Programme Specification for PG Cert/ PG Dip/MSc Applied Sports Science

This document applies to academic year 2018/19 onwards

1.	**Awarding institution/body**	University of Worcester
2.	**Teaching institution**	University of Worcester
3.	**Programme accredited by**	N/A
4.	**Final award or awards**	MSc, PG Cert, PG Dip
5.	**Programme title**	Applied Sport Science
6.	**Pathways available**	N/A
7.	**Mode and/or site of delivery**	Blended / Distributed Learning (intensive teaching blocks and on-line delivery) University of Worcester
8.	**Mode of attendance and duration**	Full Time: mandatory attendance requirements of approximately 20 days per year. The course runs from September-October the following year. Part Time: Flexible Distributed Learning course with approximately10 days per year face to face contact teaching required. Typical time to complete the course part-time would be 2 years.
9.	**UCAS Code**	*N/A*
10.	**Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement**	*QAA Masters Degree Characteristics*.
11.	**Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision**	April 2018 August 2018 – AQU amendments

12. Educational aims of the programme

Applied Sports Science is the application of scientific principles and knowledge in the support of performance driven athletes and their coaches. The course aims to improve the knowledge, understanding and practical skills of practitioners working in or hoping to work in the sports performance industry. With this in mind the primary focus of content is related to enhancing athletic performance. This distinguishes the course from other postgraduate courses that also include aspects such as health. This specific focus provides students with a greater depth of understanding and technical skills and will better prepare students to further their careers in the highly competitive field of applied sports science.

The educational aims provide the over-arching structure to the course, together with also establishing its key philosophical underpinnings.

On completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. develop a systematic and in-depth understanding and a critical awareness of current problems and/or contemporary issues in applied sport science;
2. develop a critical understanding of research methods applicable to their own applied research and advanced scholarship within the field of sport science;
3. demonstrate proficiency in practical and technical skills required in applied sports science;
4. solve complex problems in applied sports science scenarios through application of knowledge and 'applied skills' such as decision making, collaboration and team work;
5. further develop their own continued professional development through independent learning and continued reflective practice;

6. engage in and experience international academic study and employment and further develop vocational skills required to meet the challenges of the global, knowledge-based economy;
7. demonstrate advanced communication skills both in written, verbal and audio visual formats;
8. develop originality in the application of theoretical principles and apply research skills to create further knowledge within the discipline of applied sport science;

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding, skills, qualities and other relevant attributes. The following learning outcomes have been informed by the QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement and the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and adapted according to the needs of this particular course.

The learning outcomes for the Applied Sport Science Masters programme are as follows:
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Knowledge and Understanding

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s	Award
1.	Identify, analyse and critique appropriate theory in applied sport science	MSPO4132 MSPO4134	MSc PG Dip PG Cert
2.	Appreciate and critically reflect upon current problems or contemporary insights in applied sport science	MSPO4030 MSPO4135	MSc PG Dip
3.	Synthesise a wide range of quantitative and/or qualitative methods applicable for research or practice in applied sport science	MSPO4131	MSc PG Dip

Cognitive and Intellectual skills

4.	Demonstrate an in depth understanding and application of appropriate research methods	MSPO4131 MSPO4030	MSc PG Dip
5.	Design, implement and evaluate a personal research project in a contemporary area of applied sport science, demonstrating critical analysis of the research process, appropriate research methods and the analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data	MSPO4130	MSc
6.	Critically analyse and appreciate different perspectives, values and strategies of applied practitioners in the field and synthesise these with theory to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences	MSPO4135	MSc PG Dip
7.	Demonstrate self-direction and originality in identifying needs, formulating solutions and evaluating strategies within the context of applied sport science	MSPO4136 MSPO4132 MSPO4134	MSc PG Dip PG Cert

Skills and capabilities related to employability

8.	Develop critical self-reflection and an independent autonomous approach to learning required for continuing professional and personal development as a reflective practitioner	MSPO4135	MSc PG Dip
9.	demonstrate critical self-assessment of key and vocational skills in the field of applied sport science	MSPO4135 MSPO4134	MSc PG Dip
10.	demonstrate competency in key sport science assessment techniques	MSPO4132	MSc PG Dip
11	Demonstrate a high level of proficiency in methods of enhancing performance	MSPO4132	MSc PG Dip

