on the VLE.
- At FHEQ Level 4, priority is given to introducing the student to the disciplines and areas of study through directed learning and guided tasks. These complement the lecture programme and prepare students for conducting independent research using a range of sources; monitoring their progress and managing their time. Group-oriented tasks prepare students for working effectively as a team and engaging in peer learning.
- At FHEQ Level 5, students are encouraged to work increasingly independently though still under tutor guidance. In addition to the lecture and seminar programme, students engage in individual and/or small group projects or case studies in order to pursue their own interests within the broader framework of the programme.

- By FHEQ 6, students are expected to be working more independently, specialising in particular aspects of their programme in greater depth.
- Source materials are available to students in English. These include written texts, on-line materials, video and audio materials.

### Assessment

All assessment strategies and assessment loads for units on this programme conform to the requirements of the Curriculum Framework Document and the December 2015 Policy on Maximum Assessment Loads. FHEQ Level 4, work is assessed primarily through 1500 word essays, plus other combinations of assessment including presentations (individual or group), posters, in class tests, or examinations of varying duration (60 minutes; 90 minutes; 120 minutes). The length of essays may extend to 2500 words in combination with fewer of the other assessment modes outlined above. Alternatively, some units may assess by examination only (3 hours) or entirely by coursework (4000 words). For FHEQ Level 4, assessment loads towards the lower end is usually the norm. FHEQ Level 5 is assessed through longer essays (up to 4000 words) in combination with individual and/or group presentations, reports, projects or case studies, in class tests and examinations of varying duration (60 minutes; 90 minutes; 120 minutes). Alternatively, some units may opt to assess entirely by coursework with portfolios or other artefacts (up to 4000 words), or solely through examinations (up to 3 hours). The same provision is made for assessment at FHEQ Level 6 but in addition, students are required to undertake a research project (4000 words) or a dissertation (10,000 words). There is a strong emphasis on building in formative assessment at all levels, but most especially at FHEQ Level 4, to facilitate constructive 'feed-forward' from academic staff to students.

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

1. Critically analyse and demonstrate detailed knowledge of the area, its history, culture, and society (A)
2. Demonstrate critical understanding of contributory disciplines and theories, and the capacity to assess & compare the merits of different approaches. (A)
3. Describe, differentiate and compare concepts from different disciplines and/or interdisciplinary approaches as a means of understanding the area under study (A).
4. Communicate information, ideas and arguments cogently and coherently, both orally and in writing, with due regard to the target audience.
5. Identify and analyse problems using relevant approaches, and reflect on the scope and limitations of what has been ascertained and understood (A).
6. Demonstrate awareness of a diverse range of relevant information and research resources. (A).

### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

At all levels, discussion classes and seminar sessions offer an opportunity for students to develop intellectual skills by testing out ideas, and applying the knowledge that they have acquired in order to explain and analyse situations. Workshops will deal with interpreting primary source materials, document analysis, historiographical issues, statistics, literature, film and popular memory.

Students are expected to prepare in advance selected readings and secondary source materials which are provided on the VLE. This requires incisive reading of a variety of materials, identifying theoretical approaches, key arguments and issues; synthesising the information to present a coherent argument.

### Assessment

All assessment strategies and assessment loads for units on this programme conform to the requirements of the Curriculum Framework Document and the December 2015 Policy on Maximum Assessment Loads. FHEQ Level 4, work is assessed primarily through 1500 word essays, plus

other combinations of assessment including presentations (individual or group), posters, in class tests, or examinations of varying duration (60 minutes; 90 minutes; 120 minutes). The length of essays may extend to 2500 words in combination with fewer of the other assessment modes outlined above. Alternatively, some units may assess by examination only (3 hours) or entirely by coursework (4000 words). For FHEQ Level 4, assessment loads towards the lower end is usually the norm. FHEQ Level 5 is assessed through longer essays (up to 4000 words) in combination with individual and/or group presentations, reports, projects or case studies, in class tests and examinations of varying duration (60 minutes; 90 minutes; 120 minutes). Alternatively, some units may opt to assess entirely by coursework with portfolios or other artefacts (up to 4000 words), or solely through examinations (up to 3 hours). The same provision is made for assessment at FHEQ Level 6 but in addition, students are required to undertake a research project (4000 words) or a dissertation (10,000 words). There is a strong emphasis on building in formative assessment at all levels, but most especially at FHEQ Level 4, to facilitate constructive 'feed-forward' from academic staff to students.

