



BSc (Econ) (Hons) Economics

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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Contents

Course Details	1
1. Named Awards.....	1
2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable).....	1
3. Awarding Body	1
4. Teaching Institution	1
5. Accrediting Body	1
6. QAA Benchmark Groups	1
7. Document Control Information.....	1
8. Effective Session.....	1
9. Author	1
10. Faculty.....	1
11. Subject Group	1
Curriculum	1
12. Educational Aims.....	1
13. Reference Points.....	2
14. General Learning Outcomes.....	2
15. Learning Outcomes	3
A. Knowledge and Understanding of:.....	3
B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:	4
C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:	4
D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:	4
16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods.....	4
17. Assessment Strategy.....	6
18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements.....	7
19. Employability Statement.....	7
Course Management	8
20. Support for Student Learning.....	8
21. Admissions Criteria.....	8
A. Academic Admissions Criteria	8
B. Disability	9
22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching	9
A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation	9
B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation.....	9
C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback	9
D. Staff Development Priorities.....	10
23. Assessment Regulations	10
24. Role of Externals	10
25. Indicators of Standards and Quality.....	10
A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition.....	10
B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent).....	10
C. Quality Assurance Agency	10
D. Others	11
26. Further Information	11

Course Details

1. Named Awards

BSc (Econ) (Hons) Economics

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C1824S (L100)

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

None

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Economics

7. Document Control Information

Version, July 2018

8. Effective Session

2018/19

9. Author

Dr Joe Cox

10. Faculty

Faculty of Business and Law

11. Subject Group

Economics and Finance

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

The B.Sc. (Econ) (Honours) Economics course aims to equip students with skills and knowledge that will enable them to practise as a professional economist. The programme also seeks to provide students with suitable foundations for pursuing a post-graduate qualification in Economics.

More specifically, the course aims:

- To provide an awareness of economic concepts and principles, with examples of their application;

- To present a stimulating, challenging and rewarding environment;
- To contain a clearly defined core, which is accompanied by a range of optional units;
- To equip students with analytical, quantitative, research and communication skills;
- To allow students the opportunity to apply to undertake a work placement;
- To develop a range of generic life and employability skills through the operation of dedicated units and close collaboration with the University's Purple Door facility.

13. Reference Points

The major reference points are:

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document September 2014;
- 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);
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Economics July 2015 (SBS);
- University of Portsmouth Education Strategy (2016-2020) - Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate (HPG).

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 4

Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
- an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility

Level 5

Diplomas in Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making

Level 6

Bachelor's degrees/Bachelor's degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline
 - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline)

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences

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 contexts
- the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature

15. Learning Outcomes

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 Macroeconomic and Microeconomic principles and theory to an advanced level
- A.2 Established and specialised quantitative techniques which are used for analysing economic data (SBS)
- A.3 The nature, sources and uses of both quantitative and qualitative data (SBS)

- A.4 Mathematical principles and techniques that facilitate the understanding of economic literature and enable theoretical analysis to be undertaken (SBS)
- A.5 The application of core economic principles to different topics (SBS)

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

- B.1 Demonstrate a critical and reflective understanding of economic theories and policies (HPG)
- B.2 Be adaptable and flexible in the use of appropriate analytical methods (SBS, HPG)
- B.3 Acquire and process relevant data for the assessment of an economic hypothesis
- B.4 Structure and communicate a reasoned argument to specialists and non-specialists (SBS)
- B.5 Interpret mathematical models and evaluate the results of quantitative analysis

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

- C.1 Decide upon a suitable framework for conducting economic analysis (SBS)
- C.2 Synthesise new and existing knowledge to provide innovative, evidence based solutions to identified problems (HPG)
- C.3 Employ suitable software for the purpose of generating and reporting statistical results;
- C.4 Abstract the essential features from a complex system (SBS)
- C.5 Present material, in an appropriate form, on a technical subject matter

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

- D.1 Communicate clearly and effectively in a form which is suitable for the audience being addressed (SBS, HPG)
- D.2 Use current and emerging technologies to critically engage with information and data (HPG)
- D.3 Demonstrate confidence and competencies in relation to numeracy (SBS)
- D.4 Use appropriate conceptual frameworks to aid decision-making (SBS)
- D.5 Think independently, analytically and creatively, drawing on knowledge from outside of the boundaries of the subject area (HPG)
- D.6 Work as an effective member of a team and in conjunction with a supervisor (interpersonal skills) (SBS, HPG)
- D.7 Recognise and take advantage of opportunities for ongoing personal development (HPG)

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

In respect of A1, Macroeconomics and Microeconomics are studied at all three levels on the degree course. The subject knowledge and understanding are acquired through a combination of lectures and seminars.