Transferable/key skills

12.	demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility when working alone or with others on applied problems or tasks	MSPO4132 MSPO4134 MSPO4136	MSc PG Dip PG Cert
13.	make decisions in complex applied situations using systematic and creative methods and communicate their conclusions clearly	MSPO4132 MPSO4134	MSc PG Dip PG Cert

Learning, teaching and assessment

The MSc programme aims to further develop students' independent learning ability and enable them to become effective, reflective practitioners. Consequently, the learning, teaching and assessment methods are designed to provide opportunities for the students to develop these qualities. The learning environment will include a full range of practical work, lectures, seminars, workshops, problem-based learning, online learning, project work and independent and group study tasks. Students will be encouraged to take control of their learning in an independent manner. Three modules will be taught as 'Intensive study weeks' where students attend the University of Worcester for a full week of traditional face to face teaching. These modules will include practical laboratory and field based activities, student presentations and self-assessment of practical competencies. Two of the taught modules (Limits to Human Performance and Enhancing Human Performance) will also have large elements delivered through distance learning. All online learning will be delivered through extensive use of the Universities Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard). These modules will make use of webcasts, on-line seminars, directed reading and study tasks, group discussions and problem based learning activities.
The course is structured to allow students the flexibility to gain significant work experience within the sports science industry alongside their formal learning. This is considered by employers to be one of the primary differentiating factors between successful and unsuccessful applicants for jobs within applied sports science.

On completion of the MSc programme students should have demonstrated competency in a range of skills relating to knowledge and understanding, cognitive and intellectual skills and key skills and further, given the wide variety of modes of presentation of information required by employers today, the course aims to assess students abilities and skills in as wide a range of these modes as possible whilst ensuring coherence with the module intended learning outcomes. As such, students are required to submit assessments including oral presentations, portfolios, research proposals, written reports, case studies, data handling assignments and research findings through the Dissertation. In addition, opportunities exist for students to undertake an interdisciplinary approach to their work and ensure a holistic analysis of the subject area being studied.

Contact time

For the three intensive study weeks students are expected to have 40 hours of contact time each. While studying on distance learning modules, students are expected to have approximately 2 hours of contact time (via virtual learning) per module, per week. You are also entitled to up to 8 hours of tutorial support during the course of your dissertation, and there is an 8 hour study day prior to your placement (MSPO4135) which you are expected to attend

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time, students are expected to undertake substantial personal self-study per week. Typically, this will involve online study tasks, reading journal articles and completing formative assignments. MSPO4131 incorporates tutorial further Blackboard tasks and tutorial support following the intensive week to prepare students for assessment, whilst the content of MSPO4136 is student driven and completion of the module is achieved largely through independent work (with tutorial support). MSPO4135 requires approximately 36 hours for the completion of online tasks over 12 weeks, and completion of a 100 hour placement, and your dissertation (MSPO4030) requires you to undertake approximately 450 hours of work.

As a guide, completion of the entire course should require 1800 hours of total student learning time,

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources.

Teaching staff

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course and have experience of both research and applied practice and consultancy in Applied Sports Science; the team includes a range of expert lectures (details of which can be found on the course handbook and on the Institute web pages.

14. Assessment strategy

The overall aim of the course is to develop students into more effective practitioners in Applied Sports Science and this is reflected in both the learning and teaching strategy but also the assessments. As such, a range of intellectual, practical and interpersonal skills will be assessed.

Each module has an assessment strategy which is aligned to the intended learning outcomes of the module itself but are also aligned to the overall course learning outcomes. The course teaching and assessment strategy is aligned to both internal (the UW Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy) and industry benchmarks for vocational qualifications and practice in Applied Sports Science (BASES, NSCA, UKSCA).

The assessments include a balanced range of activities that reflect the roles and responsibilities of practitioners within applied sports science; the assessment mediums include written, practical, verbal, digital and graphical as these are all mediums that graduates will be expected to be competent in. Throughout the course the assessments and associated tasks are set in context while students are challenged to find their own solution to a particular issue or problem.

Throughout the course teaching and assessments are set in real world scenarios using real athletes and real case studies. This helps to increase the consequence of these scenarios and further improves the student's real world experience.
A feature of this course is the utilisation of a Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach to the delivery of a range of modules and throughout assessments. This approach is utilised in order to emphasise the multi- and interdisciplinary nature of the course and enhance students' employability & career preparation through the development of a range of key transferable skills.
A period of professional work based learning is included within the course whereby students are required to apply their knowledge and skills to a sport science environment setting and assessed on aspects associated with their own continued professional development. Although many of our current students are already in employment within the sports science industry, this is not a requirement of admission, and the course team have strong links with a number of professional sports teams within the region. The course culminates with a Masters level Advanced Independent research project during the final year of study.

