

Postgraduate Certificate Systematic Reviews in Health

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

Postgraduate Certificate Systematic Reviews in Health

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2525F&P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

N/A

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2011)

UK Quality Code for HE Chapter B11 Research Degrees (2011)

7. Document Control Information

Version 4.0 2018

8. Effective Session

2018-2019

9. Author

Dr.Karen Pilkington

10. Faculty

Faculty of Science

11. Department

School of Health Sciences & Social Work

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

- Enable students to demonstrate excellence in appropriate research planning and skills
- Prepare students to move into further postgraduate (Doctoral) research study
- Enhance critical analysis of methodological and conceptual issues

13. Reference Points

- The programme learning outcomes have been developed in alignment with the University of Portsmouth regulations, policies and procedures and with reference to the following:
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document (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)
- Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS)

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 7

Postgraduate Certificates 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

Statement of orientation:

The Postgraduate Certificate Systematic Reviews in Health will reflect contemporary learning, research and practice in the specific area of health. As such, the programme will enable students to develop an enhanced critical awareness and conceptual understanding of health issues, systematic review methodology and relevant research design and reporting appropriate to that of systematic reviews in health.

It is expected that students who have successfully completed the course will, at threshold, have:

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 Core knowledge of key concepts: Formulating a review question according to PICOS criteria, Introduction to key searching ideas, sources and methods
- A.2 Quality assessment & critical appraisal of primary studies: Appraising, and reporting a systematic review. Introduction to key factors affecting trial results, including practical session appraising example papers.
- A.3 Introduction to meta-analysis: Overview of summary statistics, introduction to methods, statistical synthesis and meta-analysis including using computer software to demonstrate how to undertake meta-analysis
- A.4 Reporting: Introduction and discussion of key criteria and reporting requirements.
- A.5 Professional Practice: Issues involved with professional practice in science related subject areas

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

- B.1 Critique relevant research approaches including systematic review methodology.
- B.2 Formulate appropriate research questions.
- B.3 Critically appraise the value of research evidence collected in the specified area of study.
- B.4 Evaluate, interpret and summarise research evidence into relevant formats
- B.5 Reflect on the synthesis and contribution of knowledge gained

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

- C.1 Proficiently use library searching, saving searches in a safe, confident and reliable manner.
- C.2 Develop well-reasoned arguments and integrate appropriate variables within a scientific report.
- C.3 Identify and develop the relevant skills for conducting a systematic review.

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

- D.1 Be an independent learner and demonstrate collaborative skills.
- D.2 Solve problems and demonstrate sound judgement in decision making.
- D.3 Identify and use the appropriate resource to enable the successful completion of a task.
- D.4 Demonstrate relevant skills for conducting systematic reviews.
- D.5 Develop a self-reflective element to learning and evaluation.

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

A1-A5: A variety of learning and teaching strategies will be used based on successful methods currently used within the varying faculty of Science Schools/Departments, appropriate to a distance learning course

A1-A5: Core knowledge mainly delivered via workbooks, on-line teaching and personal/group tutorials (A1-A5). Practical exercises using scenarios and/quizzes will be used to reinforce topic areas

A1-A5: Group discussions on line /self-assessment practical exercises will also aid students' ability to work proactively with others.

The course is delivered by researchers and information specialists with knowledge and experience in undertaking systematic reviews on a wide range of healthcare topics. The emphasis on good practice throughout the programme encourages students to utilise and appraise a variety of information sources, including traditional books and peer reviewed journal based articles, as well as

using information technology resources such as relevant internet websites, databases and internet based journals.

To provide an overview, cognitive and intellectual skills will primarily be developed through personal and group tutorials (B1-5).

The taught units will provide students with the opportunity to develop their overall confidence in the preparation of systematic review protocols and the process of conducting a systematic review. This will provide additional confidence in own development as a researcher.

Personal tutorial support is included across units and will help to meet all learning outcomes (C1-C3).

The format of the programme will enable students to obtain a range and depth of skills preparing and writing systematic review protocols.

Students will receive a personal tutor skilled in systematic review methods.

Personal (skype/telephone/on campus) and group on-line tuition sessions will be provided by suitably experienced and qualified staff at all times to ensure students are able to learn from how researchers may approach their work. These will help students to meet all learning outcomes (D1, D3, D4 and D5)

Independent work will be required in all of the unit's summative assessments (D2).

17. Assessment Strategy

Assessment consists of formative, self-assessed elements and summative elements (A1-A5). Each unit will be assessed through one on-line assessment and one critical report.

Assessment consists of formative, self-assessed elements and summative elements (B1-B5) assessed by two artefacts for each unit, one critical report and one on-line assessment. Both artefacts must be passed for each unit.

All practical skills will be formatively assessed either via tutorial meetings, self-assessment by the individual or group activities through on-line tutorials/discussions. Summative elements C2, C3 will be assessed by two artefacts for each unit, one critical report and one on-line assessment.

Effective and confident collaborative and communication skills will be formatively assessed throughout the units (D1-D2).

Utilising practical exercises using scenarios and/quizzes will be used to solve problems and demonstrate sound independent judgement in decision making relevant to developing systematic review protocol development and conducting systematic reviews (D2, D3, D4, D5).

Transferable skills (D2-D4) will be assessed through coursework as follows: Two assessments comprising one critical report and one on-line assessment for each unit completed.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

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

The course is 1 academic year full time (or 2 academic years part time) delivered in the distance learning mode of study. Two start dates are available in September and February. A student who exists having passed 60 credits will qualify for the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Systematic Reviews in Health.

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

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

19. Employability Statement

Many of the students accepted onto the course are likely to have had several years of relevant work experience and, therefore, focus will be on enhancing their employability skills. Skills gained from successful completion of the course will help health professionals enhance practice decision making, as well as developing the ability to conduct their own systematic reviews.

For other students completing the course, skills gained will provide them with an excellent position to apply for general research related roles, or to any related Doctoral training programmes.

All students will be provided with the opportunity to evaluate their skills and interests and to develop a PDP in line with their own career plans and the requirements of their relevant accreditation bodies. The whole process will be overseen by their personal tutor. Students will be encouraged to complete their PDP throughout the course and formative assessment opportunities will provide a link between the taught unit material, work-related learning and the development of employability skills.

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance
- University support services include careers, financial advice, 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:

A lower second-class honours degree or equivalent in a relevant subject. Professional experience and other qualifications may be taken into consideration for applicants not meeting this requirement.

IELTS score:

English language proficiency at a minimum of IELTS band 6.5 with no component score below 6.0 or equivalent.

Mature students are encouraged to apply for the course.

International students are encouraged to apply for the course with backgrounds in relevant health science disciplines.

If appropriate, prior learning 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
- 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 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
- Combined Honours Management Board
- Head of School
- 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, eg Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), 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
- 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

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

None

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The course will be subject to normal monitoring and review policy and procedures.

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 [School⁵](#) 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 www.port.ac.uk/school-of-health-sciences-and-social-work/