Student Handbook 2015
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Academic year dates

**Induction week**
Monday 14 September 2015 to Friday 18 September 2015

**Autumn teaching block**
Monday 21 September 2015 to Friday 11 December 2015

**Spring teaching block**
Monday 4 January 2016 to Thursday 24 March 2016

**Consolidation and assessment period**
Monday 18 April 2016 to Friday 27 May 2016
Your student handbook

This handbook is for all new students who are starting at the University of Portsmouth – undergraduates, postgraduates, part-time and distance learners.

The purpose of the University Student Handbook is to tell you about our commitment in providing an enabling learning environment, and our expectations of you, in return, as a member of the University community.

Along with the course information from your department, it provides you with the answers to many of the questions you might have about studying here. University procedures, regulations and services are mentioned in this handbook, with directions to full policy documentation on the University website and in other relevant University publications.

This handbook should be read alongside the Student Charter, which you will receive from your department. For those of you living in halls of residence, you should also read the Halls Handbook for rules and regulations specifically about your hall.

Make sure you regularly check the student website at www.port.ac.uk/students, where you will find useful information and details of all the services available to students.

The University is committed to a partnership with its students in which both sides acknowledge their responsibilities for achieving a fulfilling and successful academic experience.

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The Student Charter

You should receive a copy of the Student Charter with this handbook. The Charter details our commitment to your learning experience at Portsmouth and, in return, our expectations of your commitment to your own study, to your fellow students, and to the University and community.
The University community

When you join the University as a student, you become a member of an inclusive community that supports equality, diversity, ethical and responsible behaviour. You will benefit in many ways and develop socially from being a member of a vibrant community of students, staff and people who live and work in the city of Portsmouth, with many different cultures and backgrounds.

As a member of the University community, and in line with the Student Charter, we expect you to behave in a respectful manner within the University – including halls of residence – and in the city of Portsmouth.

The University and the city

The University has a major physical presence in Portsmouth and with it the potential to make an impact, for better or worse, on the city’s environment. We take this responsibility very seriously and will expect you, as a member of the University community, to share it. It is expected that students living in private accommodation will be responsible and respectful neighbours and members of the local community and do nothing that might damage the University’s reputation.

The University halls of residence

The University has invested, and continues to invest, in buildings, services and accommodation to support its students during their time in the city. You are expected to treat all property, buildings, grounds and equipment within the University, particularly the halls of residence, with care and respect. Please read the Halls of Residence Handbook for more information.

The University and the environment

The University is committed to a range of measures aimed at improving its environmental sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint. This includes minimising energy use, carbon emissions and waste. You are expected to consider the environment and support the University’s green initiatives.

Support for you at Portsmouth

Student Advice Services provides a network of support to help you make the most of your time at Portsmouth. Based in the Nuffield Centre, it forms a one-stop shop providing advice on finance, housing and academic skills, and counselling. All these services are run by experienced staff trained in giving advice and helping students to resolve problems. Staff can give basic advice and information on the spot where possible, or make an appointment for you to see someone if you need to discuss an issue in greater depth.

You can find contact details in your Pocket Guide to Student Services that you should have received with this handbook.

Don’t be shy about asking for help. Many students may have a problem at one time or another and sometimes minor worries can turn into major problems if they’re not sorted out quickly. All the services are bound by confidentiality, so nothing will go on to your academic record and we won’t discuss your private affairs with anyone else. You’ll find further information on what’s offered by individual student services online at www.port.ac.uk/students.

Your safety and security

The University will take all reasonable steps to provide a safe and secure environment in which to live and work. We provide advice and guidance on staying safe in the city, and our Police Liaison Officer and the Students’ Union are always on hand. We expect our students to consider their own safety and be proactive to ensure the safety of others. Look out for Safer Student information and act sensibly and responsibly.
Equality and diversity

We believe that a climate of trust and mutual respect is essential to the maintenance of high academic standards and your full enjoyment of University life. We aim to provide a friendly and supportive environment for teaching and learning. As part of this, we have a University-wide Equal Opportunities Policy. Our aim is to ensure that everyone, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, religion or belief, can make the most of their time at the University.

We require both staff and students to behave in a non-discriminatory manner. We also expect their full support in changing any practices that deny or limit equality. In particular, we aim to ensure that no student or staff member suffers offensive or intimidating behaviour or is the victim of harassment or discrimination.

Harassment and bullying

Harassment can take many forms, such as offensive or derogatory remarks, written or physical abuse, suggestive comments or gestures or any conduct that interferes with dignity or privacy. We note that increasingly this takes the form of cyber bullying. This University will not tolerate this or any other form of abuse and will take action through the Code of Student Behaviour and/or the Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy.

If you experience or witness such behaviour, there are some key actions you should take:

• don’t put up with it
• ask the harasser to stop if you perceive it safe to do so
• get support – talk to a member of staff in whom you have confidence, a Harassment Adviser, the Students’ Union Welfare Officer or a student counsellor
• collect evidence of the harassment
• make a formal complaint

Support and advice on harassment issues can be found at www.port.ac.uk/students.

Any formal complaint of harassment should be made to the Head of Department/School or the Dean of Faculty. All complaints will be dealt with sensitively. The University has a number of detailed statements of policy and procedures on these issues which can be found at www.port.ac.uk/policies.

