



**UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH**

MRes Humanities and Social Sciences

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

MRes Sociology
MRes Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies
MRes American Studies
MRes Education
MRes Gender Studies
MRes Childhood Studies
MRes Security Studies
MRes Applied Linguistics
MRes Translation
MRes African Studies
MRes Development Studies
MRes Literary Studies
MRes History
MRes TESOL
MRes Politics
MRes International Relations
MRes Security Risk Management
MRes Public Administration
MRes European Politics
MRes Communication
MRes Forensic Investigation

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2460F/C2460P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

N/A

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Unavailable at Masters Level in relevant subjects

7. Document Control Information

Version: August 2017

8. Effective Session

2017-18

9. Author

Dr Brigitte Leucht

10. Faculty

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

11. Department

School of Social Historical and Literary Studies

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

- To enable students to demonstrate excellence in appropriate research design and techniques
- To provide an extended experience of research and the research process
- To prepare students to move into further postgraduate (doctoral) research study and/or research project management
- To provide students with enhanced transferable skills for general employment
- To enhance critical analysis of methodological and conceptual issues

13. Reference Points

- University of Portsmouth Curricula Framework Document
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff
- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- National Qualifications Framework
- RCUK Researcher Development Framework
- Graduate School Development Programme

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

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 Subject specific knowledge appropriate to the research project
- A.2 The theoretical and methodological underpinnings of research undertaken in appropriate areas
- A.3 Research planning and design
- A.4 Ethical considerations required for undertaking research
- A.5 Appropriate techniques / methods approaches applicable to the completion of research projects

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

- B.1 Critique varying intellectual paradigms, methodologies, research approaches, and analytical techniques and how they contribute to the development of research questions
- B.2 Formulate appropriate research questions within the appropriate areas of humanities and/or social scientific research
- B.3 Critically appraise the value of theoretical perspectives and research evidence collected in the specified area of study
- B.4 Select methodological approaches to the collection and analysis of data that can be evaluated, interpreted and disseminated into relevant formats
- B.5 Synthesise and contribute to the creation of new knowledge

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

- C.1 Demonstrate competency in a range of relevant data collection and data analysis techniques
- C.2 Produce critical reports in an appropriate format
- C.3 Identify ethical considerations and risk issues related to specified area of study
- C.4 Develop well-reasoned arguments and integrate appropriate empirical research
- C.5 Identify and develop the relevant skills for a research career

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

- D.1 Exercise initiative and personal responsibility
- D.2 Make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations
- D.3 Demonstrate the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

A variety of learning and teaching strategies will be used based on successful methods currently employed within the varying Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences departments, Research Centres and in the Graduate School.

- Core knowledge mainly delivered via seminars, tutorials and workshops (A1 – A4).
- The emphasis on good practice throughout the programme encourages students to critically use and evaluate a variety of paper based and electronic information sources (A1 – A4).
- Participation in subject specialist unit lectures and seminars, GSDP workshops,

Graduate School Research Students conference and research seminars held within specific Schools/Departments, research groups and centres (A1 – A4).

Intellectual skills will primarily be developed through supervision tutorials and GSDP workshops on the taught units (B1, B2, B3, B4 & B5). Individual supervision will contribute to the development of B1, B2, B3, B4 & B5, whilst GSDP workshop sessions will contribute to the development of B4.

The emphasis of this MRes is on the application of research and analytical techniques with acknowledgment of the key factors involved in the research process. The taught units will provide students with the opportunity to develop their overall confidence in the design and execution of research projects and their own development as a researcher.

- Practical supervision will be included in the research units (C1 – C3).
- The format of the programme will enable students to obtain proficiency in a range of relevant approaches as well as the ability to communicate effectively (C1 – C4 & C5). Attention to ethical considerations and risk issues is also addressed within units and through the production of reports and completion of a research project(s) (C1, C4 – C5).

