Programme Specification for BSc (Hons) Arboriculture and Tree Management

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester (UW)
2.	Teaching institution	Warwickshire College
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award	
5.	Programme title	BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management (top up)
6.	Pathways available	None
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery Pathways available	Warwickshire College Group – Pershore College and University of Worcester
8.	Mode of attendance	FT
9.	UCAS Code	D501 (BSc/ATM)
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, food and consumer sciences (2009)
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision	August 2010, August and October 2014 (regulations amended) June 2015 (periodic review and revised FHEQ)

12. Educational Aims of the Programme

The top-up degree, BSc (Hons) Arboriculture and Tree Management, is classified as a full-time (1 year) programme and is aimed at students with the following general characteristics:

- Graduates of the FdSc Arboriculture studied at Pershore College who wish to top-up their qualification to honours degree level in their chosen specialism through one year of additional study.
- **BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management** is aimed at those seeking employment as arboriculturists either as employed (or self-employed) tree surgeons, or, increasingly wishing to work for local authorities as Tree Officers or Consultants.
- Entrants from other educational institutions holding appropriate qualifications who wish to achieve a BSc (Hons) level qualification.
- Entrants working in arboriculture with relevant experience and appropriate entry qualifications who wish to engage in continual professional development by achieving a level 6 award, accepting that this may involve part-time study over more than one year.

LANTRA (the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sector), in its Sector Skills Agreements for 'Landscape', 'Production Horticulture', and 'Trees and Timber' identifies the following key strands in its workforce development plan:

- *'Promote lifelong learning to increase professionalism, productivity and profit'*
- *'Recognise and increase the skills of the entire workforce'*
- *'Facilitate entry into employment'*

- *'Make the land-based sector a positive career choice for all'*

There are approximately 235 000 people employed in the amenity horticulture, production and landscape sectors in the UK contributing in excess of £4.9 billion to GDP. LANTRA calculates that the West Midlands accounts for approximately 11% of businesses and workforce in this sector.

In discussions with industrialists through the Industrial Liaison Group and other contacts it is evident that the industry is looking for technically competent graduates who can manage horticultural situations but with a good knowledge and awareness of environmental issues. Plant knowledge and technical understanding is stressed by most industrialists. It is also clear that transferable skills are important and in a survey of the industrial members of the Industrial Liaison Committee the skills that were regarded as the most important were:

- Technical knowledge;
- Use and application of IT;
- Enthusiasm and commitment to the work and the company;
- The ability to solve routine and non-routine problems;
- The ability to motivate others.

Generic Aims

The Bachelors degree with honours award aims to provide the following:

a. to develop in each student subject knowledge and understanding appropriate to individual interests and developing vocational needs;

b. to develop each student's intellectual powers, their understanding and judgment, their ability to see relationships within what they have learned and to examine the field of study in a broader perspective;

c. to develop the personal effectiveness and employability of students, in particular their ability to learn, to communicate, to work with others and to solve problems;

d. to develop those skills of professional scholarship required for career management, lifelong learning and innovation; and

e. to provide a lively, stimulating and challenging educational experience.

Award Specific Aims

The BSc (Hons) award in Arboriculture & Tree Management aims to provide the following:

f. to provide specialist honours level study as a progression for successful Foundation Degree completers who wish to continue their studies;

g. to provide students with an appreciation of the role and significance of organisations in the horticultural sector, especially with regard to Arboriculture & Tree Management;

h. to develop students' abilities to make informed scientific, technical and managerial decisions in the horticultural sector, especially with regard to Arboriculture & Tree Management;

i.   to develop a strategic and holistic approach to issues within the horticultural sector; and

j.   to equip the student for a career in the horticultural sector, in its widest sense, and in a national and international context.

