



MSc Crisis and Disaster Management

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose

Course management and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of units and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to units and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a unit or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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Course Details

1. Named Awards

MSc Crisis and Disaster Management

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2297F/P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

None

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies

7. Document Control Information

July 2018

8. Effective Session

2018 - 2019

9. Author

Dr Richard Teeuw

10. Faculty

Faculty of Science

11. Department

School of Earth and Environmental Sciences

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

The Crisis and Disaster Management programme aims to:

- Facilitate a deep understanding of relevant knowledge and a critical awareness of current issues at the forefront of Crisis and Disaster Management
- Develop intellectual and practical skills in the collection, analysis, interpretation and understanding of geoscience and environmental data, with specific reference to the assessment and management of hazards, vulnerability and risk of disaster

- Provide a challenging and stimulating framework of study for students that facilitates personal, academic and professional development
- Develop the interpersonal and personal skills necessary for effective crisis and disaster management principles in a strategic and business management context
- Enable students to develop high-level, in-depth knowledge in a range of disciplines related to crisis and disaster management, enabling the development of a proactive disaster risk reduction culture
- Facilitate the formulation, planning and execution of a research project in the field of crisis and disaster management
- Enable students to demonstrate the ability to analyse data, make decisions, plan critically and objectively, presenting findings as coherent arguments with an assessment of future needs and consequences

Students will most likely be employed in commerce and industry (particularly the insurance and re-insurance sectors), government agencies, defence and security organisations, civil engineering or environmental consultancies and non-government organisations (NGOs). Graduates from this programme should prove very attractive to employers and are likely to be in demand by organisations within any sector.

13. Reference Points

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

- The research and scholarship interests of staff expected to develop and deliver the course units
- External stakeholders as represented by the Employers consulted in the development of the programme
- QAA Benchmark Statements for specialist masters awards in business and management
- UoP Curriculum Framework Document (2016)
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education

This is an interdisciplinary degree, involving two departments (Earth and Environmental Sciences, Strategy and Business Systems) in two Faculties (Science and Business, respectively). The course provides students with the knowledge to act as effective crisis and disaster management professionals in any size or type of organisation.

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 7

Master's degrees/Postgraduate Certificates/Postgraduate Diplomas are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline

- to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

15. Learning Outcomes

This programme seeks to provide students with appropriate knowledge and understanding to enable them to make an effective contribution to the implementation of the practices of crisis and disaster management, with appropriate academic rigour in university taught units. A holistic approach is taken in the study of crisis and disaster management and its interfaces with other disciplines. Hence, the programme provides the students with the skills and knowledge to meet personal and organisational objectives.

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 The variety of hazards (natural, socio-economic, and technological), vulnerable features (physical and socio-economic) and risk
- A.2 Key principles and processes in crisis and disaster management and the appropriateness of different methodologies
- A.3 The importance of disaster risk reduction measures to stakeholders in governments, organisations, businesses and communities
- A.4 The importance of business continuity planning and crisis management for organisations and communities
- A.5 The nature of disaster risk and the application of appropriate emergency management techniques
- A.6 The application of research methods and specialist subject knowledge in the area researched for a dissertation

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

- B.1 Deal with complex issues and make sound judgements based on available data
- B.2 Critically evaluate the relevance of theories of risk, governance and business continuity
- B.3 Demonstrate creativity, analysis and original thinking in the design and application of crisis and disaster management solutions
- B.4 Analyse and interpret data and information from a variety of sources to identify crisis and disaster management issues
- B.5 Apply and adapt crisis and disaster management theories for use within multidisciplinary scenarios

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

- C.1 Undertake independent study through research, both primary and secondary
- C.2 Select and apply relevant models to support high quality analyses and decisions
- C.3 Construct reports and assignments coherently, evaluating alternatives and supporting recommendations

- C.4 Understand, evaluate and employ concepts of the disciplines underpinning crisis and disaster management
- C.5 Demonstrate an awareness of the role of emergency planners, risk managers, emergency responders and disaster managers.