15. Programme structures and requirements

The entire programme requires students to complete 180 credits (90 ECTS) at Level 7 in the TCRF. The course is available in full and part-time modes. A full time student can complete the course in 13 months, while part –time completion of the course is normally achieved over a period of 2-3 years. The programme requires students to complete 180 credits (90 ECTS) at Level 7 in the TCRF. Students completing the course through part time study must take a minimum of one 15 credit module in each academic year, although the normal pattern of study would be to take 90 credits in total across each of two years. It should be emphasised that completion of MSPO4031 is a prerequisite for registration on MSPO4030 and it is recommended that students begin with MSPO4031. It is recommended that part time students discuss their options with the course leader when deciding on the combination of modules studied in each year.

All modules in the programme are mandatory.

		Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)			
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits** (Number)	**PG Cert**	**PG Dip**	**MA/MSc/ MBA**
MSPO4131	Research Methods in Applied Sports Science	15	O	M	M
MSPO4132	Assessing the Limits to Human Performance	30	O	M	M
MSPO4134	Enhancing Human Performance	30	O	M	M
MSPO4136	Applied Sports Science Project	15	O	M	M
MSPO4135	Applied Sports Science Professional Placement	30		M	M
MSPO4130	Applied Sports Science Dissertation	60			M
	Total Credits		60	120	180
		180			
PG Certificate To be awarded the PG Cert in Applied Sports Science students must successfully complete 60 credits at Level 7 *(specify modules). This can come from any combination of 'Research Methods in Applied Sports Science', 'Assessing the Limits to Human Performance', 'Enhancing Human Performance', or 'Applied Sports Science Project'.*					
PG Diploma To be awarded the PG Dip in Applied Sports Science students must successfully complete the					

PG Certificate plus '*Research Methods in Applied Sports Science'*, '*Applied Sports Science Project'* and the '*Applied Sports Science Professional Placement'* modules to a total minimum of 120 credits at Level 7.
Masters (MSc) To be awarded the Masters, students must complete a total of 180 credits at Level 7 including 60 credits from the dissertation.

MSPO4131 Research Methods in Applied Sports Science- September
MSPO4132 Assessing the Limits to Human Performance- January
MSPO4134 Enhancing Human Performance- June

The general course schedule including assignment deadlines is as follows:

Semester One: September - January

MSPO4131 Research Methods in Applied Sports Science
Intensive study week September
Assignment Deadlines- November, January

MSPO4135 Applied Sports Science Professional Placement
Distance learning requiring on-line tasks
Assignment Deadline- October

MSPO4132 Assessing the Limits to Human Performance
Distance learning requiring weekly on-line tasks
Assignment Deadline- December

Semester Two: January – October

MSPO4132 Assessing the Limits to Human Performance
Intensive Study Week- January
Assignment Deadline- February

MSPO4136 Applied Sports Science Project
One-to-one tutorials and self-directed study
Assignment Deadline- March

MSPO4134 Enhancing Human Performance
Distance learning requiring weekly on-line tasks (January-May)
Intensive Study Week- June
Assignment Deadlines- May, June (during intensive study week)

MSPO4130 Applied Sports Science Dissertation (can be completed in either Semester 1 or 2)
Independent study including tutorials with supervisor
Semester 1 Assignment Deadline- May (Part-time only)
Semester 2 Assignment Deadline- October

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality
The Framework for HE Qualifications

The course has been developed with reference to the QAA FHEQ (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, August 2008) **ensuring that the qualification represents appropriately the level of achievement required for Masters courses.** A full copy of the above document can be found by visiting the QAA website: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/

This award is located at level 7 of the FHEQ

The course takes into account the QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement that specifies the key characteristics in relation to purpose, content, structure and delivery, teaching, learning and assessment methods and relationship to further study or employment for Master's Degree programmes. It is further acknowledged that most "taught" Master's programmes will include some learning undertaken in a structured environment. Master's programmes, considered to be of the "professional/practice" type, often combine structured and independent learning methods alongside time spent in practice. As such, the MSc in Applied Sport Science uses Blended / Distance learning with mandatory intensive teaching blocks to comply with these characteristics.