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

1. Apply and differentiate between concepts from different disciplines as a means of understanding the Americas (A).
2. Compare and contrast the appropriateness of different disciplinary approaches in an examination of the area studies (A).
3. Use and critically interrogate a range of primary and secondary written, oral and visual resources (A).
4. Understand and engage critically with North American and Latin American cultures in a local and global context.

In addition, students who spend an optional period in USA or Mexico may also be able to:

5. Exploit for a variety of purposes a range of materials written or spoken in the target language(s). (L)
6. Appreciate the similarities and differences between areas of the world, thus fostering cross-cultural and international perspectives (A).

### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Subject specific skills are conveyed through a combination of lectures, seminars and discussion classes which allow for whole-class teaching, small group projects and individual work. Workshops deal with interpreting primary source materials, document analysis, historiographical issues, statistics, literature, film and popular memory.

Students may choose to spend an optional period abroad at partner universities in (Mexico or the USA, or undertaking internships in Washington DC). The optional period of residence abroad at Level 6 makes a significant contribution to the development and enhancement of language skills and inter-cultural awareness.

### Assessment

A range of assessment types are used at all levels to assess subject specific and practical skills. In particular, with reference to a range of issues these include assessments involving primary document analysis, critical commentaries on testimony and oral history, interpretation of media representations, application and interpretation of statistical data, and critical readings of cultural artefacts.

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

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Gather and process information from a variety of paper, audio-visual and electronic sources (A)</li><li>2. Present materials in written form with clarity in the use of language, professional referencing and effective layout, including tables, diagrams, graphics, illustrations, where appropriate (A)</li><li>3. Present materials in a clear and effective manner, using audio-visual aids, where appropriate, and answering questions from an audience (A)</li><li>4. Use a range of IT sources proficiently as a means of communication and as an aid to learning (A)</li><li>5. Work independently (A)</li><li>6. Write, think and work under pressure to meet deadlines (A)</li><li>7. Listen effectively and work creatively, flexibly and adaptively with others (A)</li></ol> |
|--|

#### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

- A wide range of transferable skills which enhance academic performance and promote employability among graduates are implicit and explicit within the teaching and learning strategies of degree programmes comprising Area Studies. Many of these have been identified in the above sections but some benefit from specific mention.
- Academic study skills and basic research skills are embedded in the core units at level 4 in the Autumn & Spring Terms. The full range of these skills is noted above in Sections A, B, and C and are developed thoroughly in core and optional units throughout the programme.
- Tutorials in Level 4 facilitate the setting and monitoring of learning objectives; these are developed further in Level 5 in preparation for the dissertation or research project, and during the production of the dissertation or research project in Level 6.
- In the final year, working on the dissertation or research project enables students to develop skills in project and time management, organisation, independent working and self-discipline.
- Many units foster team working skills through seminar work, discussion classes, and presentations.

#### Assessment

The assessment methods described in Sections A, B, C demonstrate the development and achievement of the range of graduate and employability skills indicated in Section D. These are embedded in the units and consequently provide an accumulation of opportunities for students over the duration of their programme of study. However, some assessment forms such as the dissertation, group projects, presentations or posters, essays and reports merit particular mention.

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

One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning. Units are offered as 20 credits and the final year dissertation is worth 40 credits. Each level comprises of a minimum of 120 credits.

BA (Hons) American Studies Single Honours three-year programme. American Studies is also offered as part of the Combined Honours programme in combination with English or History. All are offered in full time (3 year) mode.

The single honours and combined honours programmes have an optional period of study at partner universities in Mexico and the USA or work placement (internship in Washington DC) during the optional semester abroad (Autumn term of Level 6).

At FHEQ 5, there are opportunities to study a foreign language or a LiFE unit at FHEQ 5 and FHEQ 6.

All degree programmes in the department benefit from the inclusion of an optional Placement Year between FHEQ 5 and FHEQ 6

## Employability Statement

**Employability skills** will be delivered (and assessed where applicable) throughout the curriculum. We will provide structured support to enable students to develop their employability skills from L4 to L6. Core units at each level will include most of the academic and employability skills that are listed in Annex 5 of the 2012 Curriculum Framework. In addition, some course teams will have relevant work-related units in the curriculum.