13. <u>**Intended Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods**</u>

<u>Generic Outcomes</u>

On successful completion of the course students will be able to:

i.   communicate clearly, concisely and confidently, using an appropriate format;

ii.   collect, select and critically evaluate information from a range of sources;

iii.   manipulate and interpret complex sets of data, critically assess their reliability and validity and present them in an appropriate format;

iv.   select and apply appropriate scientific or technical principles to the diagnosis, analysis and solution of complex and unpredictable problems;

v.   learn independently and display the skills of professional scholarship required for personal development, career management and lifelong learning;

vi.   use information and communication technology effectively;

vii.   demonstrate familiarity with, and understanding of, the important facts and principles in a broad field of study and display an active awareness of the provisional nature of knowledge and theory;

viii.   display the attributes, skills, behaviour and attitudes required in working life including the ability to establish effective working relationships with others;

ix.   demonstrate an awareness of safe working practices;

x.   marshal evidence, by reference where appropriate to primary sources and knowledge at the forefront of the discipline, and apply it in a balanced way in an argument;

xi.   formulate hypotheses or research questions, plan and execute research or development work, evaluate the outcomes and draw valid conclusions.

<u>Award-Specific Outcomes</u>

On successful completion of the BSc (Hons) award in Arboriculture & Tree Management, students will be able to:

xii.   analyse and critically evaluate a wide range of scientific, technical and managerial aspects of the horticultural sector, especially with regard to Arboriculture & Tree Management;

xiii.   critically evaluate a range of information and data to make judgments, and to provide appropriate solutions to problems in the horticultural sector;

xiv.   critically review aspects of current research within the horticultural sector, especially with regard to Arboriculture & Tree Management;

xv.   use systematic understanding of key aspects of the horticultural sector, to develop, investigate and communicate a research topic within their specialist subject of Arboriculture & Tree Management; and

xvi.   appreciate the limits of their knowledge in the context of the horticultural sector and demonstrate the ability to manage their own learning.

The aims and outcomes of this award are in alignment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (November 2014) at level six.

This award meets the key requirements of skills and knowledge as identified in the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2009).

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods

Learning and teaching methods are designed to develop students' academic skills while not losing sight of the importance of industry relevance and currency. Arboriculture is a vocational subject requiring an understanding of scientific and technical principles and their application to real-life situations and scenarios. Graduates will typically be entering the industry in a technician, supervisory or managerial capacity and must therefore have a thorough grounding in horticultural principles and practices. As such the course has been designed to provide learners with an appropriate balance of academic knowledge and practical skills to enable them to succeed in the workplace or progress to post-graduate study.

The methods of learning and teaching vary according to the nature of the subject matter and the focus of the individual award but include a wide diversity from formal lectures to student-centred activities including presentations, seminars and case studies. Employer links are exploited to provide guest speakers and industry visits to help students with the contextualisation of academic knowledge.

Scientific topics are delivered using the laboratory facilities at Pershore College and the University of Worcester's plant science laboratories. Many of the modules contain outcomes which require students to demonstrate the application of theory to practical situations and are therefore designed to be work-related. The practical application of horticultural principles utilises the college's extensive grounds, plant collections and glasshouses.

Other teaching and learning methods include:
- Lectures
- Workshops
- Visits
- Seminars
- Practical demonstrations
- Practical activity involving grounds, laboratory and glasshouse experience.
- Groupwork – including presentations and creation of exhibits at national and local shows.
- E-Learning

At level 6 students are expected to demonstrate more independent learning and will be required to research a wide range of contemporary issues and produce an original piece of research for the 'Independent Study' module.

The teaching team can access excellent technology including a Virtual Learning Environment and intranet supported by strong technological support. Students will have home access to the College's VLE (called the Learning Channel) for dynamic resources and supporting materials.

The curriculum map in Section 3 of the Course Handbook identifies where the generic and award specific outcomes are covered within the programme. It also provides a check list for quality assurance purposes and aids validation, accreditation and external examining processes by making the learning outcomes transparent. The map shows the award outcomes as listed at the start of the programme specification.

14. **Assessment Strategy**

Assessment methods for are varied and have been designed to assess a full range of skills in presenting information.

The assessment programme is designed to determine if students have achieved the module learning outcomes and assessment criteria and can demonstrate qualities and abilities, which reflect the general educational aims of the course. In addition, the programme of assessment will provide feedback for both students and module tutors so that remedial action may be taken where required.

