

MSc Strategic Quality Management (DL)

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 minimise 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 Strategic Quality Management (DL)

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2431P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

There are no accrediting bodies for the Strategic Quality Management programme. However, the Faculty of Business and Law is a member of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the British Quality Foundation (BQF).

On completion of the course, students are able to use their postgraduate qualification as part of their portfolio of evidence to apply for individual membership of the Chartered Quality Institute (CQI). Please note: neither EFQM nor BQF permit individual membership.

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

QAA benchmarks for Master's awards in business and management – specialist Master's degrees

7. Document Control Information

September 2018

8. Effective Session

2018-2019

9. Author

Z Hoy

10. Faculty

Business and Law

11. Subject Group

Operations and Systems Management

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

- Provide a challenging and stimulating framework of study for distance learning students

- Provide an opportunity for appropriately qualified candidates to develop high-level knowledge and a critical awareness of current Strategic Quality Management issues in a multidisciplinary context
- Develop a systematic understanding of relevant knowledge and a critical awareness of current issues at the forefront of the quality management profession
- Facilitate personal, academic and professional development through a coherent programme of study
- Enable students to develop high-level knowledge in a range of business and quality management related disciplines
- Provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate the learning outcomes and to identify and analyse the context of the application of the learning
- Provide successful candidates with the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with complex quality management issues as leaders and practitioners

13. Reference Points

This is an interdisciplinary degree providing students with the knowledge to act as an effective quality professional in any size of organisation. It will also be instructive to managers of other disciplines who need to understand how to manage change within a quality management environment. 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 good quality and continuous improvement. The knowledge and understanding is developed in respect of the operational, functional and strategic management of quality, with appropriate academic rigour in the taught stages.

The Master's element is achieved through research activity, which requires an extended application of the theory learned during the four taught units. In addition, it demands the capacity to identify and solve complex problems, which are relevant to the management and improvement of quality. The dissertation subject will normally be of practical value to the student's organisation and is intended to demonstrate a clear integration of theory and practice.

There is demand for graduates who have understanding of effective tools and skills to manage change in a dynamic environment and with a focus on customer requirements and achieving excellence in performance. Often graduates are already employed; however, graduates from this programme have proved very attractive to employers, finding a range of employment within business generally. Typical employment destinations have included business analyst, operations management, business consultancy, retail management and the service sector.

The emphasis is on the holistic approach in the study of human organisational activity, and its support from and interfaces with other disciplines. Hence, the programme provides students with the skills needed to use knowledge gained effectively in meeting personal and organisational objectives.

Major reference points are the University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document 2012, subject Benchmark Statements, National Qualification Framework, the QAA Benchmarks for specialist Master's degrees in business and management, the QAA Codes of Practice, the Chartered Quality Institute (CQI)'s Competency Framework and Body of Quality Knowledge (BOQK) and other subject-specific standards and professional guidelines.

The programme addresses the following topic areas:

- The principles of quality management and the application to all aspects of the business environment
- The theories, concepts and basic principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and its role in the context of operations management and the overall business
- The requirements for interpersonal and personal skills and attitudes in effective team building as a key element in implementing quality improvement initiatives such as Total Quality Management
- Business Excellence and Continuous Improvement theories and their application in the workplace

- TQM principles in a Strategic Quality Management context
- Promoting and enabling the development of a culture conducive to quality throughout an organisation so it may achieve its vision and policy for quality
- Organisational capability to produce and maintain quality goods, services and the processes to improve its performance
- The role and competencies of the quality practitioner in modern organisations
- The means and skills to transfer the concepts and experience gained from the course into the workplace
- The formulation, planning and execution of a research project in the field of quality/strategic quality management
- Critical evaluation and assessment of the literature, research and knowledge gained throughout the course
- Demonstration of the ability to analyse data, make decisions and plan both critically and objectively, and to present results and conclusions in the form of coherent arguments with an assessment of future needs and consequences

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 7

Master's degrees 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

On successful completion of the programme, students are expected to be able, at threshold level, to:

- Apply and evaluate methods and techniques from the Business subject disciplines to solve business problems

- Apply and evaluate methods and techniques from the Quality Management subject discipline to solve related problems
- Integrate methods and techniques from both the Business and Quality Management disciplines
- Develop critical skills with regard to literature search, appraisal and evaluation from a variety of sources and synthesising the results
- Evaluate, synthesise and interpret information from a variety of viewpoints
- Plan, conduct, report and evaluate a programme of original research
- Communicate effectively visually, orally and in writing, and read and understand complex documentation
- Identify and interpret numerical data effectively and perform numerical analysis on data
- Use appropriate technologies effectively as an integral part of their studies
- Solve problems of various types within business problem domains and evaluate solutions
- Improve own learning performance by reflecting on attainment of goals and activities related to them
- Work with others to achieve business goals whilst being distinctively individual

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 The key principles and processes in the quality management environment and the appropriateness of different strategies
- A.2 The importance of understanding TQM principles and applying the theories of Organisational Behaviour
- A.3 Application of the principles of statistics to develop practical programmes for quality and reliability
- A.4 The way in which quality management may contribute to the effectiveness of business operations
- A.5 The way in which non-performance measures and tools are essential to monitor the achievement of business goals
- A.6 Application of key research methods in quality and business management
- A.7 The role of organisational and people development in managing and leading change
- A.8 The fundamental importance of customers and achieving excellence in the achievement of organisational objectives
- A.9 Specialist subject knowledge in the area of research for the dissertation

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

- B.1 Analyse and interpret data and information from a variety of sources to identify organisational problems
- B.2 Deal with complex issues and make sound judgements based on available data
- B.3 Critically evaluate the relevance of theories of planning, monitoring and control
- B.4 Apply and adapt theories of management style and tools within a multidisciplinary context
- B.5 Demonstrate creativity, decision analysis and original thinking in the design and applications of management solutions
- B.6 Evaluate the implications of decisions and interventions in the context of the business environment

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

- C.1 Undertake independent study through primary and secondary research
- C.2 Assess, critically evaluate, synthesise and present information from a variety of sources
- C.3 Construct reports and assignments coherently, evaluating alternatives and supporting recommendations
- C.4 Select and apply relevant models to support high-quality analyses and decisions
- C.5 Present complex arguments coherently and comprehensively
- C.6 Influence the implementation of change in organisations through the successful management of objectives

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

- D.1 Design and implement creative solutions to problem solving
- D.2 Manage independent study and work with others
- D.3 Communicate concepts and findings to professional standards
- D.4 Employ appropriate technologies to support scholarship, conduct analysis, and articulate concepts and findings

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Self-directed learning is facilitated by study groups and supplemented by online discussion moderated by staff. The student's development draws on their past and present professional experience, which students often bring into discussions in their study groups or online. Student feedback indicates that 'lessons learnt' on the course are often swiftly applied in their workplace.

Learning and teaching takes place through learning opportunities that address the learning outcomes. The aim of the LTS is to provide students with an excellent learning experience as articulated in the principles of Curriculum 2012 (Curriculum Framework Document 2012). This should enable students to achieve the Unit learning outcomes by engaging in a range of learning activities derived from the context of work-related learning, i.e. building on students' professional experience and simulations of the workplace environment. The courses are entirely online; learning opportunities include study resources on Moodle such as self-tests, discussion forum, online classroom activities to facilitate group interactive discussion and feedback, and online Unit Reading lists via the university library.

Students engage in individual projects to pursue their own interests within the broader framework of the programme.

Cognitive skills are developed using problem-solving exercises where the solution is accompanied by scientific, logical and balanced argument.

As part of the development of relevant skills, students are provided with an introduction to the library and other key sources of information within the course induction programme, including the use of Moodle. Skills are further developed through subject-specific content, academic and research techniques delivered in all units. Students are required to display a range of skills as an integral part of their professional development. All assessments require students to make use of all practical skills, collecting and interpreting data, applying relevant models, organising and controlling resources, producing reports, and presenting and justifying analyses, evaluations and recommendations.

