

Programme Specification for FdSc Arboriculture

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester (UW)
2.	Teaching institution	Warwickshire College
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award	Foundation Degree (FdSc)
5.	Programme title	FdSc Arboriculture
6.	Pathways available (and or/Linked Honours Degree Progression routes)	BSc Arboriculture and Tree Management
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Warwickshire College Group: Pershore College and University of Worcester
8.	Mode of attendance	FT / PT
9.	UCAS Code	D510
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 (updated following the Periodic Review and to meet the revised 2014 FHEQ)

12. Educational Aims of the Programme

The FdSc Arboriculture is classified as a full-time (2 year) programme and is aimed at students with the following general characteristics:

- Entrants progressing from 'A' level studies or from further education who wish to achieve a level 5 qualification within 2 years.
- Entrants who already have a clear idea of a chosen career path within the field of Arboriculture, either through previous experience, personal interest or career guidance.
- **FdSc Arboriculture** is aimed at those seeking employment as arboriculturists either employed (or self-employed) as tree surgeons, or, increasingly wishing to work for local authorities as Tree Officers or Consultants.
- Entrants requiring a practically focussed course with an emphasis on employability skills and preparation for the 'world of work'.

The programme has been designed to comply with the defining characteristics of Foundation Degrees as outlined by the QAA, namely:

Employer Involvement: The award has been designed in consultation with industry and employers through liaison groups, surveys, meetings, and through reference to National Occupational Standards for Trees & Timber (2011).

In discussions with industrialists through 'Pershore Forward', Pershore College's 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.

Employers are also involved in the delivery and assessment of the Foundation Degree as formally appointed Industrial Advisors, guest lecturers, visiting speakers or by hosting work-place visits, providing case-study and work placement opportunities.

Accessibility: The Foundation Degree programme is designed to allow participation by a wide range of students. Although the full-time Foundation Degree is particularly suitable for entrants continuing within full-time education (see above), those returning to education or career changers with non-standard entry qualifications are welcome to apply.

Articulation & Progression: The Foundation Degree programme has been designed to allow progression to a named honours degree, BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management, at Pershore College allowing students to continue their studies in their chosen field up to level 6. Additional progression opportunities are available at other institutions including the opportunity for post-graduate study.

Flexibility: Although the programmes are designated as full-time study over 2 years the possibility for part-time study is available whilst recognising that this may take considerably longer.

Partnership: The Foundation Degree operates within the strong partnership that exists between Warwickshire College and the University of Worcester. This partnership includes the sharing of resources, lecturing staff and course management.

The defining characteristics of the Foundation Degree are underpinned by a strong emphasis on work-based-learning that allows students to apply the skills and knowledge in the workplace.

Generic Aims

The Foundation Degree 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;
- e. to provide opportunities to learn and apply skills and knowledge in the workplace;
- f. to provide a lively, stimulating and challenging educational experience which meets the defining characteristics of Foundation degree awards;
- g. to apply theory to observe and appraise practice in the work place; and
- h. to evaluate safe working practices.

Award Specific Aims

The FdSc award in Arboriculture aims to provide the following:

- i. an educational foundation for a range of careers in the horticultural sector focusing on the care and management of trees and woodlands;
- j. development of a range of transferable skills and techniques, personal qualities and attitudes essential for successful performance in working life;
- k. an appreciation, gained through work-based learning, of the nature and actualities of work in the field of arboriculture;
- l. support to meet the individual academic and pastoral needs of students with varying abilities;
- m. equipping students for progression to honours degree study and to develop a positive attitude towards lifelong learning and employment;
- n. opportunities to develop, encourage and enhance students' motivation for arboriculture so that they are able to make an immediate contribution to their chosen area of employment;
- o. an appreciation, gained through work-based learning, of issues in the horticultural sector, especially in relation to arboriculture;
- p. development of students' abilities in scientific, technical and managerial aspects of horticulture, especially in relation to arboriculture;
- q. development, through work-based learning, of students' abilities to make informed decisions in the arboricultural industry.