Formative assessment is undertaken regularly throughout the course. Many of the assessments that contribute to final grades are of a formative nature in addition to their summative role. Furthermore, students are expected to participate in a wide range of in class activities, presentations and written work that will not contribute to the final grade but which is vital as part of the learning process and in providing feedback on academic progress.

The use of examinations is considered important as an effective way of assessing key aspects of the course and preparing students for potential progression to a higher level qualification.

The course is fully compliant with UW regulations for assessment, mitigation, appeals and complaints. For further details on any of these areas please follow this link to the Registry website or see the UW Student Handbook.

Assessment methods include:
- Written reports, assignments & essays
- Case-studies
- Posters;
- Podcasts

- Information factsheets
- Reflective logs
- Design Projects
- Practical assessment
- Examinations and end-tests
- Plant Identification tests
- Independent study

The Assessment Strategy in Section 3 of the Course Handbook shows the full range of assessment items used within the subject, by module and also shows the relative weightings of each item.

15. Programme Structures and Requirements

The course is of one year's duration with between 3-4 days per week spent at the college in lectures, seminars and workshops.

The course is module-based. Each module consists of a package of lectures, seminars and assessment of, notionally, 60 hours. Learners are expected to spend around 90 hours per module in private study and preparation for assessment bringing the notional time for each full 15-credit module to 150 hours. Students would normally be expected to complete the award in one academic year.

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Year: 2010/11 onwards   Last Updated: May 2010

LEVEL 6				
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits** (Number)	**Status** Mandatory (M) Option (O)	**Prerequisites (P) & Co-requisites (Co)**
PERH3002	Independent Study	30	M	None
PERH3003	Integrative Assignments	15	M	None
PERH3004	Business & Personnel Management	15	M	None
PERH3014	Arboricultural Technology	15	M	None
PERH3015	Silviculture	15	M	None
PERH3016	The Urban Forest	15	M	None
PERH3017	Habitat Creation & Management	15	M	None

Honours Requirements at Level 6
Students must take the all Mandatory modules as specified in the award map.

16.   QAA Academic Infrastructure

Like all higher education courses in the UK, this award is designed with reference to the Academic Infrastructure, a means of describing academic standards in terms of the academic level students are expected to achieve and, in broader terms, the content that will be covered. This includes the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), which provides details of the academic level expected within each year of the course.

A key reference in the development and management of higher education courses is UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Section A). The Quality Code plays a central role in shaping the BSc (Hons) in Arboriculture & Tree Management and has been a guide to developing the underlying University of Worcester Undergraduate Regulatory Framework as well as key aspects of the course such as approaches to admissions policy, assessment procedures and quality assurance through the appointment of External Examiners to oversee the course.

The QAA also produces a Subject Benchmark Statement which describes the content required by courses in particular subjects. The BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management has been developed in line with Subject Benchmark Statements Academic Standards: Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2009)

The BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management has been designed in line with the University of Worcester Curriculum Design Policy Curriculum Design Policy. This includes most specifically, ensuring that the award provides students with appropriate learning outcomes and assessment opportunities. It also ensures that assessment criteria are appropriate and fair and that the course runs in line with the University of Worcester Assessment Policy. In addition, the programme is consistent with the University of Worcester's Undergraduate Regulatory Framework and is fully informed by the University of Worcester's Diversity and Equality Policies.

17.   Support for Students

Induction
All students will be given a full induction to their course which will include meeting staff and a tour of facilities both at Pershore College and the University of Worcester. Further details on the induction programme can be found in the course handbook.

Equal Opportunities

Warwickshire College has a comprehensive Equal Opportunities policy details of which can be found on the Warwickshire College intranet, including our statement on Meeting Learner's Individual Needs: Disclosure and Confidentiality Policy Relating to DDA4.

The University of Worcester also has an Equal Opportunities Policy, together with equality schemes and action plans promoting equality in relation to race, disability, gender, age and sexual orientation. Progress in implementation is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee.

The University's [Disability and Dyslexia Service](#) within [Student Services](#) provides specialist support on a one to one basis.

Academic Tutors

Students are entitled to a minimum of three tutorials per year on an individual basis with their personal or academic tutor. Records and action plans resulting from tutorials are entered onto the learner's College file for review and updating.