**Career management skills** specifically (as a subset of employability skills) are embedded throughout the curriculum.

At **Level 4**, Studying American Studies and Working Life Today in the USA include an introduction to basic career management skills (self-awareness, personal and professional development planning, CV writing etc) in order to get students to start thinking about what they might want from a career and what they might have to offer, and introduces students to a range of research methods for application in units throughout their degree. Additionally, these units provide a forum for students to begin researching possible fields of employment and postgraduate study if appropriate. Here students will research organisations, fields of employment and the range of skills, knowledge and attributes required in these. Online materials will be available to support all single and combined honours students in the Faculty.

At Level 5, we continue with developing Career Management skills through the tutorial system. There will be plenary sessions for students on the further development of career management skills and this will be backed up by interactive online exercises and website resources related to the subject area. There are additional employability activities in the Consolidation and Assessment Period (CAP) for levels 4 and 5.

At Level 6, as part of Induction Week, personal tutorials and PDP, we will provide further guidance and activities for students (as part of what are currently termed 'Pathfinder Exercises'). This will be linked to individual research/project skills related to the 40 credit dissertation/project and group research/project skills in core units.

For both Level 5 and Level 6 students we run a series of Faculty-wide careers events with employers from a range of relevant employment sectors during the year (including a Faculty Alumni Day). All these activities are supported by the Personal Tutor system and a refocused PDP – developing students as professionals - **Professional Development Planning**.

**Work-Related Learning:** We provide opportunities for students to engage in work-related learning through active learning and the application of skills in work-related environments. This will consist of an understanding of working environments and the impact of globalisation on career goals (adapted to specific subject areas/disciplines where appropriate). In most subject areas of the Faculty, this will take place through simulated work-related environments in one or more core units. For some subject areas, this will involve real-world working environments.

All degree programmes in the department benefit from the inclusion of an optional Placement Year between FHEQ 5 and FHEQ 6

On American Studies, at **Levels 5 and 6**, we will provide opportunities for students to engage in work-related learning through active learning and the application of skills in simulated professional or work-related environments. Examples of this can be found in core units at **Level 5** such as *Home and Away: USA Foreign and Domestic Policy* which requires students to produce a briefing paper and prepare a speech for a politician. *Race & Slavery in the Americas* requires students to work with statistical databases. *Democratisation in Latin America* requires students to simulate a party political broadcast for an election campaign. At **Level 6**, *Transitional Justice & Human Rights in Latin America* requires students to prepare a consultancy report, a press release and a poster presentation on a memorial site. While these situations are simulated and appropriate to the academic requirements of the unit, the skills acquired are transferable into a wide range of professional environments.



At **Level 5 and Level 6**, students have the opportunity to take the Faculty-wide **Learning from Experience (LiFE)** unit. This allows students to gain credit from paid or unpaid work including volunteering, placements, internships, working on research projects for staff etc.

At **Level 6**, students may undertake an optional period of residence abroad whether as university study or as a work placement. This experience enhances students' employability by providing opportunities to develop essential life skills including problem solving, inter-cultural awareness, and acquiring or improving foreign language skills. American Studies students can spend the term in Mexico or the USA; they may follow a course of study at a university or undertake an internship in Washington DC, subject to the availability of places. Students wishing to undertake study abroad and/or placement based learning are fully supported by a combination of the departmental Placement and Internship Centre (PIC), the Year Abroad/Placement Tutor, designated Institutional Coordinators, or the programme Course Leader. Details of what students must do to complete this phase of the programme, where the study abroad or placement learning is credit bearing, are set out in the SLAS Placement Supplement Student Handbook on the Accredited Study Abroad Moodle site (<http://moodle.port.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3935>).

At **Level 6**, all students will have an opportunity to undertake a **work-based learning dissertation/project** (where appropriate) as an alternative to the traditional dissertation.

#### **Internationalisation & Global Graduate Skills:**

The optional period of residence abroad in USA or Mexico, whether as university study or as a work placement, further enhances students' employability by providing opportunities for acquiring or improving their language skills in a country where a foreign language is spoken. It also provides students with opportunities to develop essential life skills including problem solving and inter-cultural awareness.