Graduate and employability skills are developed through self-directed learning and critical reflection arising from both formative and summative assignments.

17. Assessment Strategy

Assessment is through the demonstration of successful application of theory to practice through assignments.

Assessment of the dissertation will indicate achievement at Master's level in the research study.

Cognitive skills are assessed by means of related coursework assignments all of which necessitate the use of creative thinking, application and critical evaluation.

As part of their coursework, students are required to present and justify complex arguments, and to influence the management of change and the delivery of organisational objectives.

Assessment allows students to demonstrate their capacity to manage their own learning, and to exhibit academic management skills, their ability to work with others, and their commitment to professional and ethical standards.

Formative and summative assessment are used on the Programme. These approaches enable students to develop and demonstrate a systematic understanding and mastery of the course content and its application in the workplace.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

Standard University regulations apply. 180 credits are required to achieve the Master's award. The Academic Regulations should be consulted for a full description of exit awards.

All units are worth 30 credits except for the dissertation, which is worth 60 credits.

The course is completed over a period of 27 months.

19. Employability Statement

As a specialist postgraduate programme studied by distance learning, virtually all students have professional experience. Employability skills are, therefore, less key to the programme. However, given that the purpose of study at postgraduate level is to develop the critical and practical skills that will enable the individual to enhance their performance and continuing professional development, graduate and employability skills remain embedded throughout the programme with respect to:

- Encouragement of reflective learning through appropriate feedback and tutorial support
- Use of case studies based on workplace situations and the appraisal of contemporary scholarly research
- The scope for cross-cultural experience and networking as students are from a variety of countries and business sectors

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The courses are managed by a course leader
- Induction resources including Course handbooks provide information about the course and the context of being a student at the University of Portsmouth
- Learning opportunities are provided on Moodle
- Individual and cohort feedback is provided for all assessments
- Excellent library resources and helpdesk
- Faculty Study Support tutors
- Each student has a personal tutor who provides pastoral support, and guidance and is available to discuss personal development planning as necessary
- University student-support services include Purple Door careers service, the Student Wellbeing service and the Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC)

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

The programme accepts students from a broad range of backgrounds. Ideally, students should have a first degree or equivalent of a good standard in a relevant subject; applicants with substantial relevant professional experience will be considered. Students with a first degree should ideally have relevant work experience to enable them to contextualise the material; however, the overriding focus is the ability of the student to achieve their award.

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

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

- Programme Director's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review (Head of Postgraduate Programmes)
- 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
- 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
- Programme Director for overall evaluation and development
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course
- Head of Subject Group
- Head of Postgraduate 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 satisfaction questionnaires
- Contact with the SQM teaching team

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to learning and teaching, research, scholarship and student support and guidance
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs
- Management staff undertake a variety of management development programmes
- New academic staff required to undertake appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching programmes
- All academic staff are 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)

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

Chartered Quality Institute – the course contributes to the academic requirements for individual membership of the Institute.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

April 2014, Specialist Masters Programmes

Courses reviewed:

- MSc Project Management/Project Management and Leadership
- MSc Strategic Quality Management – all routes
- MSc Risk/Risk, Crisis and Resilience Management
- MSc/PgDip/PgCert Coaching and Development.

Outcome: '*Continued validity and relevance of the curriculum for all Programmes*' agreed and '*Annual Monitoring and Review Processes*' considered to be 'effective'.

Two conditions:

- 'Update the unit and course level documentation so that it more accurately reflects the distinctive programme'.
- 'Implement processes to ensure the assessment schedule enables the timely return of feedback to students, providing appropriate support to new and part-time lecturers'.

The above conditions did not apply to the MSc Strategic Quality Management suite of programmes.

Note: November 2007 Periodic Programme Review – successful outcome with no actions required.

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

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

In keeping with the ethos of the course, the course team undertake reviews of all aspects of the programme in line with professional practice and current scholarly activity.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

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

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/operations-and-systems-management/