

Level 7 Systems Thinking Practitioner Apprenticeship MSc Systems Thinking in the Public Sector

This Systems Thinking Apprenticeship has been designed to focus on the needs of public employers for meeting complex systems challenges in the 21st century. The programme brings the University of Exeter's world-class research to bear on this challenge through an applied masters-level programme that integrates theoretical and practical learning opportunities. It offers the complexity-orientated professional a deep and broad immersion in interdisciplinarity and the challenges of contemporary public service.

Designed in collaboration with employers from across the public sphere, the programme offers current and future leaders the tools and knowledge to deal with the challenges of managing complex and cross-disciplinary governance and services.

Why Exeter?

- A contemporary MSc from a Russell Group university
- Blended delivery using a combination of taught and online platforms to allow individual and group working in any location
- Addressing real-world complex public challenges through applied systems-thinking approaches
- A problem-orientated learning-by-doing approach that trains individual and groups of public professionals to collaboratively address complex and urgent challenges

- A programme designed by a team of leading academics and systems thinking practitioners in the College of Social Sciences and International Studies and the new Global Systems Institute to optimise the apprentice's time away from the workplace

Topics covered

- Cross-disciplinary problem solving
- Delivering services under complexity, risk and uncertainty
- Public sector leadership and ethics
- Evidence-based practice
- Stakeholder analysis methods
- Applied soft systems theory

- Applied critical systems heuristics approaches
- Stakeholder engagement, interventions, and management

Qualifications available

Upon successful completion, apprentices will be awarded:

- Level 7 Systems Thinking Practitioner Apprenticeship
- MSc Systems Thinking in the Public Sector
- Eligibility for recognition at Advanced Practitioner level of the professional body Systems and Complexity in Organisations (SCiO)

