COURSE SPECIFICATION

BSc (Hons) Palaeontology

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Please refer to the Course Specification Guidance Notes for guidance on completing this document.

Course Title	***BSc (Hons) Palaeontology***
Final Award	*BSc (Hons)*
Exit Awards	*CertHE, DipHE*
Course Code / UCAS code (if applicable)	*U2344PYC / F641*
Mode of study	*Full time*
Mode of delivery	*Campus*
Normal length of course	*3 years, 4 years with placement*
Cohort(s) to which this course specification applies	*September 2023 intake onwards*
Awarding Body	*University of Portsmouth*
Teaching Institution	*University of Portsmouth*
Faculty	*Faculty of Science & Health*
School/Department/Subject Group	*School of the Environment and Life Sciences*
School/Department/Subject Group webpage	*School of the Environmental Life Sciences*
Course webpage including entry criteria	*https://www.port.ac.uk/study/courses/bsc-hons-palaeontology*
Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Body accreditations	*The Geological Society of London*
Quality Assurance Agency Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	*Level 4,5,6*

This course specification provides a summary of the main features of the course, identifies the aims and learning outcomes of the course, the teaching, learning and assessment methods used by teaching staff, and the reference points used to inform the curriculum.
This information is therefore useful to potential students to help them choose the right course of study, to current students on the course and to staff teaching and administering the course.

Further detailed information on the individual modules within the course may be found in the relevant module descriptors and the Course Handbook provided to students on enrolment.

Please refer to the Course and Module Catalogue for further information on the course structure and modules.

Educational aims of the course

The course aims to equip students to work as palaeontologists, geoscientists or in alternative relevant employment. In addition, and more generally, the course aims to:
· Provide a challenging, stimulating and self-rewarding study environment.
· Provide a framework whereby individual study paths may be forged based on choice from a range of options.
· Develop a range of key 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 in their chosen subject area.

Course Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) sets out a national framework of qualification levels, and the associated standards of achievement are found in their Framework for Higher Education Qualifications document.

The Course Learning Outcomes for this course are outlined in the tables below.

A. Knowledge and understanding of:			
LO number	**Learning outcome**	**Learning and Teaching methods**	**Assessment methods**
A1	The evolution, structure and composition of the Earth, and the nature of Earth materials.	Lectures, practicals and fieldwork. 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. Develops subject knowledge, critical thinking; plus analytical, observational and interpretational skills; communication skills using text and graphics. The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.	Exam; coursework; lab books, field notebooks, maps and log sheets.
A2	The principles of stratigraphy and paleoenvironmental analysis.	Lectures, practicals and fieldwork. Develops subject knowledge, critical thinking and analysis. The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.	Exam; coursework; lab books; field notebooks, maps and log sheets. Formative assessment can be via weekly feedback in practical classes and test questions on the intranet, in-field exercises.
A3	Life: its origin, evolution and diversity through time.	Lectures, practicals and fieldwork. Develops subject knowledge, critical thinking; plus analytical, observational and interpretational skills; communication skills using text and graphics. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 4,, 7, 8, 9, 10.	Exam; coursework; lab books. Formative assessment is via weekly feedback in practical classes and test questions on the intranet.
A4	Methods of palaeontological, geological and biological data acquisition and analysis.	Lectures, practicals and fieldwork. Develops subject knowledge, critical thinking; plus analytical, observational and interpretational skills; communication skills using text and graphics. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10.	Coursework; lab books; field notebooks, maps and log sheets. Formative assessment can be via weekly feedback in practical classes and test questions on the intranet, in-field exercises.

A5	How palaeontological data can be applied to solving scientific and economic problems.	Lectures, practicals and fieldwork. Develops subject knowledge, critical thinking; plus analytical, observational and interpretational skills; communication skills using text and graphics. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10.	Exam; coursework; lab books. Formative assessment is via weekly feedback in practical classes and test questions on the intranet.

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) skills, able to:			
LO number	**Learning outcome**	**Learning and Teaching methods**	**Assessment methods**
B1	Plan, conduct, evaluate and report a programme of research, and formulate/test a hypothesis.	Practicals, workshops and fieldwork. Develops critical thinking and analysis; communication skills, researching and referencing. Data manipulation and presentation; project management. An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline. 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. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10.	Coursework, presentations, lab books. Formative assessment is via weekly feedback in practical classes and field notebooks.
B2	Research and synthesise information from a variety of sources.	Practicals and workshops. 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). The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10.	Coursework, lab books, presentations.

