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**ADAM SMITH COLLEGE**  
INSPIRING LEARNING

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# Course Handbook

**HND Environmental Sciences**

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## Welcome to Adam Smith College

This is the Course Handbook for the HND Environmental Sciences. On behalf of the Course Team I would like to warmly welcome you to Adam Smith College. We feel sure that you will enjoy your time spent here.

To help you make the most of your time at College and to familiarise you with your course we have produced this course handbook. In here you will find information about the structure of your course, the teaching and learning styles used and the ways in which your work will be assessed and graded.

There is a considerable amount of information contained in this handbook, some of which will be of greater relevance to you as you work through the course than it is at the start of your studies in the College. However, we recommend that you read this Course Handbook through carefully **now**, then keep it safely - you will need to use it through your course.

We hope you will find the handbook a useful guide to your course and wish you every success in your studies.

Mildred Drain

Curriculum Head: HND Environmental Sciences

## Information about your course

Your course is:

HND Environmental Sciences

Your Curriculum Head is:

Mildred Drain

His/Her office is:

ES04, Stenton Campus

His/Her telephone number is:

01592 223360

His/Her email address is:

[mildreddrain@adamsmith.ac.uk](mailto:mildreddrain@adamsmith.ac.uk)

Scheduled guidance time:

As per timetable

## **Your Curriculum Head**

Each course in the Adam Smith College is assigned a Curriculum Head, whose role is to provide you with advice and support through your course of study. This falls roughly into two categories – guidance related to your studies and pastoral care to help you deal with any difficulties you might encounter of, for example, a personal, financial or health-related nature.

At the beginning of your course you will agree your learning targets with your Curriculum Head. These will be recorded on your Learner Agreement which both of you will sign. Throughout your course, your Curriculum Head will monitor your progress and meet with you regularly during the year to discuss how you are getting on.

Your Curriculum Head will also be available at a set time each week when you can meet if there's something you need to discuss. However, if something comes up which has to be dealt with urgently, you can ask to speak to your Curriculum Head at any time. He/she might not be able to meet you immediately – Curriculum Heads have classes to teach and other students to look after – but he/she will offer you an appointment as soon as possible or refer you to another appropriate member of staff.

Your Curriculum Head may not always be able to personally provide you with the sort of help or support you need, in which case he/she might recommend that you are referred to a member of the College's Guidance or Learning Support staff.

So, if at any time throughout your course, you experience difficulties which are affecting your progress as a student, your Curriculum Head should be your first contact. Please remember that unresolved problems rarely just go away. On the contrary, they tend to get worse the longer they're not dealt with. So, speak to your Curriculum Head sooner rather than later.

## **Your attendance at college and part-time employment**

Your success as a student depends on full and regular attendance at **all** classes. You should inform your Curriculum Head as soon as possible if you have problems with attendance. Our records show that students who do not attend all their classes have a very high risk of failure.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For full details of regulations about attendance, see the College Attendance Policy and Procedure.

We recognise that you may need to undertake part-time work, but we strongly advise you not to take employment of more than 15 hours a week if you are a full time student. Should you need to take employment of more than 15 hours per week we recommend you register as a part time student. A full time student is expected to follow their timetable and negotiate work times around it.

## Your learning

Your College course will provide you with constant opportunities to learn new skills and acquire knowledge in your chosen subject areas. In order to make the most of all the opportunities available, you need to organise and plan your learning and also to manage your time effectively.

You must attend **all** your timetabled classes. You also need to study in your own time and you should plan to spend several hours a week to fulfil your commitment as a full-time student. You need to allocate time for this in your diary.

Prepare for lectures and tutorials by doing any reading or exercises in advance. Always make some notes – there is usually a handout provided. Review these after the class and ask your lecturer if there is anything you do not understand.

Note assignment deadlines and exam dates in your diary and remember to begin assignments early. You will enjoy researching and planning your work if you allow yourself plenty of time. Make sure you understand what you need to do and plan how you are going to tackle it. Seek advice from your lecturer or Curriculum Head if there is anything that needs clarification.

For full details of regulations about attendance, see the College Attendance Policy and Procedure.

In summary:

- ❖ plan your learning strategy
- ❖ allocate enough time
- ❖ attend **all** of your classes
- ❖ start assignments well in advance
- ❖ seek advice and help
- ❖ use the learning resources offered
- ❖ enjoy the learning experience!

## **Credit for previous learning**

Some students have previous experience or qualifications for which they may receive credit on their present course of study. If you have any qualification that may exempt you from part of your course, for example from school or another college, you may apply for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). Similarly, if you have undertaken work, paid or voluntary, that has resulted in learning skills or knowledge that is equivalent to units you will be studying here, you may apply for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). Together these are known as AP(E)L and it means you do not have to duplicate study you have done previously. It does not necessarily have to be in your chosen subject, but it must be at the same level as your course of studies here.<sup>2</sup>

If you wish to claim for APL/AP(E)L please speak to your Curriculum Head.