The course team recognise that a significant proportion of students recruited to the course will be largely based in their country of residence. Therefore elements of the course and individual modules have been developed to incorporate a flexible/blended learning approach.

17. Support for students

The Disability and Dyslexia Service within Student Services provides specialist support on a one to one basis. In addition, Student Services specifies appropriate arrangements that can be made for students with disabilities.

The following guidance and support structure is in place for students participating in this course:

- An initial course induction
- Course Handbook (published on an annual basis).
- All students have a Personal Academic Tutor who guides the process of Personal Development Planning (PDP) and offers general support. Support is available in the form of face-to-face tutorials, telephone, emails, skype and through Blackboard Collaborate.
- Study skills provided within the subject and separately by Student Services.
- A wide variety of support for their learning e.g. seminar group work, practical activities, tutorials, pre-module learning activities, Personal Academic Tutor support and the use of e-learning and access to computer and internet facilities e.g. Blackboard.
- Opportunities to study abroad (optional).
- Students supported by Library Services (Library, IT, Media and Print) http://www.worcester.ac.uk/library
- The University's Careers Service provides training opportunities for career planning.
- firstpoint and Student Services *Student Services* can answer queries related to student life.
- The University's International office offers support to overseas students via Firstpoint; The Language Centre provides English Language courses for International students.

Personal Academic Tutor System

Each student will be allocated a Personal Academic Tutor (from within the Course Team wherever possible). Students will be given an opportunity to meet with their Personal Academic Tutor during the induction sessions. The intention behind the system is that the student and tutor will develop a close working relationship, so a clear picture of the student's progress is developed throughout the course. The Personal Academic Tutor will be able to offer both academic and pastoral advice and should be the main contact throughout the course.

The Personal Academic Tutor will encourage the student to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development planning. Structured face-to-face and on-line support typically covers the following:

- Awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses;
- A clear vision of what the student wants to achieve through HE study;

- Greater understanding of how study in the discipline area at the University can help towards student goals;
- Responsibility for personal choices in modules, work and social life;
- A reflective approach to all the feedback received on work;
- A sense and a record of progression and achievement in the development of subject and generic skills and attributes (qualities);
- An ability to use this greater awareness to articulate the benefits of the HE experience to others including employers.

The Personal Academic Tutor will also:

- Respond to the student's requests for support and help with problems which affect academic work either at subject level or by referral to other University support services;
- Provide information for and assist in the drafting of the University reference.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The University aims to be accessible. It is committed to widening participation and encouraging diversity in the student population. The Institute of Sport and Exercise Science works closely with central student support services including the Admissions Office and the International Centre to support students from a variety of different backgrounds. We actively encourage and welcome people from the widest range of economic and cultural backgrounds and value the contribution of mature learners.

Our policy is to offer a place to any student that we deem to be capable of success and who is likely to substantially benefit from the programme. We support the University's mission statement of *increasing access, widening participation and assisting students to achieve their potential.*

Entry requirements

Students will normally have a 2:1 degree classification in either a sport or science (e.g. biology, physiology, psychology) discipline.
Students who hold a relevant degree classification of either 2:2 (or below), or, a non-related degree will be considered on a case by case basis and may be required to submit a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate experience of work within the field. Applicants should be able to demonstrate academic capability for study at this level and strong interest and commitment in the relevant disciplines.

In the event of students completing their period of Professional Placement in an environment where they may be working with children or vulnerable adults, they will be required to follow their home country procedures for Criminal Records Bureau enhanced disclosure checks and they must provide this evidence to University of Worcester staff prior to acceptance.

Any applicants whose first language is not English or who has not been educated wholly or mainly in the medium of English must reach a minimum IELTS overall band score of 6.0 with a score of at least 5.5 in any individual component (or equivalent in an approved test in English) or otherwise demonstrate that they have an adequate command of both written and spoken English before starting the course.

See Admissions Policy for other acceptable qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm

Admissions procedures
Potential students should apply directly via the Registry at the University of Worcester. Given the potentially diverse backgrounds of applicants with a sport or science related degree qualifications, all will be interviewed in order to ascertain their suitability for the course. Interviews can be conducted in person, via telephone or skype to suit the applicant.