B3	Analyse, evaluate, interpret and integrate data from a variety of sources.	Practicals, workshops and fieldwork. Develops analytical, observation and interpretational skills; communication; data processing, manipulation and presentation; project management. An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10.	Exams, coursework, lab books, presentations. Formative assessment is via weekly feedback in practical classes and field notebooks.

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) skills, able to:			
LO number	**Learning outcome**	**Learning and Teaching methods**	**Assessment methods**
C1	Employ relevant field/laboratory data collection and analytical techniques, and interpret these data in a professional manner.	Practicals. 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. Aligns to Hallmarks 9 and 10.	Coursework; direct observation by staff; field notebooks, dissertation.
C2	Carry out good laboratory/field practice according to local, national and international regulations	Fieldwork. 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. Aligns to Hallmarks 4, 9, 10.	Direct observation by staff; field notebooks, dissertation.
C3	Prepare fully-referenced scientific reports, with high-quality illustrations.	Coursework assignments; can also be to some extent in practical portfolios (lab books). 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. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 3, 8.	Lab books, reports, dissertation.
C4	Utilise specialist +/- industry-standard software, appropriate to a task.	As follow-up work to fieldwork/labwork; databases, statistical packages, StrataBugs, graphics packages, DigiMap. 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	Portfolios, reports, coursework. Formative assessment can be via weekly feedback in practical classes.

		and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. Data manipulation, interpretation and presentation. Aligns to Hallmarks 3, 7, 9, 10.	

D. Transferrable (Graduate and Employability) skills, able to:			
LO number	**Learning outcome**	**Learning and Teaching methods**	**Assessment methods**
D1	Take responsibility for the planning and execution of their learning, meeting deadlines, and identifying the appropriate resources (human and physical) to enable the successful completion of a task.	Tutorial programme, within classes and workshops, and additional support networks. Identify and critically evaluate personal learning styles and skills gaps, seeking relevant support where appropriate to become a well-rounded scientist. Take on board formative and summative feedback to identify highlighted areas of improvement. Aligns to Hallmarks 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10.	All coursework and exams, including dissertation.
D2	Communicate effectively using a range of media, and be confident in the use of Information Technology (word processing, databases, spreadsheets, statistical packages, graphics packages, electronic mail and Internet).	Tutorial programme, various modules, lab work. 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. Data manipulation, interpretation and presentation. Aligns to Hallmarks 3, 7, 8, 9, 10.	Presentations, reports, lab books, posters, infographics, museum displays.
D3	Demonstrate numerical and statistical skills appropriate to the scientific field.	Various modules, lectures, workshops. Data manipulation, interpretation and presentation. Aligns to Hallmark 1, 2, 5.	Exams, reports, coursework.
D4	Be able to work independently and as part of a team.	Fieldwork and presentations. Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. Data manipulation, interpretation and presentation. The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts. Aligns to Hallmarks 5, 6, 8, 9, 10.	In-field exercises; presentations; coursework.

Academic Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth Academic Regulations: Examination & Assessment Regulations will apply to this course.

Support for Student Learning

The University of Portsmouth provides a comprehensive range of support services for students throughout their course, details of which are available at the MyPort student portal.

Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

The University of Portsmouth undertakes comprehensive monitoring, review and evaluation of courses within clearly assigned staff responsibilities. Student feedback is a key feature in these evaluations, as represented in our Policy for Listening to and Responding to the Student Voice where you can also find further information.

Reference Points

The course and outcomes have been developed taking account of:

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Specification
- University of Portsmouth Strategy
- University of Portsmouth Code of Practice for Work-based and Placement Learning
- Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Quality Assurance Agency Subject Benchmark Statement for **Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies.**
- Requirements of Professional and/or Statutory Regulatory Bodies: **The Geological Society of London**
- Vocational and professional experience, scholarship and research expertise of the University of Portsmouth's academic members of staff
- National Occupational Standards

Changes to your course/modules

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information provided in this Course Specification and will endeavour to deliver this course in keeping with this Course Specification. However, changes to the course may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, and the review and update of modules and courses.

Where this activity leads to significant changes to modules and courses there will be prior consultation with students and others, wherever possible, and the University of Portsmouth will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption to students.

It is also possible that the University of Portsmouth may not be able to offer a module or course for reasons outside of its control, for example, due to the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University of Portsmouth will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible, and where appropriate, will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

Document Details	
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