The Students’ Union

The Students’ Union at Portsmouth is an organisation led by students who have been elected as Sabbatical Officers on behalf of the whole student population. Its aim is to enhance the student experience by providing support, recreation and training opportunities. All members are represented equally and without discrimination. Membership is automatic upon joining the University, although you can opt out if you wish. If you opt out it won’t make any difference to your studies, but you won’t have the advantages that include:

• representation in cases of disciplinary or academic appeal with the University
• the ability to join one of the many funded sports clubs and special interest societies
• use of Union facilities for socialising
• discounts from many retail outlets in Portsmouth

The Union also supports departmental course representatives in their role, providing vital feedback and influencing decisions that affect you and your course. If you are elected, you will have the chance to sit on Student Staff Consultative Committees’ and the Board of Studies’ meetings in your department and the Union’s Student Representative Council. You may even have the chance to represent students at University level (this could be on a University committee or as a Student Governor on the University’s Board of Governors).

For further information on all aspects of the Students’ Union visit www.UPSU.net.
Learning at Portsmouth

During your time at Portsmouth, you’ll experience a variety of learning and teaching methods. You’ll also encounter the very latest technologies as we make full use of computer-based and multimedia techniques, with a growing role for digital learning as a supplement to more traditional methods. Further details on all these aspects of learning will be included in your departmental/course handbooks.

Our commitment to your learning

The University will provide a high quality, stimulating and challenging learning and research environment with expert teaching staff and advice and guidance to support you in seeking to fulfil your academic potential.

We will provide access to a personal tutor/supervisor and a range of high quality, professional central support services including support for students with additional learning needs. You will have access to high quality general and specialist IT and library facilities, an online learning environment and other learning resources and spaces.

We will support you by providing information on assessment arrangements and deadlines for assignments and will provide clear, timely, constructive and quality feedback on your work.

Your commitment to your learning

Your learning is a shared experience which requires your investment and commitment. We expect you to attend and engage with all learning and research activities, to complete assessments, submit work on time and take responsibility for your learning. Reviewing the feedback on your work is critical to improving your performance.

You should attend meetings with your personal tutor/supervisor and make use of support and guidance services. You should be proactive and take advantage of extracurricular activities to develop your employability skills and personal qualities.

Assessment

An essential part of this whole process is assessment. Whatever course you follow, you will be assessed and evaluated on your skills, knowledge and understanding. Your personal tutor will guide you through the process.

Personal Development Planning (PDP)

There are specific units to help prepare you for job hunting and career development. This is all part of the Personal Development Planning (PDP) process that provides a framework for you to think about and integrate the personal, academic and career aspects of your time at Portsmouth.

We aim to provide an enabling learning environment so that by the end of your studies you will demonstrate the following ‘graduate skills’:

- command of a significant body of subject knowledge and skills
- transition into employment and/or further study
- confidence to engage in lifelong learning in pursuit of personal, academic and career development
- academic, research, information and digital literacy skills
- autonomous and collaborative work
- an enterprising outlook with logical, critical and creative thinking to solve a range of problems
- a global perspective and the ability to act in an ethical and socially responsible manner

As a University student, there is an emphasis on you taking responsibility for your own learning and critically interacting with material, rather than passively absorbing information. All of our courses include study skills, either as separate units or integrated within other units of study, which aim to help you learn effectively and make the best use of our learning resources.

You will have access to our online portfolio system where you can organise and record your PDP activities.

IT and computer systems

The University has invested significantly in computing facilities and has integrated the use of IT into all degree courses. You’ll have access to networked PCs and Macs throughout the campus, providing access to a wide variety of services, resources and software, including free internet access. If you own a PC, Mac or laptop and are living in a hall of residence, you can also connect to the University’s broadband service.

As a student, you will have your own computer account and email address and will be encouraged to make full use of the internet and other multimedia resources. Access to these facilities demands a degree of responsibility from each user not to jeopardise the integrity of systems.

Most, if not all, of your units of study will be delivered in part through the University’s virtual learning environment – Moodle. You can access Moodle at www.port.ac.uk/students.
Computing regulations and advice

You are responsible for your account and the way in which it is used. Make sure that your password cannot be easily guessed and if you think someone knows your password, change it immediately and inform the IS Service Desk, on 023 9284 7777. If you wish to change your password this should be done through www.port.ac.uk/studentaccount.

You must log out correctly when you finish working on a workstation. This is important for the security of your account. To do so on a PC, click on the ‘Start’ button in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen and then click on ‘Log Off username’ and click ‘OK’.

For more information on our IT services, including guidance and regulations, visit www.port.ac.uk/ithelp.

Copyright

During your studies you may want to include material that has already been published elsewhere in your own work. This is likely to be an extract from, or reference to, a textbook or journal, but could include magazine or newspaper articles, photographs, illustrations, logos or trademarks, web pages, emails, sheet music, maps or video, audio, TV or radio broadcasts. This includes use of the University of Portsmouth logo, which is a registered trademark of the University of Portsmouth and is protected under copyright law.

Any material that has been recorded (in any way), published, released or broadcast is covered by UK and international copyright law. The most common misunderstanding is the belief that web pages are in the public domain and are therefore free from copyright and can be reproduced freely. This is not true. Web pages are published works and the same copyright laws apply. If you wish to use materials in your own publications you should ask the copyright holder’s permission before reproducing any copyright work.

There are circumstances under which you are allowed to reproduce copyright material for private study without first seeking permission. These circumstances are defined in the University’s Copyright Code which can be downloaded from www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation.

Copyright is a serious issue; both you and the University could be in serious trouble if you disregard copyright law. The use of University resources to reproduce copyright material without the copyright holder’s permission could lead to disciplinary action. If you are in any doubt, please check with the Copyright Licensing Coordinator before using copyright materials. At the time of publication, the University Copyright Coordinator is the University Librarian, Roisin Gwyer roisin.gwyer@port.ac.uk.