## **The aims of your course**

The aims of your course are:

- ❖ To acquire good laboratory practical skills which are readily transferable to the work place environment.
- ❖ To gain the relevant underpinning knowledge required to pass assessments.
- ❖ To pass all units on the course.
- ❖ To work to deadlines and submit coursework on time.
- ❖ To progress to the next level of study or employment.

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<sup>2</sup> For full details of the scheme for crediting previous learning, see the College Credit Transfer and APL/APEL Procedure.

## The structure of your course

The course consists of a total value of **30 credits**. Fifteen of these credits you should have acquired during HNC Applied Sciences. The remaining 15 credits you will study this year.

**Carrying Units** If you did not pass all 15 credits last year this is what is meant by “carrying units”. You will be given a copy of the HNC timetable so that you know which lecturer is delivering the unit(s) you are carrying and when the classes are. It is possible that you will not be able to attend these classes as they will clash with HND lectures or labs. **It is your responsibility to contact the lecturer and find out:**

- **Dates when assessed coursework is to be submitted.**
- **Dates of end of unit written assessments.**
- **When the associated laboratory practicals will occur during the HNC lab programme and make sure you attend.**

You should write the units you are carrying in the table below and record when they have been achieved.

The course consists of **4 days** of formal classes, along with individual study and coursework.

Carried Units from HNC Applied Sciences			
Unit Code	Unit Title	Credit Value	Pass Achieved

The units you will study this year are:

<b>HND Environmental Sciences</b>			
<b>Unit Code</b>	<b>Unit Title</b>	<b>Credit Value</b>	<b>Pass Achieved</b>
DH54 35	Instrumental Techniques: Theory and Practice 1	1	
DP4Y 34	Environmental Chemistry	1	
DP4X 35	Terrestrial Ecosystems	1	
DP4V 35	Aquatic Ecosystems	1	
DT4X 35	Environmental Sampling and Analysis	1	
DV0N 35	Plan an Environmental Management System	2	
DN38 34	Sustainable Development	1	
DP4P 34	Genetics	1	
DW7P 35	Environmental Sciences: Graded Unit 2	2	
<b>DP4M 34</b>	<b>Plant Biology</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>DP4L 34</b>	<b>Animal Biology 1</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>DG6Y 34</b>	<b>Applied Biochemical Techniques</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>DH2N 35</b>	<b>Instrumental Techniques 2</b>	<b>1</b>	

Optional units shown in bold. All other units are core.

If you are studying other units e.g. if you did not pass Mathematics for Science 1 you may be studying Instrumental Techniques: Theory and Practice 2, add these units in the spaces provided on the table. This will complete your record of achievement.

Assessment for the HND Environmental Sciences course has a higher content of coursework than the other HND courses. You might think you have a very light timetable. This enables you to work on the coursework and hence submit it by the deadline. For this reason alone, you will have to organise your self study so that you do not have numerous assignments to complete at the same time. If you allow yourself to reach this stage you will find it very difficult to complete the course successfully.

## **The content of your course**

Here are brief descriptions of the units which make up your course:

Lecturers will give a brief outline of the content of each unit they deliver, how it is assessed, and what you need to do to achieve the unit. More detail can be obtained at the SQA website [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

## **Assessment of your work**

Throughout your course, your work will be assessed in a number of different ways, depending on the different criteria in individual units.<sup>3</sup>

The majority of courses delivered in the College are assessed partly or wholly on a continuous basis – in other words, you will be assessed on parts of your work as you go along rather than all of it at the end of the unit. This assessment is carried out by the lecturer teaching the unit.

So that assessments can be fair to all students, and whoever teaches them, internal assessments are checked by other lecturers teaching the same, or similar, units. This is a process called 'internal moderation'.

Over and above the internal moderation of assessments of student work, awarding bodies check that colleges are assessing work appropriately by a process called 'external verification'. This process involves the awarding body carrying out checks on College staff's assessments of student work. This is done by sending 'external moderators' to the College, where they check assessments against national standards.

Only after these three stages have been completed can you be sure of your results, the certificates for which will be sent to you directly by the awarding body, not the College.

Internal assessment is not just about judging whether you have passed or failed. It also provides both you and your lecturers with important information about what you're doing well and where you have shortcomings in your knowledge, understanding or skills. Assessment is closely linked to the learning process in the sense that the feedback

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<sup>3</sup> For full details of the College's regulations about assessment, see the College's Assessment Procedure.

you will receive from your lecturers will help you improve your work in the future.