Admissions/selection criteria
Prospective students may contact the course leader for further information and guidance on suitability for the course.
In all circumstances, the following criteria will guide acceptance to the course:

- strong knowledge in the field of sport or related subject suitable for Masters level academic work;
- a willingness to learn and develop their skills and knowledge of applied sports science;
- evidence of engagement with professional and academic literature/publications in applied sports science;
- ability to manage self, learning and professional duties where applicable;
- a good communicator;
- evidence of ability to manage work independently;

Additional costs associated with the course:
Any other additional costs will be detailed within your welcome letter.

Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on +44 (0)1905 855111.

19. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

The Institute of Sport & Exercise Science operates a robust system of quality management and enhancement that involves the following elements:

- The course leader will be appointed from within the Institute of Sport & Exercise Science.
- Annual Evaluation of the quality of the course from the course leader which is then scrutinised by the Head of Department.
- External Examiner reports based upon the quality of student work and staff feedback.
- Each module provides opportunities for student evaluation
- Institute Quality Committee considers formal student feedback.
- Institute staff and student consultative committee considers generic student issues.
- University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee promotes learning and teaching across the institution.
- Post Exam Board module investigation (selected modules)
- Peer review of teaching by staff.
- A teacher accreditation course (Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education) for new staff, and Higher Education Academy membership.
- Institute of Sport & Exercise Science Learning Advisory Group.
- New Staff mentoring system.
- New staff observed by Head of Institute.
- Personal Academic Tutor system.

- Postgraduate taught experience survey.

20. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert in Applied Sports Science	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
PG Dip in Applied Sports Science	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
Master in Applied Sports Science (MSc)	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map

PG Cert and PG Dip awards are unclassified. The awards of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

In recent years the course receives excellent feedback on each module. Student have particularly enjoyed the practical nature of the course and the chance to apply their

knowledge to specific scenarios. This is supported by a high quality teaching team, with all staff having significant applied/consultancy experience and/or multiple publications in the field. These standards are further evidenced by highly positive reports from our external examiner on both the quality of student work and rigour and depth of feedback received from staff. The course is well supported by visiting experts such as practitioners from the University of Leon in Spain who also provides a broader international element to the course.

Students are well supported in terms of finding work placements and full time jobs. In the past 2 years over half of students have been provided work placements or full time employment through direct links with the Course Leader, whilst other students are already in full time employment within the Applied Sports Science environment. As such, the course puts students in an excellent position to further their careers in a highly competitive industry.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

The course equips students to progress further in their career within applied sports science. This may be attaining a first internship or paid position for recent graduates alternatively more experienced practitioners will be in a better position to apply for promotion or to move into more senior positions within the industry.
In this regard the course has an excellent track record in a highly competitive industry; postgraduate destinations include Head of Junior Academy Recruitment at Manchester United Football Club, Head of Sports Science and Medicine Bournemouth FC, Sports Scientist at Birmingham City FC, Strength and Conditioning Coach at Worcester Warriors RFC.
The course also prepares students for further study and higher level research degrees, in this regard several students have successfully progressed on to fully funded PhD studentships. While other students have gained more immediate employment in Higher Education in teaching and technical support roles.

Student employability

A major focus of the course is in preparing students for graduate employment within applied sports science. As such many of the tasks and activities are based upon real world scenarios and tasks required in the sector. Further to this students must complete a work placement module which focuses on broader and non-technical employability skills such. Within this module there is support and critique of job applications and interviews which are supported by a 100 hours work placement opportunity. Students are supported throughout this process in terms of guidance for an appropriate placement or how to develop their own practice within the placement. One further feature of the work placement module in particular, is that it may provide the opportunity for students to begin the process of accumulating the portfolio of work that could contribute to a subsequent application for accreditation as an applied sport and exercise scientist.
Details of how individuals may apply for British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES) accreditation can be found here:
http://www.bases.org.uk/Accreditation/Accreditation

Links with employers

With a view to further developing the course and also improving graduate employability, the course team consulted with industry leaders in Applied Sports Science with experience in both Higher Education and High Performance. The current course content includes many of the recommendations made during this consultation process, with a view to improving potential career prospects of students.
Further to this the course team have strong links with professional sports teams in the local area such as Worcester Warriors RFC, Worcestershire County Cricket Club,

Worcester Wolves Basketball, and Severn Stars. These links provide an excellent basis to liaise with and discuss course development with a view to further enhancing future employability of students.

Further links with employers are continually being developed as the course grows in reputation.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.