Recording lectures

Lectures can be considered to be broadcasts and are therefore subject to copyright law, as described above. Students may record lectures for private study purposes only and, out of courtesy, should request permission to do so. Written permission from the lecturer must be obtained if students would like to record a lecture for any other purpose.

Students with a disability are permitted to record lectures for private study purposes only as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. This should first be discussed and agreed with the Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC) and the student’s Head of Department/School. The Head of Department/School will then disseminate this information to the relevant lecturers.

The use of recorded material for any purpose other than private study – for example posting via social media – without having first gained permission from the lecturer is an offence under the University’s Code of Student Behaviour and may result in disciplinary action being taken.
Academic citizenship

Studying for a degree in higher education involves becoming a member of an academic community. This means learning from your lecturers and fellow students in an environment based on courtesy, honesty and mutual respect. As a student, you will be encouraged to develop your own ideas and, in return, will be expected to acknowledge the way you have drawn on the concepts, theories and practice of others in this process. This is about intellectual integrity. For written coursework, this implies appropriate acknowledgement of the sources that you have consulted and used.

Respecting views
Students, like academic staff, enjoy the benefits of freedom of expression and enquiry. This is essential in giving you the opportunity to develop your thinking, independence and self confidence. However, this is a privilege that is only possible through being a good academic citizen. This means respecting the views of others even when we do not necessarily agree with them. It implies taking your turn to listen as well as speak. It means working and cooperating with a wide range of fellow students, lecturers, professional support staff and work-based practitioners in a wide variety of learning settings. These expectations are not meant to constrain your thinking. These are simply values that make a ‘higher’ education possible.

Honesty and integrity
Intellectual integrity is another important element of academic citizenship. Every time you submit work for assessment, it is essential to be honest about which elements have been influenced or contributed by the work of others. This might be an author of a book or article in the case of an individual assignment, or acknowledging the contribution of a fellow student in the case of a group assignment. You need to be open and clear about such matters. In the case of individual assignments, it is about respecting the priority of others who have publicly shared their ideas, usually through publication. Failure to do so amounts to theft of someone else’s idea and is regarded by the University with the utmost seriousness. Your lecturers will work with you to explain their expectations and help you understand how to ensure your work is properly referenced.

The University will not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form. It is a form of cheating and cheating in assessments undermines everything we believe about learning, academic integrity and academic achievement.

What do we mean by cheating?
We mean ‘an attempt to complete an assessment by means considered to be unfair’. By unfair we mean:
- bringing into an exam situation information that you should not have
- copying or passing off someone else’s work as your own
- any of the other ways in which an individual may attempt to ’tilt’ an otherwise level playing field

What if it was group work?
Your contribution must still be your own. If we find it’s not we will treat you and the other members of the group as cheats.

What happens if we catch you cheating?
Your Head of Department will deal with the matter. They, or another senior member of staff, will interview you and if you are found guilty, may reduce the mark for that assessment to 0. If it is a very serious offence, we will call a University disciplinary panel. The panel will ensure you get a fair hearing. If it concludes that you did cheat, the panel has a range of powers and penalties, the most serious being exclusion from the University.

Is plagiarism cheating?
Most definitely. It is a common form of cheating, especially with the wider access people now have to the internet.

Plagiarism includes:
- copying material from any source and trying to pass it off as your own work (this includes computer language and programmes, scientific experiments and visual images in addition to standard written text)
• paraphrasing material without appropriate acknowledgement and not in accordance with the University’s agreed referencing conventions (this includes computer language and programmes, scientific experiments and visual images in addition to standard written text)
• collusion, where the assessment artefact is prepared by someone else and presented as your own work
• purchase of an essay, project, computer programme and so on (whether pre-written or specially prepared)
• submission of an essay, project and computer programme written by someone else
• submission of another student’s work with or without that student’s knowledge or consent

Plagiarism is easy to spot for the following reasons:
• your lecturers are experts in their subjects and will recognise when a work is plagiarised or when the work of others is incorrectly or inappropriately presented and referenced
• plagiarised work often includes obvious signs such as dramatic (and improved) changes in language, grammar, style or unusual formatting (a mixture of font styles and type sizes) because of cutting and pasting
• there are now a variety of electronic detection tools that can help staff identify plagiarism

The University subscribes to TurnitinUK. This is a web-based system that can check submitted work by matching text via web pages, electronic journals and previously submitted work by students in all other universities that subscribe to the software. It does not prove plagiarism, but further informs the marker who suspects plagiarism and contributes to the academic judgement as to whether plagiarism has occurred.

NB: As part of your responsibility to behave with honesty and integrity, we require you to keep electronic copies of all of your written coursework assignments.

What happens if you are accused of plagiarism?
If your tutor thinks you’re guilty of plagiarism, your Head of Department will deal with the matter, and the following procedures will be set in motion:
• your department will ensure that the work has been evaluated using all available resources (via TurnitinUK and/or other means)
• you will be interviewed by the Head of Department (or nominated delegate) to establish the amount of plagiarism involved and to get your version of events
• if it turns out that you’re claiming that you have referenced the work, but you haven’t done it very thoroughly then the work will be marked down (a referencing penalty) because poor referencing is poor scholarship
• if plagiarism is proven, your department may reduce the mark for that assessment to 0
• if you repeatedly commit plagiarism or do so in a blatant way, you will be referred to a University disciplinary panel that has a range of powers, including the power to expel you from the University

So, learn how to attribute other people’s work properly; don’t be a plagiarist and don’t cheat. It really isn’t worth the risk.