Students may also be issued with progress reviews to provide an overview of their achievements to date, and what they need to do to improve.

Personal Development Planning

The Warwickshire College PDP tutorial process provides advice and guidance to students on a range of approaches to planning for their personal, educational and career development. The planning of individual goals and intentions and the alignment of actions to achieve them is emphasised. Students are encouraged to record thoughts, ideas, and experiences in the form of an Evidence Log or Personal Development Record. Students are guided to use this PDR as a tool to review and evaluate their experiences and the results of their learning.

Study Skills

During their course all students should develop and exercise key skills, career management abilities, and the research and scholarship competencies required of autonomous professionals in a rapidly changing sector. The course aims:

- To develop the key skills for successful learning both in undergraduate courses and in subsequent careers.

- To develop the knowledge, understanding, attributes and skills required to obtain appropriate employment and manage career development.

- To develop the professional scholarship required in a learning society.

[Study Skills Advice Sheets](#) have been developed in order to help students plan and carry out their coursework and assessments, making the most of the time available and helping them to achieve their potential.

Student Services

Students enrolled on a BSc Arboriculture and Tree Management course have the opportunity to access the services offered by UW Student Services. Student Services is the central department that provides non-academic support of students. The department includes Careers, Counselling and Mental Health Support, Disability and Dyslexia Service, Student Wellbeing Centre, and Welfare and Financial Advice. Further details of these and a range of additional college services provided by Student Services at Warwickshire College are listed in the Course Handbook.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

The degree award acts as a top-up from the FdSc Arboriculture programme offered at Pershore College, the completion of which (or equivalent) is required for entry.

The College celebrates and values diversity. We will seek to ensure that individuals and communities have equal access to learning programmes and facilities.

We will treat all students with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive learning environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

We are committed to providing high quality education in a welcoming and supportive environment enabling everyone, regardless of age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender, learning difficulty or disability to have the opportunity to succeed.

Entry requirements

A pass in the FdSc Arboriculture award or equivalent is usually required for entry to the BSc (Hons) Arboriculture programme. Applicants who have not completed the FdSc award at Pershore College but have an equivalent qualification will be interviewed to establish that the course is of benefit to them. In addition, entry qualifications other than the relevant Foundation Degree award will have to be carefully studied to ensure that direct entry to the BSc (Hons) programme is possible. Additional studies may be required.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Details of acceptable level 3 qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University webpages. Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University webpages or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111).

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

Admissions procedures

Both University of Worcester and Warwickshire College hold a series of open mornings and afternoons when further course details can be discussed. This is also the time when interviews take place.

Full-time applicants apply through UCAS - D501 BSc/ATM

<u>Admissions/selection criteria</u>

Applicants will be invited to attend an interview at Pershore College to discuss their application, establish the level of any previous experience they possess, that the course will be of benefit to them and that they have an enthusiasm for the subject.

An offer of a place will be made on the basis of the applicant holding or achieving the minimum entry requirements discussed above and demonstrating an enthusiasm for the subject, and commitment to the programme of study.

19. Methods for Evaluating and Improving the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning

Quality and standards at Warwickshire College are monitored and maintained through a wide range of processes, including those relying upon contributions from the student body.

The Course Manager for BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management completes an Annual Evaluation report at the end of each academic year. This report enables the evaluation of many aspects of the course management including the quality of assessment and employer engagement. The report is shared with UW and the course's link tutor at UW writes a Link Tutor Report to comment on the AER and the quality of the course. In addition, the report is circulated to key managers within Warwickshire College so that the quality of the course can be widely assessed.

One key piece of information that feeds into AER is the External Examiner's (EE) Report. The EE looks at the quality of assessment on the course and sits on the Examination Board that confirms grades and progression.

Another internal quality mechanism is the annual lesson observations that are undertaken within Warwickshire College to assess the standard of teaching in the classroom.

A course management committee meets on a regular basis to review the programme as a whole, take into account student comments and perceptions, and plan short and long term changes.   The membership and role of the Course Committee is as follows:
- Course Manager (Chair)
- Module Leaders
- Student representatives (called StARs)
- Learning Resources Manager of Pershore College
- ILT Manager of Pershore College

Students have a vital role to play in reporting on the quality of their course. A range of quality questionnaires are circulated during the year to look at a number of key aspects of the provision. One important questionnaire is the Course Survey which asks students to comment on aspects of the course such as the quality of learning resources and the quality of lecturers. These Course Surveys are supported by Module Surveys which look more in depth at individual modules.