Students work will be supervised by a member of staff whose research is relevant to their field of interest. Students will enter this programme following undergraduate study and therefore many underpinning academic and professional attributes may already have been acquired. Further development of these and other transferable capacities are features of this MRes. The course curriculum enables students to acquire knowledge of a broad range of research techniques as well as insight into ethical and organisational issues faced by researchers (D1, D4, D6, and D7). These aptitudes have been identified for every unit and there is extensive coverage of communication (D1, D2, D3), information technology (D1 & D3), improving own learning (D4, D5, D6, D7) and problem-solving (D4 – D6).

17. Assessment Strategy

Assessments consist of formative and summative elements (A1 – A4). Coursework includes analytical essays (A1), oral presentation (A1, A2, A3), reflections on appropriate research projects (A2, A3, A4) and engagement with ethics protocols (A1 – A4).

Assessments consist of formative and summative elements (B1 – B5). Coursework includes a critical engagement with the relevant literature (B1), oral / poster presentation (B3 – B5), and ethics application (B2 & B4).

All elements will be formatively assessed via tutorial meetings, project development, and data collection processes (C1 – C5). Summative assessments may include analytical essays, oral presentations and ethics application (C1 – C5).

These elements will be formally assessed through a variety of assessment techniques. Presentations will be delivered by students in taught and research focused units (D1, D5, D6 and D7). Independent work will be required in many unit assessments and collaborative work will be formatively assessed where appropriate (D3). Specific transferable aptitudes relating to professional development will be assessed by a research-related application (D2 & D6).

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

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

- A student who exits having passed 60 credits will qualify for the award of PgCert in Research
- A student who exits having passed 120 credits will qualify for the award of PgDip in Research
- A student who has passed 180 credits will qualify for the award of MRes with the relevant named exit award listed in section 1.

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

- The programme is offered as a full-time (12 month) course and as a part-time (24 month) course.

19. Employability Statement

Those students completing the course will have moved to the next level of qualifications with the advantages that this offers in terms of learning and employability. They will also be in an excellent position to apply for any related Doctoral training programme, research assistant positions, graduate teaching positions, or general research related roles.

Career management skills are embedded in the course and will be supported by a tutorial programme and developed via relevant formative and summative assessment activities. A focused Personal Development Plan including the identification and review of skills will also be formulated and developed through the tutorial programme.

Career management skills are formatively assessed within the Research Preparation and Development unit and this will enable students to demonstrate to employers that they have the necessary skills to perform research roles. Furthermore, all students will be introduced to Purple Door within their induction to facilitate links between the students and career advisors.

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader.
- Students will have access to the University of Portsmouth Graduate School.
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course.
- Each student has a personal tutor (who will also be their research supervisor) responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK).
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC).
- Excellent library facilities.
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations etc.
- Feedback is provided for all assessments.
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards.

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

- Students will be expected to hold at least an upper second class honours degree in an appropriate subject awarded by a UK university or internationally recognised higher education institution.
- Applicants are required to have a standard of proficiency in the English language to IELTS grade 6.5 (with no less than 6 in any area) or equivalent.
- Mature students are encouraged to apply for the course.
- International students are encouraged to apply for the course with backgrounds in relevant humanities and social science disciplines.
- If appropriate, Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) may be assessed and accredited.

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.
- Heads of Departments/Schools' 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 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.
- Research supervisors
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course.
- Dean
- Heads of Departments/Schools.
- Associate Dean (Academic).
- Associate Dean (Students).
- Quality Assurance Committee.
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners.
- Graduate School Management Board

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies.
- Student Staff Consultative Committees.
- University participates in internal and external student surveys, e.g., UPRES, PRES and International Student Barometer (ISB).

D. Staff Development Priorities

- All supervisors should be classified as research active or research engaged.
- 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 are 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

Despite there being no official professional links, the Graduate School has benchmarked the taught units against the RCUK Researcher Development Framework (<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf>).

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

All Departments/Schools within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences engage in a Periodic Review, and Annual Subject Quality Evaluative Review cycle.

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](#)*).

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 Portsmouth⁴](#) and [School of Social, Historical and Literary Studies⁵](#) websites

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

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ <http://www.port.ac.uk/school-of-social-historical-and-literary-studies/>