

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	<b>Awarding institution/body</b>	University of Worcester
2	<b>Teaching institution</b>	Warwickshire College
3	<b>Programme accredited by</b>	N/A
4	<b>Final award</b>	Higher National Certificate
5	<b>Programme title</b>	Organic Horticulture Garden Design Professional Gardening
6	<b>Pathways available</b>	None
7	<b>Mode and/or site of delivery</b>	Warwickshire College - Pershore College Centre
8	<b>Mode of attendance</b>	PT
9	<b>UCAS Code</b>	N/A
10	<b>Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement</b>	Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, food and consumer sciences (2009)
11	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation/revision</b>	August 2010

### 12 Educational Aims of the Programme

The Higher National Certificates contained in this suite of programmes are classified as part-time programmes and are aimed at students with the following general characteristics:

- In existing full-time or part-time employment for whom full-time study is not suitable.
- Seeking employment in their chosen field or to set-up a business as a garden designer, landscaper or gardener.
- Entrants who are seeking a level 4 qualification
- Progression from L3 qualification
- Seeking a stepping-stone to a level 5 or 6 qualification
- Entrants who are seeking to change careers or return-to-learn
- Entrants who already have a clear idea of their chosen career path within the horticulture industry either through previous experience, personal interest or career guidance. The suite of Higher National Certificates will allow such entrants to specialise in one of 3 distinct pathways

**HNC Professional Gardening** is designed for those wishing to work in the development and maintenance of parks and gardens and is particularly suitable for mature students wishing to become self-employed gardeners.

**HNC Organic Horticulture** reflects the increasing importance of organic principles and sustainable development in horticulture.

**HNC Garden Design** is designed for students wishing to develop skills

as garden designers either on an employed or self-employed basis. The programme also offers the possibility of progression into the wider field of landscape design or landscape architecture.

Higher National Certificates are vocational qualifications and as such have been designed in consultation with industry and employers to ensure that the appropriate skills and knowledge have been included in the programmes. The 2005 report 'Cultivating Skills in Historic and Botanic Gardens' identifies the skills shortage that continues to exist in the amenity horticulture sector. It calls for the development of flexible and clear sets of qualifications that meet very specific skill needs – including the development of practical skills. The report stresses the importance of ensuring that new entrants to the sector are attracted and that they possess the appropriate skills and knowledge. In terms of specific skills shortages the report highlights 'plant identification', 'garden design' and 'management of historic gardens' as being of particular importance.

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.

The Higher National Certificates have been designed to cover a wide range of

academic knowledge and practical skills with the emphasis placed on the application of theory to practice. As such many of the modules contain work-related outcomes designed to simulate actual work-place practices that students may encounter when they enter employment.

### Generic Aims

The HNC award aims to provide the following:

- a. a flexible, work-related qualification appropriate to the students' career aims;
- b. the required knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to prepare students for progression to further study;
- c. the required knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to provide career development or career change opportunities for those already in work;
- d. opportunities to relate theory to workplace practices;
- e. development, in each student, of subject knowledge and understanding appropriate to individual interests and developing vocational needs;
- f. development, in each student, of 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;
- g. the personal effectiveness and employability of students, in particular their ability to learn, to communicate, to work with others and to solve problems; and
- h. a lively, stimulating and challenging educational experience.

### Award Specific Aims

The HNCs in Organic Horticulture, Garden Design and Professional Gardening aim to provide the following:

- i. an educational, work-related route to career development or career change in the horticultural sector focusing on the student's chosen specialism;
- j. development of a range of transferable skills and techniques, personal qualities and attitudes essential for successful performance in working life;
- k. equip students for progression to further study and to develop a positive attitude towards lifelong learning;
- l. provide opportunities to develop, encourage and enhance students' motivation for the horticultural sector so that they are well prepared for their chosen area of specialist employment;
- m. provide students with an appreciation of current issues in the

horticultural sector;

- n. develop students' abilities in scientific, technical and managerial aspects of horticulture, especially with regard to their chosen specialism;
- o. develop students' abilities to make informed decisions in the horticultural sector.