13. Intended Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods

Generic Outcomes

On successful completion of Foundation degree awards, students should be able to:

- i. communicate clearly, concisely and confidently, including in the workplace, and using an appropriate format;
- ii. collect, select and evaluate information from a range of sources;

- iii. use information and communication technology effectively;
- iv. select and apply knowledge and principles to the solution of well defined problems;
- v. manipulate and interpret complex sets of data, assess their reliability and present them in an appropriate format;
- vi. learn independently and display the skills required for personal development, career management and lifelong learning;
- vii. demonstrate familiarity with, and understanding of, the important facts and principles in a broad field of study and an awareness of the provisional nature of knowledge and theory;
- viii. display, in the workplace, the attributes, skills, behaviour and attitudes required in working life;
- ix. demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others and observe and evaluate working practices; and
- x. demonstrate safe working practices and advise others accordingly.

Award-Specific Outcomes

On successful completion of the FdSc Arboriculture award, students should be able to:

- xi. undertake, safely, a range of practical arboricultural and other horticultural skills in a work-based context;
- xii. reflect critically upon their own development of the attributes, skills, behaviour and attitudes required in working life in the context of a workplace in the arboricultural sector;
- xiii. apply, in a work-based context, theoretical and practical scientific knowledge to the field of arboriculture, including the management of trees and woodlands;
- xiv. demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of scientific, technical, legal and managerial aspects of the horticultural sector focusing on the care and management of trees and woodlands;
- xv. demonstrate knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the field of horticulture and the ability to undertake different approaches to solving problems in a work-based context; and
- xvi. demonstrate an understanding of the limits of their knowledge in the context of the horticultural sector and identify areas for personal and professional development.

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

This award suitably prepares students for progression to Honours level study by addressing key 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

Work-based-learning (WBL) is an integral part of Foundation Degrees making them distinct from other awards at the intermediate level. "Work-based-learning can be achieved through a variety of means including full-time or part-time work, integrated work placements, and real-work environments" QAA (2010) Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark.

The **FdSc Arboriculture** contains identified modules of work-based-learning that require learners to complete a minimum placement period in the first and second stage of the programme.

Core work-based-learning modules are:

- Professional Development & Work-based learning (15 credits at Level 4) which requires a minimum 2 week placement in the first stage of the programme,
- Plant Use and Establishment (15 credits at Level 4) which requires Learning Outcomes to be achieved in the workplace and,
- Work-based-learning in the Horticultural Sector (30 credits at Level 5) that requires an additional 8 weeks of work-based-learning.

Through these core modules learners will apply skills and knowledge in the workplace and reflect on their personal development. A portfolio of evidence will be generated linking the placement activities to National Occupational Standards and other modules of the Foundation Degree.

The diversity of the horticultural sector means that not every placement will offer the same breadth of opportunities for work-based-learning demanded by the overall aims of the course. Therefore, in addition to the work-based-learning modules, the Foundation Degree contains modules with outcomes that require assessment through work-based or work-related learning achieved either in the work-place or more practically in a work-related environment such as the College's grounds or commercial units.

The College estate contains an extensive tree collection, arboretum, display gardens and a commercial plant nursery. The college also works closely with major local landowners who provide teaching opportunities for woodland management, tree-surveys and tree-work skills.

In addition to work-based-learning the Foundation Degree also utilises traditional teaching and learning methods including:

- Lectures
- Seminars and tutorials
- Workshop sessions
- Practical demonstrations

- Visits;
- Seminars
- Practical activity involving grounds, laboratory and glasshouse experience;
- Groupwork – including presentations and creation of exhibits at national and local shows;
- e-Learning.

The teaching team utilises the College's virtual learning environment, 'The Learning Channel' to provide students with access to a range of resources including lecture notes, presentations, videos, formative assessments and links to internet sites of special interest. Students will also have access to the University of Worcester's 'Blackboard' on-line learning environment.

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

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 the student and module tutors so that remedial action may be taken where required.