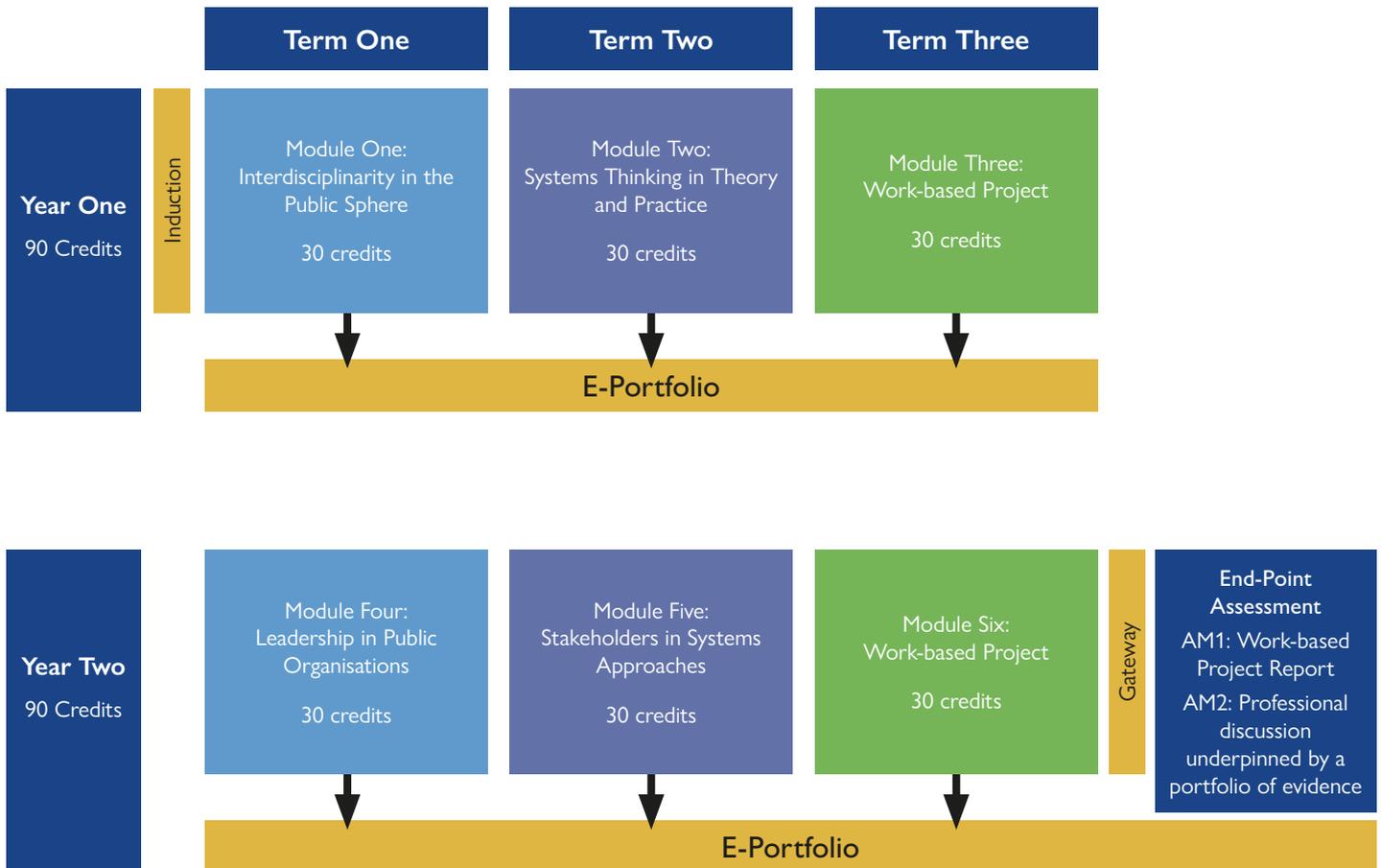
Entry requirements

A 2:1 first degree and/or a minimum of three years' work experience. Level 2 Maths and English will need to be evidenced prior to the end-point assessment.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Level 7 Systems Thinking Apprenticeship

MSc Systems Thinking in the Public Sector



MODULE OVERVIEW

Year One

Interdisciplinarity in the Public Sphere – 30 credits

- Contemporary problems and challenges in government and governance are complex and span different public departments, teams and interests.
- Addressing these challenges requires collaborative and interdisciplinary working – this module foregrounds these and shows why systems approaches are highly effective in addressing such challenges.
- Teaching apprentices how to apply the **soft system methodology** for addressing complex cross departmental challenges.
- A term-length problem-based learning exercise: to support the development of inter-cross disciplinary and team-based skills and behaviours.

Systems Thinking in Theory and Practice – 30 credits

- A detailed history of the development and application of systems approaches to addressing complex challenges in the public sphere.
- Introduction to boundary critique in soft systems.
- The **critical system heuristics** approach to reflexively delineating the boundaries of systems in the public sphere.
- Evaluating, modelling, auditing and reporting on systems approaches.

Work-based Project – 30 credits

- An opportunity for apprentices to apply their learning into practice within their home organisation.
- Addressing a problem or challenge area that benefits from a systems approach.
- Addressing problems and challenges that matter to the home organisation.
- Opportunities for cross-organisational projects with multiple apprentices addressing significant pan-organisational challenges.

Year Two

Senior Leadership in Public Services – 30 credits

- How to lead adaptive and responsive public organisations in increasingly complex, risky, and constrained environments.
- Apprentice development trajectories as future organisational leaders that apply systemic approaches to complex challenges.
- How to apply the **Vanguard method** for creating customer-orientated public organisations.
- Evidence-based policy and practice in public organisations.

Stakeholders in Systems Approaches – 30 credits

- Who matters and why in complex systems – the idea of stakeholders in governance and the public sphere.
- Conducting **stakeholder analysis** for effective and ethical interventions in systems.
- Data collection methods and approaches for systems modelling and interventions.
- Ethics in systems interventions and stakeholder management.
- The **patterns of strategy** approach to organisational collaboration and cross-disciplinary problem-solving.
- The stakeholder ecosystem of the UK public policy and administrative sphere.

Work-based Project – 30 credits

- An opportunity for apprentices to apply their learning into practice within their home organisation.
- Addressing a problem or challenge area that benefits from a systems approach.
- Addressing problems and challenges that matter to the home organisation.
- Opportunities for cross-organisational projects with multiple apprentices addressing significant pan-organisational challenges.
- Creating a substantial project report that details how the apprentice has applied their cumulative learning in addressing an identified organisational challenge.



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