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

- D.1 Work effectively individually and in group settings to achieve set goals
- D.2 Communicate effectively in writing and through graphical representations in professional and academic settings
- D.3 Apply appropriate mathematical techniques in analysis and problem solving
- D.4 Assess problem domains and formulate appropriate problem-solving strategies
- D.5 Build on previous experience in order to improve systems for emergency planning and crisis response
- D.6 Use appropriate information technology to handle text, data, simulation, design and testing

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

This programme aims to widen access to qualifications by offering a variety of learning opportunities. Interactive seminar sessions and workshops will allow the exploration of good global practice and research (A5). Site visits and fieldwork will be used to reinforce and contextualise the lecture programme (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5). The programme includes role-play simulations and provides links with work-based practice, which makes a valuable contribution to learning and benefits employers (A3, A4, A5). The teaching is by staff competent in the assessment and hazards, vulnerability and risk, crisis assessment, emergency response and disaster management, as well as disaster risk reduction strategies (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6). The programme includes visiting speakers from government agencies, NGOs, commerce and industry (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5). Various e-learning resources will be used to support teaching and learning, primarily supplied via the Moodle system (A1). Students engage in individual projects in order to pursue their own interests within the broader framework of the programme (A6).

Teaching and learning is through a combination of lectures, seminars and workshops, using academically-sourced materials as well as material from external crisis and disaster management contributors (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5). Cognitive skills will be developed by encouraging students to reflect on the experience of their unit assignments and their research project, in order to embed the successful principles involved (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5). Tutorials, lectures, workshops and reports will encourage critical evaluation and comparison of established principles and theory in the literature and global best practice (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5).

As part of the development of practical skills, all students will be provided with an instruction to key sources of information (including electronic) during the course induction (C1, C4). Coursework and presentations will require students to apply relevant models, organise and control resources, critically evaluate their effectiveness and produce reports and recommendations (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5).

The acquisition of skills is integral to all activities within the course programme. Students will develop skills in the use of Information Technology for collecting, analysing and presenting information and data (D6, D3, D5). Planned and reflective learning identified in specific units provides a means of developing all key skills with a particular emphasis on communication skills and working with others (D1). The skills of application of number and problem solving will be emphasised within the Disaster Management Techniques & Study Visits unit and students will be encouraged to monitor and improve their own learning and performance throughout the course through the self-reflective process (D2, D3, D4, D6). These, together with learning to work both individually and in groups (D1) are essential elements of effective crisis and disaster management.

17. Assessment Strategy

Coursework includes case studies, seminar presentations, fieldwork observations, reports and computer practicals involving geospatial technologies (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5). The assessment strategy will employ a range of different assessment techniques through reports, written

assignments and a final dissertation (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6). Assessment of the dissertation will indicate achievement at masters level in the research study (A6). This range of techniques will facilitate the assessment of the specified learning outcomes in the curriculum (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6).

All cognitive skills, in particular higher-level cognitive skills, are assessed by means of related coursework assignments, all of which necessitate the use of creative thinking, application and critical evaluation (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5).

Knowledge and practical skills will be assessed within coursework assignments, laboratory practical classes and fieldwork-based practical work (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5). As part of the coursework, students will be required to present and justify complex arguments and to influence the management of risk in crisis and disaster contexts (C2, C3, C4, C5).

All assessments will contribute towards the assessment of skills. The compulsory Research Project allows students to demonstrate their transferable skills to the highest level.

The assessments involve the preparation of illustrated technical reports, field reports and maps, oral presentations and poster presentations. These have been selected to enhance the employability skills of the students using reporting mechanisms that are standard in the work place and research world. No formal examinations are used in any of the units on this course.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

The programme consists of four 30 credit rated level 7 core units and one 60 credit rated level 7 unit (the Research Project). For 2018-19 only, part time students will take the first of two 30 credit point units that together will make up the project. The assessment is 100% coursework. These units are not dependent upon each other but follow a predefined sequence of study; successful achievement of the assessed coursework in two units (60 level 7 credits) entitles the student to an award of PgCert and successful achievement of the assessed coursework in four units (120 level 7 credits) entitles the students to an award of PgDip. The Crisis and Disaster Management MSc requires the achievement of 180 level 7 credit points.