The National Student Survey (NSS) takes place in the spring term and is administered nationally by Ipsos-Mori, the opinion polling company. Results of the NSS are published nationally and are available to read through the UCAS website and at www.unistats.com.

20. Regulation of Assessment

The course operates under the University's Undergraduate 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.
- Some modules have attendance requirements.
- 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 see Undergraduate Regulatory Framework

Retrieval of failure
- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade, unless the failure was due to non-attendance.
- Reassessment items that are passed are graded 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).

Requirements for Progression
- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.
- Students who pass less than 90 credits but have submitted all items of assessment will be required to retake modules.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
Degree (non-honours)	Passed 90 credits at level 6.
Degree with honours	Passed 120 credits at level 6, including Independent Study.

Classification

The honours classification will be determined on the profile of the best grades with 120 credits grades attained at Level 6 only. Students completing 90 credits at level 6 will leave the programme with a Non-Honours degree.

For further information on honours degree classification, see the [Undergraduate Regulatory Framework](#).

21. Indicators of Quality and Standards

The University underwent a QAA Institutional Audit in March 2011. The audit confirmed that confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. The audit team highlighted several aspects of good practice, including the student academic representative (StARs) initiative, the proactive approach which supports the student experience for disabled students, the comprehensiveness of the student online environment (SOLE), the wide range of opportunities afforded to students to enhance their employability, the institution's commitment to enhancement, and the inclusive approach to working with its collaborative partners.

Warwickshire College's National Student Survey results in 2011/12 placed it as the number one higher education provider in Coventry and Warwickshire for Academic Support and for Assessment and Feedback.

In March 2015 an internal Periodic Review by the University of Worcester into all HE Horticultural provision at Pershore College reported that:
- confidence can be placed in the soundness of the management of the academic standards of the programmes
- confidence can be placed in the quality of the learning opportunities available to the students in the above courses.

Warwickshire College underwent the QAA's Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER) process during 2009, 2010 and 2011 with a focus on Assessment (in 2009) and Work-Based and Placement Learning (in 2010). The results from each review were very positive and significant areas of good practice were recognised across a wide range of activities.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Warwickshire College operates commercial enterprises at the Pershore College centre including a Plant Centre and Nursery and has strong links with horticultural employers, learned bodies and trade associations.

Staff associated with these courses, currently or in the recent past, have been External Examiners for other similar HE courses. They have also been involved as Internal and External Panel members at reviews and validations at UW or other

HEIs. Many are involved as committee members of national professional bodies and learned societies *e.g.* Arboricultural Association, Association of the Landscape Institute, International Plant Propagators' Society and Plant Heritage. The College also has links with the horticultural industries research station, HRI Warwick, based at Wellesbourne in Warwickshire.

Pershore College hosts meetings and academic staff serve on the committees of: The West Midlands Fresh Produce Forum, The Midlands Regional Growers Association, The West Midlands and South Wales branch of the Institute of Horticulture, International Plant Propagators' Society. Most of the members of these bodies are horticultural employers and College staff have regular formal and informal links with these employers through the meetings, visits, seminars and other events they organize.

There is a horticulture industry liaison group, Pershore Forward, that meets regularly at the college where a range of employers from different branches of the industry advise the college on education issues in their various areas of interest.

The BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management leads to career opportunities in commerce and industry, the public sector and education as well as scope for further studies leading to postgraduate qualifications.

- Business (e.g. Self-employment or employment in tree surgery, arboricultural contracting, estate management, landscape contracting)
- Government Agencies, charities and other organisations (e.g. National Trust, English Heritage, Local Authorities)
- Technical Posts (e.g. Tree Officer, Arboricultural Consultant, Landscape officer)
- Education (e.g. Teaching, Lecturing, Research)
- Postgraduate qualifications such as a Masters degree

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 the module study guides and course student handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#).