In respect of A2, students are formally introduced to quantitative techniques via the mathematics and statistics units at Level 4 and the econometrics units at Level 5 and Level 6. These units are delivered by means of lectures, seminars and computer workshops. Through the latter, students are acquainted with specialist statistical and econometric software.

In respect of A3, in particular, the level-six unit, Applied Economics seeks to inform students of established sources of data in Economics. This information is communicated formally, via lectures, in addition to through discussions with an allocated supervisor. Approaches towards obtaining primary data are explained principally through lectures that are held in this same level-six unit.

In respect of A4, students are taught directly mathematical principles and techniques through the units Mathematics for Economics (Level 4), Statistics for Economics (Level 4), and Quantitative and Research Methods for Economics (Level 5). Conventional lectures are accompanied by seminars, which enable practice at applying the respective methods.

In respect of A5, students learn about the application of economic principles and concepts to different areas via a range of taught units which feature on the course structure (e.g., International Economics (Level 5), Labour Economics (Level 6)). Moreover, the final-year independent research units present students with the opportunity to conduct economic and quantitative analysis within a chosen field.

Cognitive skills are embedded within the curriculum.

In respect of B1, several core and optional units give consideration to the relative merits of economic policies and theories, most notably, the units at all three levels in Macroeconomics and Microeconomics.

B2 is most directly addressed by Applied Economics (Level 6) which seeks to develop skills in critical analysis and research design.

B3 is accomplished through a combination of research methods and econometrics units. Laboratory sessions help to familiarise students with relevant databases and software.

At all levels of the programme, there is a focus on B4. Beginning with the seminars in the unit Issues in Economics (Level 4) and concluding with the supervision which is offered in Applied Economics (Level 6), students receive advice on a suitable structure for a piece of work. Emphasis is also given to the need to be able to communicate to the non-specialist.

In respect of B5, lectures and seminars in the Level 5 and Level 6 econometrics units are directly concerned with the interpretation of quantitative output and the evaluation of mathematical economic models. However, this skill also features prominently in the research units at Level 6.

In respect of C1, the skill of framing an economic problem is incorporated within the majority of the units on the programme. Most notably, this skill features in the units in Macroeconomics and Microeconomics, where an appreciation is obtained of the sensitivity of outcomes to the chosen structure.

In respect of C2, several units on the degree course require students to synthesise knowledge from a range of sources in order to solve problems. Most notably, lectures in Quantitative and Research Methods for Economics (level 5) and Applied Economics (Level 6) offer students guidance on the construction of a literature review in accordance with academic convention and standards. In addition students learn how to set and address appropriate research questions in Applied Economics (Level 6).

In respect of C3, workshops in Statistics for Economics (Level 4), Econometric Methods (Level 5), Quantitative and Research Methods for Economics (Level 5) and Econometric Analysis (Level 6) acquaint students with software which is available for presenting and processing economic data.

In respect of C4, the abstraction of complex systems to provide a workable framework for analysis constitutes a key skill of an economist. While featuring in many units, this skill is most explicitly represented in the core units in Macroeconomics and Microeconomics.

In respect of C5, in several units across the programme, in lectures and seminars, students are shown different approaches (mathematical, diagrammatic and verbal) towards undertaking economic analysis. Prime examples are the Level 5 units, Intermediate Macroeconomics and Intermediate Microeconomics. Also, the Level 6 unit in Labour Economics introduces the students to the notion of a poster as a means of presenting economic material.

D1 is developed in several units. However, guidance is given on writing literature reviews and reports in both Quantitative and Research Methods for Economics (Level 5) and Applied Economics (Level 6). Also, students are given advice on how to conduct themselves at a job interview in the Academic and Employability Skills for Economists units that feature at all levels of study.

D2 relates to the majority of the assessed units which feature on the degree programme. IT skills are most explicitly acquired, though, from taking the quantitative and econometrics suite of units.

The student who successfully completes the course will be numerate. In the process of taking the core units in mathematics, statistics and econometrics, the student will acquire the capability of analysing data and interpreting quantitative results (D3). Support from within a unit is supplemented by general facilities, such as the Maths Café.