Finally, a range of courses delivered in the College are assessed by means of an externally-set and externally-assessed examination. The examining body will inform you directly whether or not you have completed your course successfully. College lecturers are not in a position to tell you whether you have passed or failed, until they have been informed by the examining body (usually at the same time as you will know directly from the examining body). If in doubt, please ask your lecturer about the procedures used.

### **Re-assessment of your work**

If you are unsuccessful in an internal assessment, you will be offered the opportunity to be re-assessed. Depending on the arrangements for re-assessment laid down for a particular unit, this may involve retaking either the whole assessment or just part of it.

You will normally only be allowed one (or, in exceptional circumstances, two) re-assessment opportunities.

### **Submission of your coursework**

You should hand all coursework in to your subject lecturer.

All coursework for assessment will have a specified deadline for submission. It is essential that you meet the submission deadline to ensure fairness amongst all students and to enable staff to mark efficiently.

Your subject lecturer may allow you an extension to a submission date if there are valid circumstances affecting your ability to meet the deadline.

Any coursework (for which there are no mitigating circumstances or an agreed extension) handed in after the submission deadline will normally receive a mark of 0.

If you are unwell when completing assessed coursework or sitting examinations, or have any other specific difficulties that may affect your performance in assessed coursework or examinations, you should notify your Curriculum Head in writing of the circumstances as soon as

possible, and make immediate arrangements for medical certificates or other letters of support to be submitted.

## ***Cheating and plagiarism***

There are various forms of academic dishonesty but in the student's context it means cheating in examinations or presenting work for assessment which is not your own.

Plagiarism as a form of cheating takes place when the student 'borrows' or copies information, data or results from an unacknowledged source, without quotation marks or any indication that the presenter is not the original author or researcher.

If carried out knowingly, cheating and plagiarism have the objective of deceiving examiners and this threatens the integrity of the assessment procedures and the value of your award.

Work produced by someone else may be summarised or repeated providing it is referenced to the original author. As well as text, work such as diagrams, maps and charts must also be acknowledged. In addition to the use of quotation marks when quoting from original sources and secondary material, full reference for both quotes and paraphrases or summaries of published material must be given. All references should then be included in a bibliography at the end of the piece of work. Appropriate references for web-based material must also be given, including the relevant URL.

Any student found to have used unfair means in any examination or assessment procedure will be penalised.<sup>4</sup>

## ***Support for your learning***

The College has a positive policy of supporting students with learning difficulties or disabilities and their interests are represented by the Diversity Committee which reports directly to the Principals Group. The College has a Learning Support team, which can provide help and advice on all aspects of learning support and coping with learning difficulties.

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<sup>4</sup> For full details of the College's regulations on cheating and plagiarism, see the College Academic Deceit Procedure.

The College offers support in making alternative arrangements for exams and assessment, support with study skills and advice with applications for the Disabled Students Allowance. Support and advice can also be provided in the specification and purchase of specialist equipment and the use of Information Technology.

In order to ensure that you are provided with the appropriate advice and support from the start of your studies it is important that you discuss any difficulties and special requirements with the Learning Support Manager, or with your Curriculum Head, as early as possible.

## **Your feedback**

The College requires all courses to have a formal system through which students are invited to comment routinely, in confidence, upon the teaching they have received. This helps us to check that students have a clear idea

- What are our aims in teaching particular units
- What we expect them to do
- That our classroom teaching is effective and stimulating
- That our advice and feedback to students on individual work is helpful
- That our resources are adequate.

Questionnaires are the primary mechanism for this formal 'feedback'. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire for each unit you are taught. We appreciate that they can be tiresome to complete in large numbers, but hope that you will take the time to give a full and detailed response. Both negative and positive feedback is important. In order to be able to assess the feedback, and to attempt to take appropriate action, it is important that when making comments, you indicate *why* you feel that something is good or bad, not just that you think it is.

Each lecturer responsible for a unit will prepare a short report analysing the questionnaire returns, highlighting any criticisms or suggestions. The report and the questionnaires for each unit will then be passed on to the Curriculum Head, who will present the reports at meetings of the Course Committee. The reports will also be discussed at appropriate meetings of staff within the department so that appropriate action can be taken. A summary of the student feedback and the action taken will be included in the Institute's Annual Report, which is presented to the college Academic Board.

## **Your representation**

Each course in the college is required to have a Course Committee. This meets at least twice a year and consists of the Curriculum Head, all members of staff who teach units on the course, and two representatives from the students on the course.

Prior to each meeting, your course representative(s) will be given a copy of the agenda, and will be asked to consult their fellow students about the items listed, and be prepared to report to the Committee on any issues raised.