A diagnostic written assessment is undertaken at the beginning of the course for all students. This assessment does not go towards final grades but enables students to have early feedback on any apparent areas of strength and weakness.

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 their 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 top-up degree qualification.

A substantial proportion of assessments on the FdSc Arboriculture are designed to be completed through work-based or work-related learning. Learning Outcomes in modules, and the associated assessments, often make reference to evidencing something being achieved in the workplace or in a work environment. Application of theory within the workplace is an essential aspect of Foundation degrees and the assessment that takes place may be of direct benefit to the work placement provider as well as meeting course Learning Outcomes. Work placement providers may be

asked to make judgments on a student's abilities in certain areas as part of the course assessment. Where this happens, the work placement provider will be asked to complete a witness statement rather than providing detailed marking and feedback.

All assessments are accompanied by detailed criteria that make clear the standard that must be demonstrated for a learner to achieve a specific grade. 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](#).

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

15. Programme Structures and Requirements

The course is of two years duration with between 3-4 days per week spent at the college in lectures, seminars and workshops. A minimum of 1 day per week will be available for work-based learning during term time but learners will need to supplement this with more extensive work placements for example during college holidays or between years 1 and 2 of the programme.

The course is module-based. Each course 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.

Title: FdSc Arboriculture

Year: 2010

Last Updated: May 2010

LEVEL 4				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) Option (O)	Prerequisites (P) & Co-requisites (Co)
PERH1002	Mechanisation & Finance	15	M	None
PERH1004	Horticultural Science	15	M	None
PERH1007	Hardy Nursery Stock & Nursery Management	15	M	None
PERS1001	Academic Development & Work-Based Learning	15	M	None
PERS1002	Plant Use and Establishment	15	M	None
PERS1003	Arboricultural Principles	15	M	None
PERS1004	Tree Hazard Analysis	15	M	None
PERS1005	Tree Work Skills	15	M	None

LEVEL 5				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) Option (O)	Prerequisites & Co-requisites
PERS2001	Work-Based Learning in the Horticultural Sector	30	M	PERS1001 (P)
PERH2001	Applied Horticultural Science (Pests & Diseases)	15	M	None
PERH2002	Business Environment and Marketing	15	M	None
PERH2003	Research & Statistics	15	M	None
PERS2002	Arboriculture Industry & the Global Market	15	M	PERS1003 (P)
PERS2003	Tree & Woodland Management	15	M	None
PERS2004	Trees, planning and the law	15	M	None

Honours Requirements at Levels 4 and 5

To complete the FdSc Arboriculture, students must:

1. Gain at least a PASS grade in each module
2. Achieve 240 credits, of which at least 120 are at level five.

Students who successfully complete the FdSc Arboriculture are eligible to apply for entry to the BSc (Hons) Arboriculture & Tree Management top-up programme.

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 the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (Section A). The Quality Code plays a central role in shaping the Foundation Degree Arboriculture 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. All Foundation Degrees are developed in line with the QAA's Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement and Subject Benchmark Statements Academic Standards Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2009)

The Foundation Degree Arboriculture has been designed in line with the University of Worcester [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 at 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 FdSc Arboriculture 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 Foundation Degree course aims to attract interest from school leavers to those already experienced in the arboricultural industry and applicants wishing to change their career paths. This diversity of interest means that the entry requirements (detailed below) reflect the varying qualifications of the applicants.

Given the vital importance of work-based learning in achieving learning outcomes, all applicants must secure a work placement relevant to their course. Work-based learning is an essential component of the modules 'Academic Development and work-based learning', 'Plant Use and Establishment', and 'Work-based learning in the horticultural sector' – students will not be able to pass these modules without

completing the requisite period of work placement. Gaining a work placement is the responsibility of the applicant although the Course Team will aim to provide support and guidance if necessary.

Work placements will be a minimum of 10 weeks equivalence which may be spread throughout the course to fit around other time and work commitments, e.g. one day a week for 50 weeks. All placements MUST be approved under the Warwickshire College work placement guidelines. Employers must hold public and employer liability insurance, undergo a health and safety assessment and undertake an equal opportunities approach to supporting placement students.