For full information on the examination and assessment regulations, please consult the regulations at www.port.ac.uk/assessmentandregulations.

For information on how to reference other people’s work, including online help and downloadable guides, visit http://referencing.port.ac.uk or www.port.ac.uk/ask (which also has more study skills guides).
Academic regulations

Every university has its own academic regulations. These set out the principles, procedures and practices relating to all things academic. It’s all about how to pass, how to progress and what to do if you don’t pass. A few examples are given below to give you an idea of the scope and purpose of academic regulations and information on where to find them. You will also be given a summary of University of Portsmouth regulations during induction.

Find it on the web
Most of the University’s academic regulations are published on our website, together with other policy and advisory documents that may have a bearing on your studies. If you have a query about rules and regulations, look at the website first at www.port.ac.uk/assessmentandregulations.

Attendance and engagement
The University expects you to attend all learning and teaching sessions associated with the programme on which you are enrolled. Your attendance and participation at learning and teaching sessions will ensure you are best placed to achieve your full potential and will greatly enhance your enjoyment and overall experience at University.

The University operates a Student Attendance and Engagement Monitoring policy as part of our commitment to providing a supportive learning environment. We recognise the investment you and your sponsors have made when you enrolled to study at this University. As a responsible institution, we believe we have a duty to monitor attendance, and to act on non-attendance, so that we can support you to complete your programme of study. The policy applies to all registered students on taught programmes, no matter how your programme of study is delivered.

Achieving success in your course
The University’s academic regulations include assessment regulations. These provide a general framework for how our courses are assessed. For example, the regulations state that your responsibilities as a student are to:

• attend examinations and submit work for assessment as required; if you fail to attend examination(s) or submit work punctually for assessment without good reason, the Unit Assessment Board (UAB) and/or Board of Examiners will determine that you have failed the assessments concerned

• provide the Unit Assessment Board and/or Board of Examiners before its relevant meeting with any information on personal circumstances that may have prevented you from submitting or attempting an assessment and which you wish the Unit Assessment Board and/or Board of Examiners to take into account, failing which any appeal founded on those grounds will be rejected

• undertake assessments honestly and in a manner that does not attempt to gain unfair advantage

• ascertain the results of your performance in any assessment

The regulations state that our responsibilities are to:

• assess students fairly

• provide proper invigilation of examinations undertaken in the University

• publish the results of students’ assessments affecting progression or awards and to issue individually to students, on request, their marks or grades

• investigate allegations of malpractice during assessment

• consider appeals against decisions of Unit Assessment Boards and/or Board of Examiners

• assure itself that all other institutions and organisations conducting programmes leading to awards of the University have procedures and processes for examining students that are consistent with those of the University

In addition to the general regulations, your own course may have specific and detailed assessment regulations. These must be made clear not only to you but also to the Board of Examiners. The regulations will tell you each stage of progression in your course of study, each element within that stage which is to be assessed, how it is to be assessed, which elements are compulsory and which you must pass, and the criteria for judging whether you have passed or failed.
At Portsmouth, we have what is known as a ‘two tier’ assessment system. Firstly, your grades in each unit are confirmed by a Unit Assessment Board. Secondly, these grades are considered once a year by a Board of Examiners, who are responsible for progression. It’s the Board’s responsibility to decide if you can pass onto the next year of the course (or in your final year, if you are eligible for your degree or diploma).

The Board looks carefully at your overall performance and may, in special limited circumstances, give compensation for failed units that would otherwise stop you getting your degree or progressing to the next year. It cannot, however, alter your grades in individual units. Both Boards include external examiners so as to give a measure of independence and help us ensure that our courses meet national comparative standards.

**Failing a unit**

The University will do all it reasonably can to help you recover from this event. Firstly, the Unit Assessment Board (UAB) will state what you must do to recover the failure. You can look up the various possibilities in the academic regulations, but they range from resubmitting a piece of work to repeating the unit in full. Secondly, you are advised to see your Unit Coordinator and get some feedback on why you failed to achieve the learning outcomes. Lastly, make sure you know what you must do and by what date in order to recover the failure. It should be said that the most common reason for failure is poor engagement with the unit, including attendance (other than for illness or personal circumstances) by the student. The UAB will be aware of and treat such lack of engagement very seriously.

If you fail several units and you are not able to recover them and there are no special circumstances, the Board of Examiners will consider whether you may progress or not. Academic regulations will give you the full details, but broadly speaking there are two possibilities:

- you must repeat the units that you failed
- you may be excluded from further study and you may not continue. If this happens to you then you may seek an interview with the Chair of the Board of Examiners who can advise on the Board’s decisions and who also has the power to review your case

In all cases you are encouraged to see your personal tutor or course leader. You can also seek the advice of the sabbatical officers or academic caseworker in the Students’ Union or speak to the University’s counselling service.

**Appealing against your final unit mark or degree classification**

All students have the right to appeal against their final unit mark or degree classification. However, this should not be undertaken lightly. The only grounds for appeal are that:

- you believe that the University has made an error or regulations have not been properly followed
- the University was unaware of circumstances that prevented you from submitting or undertaking an assessment and you have a relevant reason why you did not use the extenuating circumstances form (ECF)

You cannot appeal simply because you are unhappy with the mark or classification.