In respect of D4, through a range of units, students are introduced to models of different degrees of complexity which allow them to identify a suitable approach towards solving a problem. Repeated application occurs in seminars/workshops and through on-line resources.

In respect of D5, the majority of units involve students working independently. In order to achieve a high grade, the student should show initiative, for example, in terms of accessing reading material and/or economic data. This general skill is emphasised through the holding of regular meetings under the personal tutorial system (which operates at all levels). The final year Applied Economics unit requires students to establish an innovative research question as well as to independently propose and implement appropriate methods to address them.

The Level 5 and Level 6 units in Econometrics permit the students to work in pairs, and so to identify strengths and weaknesses and to implement a suitable division of labour (D6). Also, the final-year research units require the students to liaise effectively with a supervisor.

In respect of D7, the Academic and Employability Skills for Economists units at each level of study require students to complete a PDP portfolio and reflective statement on development during each academic year.

17. Assessment Strategy

The degree programme includes both formative and summative assessment. The purpose of formative assessment is to guarantee that students understand the standard that is required in summative assessments. Formative assessment is also used to explain the approach to adopt towards an assignment or examination question. The objective of summative assessment is to indicate the extent to which learning outcomes have been achieved. There is a deliberate policy of employing a range of assessment, both within and across units. As a consequence, a student who experiences difficulty with a particular type of assessment is not unduly disadvantaged. Feedback is offered on all work which is submitted. Both coursework and examination scripts are returned to students. Model answers are made available on the Moodle sites for the respective units.

Assessment is comprised of: unseen and seen time-constrained examinations (A1, A2, A4, A5); within-class exercises (A1, A2, A4); computer-based quizzes (A1, A2, A4); presentations (A1); word-constrained essays and reports (A2, A3, A5).

Assessment of the cognitive skills occurs through a combination of: formal examinations (B1, B4, B5); individual and collaborative reports (B2, B3, B4, B5); as well as presentations (B1).

Students are required to produce reports via word-constrained coursework (C2). Statistical results feature in individual and group reports (C3). Practical skill, C5, is assessed in a variety of ways, including examinations, essays and posters. Although formal examinations are chiefly employed in relation to C1 and C4, in-class exercises, essays and presentations constitute alternative approaches towards assessment.

Group work is assessed by means of collaborative written reports (D6). In all forms of assessment, e.g., written examinations, reports/essays, presentations, the student is required to show an appreciation of the intended audience (D1). Similarly, all forms of assessment, with the exception of a conventional examination, necessitate reliance upon information technology (D2). The ability to interpret data is assessed by means of an examination or a report. Typically, though, an ability to undertake quantitative analysis is evaluated via the submission of an individual or group-based report (D3). Examinations and coursework permit the student to demonstrate his/her problem-solving skills (D4). Finally, resourcefulness and the capability of working independently are attributes which are assessed through word-constrained essays or reports and orthodox examinations (D5).

Level 4

Students are required to take final examinations in all six twenty-credit units featuring at Level 4. However, additional forms of assessment accompany the examination in all cases. For both Mathematics for Economics and Statistics for Economics, reliance is placed on supplementary quizzes, which are accessed electronically. In Macroeconomics and Microeconomics, students complete a coursework portfolio consisting of a short essay combined with a series of online exercises. For the unit Issues in Economics, students are required to complete a short written

assignment and participate in a group presentation. All students also complete the unit Academic and Employability Skills for Economists, which, although carrying zero credits, requires students to complete a portfolio recording their personal development over the course of the year. This portfolio makes represents a pass/fail assessment in the Issues in Economics unit. This assessment is completed with support from specialist sources, such as the Faculty of Business and Law's Careers Advisor.

Level 5

At Level 5, students are assessed in six twenty-credit units, five of which are core, while the remaining unit is selected from a list of optional units. Most of the units at Level 5 are closely aligned to established textbooks, and so have clearly defined syllabuses. In these units, a conventional unseen examination represents the standard form of assessment. However, in each of Intermediate Macroeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, and Econometric Methods, students complete portfolios of coursework containing short written assignments as well as a regular series of in-class exercises. These exercises provide encouragement to the students to keep up to date with the lecture material and more generally to engage with the unit. The written assignment in Econometric Methods additionally requires students to undertake applied data analysis. Students are permitted to work in pairs out of recognition that econometric research is often the result of a collaborative effort.