19. Employability Statement

This is an interdisciplinary degree, involving two departments (Earth and Environmental Sciences, Strategy and Business Systems) in two Faculties (Science and Business): the course provides students with the knowledge to act as effective crisis and disaster management professionals in any size or type of organisation. Employability skills are embedded into the course, as follows: critical thinking and professional writing skills are demonstrated through the completion of illustrated reports and/or poster presentations; I.T. skills are demonstrated through the desktop publishing activities associated with the production of the illustrated reports and/or poster presentations. Field survey skills and computer practical skills are demonstrated by the field notebook and portfolio of practical assignments respectively.

Career Management skills are demonstrated in the selection of the topic for the Research Project, which the students are encouraged to link to their career development plans via associated tutorial sessions. Work-related learning is achieved via guest lectures from practitioners and via study visits to the command and control centres of 'blue light' emergency services and emergency planners, both in the UK and overseas. The study visits to command and control centres of emergency response organisations (e.g., Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, Oil Spill Response Ltd, the Contingency Planning unit of Portsmouth City Council] give the students' experience of the operational side of disaster logistics and financial planning. The students are also given the opportunity to apply for a number of voluntary work placements – usually for 2 days per week – with emergency sector organisations in the Solent region or overseas (e.g. with the Disaster Management Department of the British Virgin Islands).

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader, who is also the students' personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance
- The 2-day induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course
- The course handbook provides information about the course structure and University regulations
- Key Skills opportunities are incorporated into all units
- The students have access to a dedicated MSc study room in SEES, with networked computers and printers
- The University of Portsmouth's dedicated Student Services Centre provides careers advice, financial advice, housing, counselling, the Academic Skills Unit (ASK) and the Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC)
- The students have access to 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
- Group tutorials and one-to-one tutorials are provided, along with Personal Development Planning (PDP)
- Feedback is provided for all assessments, via written assessment and one-to-one discussion
- Assistance is given in selecting and applying for work placements

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

This programme has been designed to meet the requirements of graduates in any discipline who want to develop their crisis and disaster management knowledge and skills, in preparation for employment in organisations - in both the public and private sectors. The programme accepts students from a broad range of backgrounds. It is not necessary to have studied crisis and disaster management or related subjects at first-degree level; however, students are expected to have numerical ability and both written and spoken communication. International students whose first language is not English, should have a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 with no component score below 6.0. Students will ideally have a minimum of a lower second class honours degree. However, mature applicants with relevant management experience may be considered, via the Recognition of Prior (& Experiential) Learning (RP(E)L) admissions route. The overriding focus is the ability to succeed on the programme and the potential to achieve the academic award.

B. Disability

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

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

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Faculty Executive
- 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
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees

- Annual Staff Appraisal
- Peer Teaching Observation
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

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

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies
- Student Staff Consultative Committees
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g., 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 new to teaching required to undertake Initial Professional Development Programme (iPROF)
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages

23. Assessment Regulations

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

24. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- Oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards
- Review unit assessment strategy
- Sample assessment artefacts
- Present report to Unit Assessment Boards

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

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

There is no directly relevant UK Professional Accreditation body. However, the Crisis and Disaster Management MSc course has been validated by the Emergency Planning College (EPC) of the UK Cabinet Office, as a chosen provider of MSc-level training.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

Periodic Programme Review – 26 January 2016 confirmed the course was fit for purpose.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015](#)*³).

D. Others

Staff from this subject area contribute to RAE Units of Assessment in RAE Panel-E, Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences.

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 Earth and Environmental Sciences](#)⁵ websites

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

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ www.port.ac.uk/school-of-earth-and-environmental-sciences/