Before mounting an appeal, you are advised to consult your course leader. However, the University does have a formal procedure, described in the Examination and Assessment Regulations. For full details see www.port.ac.uk/assessmentandregulations.

Advice can also be obtained from the Students’ Union Advice Centre: www.upsu.net/advice.

**Transferring credits**

It is possible to transfer credits if you have already studied part of a degree elsewhere. The University has a policy for credit transfer and the accreditation of prior learning. The policy covers the ‘equivalence’ of learning, such as how a qualification you have gained elsewhere compares to what you would have covered at Portsmouth. This guides our academic judgement about whether what you’ve got can be ‘traded in’ for credit against your chosen course of study. For more information about this, talk to your tutor or course leader.
Communicating with you

As a student at Portsmouth we endeavour to communicate with you in the most effective way, using a mix of printed and online information. We will provide you with a student email account as an appropriate means of communicating with staff and fellow students. Your email account is delivered to you by Google Mail along with other Google services such as Calendar and Drive.

You need to be aware of the following communication channels and use them as a means of keeping informed about important University and course related issues and events.

**Student website**
The student website at [www.port.ac.uk/students](http://www.port.ac.uk/students) is specifically for current students where you will find valuable information and links to other useful University resources. Use this site as your one-stop area for links to:

- the latest news and events for students
- your Google Mail, Google Calendar and other Google applications
- learning resources and all the services here to help you
- Myport, containing your timetable, results and other information just for you

The student website is the homepage on all University PCs but make sure you bookmark this site at home as you will need to use it regularly.

**Myport**
Myport is one of the most important resources and is your personalised view of the University. You can access the site from [www.port.ac.uk/students](http://www.port.ac.uk/students).

You have private access to your own student file online and your information cannot be viewed by other students. Your username will be given to you when you join the University, as will your password (which you will be advised to change). You will be able to access your personal records, timetable and marks and you can also subscribe to view your timetable on your smart device. We recommend that you use this information source regularly.

Please be aware however, that in many instances the information contained in Myport will be provisional and you may need to check and confirm information with a member of staff.

**Virtual learning environment**
The University’s virtual learning environment – Moodle – is accessible via a desktop, laptop or smartphone. Here you will find your online course content and you can also collaborate and communicate with fellow students and tutors. You can access Moodle at [www.port.ac.uk/moodle](http://www.port.ac.uk/moodle).

**Google Mail**
You will be given your own University email account with Google when you join, which will be used on a regular basis to send you important information. You will have two email addresses that you can use to send and retrieve mail from within Google Mail: your basic email address, which is your username@myport.ac.uk, for example up669537@myport.ac.uk, and a ‘nickname’ which we have automatically assigned as your firstname.lastname@myport.ac.uk, for example joe.bloggs@myport.ac.uk. You can keep your account for life, so you won’t have to transfer all your email and contacts when you leave.

Email is the main way in which the University will communicate with you, so it is important that you manage your email account. Check your emails daily and respond to any questions from the University within a reasonable time. Failure to do so may result in you missing valuable information. You can access your email via [www.port.ac.uk/students](http://www.port.ac.uk/students) either on campus or at home.

Make sure you understand where your emails are coming from and unsubscribe from any email notifications that you no longer wish to read, and report as ‘spam’ any emails that you consider to be unsolicited.

You can email staff at the University with any queries and questions. Staff email addresses are all structured as forename.surname@port.ac.uk.
**Plasma screens and noticeboards**
There are plasma screens and noticeboards in various buildings across the campus. These screens and boards display useful information about the University and about your department and/or building so make sure you check your local screen and board as often as you can.

**Paper mail**
Sometimes it is necessary to send paper mail to you in your department or at your home or term time address. Your department will advise where to collect any correspondence within your building. For mail to your home, we need to ensure we have your current home and term time address so please keep your contact details up to date using the facility within Myport.

**Communicating in an emergency**
In the event of an emergency, depending on the nature of the incident, we will use all means available and appropriate to contact you and to keep you informed of the situation. Please ensure you comply with any instructions given to you and regularly check your email, the student website and any noticeboards or screens for further updates. If necessary we will also contact you via text, so please ensure your mobile phone number is up to date in our records by using the facility within Myport.

**Use of social networking sites, other websites and online forums**
Many of you may already regularly use blogs or social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter or create your own websites. Mostly, the means by which you wish to communicate with your peers or the wider world is not the concern of the University, however the University requires you to use these sites responsibly.

Freedom of academic enquiry and expression are valued by the University and at the same time we expect ethical and responsible behaviour from our students and staff. The University expects that you will not write abusive material about fellow students and/or staff in emails, on web pages and/or social networking sites (see page 5 on harassment and bullying). It is your responsibility to ensure that you do not act to bring the University of Portsmouth into disrepute or in a way that is offensive or discriminatory to others. When statements or views are expressed online that are considered to be abusive, libellous or damaging to the reputation of the University, action can be taken against the author or publisher.

The University logo is a registered trademark of the University of Portsmouth and is protected under copyright law. It is not permitted to use the logo, online or in any publication, without the prior consent of the University.

You might also want to bear in mind your ‘digital footprint’ – the trail, traces or ‘footprints’ that people leave online. This is information online – such as forum comments, emails and attachments, uploaded videos or digital images – all of which leave traces of personal information about you available to others, including possible future employers.

The University has Facebook pages and a Twitter feed which you may wish to follow, however these are not primary channels with which to communicate with you. The University will only use the means of communication outlined at the beginning of this section to communicate important and essential information to you.