Degree programmes in SLAS have a strongly international flavour and this feeds into the world of work in the unit **Managing Across Cultures**. Students can apply what they learn in the unit to employment fields relating to their programme of study. The following skills are embedded in this unit:

- Applying and reflecting on their graduate and employability skills in a real or simulated work environment in an international and cross cultural context.
- Gain insights and learning into the world of work in a national, international and cross cultural context.
- Gain an understanding of how organisations work and how they plan their business and make decisions.
- Gain an insight into how they manage themselves in a range of situations found in the workplace.

The unit is optional on all undergraduate degree programmes in SLAS (**Level 5** for home & EU students; **Level 6** for international students).

#### **16. Support for Student Learning**

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader.
- Collaborative programmes are managed on a day-to-day basis by the University Contact who may or may not be the 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.
- The Department has a number of Learning Support Tutors who support students in their learning
- The Department houses the Placement and Internship Centre (PIC), offering advice and support
- 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.
- Support is available prior to, during and following placements including study abroad. This is provided by the Course Leader, personal tutors, placement co-ordinators, and course administrators. While students are off-campus, they can access relevant study materials and handbooks on the VLE.

## 17. Admissions Criteria

Students are recruited with a variety of different qualifications. As general guidance:

- A-levels: should include 2 x 6 units
- GNVQ: students must have achieved at least a C grade for a single 12-unit GNVQ in a relevant area.
- Students may also offer more varied GNVQ and A/AS combinations, including 6-unit and 3-unit GNVQ awards.
- Professional qualifications & experience and other equivalent qualifications considered positively.
- Access courses: 60% overall.
- Mature and International students are welcomed.
- Highly accurate English writing and listening skills with an IELTS or equivalent of at least 6 for applicants for whom English is not their mother tongue.
- If appropriate Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) may be assessed and accredited

Requirements for students considering a work placement or study abroad may include:

- Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.
- Statutory health checks or fitness standards.

Some placements may not be appropriate for all students.

### 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.

For study abroad or work placements, it is advised that some placements may not be appropriate for all students.

## 18. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

### 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.
- 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.
- Institutional links and email contact provide support and monitoring of students who choose to do a university placement abroad.

### **Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery.
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course.
- University Contact 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.

### **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).

### **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.
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership.
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) programme which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages.

## **19. Assessment Strategy**

All assessment strategies and assessment loads for units on this programme conform to the requirements of the Curriculum Framework Document and the December 2015 Policy on Maximum Assessment Loads. FHEQ Level 4, work is assessed primarily through 1500 word essays, plus other combinations of assessment including presentations (individual or group), posters, in class tests, or examinations of varying duration (60 minutes; 90 minutes; 120 minutes). The length of essays may extend to 2500 words in combination with fewer of the other assessment modes outlined above. Alternatively, some units may assess by examination only (3 hours) or entirely by coursework (4000 words). For FHEQ Level 4, assessment loads towards the lower end is usually the norm. FHEQ Level 5 is assessed through longer essays (up to 4000 words) in combination with individual and/or group presentations, reports, projects or case studies, in class tests and examinations of varying duration (60 minutes; 90 minutes; 120 minutes). Alternatively, some units may opt to assess entirely by coursework with portfolios or other artefacts (up to 4000 words), or solely through examinations (up to 3 hours). The same provision is made for assessment at FHEQ

Level 6 but in addition, students are required to undertake a research project (4000 words) or a dissertation (10,000 words). There is a strong emphasis on building in formative assessment at all levels, but most especially at FHEQ Level 4, to facilitate constructive 'feed-forward' from academic staff to students.

On the American Studies Programme, the 4.000 research project (20 credits) must be taken in conjunction with a Directed Research Unit (DRU – 20 credits). The assessment on a DRU unit fosters independent research skills, and undertaken with a research project, in the equivalent of a 40 credit dissertation. The DRU for the American Studies programme is Thomas Jefferson and the Making of the American Republic.

The core units on American Studies at Portsmouth are drawn mainly from the discipline of History; other core and optional units are drawn from the fields of cultural studies, politics and economics. A range of assessment types are used at all levels to assess knowledge, understanding and subject specific skills which include primary document analysis, critical commentaries on testimony and oral history, interpretation of media representations, application and interpretation of statistical data, and critical readings of cultural artefacts.

