



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

BSc (Honours) Business Information Systems (Distance Learning)

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.

Copyright

The contents of this document are the copyright of the University of Portsmouth and all rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior consent of the University of Portsmouth.

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. Department	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:	3
C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:	3
D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:	4
16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods.....	4
17. Assessment Strategy.....	4
18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements.....	5
19. Employability Statement.....	5
Course Management	6
20. Support for Student Learning.....	6
21. Admissions Criteria.....	6
A. Academic Admissions Criteria	6
B. Disability	6
22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching	6
A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation	6
B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation.....	7
C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback	7
D. Staff Development Priorities.....	7
23. Assessment Regulations	7
24. Role of Externals	8
25. Indicators of Standards and Quality.....	8
A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition.....	8
B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent).....	8
C. Quality Assurance Agency	8
D. Others	8
26. Further Information	8

Course Details

1. Named Awards

BSc (Hons) Business Information Systems

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2186P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

NA

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Computing

7. Document Control Information

R1.8 July 2018

8. Effective Session

2018-19

9. Author

Dr K Dingley; revisions by Angela Fletcher and Kathy Parker

10. Faculty

Faculty of Technology

11. Department

School of Computing

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

This is a part-time level 6 top-up programme which enables students who have reached Dip HE or HND level, or equivalent, the opportunity to obtain an honours degree by on-line distance learning. It offers academic coherence and supports the widening participation agenda in that it facilitates the access to higher education of students who cannot travel to the University. The course aims to combine a deep understanding of the significance of information systems with a robust development of problem solving and computational skills that will prepare students for professional posts in the computing industry. Students will bring their existing skills to the framework of units, where their talents will be exercised and directed towards theoretical understanding and practical

implementation of knowledge gained. The programme offers two entry points a year (in September and February).

In addition the course aims to:-

- Provide a challenging, stimulating and rewarding study environment.
- Develop a range of transferable skills by means of opportunities provided in the study units.
- Accommodate student needs in relation to maximising their career potential by enabling them to develop knowledge, understanding and skills

13. Reference Points

The major reference points are University of Portsmouth Undergraduate Curriculum Framework 2014 Document, the University policy on Key Skills, Computing 2016 Benchmark Statement, National Qualification Framework and QAA Codes of Practice.

The Computing 2016 Subject Benchmark states (section 2.18) that there are three key ideas which constitute a certain ethos that can be expected to characterise any honours degree programme in computing:

- the concept of computational thinking, the recognition of its main elements and the relevance of these to everyday life
- the Computing system (including an information system), and the process of developing or analysing it is important; understanding of the system and its operation will go deeper than a mere external appreciation of what the system does or the way(s) in which it is used
- the balance of practice and theory, appropriate to the aims of the particular degree programme, such that practical activity can be supported by an understanding of underlying principles.

The programme has been designed with four areas drawing on the following Computing 2016 benchmark elements:

Software – project management software, the concept of database and database management, management information systems and services, information and knowledge management software. **(S)**

Practice – professionalism, requirements engineering, software design, evaluation of software and systems, and legal and ethical issues. **(P)**

Communication and Interaction – Developing business plans including costing, technology and social environment. Reviewing IS decision making within a business management strategy. The use of critical reflection, mind mapping and brainstorming as part of an analytical technique for IS development. **(CI)**

Theory – Information systems, information system development, systems theory, systems requirements and specification, system design: strengths and weaknesses of relevant methodologies and techniques. **(T)**

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 6

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 Tools and techniques for Information Systems (IS) application development, building and management. (S, P)
- A.2 The fundamentals of systems analysis and design using both structured and object oriented paradigms. (P, T)
- A.3 The necessary techniques for the successful implementation of a database in the context of a database management system. (S, P)
- A.4 Relevant project management practices and techniques needed for information systems development. (CI)
- A.5 Codes of practice and ethical considerations in information systems building and management. (CI)
- A.6 The theory, development and use of database management systems. (S, T)

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

- B.1 Apply general abilities of an intellectual, analytical, creative and problem-solving nature to the field of information systems.
- B.2 Demonstrate critical skills and an ethical awareness, which are both necessary and appropriate for a reflective IS practitioner. (P, CI)
- B.3 Demonstrate an awareness of the effects upon society of technical and technological development and proper professional conduct in relation to society's increased dependence on information systems. (C)
- B.4 Apply methods and techniques from the computing subject disciplines to the solution of information systems problems.(S, P)
- B.5 Apply professional codes of conduct and appreciate the ethical considerations that underpin them. (P)
- B.6 Demonstrate critical skills with regard to literature searching, appraising and evaluating from a variety of sources and synthesising the results.
- B.7 Plan, manage, undertake and report on a significant final year project related to the field of business information systems.

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

- C.1 Use and manage appropriate software and hardware to produce designed outcomes. (S, P)

- C.2 Competency in creating and using relational databases. (S, P, T)
- C.3 Competently and critically assess, analyse and use business information systems. (CI)
- C.4 Have an awareness of ongoing and future IS trends and an appreciation of their implications.
- C.5 Demonstrate the knowledge and ability to optimize a database design for commercial operation (, P)
- C.6 Project manage simulated complex software developments. (S, P)

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

- D.1 Use information systems to handle data, and assist with design, development and testing.
- D.2 Review achievements against firm evidence in order to facilitate professional and intellectual development.
- D.3 Communicate effectively in writing using appropriate forms of presentation.
- D.4 Read and understand complex documents related to software products and system requirements.
- D.5 Competently deal with numerical data as might be found in typical business orientated applications.
- D.6 Assess problem domains and formulate appropriate problem-solving strategies and to recommend/design viable solutions.
- D.7 Build on previous experience in order to generalise and improve learning performance.