**Text messaging**
We may on occasion contact you via text, in case of an emergency or to confirm appointments with our services. Texts will be kept to a minimum and will be sent in line with our Data Protection Policy.

**Use of your personal data**
The University conforms to all data protection legislation in managing and using your data, including your contact details. For more information on how we will use your data visit www.port.ac.uk/dataprotection.
Working in partnership

At Portsmouth we believe in working in partnership with our students so that together we can enhance all aspects of your experience. The University attaches great importance to creating a culture and environment that promotes student engagement and offers all students an opportunity to be involved in its quality system.

This partnership, as set out in the Student Charter, recognises that students have rights and responsibilities to voice their opinions and that the University has obligations to respond to them.

We listen to our students through student participation in committees, through surveys and other forms of student feedback, and through activities led by the Students’ Union.

The University has a range of formal and informal mechanisms to make sure that your views are heard. Students are encouraged to speak to their personal tutor, course leader or Head of Department early if they have any concerns about their course. Formal mechanisms to gather and respond to student views are set out in our Policy for Gathering and Responding to the Student Voice, and include the activities outlined below.

**Student representation**
The student representation system is jointly owned by the University and the Students’ Union. Course representatives are a vital means of ensuring that we listen to students within the University. Elections for Course Representatives are held at the beginning of the academic year, and training is provided jointly by the University and the Students’ Union.

A course representative is responsible for finding out and expressing their peers’ views on their course and the wider student experience. Course representatives then take students’ views to the Student Staff Consultative Committees and ensure that, where appropriate, matters of particular importance are discussed at Board of Studies and Faculty Board meetings.

**Student surveys**
You will be invited to participate in a small number of formal University surveys each year by email – so please do read these emails. The purpose of these surveys is to provide formal feedback to unit coordinators, course leaders and senior University staff and the Students’ Union about your experiences of, and satisfaction with, various aspects of your studies and the support provided to you.

These are important opportunities for you to express your views and have an impact on your experience and that of future students and, as partners, we expect you to participate and provide constructive feedback. In return we will tell you what action we have taken as a consequence of the feedback you gave us.

**Student participation in quality assurance and enhancement**
Each year the University approves new undergraduate and postgraduate courses. We follow a rigorous course approval process to ensure that the course curriculum meets national subject requirements, that the standards set for achieving the award are appropriate for the level of the award, and that students will have an excellent learning experience studying the course.

You can play an important role in the approval process and be a full member of the approval panel. We can offer you training and support to be a Student Approval Panel Member and it is an excellent way to ensure the courses we offer at Portsmouth have been designed and approved with the student body fully involved. It is also a great achievement for you to include on your CV.

Similarly, all courses undergo a periodic review every six years and you can also be a full member of the panel for Periodic Programme Reviews. All training and support will be offered to you. If you are interested in taking part in these important activities please discuss it with the Students’ Union.
**Making a complaint**

The University is committed to providing a high quality service and encourages its students to raise issues where they have cause for concern. In the first instance, you should raise any concerns you might have informally with a member of staff who can help (for example, your lecturer, personal tutor or a member of residential halls staff). If you feel they haven’t dealt with your concerns you should raise the issue, in writing, to the University Complaints Team by emailing complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk.

The Complaints Team will consider your complaint and decide if there is a case to answer, and, if there is, what form of investigation into your concerns should be conducted.

Further information about the University’s complaints procedure, including a number of frequently asked questions and a complaint submission form, can be found at www.port.ac.uk/studentcomplaints.

**Student Opinion Panel**

We are always keen to gather your views and opinions from time to time to help us improve your experience at Portsmouth. The Student Opinion Panel is a less formal method of assessing our service to you by asking you to complete surveys and attend focus groups in return for vouchers or the chance to win prizes.

Join the Student Opinion Panel at www.port.ac.uk/studentopinionpanel.
Glossary – some useful definitions

The language of the University is full of abbreviations, acronyms and jargon. At first this might seem a little off-putting, but you’ll quickly pick up the most common bits of ‘shorthand’. Here are some of the terms and abbreviations you’ll encounter most often:

**Academic Registry**
Usually known just as ‘Registry’. This is the University’s administration office responsible for a range of services including admissions, registration, student records, confirmation of awards, awards ceremonies, quality standards and development.

**Recognition of Prior Learning**
‘RPL’ (recognition of prior learning) awards credit for learning undertaken prior to joining the University, usually in the form of exemption from parts of a course.

**Anonymous marking**
The identity of students is not revealed to those marking the assessment.

**Assessment**
Anything you do which is marked where that mark counts towards your study outcome.

**Assessment artefact**
Refers to the actual piece of work that is produced for assessment.

**Assessment penalty**
A penalty applied to the mark given for an assessment; it is applied because the student has breached some requirement of the assessment regulations, usually because work was submitted late or due to an academic offence such as plagiarism. The University has a standard assessment penalty that is applied when work is submitted late. The mark for an assessment will be capped at the unit pass mark if the work is submitted within 20 working days after the due date; if submission occurs more than 20 working days after the due date, the work will not be marked and will count as a non submission.

**Associate Dean (Academic)**
A senior member of staff who supports the Dean in managing the curriculum and quality enhancement processes within a faculty.

**Associate Dean (Research)**
A senior member of staff who supports the Dean in improving the research infrastructure within a faculty.

**Associate Dean (Students)**
A senior member of staff who supports the Dean in improving the student learning experience within a faculty. They are a link between the University and your course representatives, and can be a referral point for students.