### **13 Intended Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods**

#### Generic Outcomes

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

- i. display the attributes, skills, behaviour and attitudes for career development or career change within the student's chosen field of study;
- ii. apply knowledge and understanding, in a work-related context, of a key set of current practices in the field of study;
- iii. apply a key set of practical skills, in a work-related context, within the field of study;
- iv. make effective use of information and communication technology;
- v. select, evaluate and process information from a range of sources and communicate information clearly using a range of formats;
- vi. process and interpret data and present them in an appropriate format;
- vii. relate knowledge to a key set of relevant principles and theory;
- viii. respond appropriately to evaluation by others; and
- ix. learn independently and display the skills of professional scholarship required for personal development, career management and lifelong learning.

#### Award-Specific Outcomes

On successful completion of the HNC in Organic Horticulture, Garden Design or Professional Gardening, students should be able to:

- x. demonstrate, in a work-related context, knowledge and critical understanding of scientific, technical and managerial aspects of the horticultural sector, especially with regard to their chosen specialism;
- xi. apply, in a work-related context, a range of different approaches to solving problems;
- xii. apply, in a work-related context, theoretical and practical scientific and technical knowledge to the field of horticulture; and

- xiii. 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 (October 2008) at level four.

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

A key approach to teaching and learning on the HNC programmes is to fully exploit staff, student and local employer industry experience to ensure all teaching and learning is current, vocationally relevant and to a high standard.

Employer engagement is critical for the success of these programmes. Guest speakers will be regularly involved in module delivery and industry visits will be an important aspect of the programmes. This will ensure that theoretical teaching is regularly contextualised through employer engagement, while the College will also exploit its laboratory resources and extensive grounds and commercial units to further enhance the learning experience.

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.

A comprehensive range of learning and teaching methods are associated with all the HNC programmes including:

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

The maps in Section 3 of the Course Handbook identify where the generic and award specific outcomes are covered within the programmes. 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 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
- Case-studies
- Design Projects
- Practical assessment
- Examinations and end-tests
- Plant Identification tests

The assessment maps in Section 3 of the Course Handbook show 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**

HNC programmes are of two years duration with 1 day per week spent at the college in lectures, seminars and workshops.

Title: Higher National Certificate in Organic Horticulture  
Higher National Certificate in Garden Design  
Higher National Certificate in Professional Gardening

Year: 2010

Last Updated: May 2010

<b>Higher National Certificate in Organic Horticulture</b>				
<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Credits (Number)</b>	<b>Status Mandatory (M) Option (O)</b>	<b>Pre-requisites &amp; Co-requisites</b>
Level 4				
PERH1002	Mechanisation & Finance	15	M	None
PERH1003	Plant Use and Knowledge	15	M	None
PERH1004	Horticultural Science	15	M	None
PERH1005	Plant Propagation	15	M	None
PERH1011	Garden Maintenance & Management	15	M	None
PERH1016	Principles of Organic Horticulture	15	M	None
PERH1017	Introduction to Organic Crop Production	15	M	None
PERH1018	Organic Pest & Disease Management	15	M	None

<b>Higher National Certificate in Garden Design</b>				
<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Credits (Number)</b>	<b>Status Mandatory (M) Option (O)</b>	<b>Pre-requisites &amp; Co-requisites</b>
Level 4				
PERH1003	Plant Use and Knowledge	15	M	None
PERH1004	Horticultural Science	15	M	None
PERH1006	Introduction to Garden Design	15	M	None
PERH1010	Plant Use and Design	15	M	None
PERH1012	Establishing & Managing a small business	15	M	None
PERH1013	Garden Design: Principles & Practice	15	M	None
PERH1014	Surveying & Design	15	M	None
PERH1015	Landscape Levelling and Construction	15	M	None