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Core knowledge is acquired mainly through on-line notes and exercises and directed computer practical work. Additionally, learning is supported by directed reading, study guides, tutorial questions, worked examples and larger case study based exercises. Regular self-assessment of work and the use of appropriate software support knowledge attainment. The business, social and ethical context is developed by directed reading and supported by online intra-student discussions moderated by tutor involvement.

Analytical skills are introduced in on-line lectures and developed through the use of worked exercises and case study material. . Much is based on individual learning though group learning will be encouraged via synchronous and asynchronous chat rooms. The critique of professional codes of conduct is covered through directed reading and appropriately constructed individual exercises. The ability to produce computer-based artefacts is acquired through a range of practical-based exercises and case study work and the final self-managed project.

Practical computer-based exercises are used to develop skills with the aid of case studies and project work.

The emphasis is generally on individual learning though group learning will be encouraged via synchronous and asynchronous chat rooms. Written reports, data appreciation, and familiarity with IT, are fundamental to the nature of the course. Use of problem solving and review progress

17. Assessment Strategy

Testing of the core knowledge and practical application is through a combination of coursework and portfolio activities.

Use is made of coursework reports for assessing intellectual and analytical skills, together with submission of coursework artefacts, learning journals and portfolios for project-based skills.

All learning outcomes are assessed by submission of course work.

The ability to work effectively is assessed through individual coursework activities. Data skills are assessed through the database unit. IT skills are assessed as part of virtually all the units.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

The course is a part-time level 6 top up course. The standard profile for admission is the successful completion of an HND Computing or HND Software Engineering or similar qualifications such as Advanced Diplomas. This is augmented by a comprehensive list of equivalent qualifications. This list matches those that are used for recruitment of overseas students to attend the home programmes in the Computing area. Where students apply with qualifications that do not fall in the standard list, the applications are forwarded to the relevant admissions tutor in the School of Computing for consideration and decision.

The programme is typically of 18 months duration, part time, and with the inclusion of the holiday periods for Christmas, Easter and summer, this equates to 2 academic years. The programme consists of 20 credit units plus a 40-credit project, where 20 credits represent 200 hours of study time and usually includes 6 hours of synchronous online instruction with a facilitator. The programme comprises a total of 120 Level 6 credit points. In view of the breadth of the potential curriculum relevant to the title Business Information Systems, subjects such as information systems management, database management and project management provide students with the knowledge and skills to understand and manage complex information systems in a business environment.

Students also carry out a final year major project. This can either be an engineering project or a research project. The difference rests primarily on whether the project aims to produce and report on the development of an artefact or not. The two styles permit students to direct their efforts at either the more technical or the business/societal aspects of the subject area.

The learning environment is based on an established and sophisticated virtual learning environment (VLE). Access to the VLE is through a web browser, which is easily accessible via modem or network. This environment provides an integrated communication mechanism among students and facilitators regardless of their geographical location including chat-rooms, bulletin boards and private e-mail. Because units are available across the web students may choose to sequence the units in several different ways. However, there are clearly advantages in doing some units together and in normal circumstances students will study two units in each study session. However, students will always be given advice as to the most educationally desirable sequence of units for them to take.

19. Employability Statement

Graduates from this programme are expected to become capable practitioners in the development of business information systems and the associated technical management. Within this environment graduates should be able to display creativity in dealing with systems that are related to the operation of commercial and other organisations. They will be expected to show the ability to exercise initiative and personal responsibility; to be capable of decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts; and to have the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Careers education material is reachable over the web from the University Careers service. It is anticipated that for many of the students the main reason for engaging with this programme in particular is so that study can be pursued in parallel with existing work within the IT industry, and as such, cooperation and communication between the students would provide a significant link with a range of employers, as well as a range of opportunities to discuss career opportunities in different environments. The main focus of the degree programme is on enhancing employability.

The School of Computing has regular contact with industrial advisors, which inform the ongoing development of the curriculum and course profile.

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

Course Management

20. 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
- The Combined Honours Degree is managed by a Course Leader from one subject area and a Deputy Course Leader from the other
- 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 and counselling
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK)
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC)
- Excellent library facilities
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations
- Feedback is provided for all assessments
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

- An advanced standing of 240 CATS points based on the award of a pass or higher grade for the EdExcel HND Computing or Software Engineering or equivalent. Advanced Diploma courses with significant computing content will be considered by the relevant University of Portsmouth admissions tutor.
- Be proficient in the use of the English language (e.g. IELTS band 6 or TOEFL Score 550)

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
- Deputy Course Leader for day-to-day running of Combined Honours route
- University Academic Contact for day-to-day running of course
- Partner Institution Academic Contact
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course
- Combined Honours Management Board
- 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 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](#)).

The assessment approach for all units is coursework based. The tasks have been selected to enable students to gain practical skills in working with information systems as well as demonstrate their understanding of the theoretical concepts. Activities are included in the online materials that allow students to check their understanding as they work through the materials. Help is provided from tutors through the discussion boards, and peer group discussion is encouraged. The project requires that students work independently to research, plan and develop an entire project, usually relative to their employment or field of expertise. The students will embed the knowledge,

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

understanding and skills attained during the course delivery and apply the techniques, methodologies and principles learned, to an appropriate problem theme of their own choosing.

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

NA

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The Periodic Programme Review March 2015 confirmed fitness of purpose for the course and effectiveness of annual 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](#)*³).

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 [School of Computing](#)⁵ websites

³ http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/reports/university-of-portsmouth-her-15.pdf?sfvrsn=5071f581_4

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ www.port.ac.uk/school-of-computing/