Level 6

Formal examinations are still the dominant form of assessment in the final year of the course. However, the increased emphasis which is given to independent study permits essays and reports to be requested which require more extensive research to be conducted than at earlier levels. The two independent research units play a prominent role in the final year. These units include three different elements of assessment: a literature review; project proposal and final research report.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

Students who are registered on the BSc (Econ) (Hons) Economics degree programme are assessed in one hundred and twenty credits worth of units in each of three years. Each unit is associated with twenty credits. Every twenty credits corresponds to two hundred hours of learning. Students have the opportunity to apply to undertake a 48 week work placement between the second and final year. To be awarded the degree "in sandwich mode" students must complete an approved work placement of at least 48 weeks and submit and pass the reflective report.

Standard University of Portsmouth rules apply. The University's regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.

19. Employability Statement

- Employability is developed throughout the curriculum with structured support. Core units develop most of the academic and employability skills that are listed in Annex 9 of the September 2014 Curriculum Framework. Career management skills are similarly embedded within the curriculum.
- At Level 4, key employability, academic and career-development skills are introduced and assessed in the unit Academic and Employability Skills for Economists (Level 4). Embedded in this unit is a formal personal tutorial system which involves regular meetings with students and is the means by which Personal Development Planning (PDP) is conducted by students in their first year of study. Students are expected to participate in the Faculty of Business and Law's Enterprise and Employability Impact Week.
- At Level 5, the programme enhances key employability, academic and career-development skills in the unit Academic and Employability Skills for Economists (Level 5), which continues the PDP activity that was initiated at Level 4. Additionally, students are timetabled to attend regular

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

talks that are given by employers, which are arranged by the Work Placements Office within the Faculty of Business and Law. Further guidance is offered through the Faculty of Business and Law's Enterprise and Employability Impact Week.

- At Level 6, key employability, academic and career-development skills are provided through the two twenty-credit research units, through discussions with the supervisor. PDP continues via the Academic and Employability Skills for Economists (Level 6) unit. Also, final-year students are expected to have a significant involvement in the Faculty of Business and Law's Enterprise and Employability Impact Week.
- External and alumni speakers feature as appropriate in the curriculum.
- Academic staff support the pursuit of work placements in conjunction with the Faculty of Business and Law's Work Placements Office.
- All students have the opportunity to take a twenty-credit language unit, for credit or interest, at Level 5.

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- A programme director manages the course with support from year tutors.
- Level-specific induction programmes are held in September with the objective of explaining the composition of the course, assessment regulations, and the operation of the personal tutorial system. During induction week, each student is notified of his/her personal tutor, i.e., a member of staff who is responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- Individual and group tutorials and Personal Development Planning (PDP) occur within the zero-credit units Academic and Employability Skills for Economists featuring at all levels of study.
- The virtual learning environment, Home of Electronic Resources and Materials for Economics Students (HERMES), provides a location for key documents relating to course structures, academic regulations, minutes of meetings, employment and post-graduate study opportunities.
- University support services are devoted to careers, financial advice, housing, counselling, etc., within a dedicated Student Services Centre.
- The Faculty of Business and Law Work Placements Office facilitates work-based learning. During an internship, an academic member of staff will undertake a structured visit of the student's workplace.
- The course has access to excellent library and IT facilities, including the Bloomberg Suite, which is located on the first floor of the Richmond Building, specialist econometric software and databases (e.g., Datastream, Bankscope).
- Key Skills opportunities are incorporated into all units.
- Written feedback is provided for all assessments. For 'hard copy' assignments, use is made of a generic Faculty of Business and Law feedback form. Work which is submitted electronically via Turnitin employs the feedback tools which are available in this environment.

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

Students are recruited with a variety of different qualifications.

General guidance:

- A levels – 112-120 points from three A levels or equivalent.
- GCSE English and Mathematics at grade C or above.
- GNVQ – students must have achieved at least a B 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 and experience are always considered positively.
- Access Courses – 60% overall.
- Other qualifications are considered as appropriate.
- The level of English language proficiency that is required is IELTS 6.
- Applications from social and ethnic backgrounds, currently underrepresented in Higher Education, including mature and international students, are welcomed.

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 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
- National Postgraduate Taught Experience 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 Undergraduate Programmes
- 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 Taught Experience Survey (PTES), 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 appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching 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

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

N/A

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

March 2016, Economics - the fitness of purpose of curriculum was confirmed and the annual monitoring and review processes were found to be effective.

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

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](#)⁴ and [Subject Group](#)⁵ websites

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ www.port.ac.uk/economics-and-finance/