**Award**
The outcome of a course of studies, such as a degree, certificate or diploma.

**Board of Studies**
The body responsible for maintaining the standards and quality of provision of an individual course and for recommending changes to its curriculum and regulations.

**Board of Examiners**
Sometimes called ‘Progression and Award Board’. This is the second level of the University’s ‘two tier’ examination and assessment system, responsible for making decisions about the progress of students on a course or courses and for making awards. A single Board may sometimes be responsible for several awards.

**CATS**
Our Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme gives credit for each individual course unit you complete successfully to count towards your final award. It means courses at Portsmouth can be much more flexible and adapted to individual students’ needs than at institutions without such a scheme.

**Combined Honours Degree Programme**
The term used to describe the University scheme which enables students to combine the study of two subject areas and where these two subject areas may be drawn from two separate departments or faculties of the University.

**Course**
A coherent set of units leading to an award. Also called a ‘pathway’.

**Course leader**
The member of academic staff responsible for the effective operation of a course or pathway and for ensuring it is subject to ongoing development.
**Course representative**
A student elected by course members to represent their interests on a Board of Studies.

**Coursework**
Work of any type (essays, presentations, in-class tests, portfolios) that is not an examination.

**Core unit**
A course unit that must be completed successfully in order to gain a particular named award. Often called a ‘mandatory’ or ‘required’ unit (see also Unit).

**Credits**
Credit points which a course unit carries towards an award. Every unit has a particular number of credits attached to it, with each ten credits being equivalent to 100 notional hours of student learning. On a full-time course of study, the normal workload is worth 120 points per year towards a requirement of 360 credits for a conventional three-year undergraduate honours degree.

**Curriculum**
The total learning experience provided including the content of courses, methods employed, outcomes and assessment strategies.

**Dean**
A senior member of staff responsible for the management of a faculty.

**Deferred First Attempt**
This is a first attempt at an exam which is given to a student who has been prevented from previously attempting it due to extenuating circumstances.

**Dissertation**
An extended piece of work, carried out by an individual student, on a subject that is treated at length. It involves scholarly primary research and/or the analysis or application of data/knowledge in a practical undertaking. The piece of work is submitted for an academic qualification at honours or Master’s level and will be double marked.

**Online portfolio**
An online portfolio system to store a student’s personal development planning, providing an area to plan, organise and record your development activities. It can be used to gather evidence of graduate, academic and employability skills.

**Extenuating circumstances**
Circumstances of a sufficiently serious nature to have prevented a student from attending or submitting an assessment. Students can fill in an Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF) to be considered.

**Faculty**
A group of departments, schools or subject areas, usually reflecting a broadly similar area of academic interests (like business or science), led by a Dean and run on a practical, day-to-day basis by a Faculty Manager.

**Foundation degree**
A degree integrating academic and work-based learning.

**Further Education**
Further Education or ‘FE’ is study other than for a qualification recognised as part of Higher Education or ‘HE’. FE studies include those for GCSE, A Level, NVQ, City & Guilds and BTEC qualifications, as well as Access and recreational courses.

**Head of department/school/subject area**
The person responsible for the management of a department, school or subject area’s activities, including teaching, staffing and research; also a member of the Faculty Executive.

**IWLP**
The Institution-Wide Language Programme enables almost any student at the University to learn a foreign language as part of their course.
Glossary – some useful definitions

**Key skills**
Specific skills needed for study and work that have national standards; particularly relevant for Foundation degrees.

**Learning outcomes**
The intended learning outcomes should be specified in programme specifications and unit descriptions. They are statements that predict what learners will have gained as a result of learning.

**Marking criteria**
The learning outcomes, knowledge, understanding and skill requirements that are taken into account in awarding assessment marks. Marking criteria enable the differentiation of performance, particularly beyond threshold level.

**Marking scheme**
A detailed structure for assigning marks where a specified number of marks are given to individual components of the answer.

**Moodle**
Moodle is your virtual learning environment (VLE), where you will find your online course content.

**Optional unit**
A unit that forms part of a named award, but does not have to be studied by a student in order for the award to be achieved. Instead, it forms part of a predetermined set of units within a named award/course from which a student must choose and study a certain number from those on offer to receive the award. Please note that while the University will make every effort to enable you to study the options you select, this cannot be guaranteed and you may be offered an alternative to the option you select (see also Unit).

**Pathway**
Another name for a course or for a group of named courses relating to a single subject area (for example, marine biology is one of the biology pathways).

**Personal Development Planning (PDP)**
PDP is a structured process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their own personal academic and career development. They are guided in this by their personal tutor. See also ePortfolio and Portfolio.

**Portfolio**
A range of documentation created by a person to demonstrate the achievements, learning and skills they have developed. A portfolio may be created for a number of reasons (for example, as part of the personal development planning/profiling process or as part of the assessment of a course). See also ePortfolio.

**Postgraduate**
A student who has completed a first degree who is studying for Master's or Doctorate.

**Programme specification**
A concise description of the intended outcomes of learning from a higher education programme and the means by which these outcomes are achieved and demonstrated. It should make explicit the intended outcomes in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and other attributes. It should describe the teaching and learning methods that enable the outcomes to be achieved, the assessment methods that enable achievement to be demonstrated and the relationship of the programme and its study elements to the qualifications framework and to any subsequent professional qualification or career path.

**Progression**
The academic progress of the student which should be organised so that the demands on the learner in terms of intellectual challenge, skills, knowledge, conceptualisation and learning autonomy increase. The progression points within a course/programme are usually at the end of each stage of the course; thus a student progresses as they move successively through various stages.