In the first year of the programme students will be expected to have secured a placement by the end of the autumn term and to have completed a minimum of 2 weeks of work-based learning by the end of the second semester. Arrangements for the completion of the remaining work placement must be in place prior to the end of the second semester in year 1. All work placement must be completed by an agreed date at the end of semester 2 in the 2nd year of the course.

The Course Team will advise applicants of their responsibilities when they apply for the course and guidance on work-based learning will be provided. Students who do not have a work placement arranged by the start of the course or who lose their work placement during the course, have a responsibility to secure an alternative work placement. Failure to secure a suitable work placement could mean that the student is withdrawn from their course.

Applicants not conforming to the example entry requirements below may be considered for the course where it is clear that they have the capacity and ability to benefit from the programme of study. Such applications should provide full details of their relevant training and experience including, preferably, a reference from a recent employer.

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

Entry to FdSc Arboriculture is determined by the qualifications held by the applicant and the outcome of a formal interview:

The University's standard entry requirements apply: 4 GCSEs at Grade C or above plus a minimum of 2 and maximum of 3½ A Levels or equivalent Level 3 qualifications. The current UCAS Tariff requirements for entry to the course are published in the prospectus.

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 the 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 - Course Code D510

Part-time applicants should apply directly to University of Worcester (UW) via Pershore College. Application Forms for part-time study may be obtained from the University Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111) or from Pershore College Admissions Office (01386 551187)

Admissions/selection criteria

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 FdSc Arboriculture 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 the Course Annual Evaluation report 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

- Students at Level 4 may be permitted to progress to Level 5 when they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 4.
- 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
CertHE	120 credits at Level 4 or higher
Foundation Degree FdSc	120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5

These awards are not classified.

Institute Examination Boards review and confirm results for modules, and the Scheme Examination Board considers candidates' mark profiles to make decisions about progression, awards and degree classifications as appropriate.

The University requires Institutes and/or course teams to have a formally stated policy for internal and external verification and moderation of marking which meets the requirements of the University's Assessment Policy.

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.

Other indicators of quality and standards include:

- External Examiners' reports.
- The University of Worcester has the Investors in People kite mark which was renewed in 2011.
- Warwickshire College has the Investors in People kite mark, renewed in 2011.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Warwickshire College operates commercial departments at the Pershore College centre and has strong links with horticultural employers, learned bodies and trade associations.

The **FdSc Arboriculture** has a range of links with local employers. Course enhancements provided by employers include enabling visits to their facilities and providing guest speakers to discuss contemporary issues in the horticultural sector. Students also attend sector conferences where available. All of these activities – with their crucial employer involvement – help to ensure the industry relevance and currency of the course. A key source of industrial employer advice is provided by Pershore Forward; a group of employers and interested partners representing a wide cross-section of the horticultural sector. Meeting twice a year the group advises the college on its mission to provide quality, up-to-date education in horticultural disciplines and is also a source of valuable information on current developments in the industry as well as a source of potential work placement opportunities for students.

The FdSc Arboriculture leads to career opportunities in commerce and industry, the public sector and education as well as scope for further studies leading to bachelor's degree and 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)
- Further Study: Bachelors degree with honours in an associated subject: BSc Arboriculture & Tree Management. Postgraduate qualifications such as a Masters degree

Student employability

Warwickshire College operates commercial departments at the Pershore College centre and has strong links with arboricultural employers, learned bodies and trade associations.

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 College have devised a HE student employability strategy, and during 14-15 have been engaging in the HEA Strategic Enhancement Programme on Embedding Employability into the Curriculum. All HE students are expected to attend Student Symposiums explicitly aimed at enhancing graduates' employability skill sets to increase their attractiveness to potential employers.

Links with employers

Pershore College staff have regular formal and informal links with employers through the meetings, visits, seminars and other events they organize.

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. the Arboricultural Association, Association of the Landscape Institute. The College also has links with the horticultural industries research station, HRI Warwick, based at Wellesbourne in Warwickshire.

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](#).