### Higher National Certificate in Professional Gardening

Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) Option (O)	Pre-requisites & Co-requisites
Level 4				
PERH1002	Mechanisation & Finance	15	M	None
PERH1003	Plant Use and Knowledge	15	M	None
PERH1004	Horticultural Science	15	M	None
PERH1005	Plant Propagation	15	M	None
PERH1006	Introduction to Garden Design	15	M	None
PERH1010	Plant Use and Design	15	M	None
PERH1011	Garden Maintenance & Management	15	M	None
PERH1019	The Production Garden	15	M	None

#### Honours Requirements at Level 4

To complete the HNC in Organic Horticulture, Garden Design or Professional Gardening, the learner must:

1. Gain at least a PASS grade in each module
2. Achieve 120 credits at level four.

Students who successfully complete the HNC in Organic Horticulture, Garden Design or Professional Gardening are eligible to apply for entry to the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of HND Horticulture subject to satisfactory interview.

#### **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 QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education. The QAA Code of Practice plays a central role in shaping the HNC awards 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 HNC awards have been developed in line with Subject Benchmark Statements Academic

Standards: Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2009)

The HNC awards have been designed in line with the University of Worcester Curriculum Design Policy. This includes most specifically, ensuring that the award provides learners 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 Equality Statements.

## **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.

Further information on equality, diversity and access can be found in the course handbook.

### Personal Tutors

Students are entitled to a minimum of three tutorials per year on an individual basis with their personal 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.

## **18 Admissions Policy, Criteria and Procedures**

### Admissions policy

Higher National certificate programmes are particularly suitable to those embarking on a career in the horticultural sector as well as those already experienced in the industry through employment or previous study, and applicants wishing to change their career paths. This diversity of interest means that the entry requirements (detailed below) reflect varying qualifications of the applicants.

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 the HNC's in Organic Horticulture, Garden Design and Professional Gardening 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.

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 accreditation 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).

### 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.

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 HNC Course Manager completes an Annual Course Monitoring 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 ACM report 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 Annual Course Monitoring 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 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
- Learning Resources Manager of Pershore College
- ILT Manager of Pershore College
- Student representatives

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](http://www.unistats.com).

## **20 Regulation of Assessment**

### **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.
- Students who fail to submit an item of assessment lose their right to reassessment in that module, and will be required to retake the module.
- For full details of submission regulations see URF.

### **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 or non-submission.
- 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**

<b>Award</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
HNC	120 credits at Level 4

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 (<http://www2.worc.ac.uk/registry/pdf/AssessmentPolicy.pdf>).

## **21 Indicators of Quality and Standards**

- External Examiners' reports.
- The University of Worcester has the Investors in People kite mark which was renewed in 2008.
- Warwickshire College has the Investors in People kite mark, renewed in 2006.

In November 2005, the University was audited by the Quality Assurance Agency. The audit confirmed confidence in the University's management of the quality of its academic programmes and the standards of its awards. The QAA particularly commended the University's supportive ethos and range of departmental and central services provided to students and staff in support of its mission to deliver an excellent inclusive higher education.

In December 2009 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 awards
- confidence can be placed in the quality of the learning opportunities offered to students in the above courses
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In February 2009 and February 2010, Warwickshire College underwent the QAA's Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQR) process with a focus on Assessment (in 2009) and Work-Based and Placement Learning (in 2010). The results were very positive and areas of good practice were recognised across a wide range of activities.

## **22 Career Opportunities & 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 HNCs in Organic Horticulture, Garden Design, and Professional Gardening have 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. 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 HNCs in Organic Horticulture, Garden Design, and Professional Gardening lead to career opportunities in commerce and industry, the public sector and education as well as scope for further studies leading to Higher National Diploma, Bachelors Degree with honours and postgraduate qualifications.

- Business (e.g. Self-employment or employment in nurseries, garden centres, private and public gardens, garden designer, landscape contracting)
- Government Agencies, charities and other organisations (e.g. National Trust, English Heritage, Local Authorities)
- Technical Posts (e.g. Horticultural consultant, Landscape officer)
- Further Study: Higher National Diploma in Horticulture, Bachelors Degree with honours in Horticulture

***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.