The assessment strategy links to the learning and teaching strategies deployed in the core and optional units on this programme. It emphasises the importance of learning from experience and doing, and responding to feedback from the tutor and from peers. Students receive tutorial support and guidance during the delivery of the units in order to assist them in preparing for the assessments. Formative feedback on draft essay plans, monitoring progress from seminars and discussion classes, and practice assessment makes an important contribution to student learning at Level 4. This can take the form of verbal or written feedback from discussions, presentations, activities conducted in workshops as part of the learning and teaching process. Alternatively, it may involve students doing a practice examination on which they receive written generic feedback relating to the performance of the cohort. Students receive personalised written feedback on all summative assessments.

At all levels, workshops, seminars and discussion classes provide opportunities for students to try out ideas; demonstrate what has been learned; share knowledge; test their own understanding and interpretation; and engage in the practical application of subject-specific skills. Working in small groups on a specific task, these sessions prepare students for working effectively as a team and provide an opportunity to engage in peer learning. Group presentations in seminars require students to further develop team-working skills, monitor their progress and manage their time. These activities provide students with peer learning opportunities and to gain formative feedback from the tutor. In many instances, these activities are also formally assessed thereby contributing to the summative assessment of the unit.

The assessment strategy highlights the importance of research as an essential underpinning that informs the curriculum and by enabling students to develop skills of research and enquiry, thereby encouraging them to engage actively in the process of developing knowledge. From a more hands-on approach at Level 4, students are encouraged to conduct more independent research using a range of sources at Levels 5 & 6. Assessments on units at Level 5 aim to prepare students for undertaking independent research, conducting literature reviews, and critically analysing primary source materials. Preparation for undertaking research for the dissertation or the research project is also provided through workshops at level 5 and dissertation and project supervision at Level 6 is based around written feedback on submitted draft chapters, discussion and guidance via individual tutorials, and progress reports.

## **20. Assessment Regulations**

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

## **21. Role of Externals**

Subject External Examiners who will:

- oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards;
- approve unit assessment strategy;
- sample assessment artefacts;
- present report to Unit Assessment Boards.

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner, who for this programme is Peter Brown) 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.

## 22. Indicators of Standards and Quality

### A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

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

This subject underwent External Periodic Programme Review in March 2014. The Review confirmed the 'fitness of purpose of the American Studies single honours and combined honours curriculum, and the effectiveness of its annual monitoring and review processes.

#### 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

The University of Portsmouth made one of the largest submissions to REF2014 in **Area Studies** and is in the top 4 universities for research power in Area Studies in the UK.

25% of our research was rated world-leading (4\*) and 68% either world-leading (4\*) or internationally excellent (3\*). This compares to 15% 4\* and 45% either world-leading or internationally excellent in 2008. Overall, the unit has 26.79 FTE staff whose work was rated at 4\*/3\*. This places Portsmouth in the top ten universities in the UK for 4\* and 4\*/3\*-rated research. 40% of our impact was rated outstanding 4\* and 84% as either outstanding or as being very considerable in terms of reach and significance. This places Portsmouth in the top ten universities in the UK for impact in area studies.

90% of our Environment was rated as 4\* (world leading) or 3\* (internationally excellent).

The Grade Point Average for the equivalent submission (to European Studies in 2008) was 2.4 and this has risen to 2.9 in 2014. Our GPA this year for Impact (3.24) and Environment (3.20) was significantly above the national average.

#### Research Assessment Exercise 2008

- Portsmouth is the UK's leading centre for interdisciplinary European Studies. Rated in the top 5 nationally for output, Portsmouth has twice as many members as other institutions in that group & is thus rated as number one for 'research power'.
- 100% of the entry was assessed as nationally or internationally recognised, with 45% of that total noted as 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' (4-star and 3-star).

#### Research Assessment Exercise 2001:

- Russian & East European Studies 5

- European Studies 5.

### 23. **Other Sources of Information**

Other sources of information may be found in

- Course Approval Document.
- Student Handbook.
- University of Portsmouth Curricula Framework.
- University of Portsmouth Undergraduate Prospectus.
- Assessment Regulations.
- University of Portsmouth (<http://www.port.ac.uk/>) and (<http://www.port.ac.uk/slas>) website.