**Quality assurance**
The means through which an institution confirms that the conditions are in place for students to achieve the standards set by the institution or other awarding body.

**Quality enhancement**
The means through which an institution attempts to continuously improve the quality of its curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment methods.

**Second Attempt Assessment**
Provides a further opportunity for a student to meet the assessment requirements of a unit or units after an initial failure. This will involve the student being reassessed normally in those individual components in which they were unsuccessful initially, without the requirement to repeat any attendance (except for an examination). Reassessment must be completed within a specified period of time and always before the start of the next stage for the student, in order that normal progress may be made.

**Personal tutor**
A member of staff responsible for providing general academic and pastoral (non-academic) support to individual students in liaison with students’ course leaders.
The Student Centre
The Student Centre brings together Students’ Union services including the Information and Advice Centre, Job Shop, sports and societies support, sports safety, Community Action and other general support and student development initiatives run by the Union, with the aim of providing training, recreational and other opportunities to enhance the experience of being a student at Portsmouth.

Suspension
This occurs when a student leaves a course temporarily with the intention of returning at a future point (this must be within two academic years). Providing it is within the two-year period, a student will be permitted to continue their studies at the same stage, either at the beginning of the next academic year or at the beginning of the teaching block equivalent to that in which the suspension occurred, depending upon which is the most academically appropriate.

Transferable skills
Sometimes referred to as ‘personal transferable skills’, these are skills that you learn in one situation which you can put into practice in a different one. Examples include communication, team working, leadership and problem solving. These are the sort of things employers look for and value in a newly-graduated employee, so the University places a lot of importance on helping you to develop them.

Transcript
The formal record of academic achievement of a student on a particular award, detailing all of the units that have been successfully completed by the student as part of their studies.

UPSU
The University of Portsmouth Students’ Union.

Unit
A self-contained part of a study programme with defined objectives, syllabus content and assessment scheme. Units attract credit towards named University awards. Students studying full time normally take 120 credits in a year (180 credits for postgraduates).

Types of units are as follows:

- **core** – a unit that must be completed successfully in order to gain a particular named award
- **option** – option (or optional) units provide an element of choice within most courses, although the choice may be more restricted on some courses than on others

Unit Assessment Board
The first of the University’s ‘two tier’ assessment system, responsible for confirming a student’s marks for each individual unit within a group of units related to a common subject. Normally, the group of units overseen by a Board apply to several named courses. Also see Board of Examiners.

Unit coordinator
A staff member responsible for the planning, coordination and quality of a unit.

Unit description
A detailed and explicit statement of the combination of attributes and specific characteristics which define a unit. This will include a specification of what someone who successfully completes the unit will have gained (‘learning outcomes’).

Unitisation
The programme of structuring courses as study units of common size to enable flexible programmes of study (see CATS).

Vice-Chancellor
The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Graham Galbraith, is the Chief Executive of the University, the Chief Academic Officer, and the Funding Council’s nominated accounting officer. The Vice-Chancellor determines the University’s activities and manages its budgets and staff. He is supported by the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive, a senior management team.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
Your VLE is a system called Moodle. Here you will find your online course content.

Withdrawal
Occurs when a student leaves a course with no apparent intention of returning to either the course or the University.

Work-based learning
Where the learning environment is the student’s permanent or temporary place of work and where the assessment of learning outcomes is based upon what is done at the workplace.

Work-related learning
Work-related learning is defined as learning achieved through activities that are based in, or derive from, the context of work or the workplace. They include simulated learning, work-based learning and learning derived through undertaking a placement.
Student summary of health and safety policy

University of Portsmouth Health and Safety Statement of Policy

1. The Board of Governors has ultimate responsibility for health and safety in the University. Its duties are discharged through the Vice-Chancellor, taking all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of all who make use of the University's facilities.

2. Success in health and safety management is dependent upon the integration of health and safety into all management functions within the University.

3. The Vice-Chancellor, or his/her nominee, is responsible for the formulation, implementation and ongoing policy development in the field of health and safety.

4. The promotion, enhancement and maintenance of a positive health and safety culture within the University is achieved by:
   • all staff displaying a positive attitude to health and safety
   • all staff taking care of their own health and safety and the health and safety of those who may be affected by their acts or omissions
   • managers at all levels accepting that they are responsible for the staff they supervise and are accountable to those whom they report for health and safety
   • managers ensuring that all activities are adequately resourced, both financially and physically

5. The University will maintain proper arrangements with employees’ recognised trade union representatives for joint consultation on, and participation in, measures for promoting health and safety at work.

6. This Safety Policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Health and Safety Committee and amended as circumstances require. It is a fundamental belief of the University that all injuries can be prevented. Compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the relevant statutory provisions is to be regarded by all staff as the base from which to work.

Health and safety responsibilities of all staff and students

The University is committed to creating a working environment which is safe and healthy. All staff and students have an essential role in the creation of an active and positive health and safety culture. The University requires all staff and students to take reasonable care of their own safety and of the safety of others. These responsibilities include:

• to use equipment, machinery, substances and safety equipment as instructed and respect the use of safety equipment
• to cooperate with the University and inform University staff with responsibility for health and safety of any risk or threat to health and safety
• inform the University of any areas where health and safety arrangements, including training, may be considered to be inadequate
We (the University of Portsmouth) have checked the information in this handbook and believe that it is accurate at the time of going to press (August 2015). However, some information may change and we reserve the right to make changes to procedures, regulations and other processes subject to maintaining equivalent standards.