Following the meeting, the class representatives will receive a copy of the Course Committee Report, to share with their fellow students on the course.

The existence of the formal system of student representation doesn't mean that you should feel this is the only channel open to you. You may of course raise issues directly with a lecturer, or your Curriculum Head.

Individual problems are often likely to be more easily and quickly resolved in this way.

## **Your comments, complaints or compliments**

Naturally, we hope that your experience at the Adam Smith College will be an enjoyable and rewarding one. However, we do recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and encourage you to make your comments or complaints known to us so that we have the opportunity to resolve the problem and improve our services to you.

Problems are often most quickly and easily sorted by being dealt with informally. So we would ask that, in the first instance, you raise the matter with the appropriate member of staff. If you're not satisfied with the outcome, you can discuss the matter with your Curriculum Head.

Comments or complaints can also be put forward through your course representatives.

Where informal methods have failed to resolve the problem, you can make a formal complaint through the College's Complaint Form, which is available at Reception on all College campuses and in outreach centres or through the Students' Association.

It's always good to hear about what you think we do well and we encourage you to use the Compliments Form available at Reception. Every compliment received will be passed on to the person or department it's about.

## **Science code of conduct**

This is a copy of the code of Conduct you signed at induction.

### **RULES OF CONDUCT**

Students agree to follow the Student Code of Conduct when they enrol at the college. In addition to the college code, there are specific conduct issues in science and the new Future Skills Building due to the health and safety regulations covering working and teaching in laboratories. Full details of the science Health and Safety Policy will be given to you before your first practical laboratory class.

You will be required to sign this code of conduct at the end indicating that you agree to abide by the conditions. Any student who does not follow the code may be dealt with through the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Behaviour**

You should behave in a responsible and reasonable manner during class or when on external College-related activities. Your behaviour must not interfere with the learning of other students in class e.g. shouting out, distracting students or talking when the lecturer is actively teaching.

### **Language**

Language or gestures that may offend other members of the class must not be used. This includes swearing or language which is racially or gender offensive.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

Intimidation, harassment, provoking or threatening actions towards any individual are not allowed.

### **Eating and Drinking**

Food and drink is **NOT** allowed in the Future Skills Building. Only water in sealed bottles will be permitted in classrooms. Food and drink are not permitted in labs, even if the class is a theory class. You should not be eating when entering a lab and any drink bottles should be placed inside your bag. Bottles must not be placed on lab benches. Hot food or sandwiches from the refectory are not permitted in the Future Skills

Centre. Chewing gum comes under food. This will not be permitted in any area.

### **The Bright Space**

The Bright Space is a **quiet place for private study**. No eating or drinking is permitted in this area.

### **Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices**

Mobile phones, electronic devices and pagers must be switched off before entering class and must remain switched off during the course of the lesson. Students should put all such devices into their bags during class. Earphones should be removed.

### **Late Arrival/Appointments**

Students are expected to arrive promptly for classes. Late arrival or early departures must be agreed with the lecturer in advance. Appointments e.g. dentist, doctor should be arranged when you are not timetabled for a class. Hospital appointments should be kept even if they are arranged during class time. You should show the letter or appointment card to either your class lecturer or curriculum head in advance of the appointment.

### **Laboratory Practical Classes**

Students arriving 10 minutes late for a laboratory practical class will **not be allowed entry to the lab**. A fail result will be recorded if the practical is assessed and a 3A warning issued.

### **Theory Classes**

Late arrival after 5 minutes will lead to the issue of a 3A warning. Arrival after 15 minutes will be marked as absent on the register and a 3A warning given.

### **Preparation for Classes**

Students should arrive prepared for all classes with paper (this includes graph paper), pens, pencils, rulers, calculators, lecture notes etc. As mobile phones can not be switched on in class, you will not be able to use your phone as a calculator if it has this facility. Most science classes will involve performing calculations, therefore a calculator is a worthwhile investment. All of this equipment is essential for classes and labs in science. They will not be given to you. It is your responsibility to make sure you bring these with you each day you are in college.

### **Dress**

Caps/hats must be removed during a laboratory practical class and no open toe shoes should be worn. Please refer to the college Student Code of Conduct for further information on acceptable dress within the college e.g. no football colours or shirts.

A breach of the above rules will result in the issue of a 3A warning and may also result in disciplinary action under the college student disciplinary procedure.

*I have read and agree to abide by the conditions in the code of conduct:*

Signed .....

Date .....

## Science and technology joint agreement

This is a copy of the Joint Agreement you signed at induction.

Institute of Engineering, Construction and Science

Science and Technology (Session 2009 – 10)

JOINT AGREEMENT (Assessments, Courseworks and Examinations)

Student:

Course	Please Cross
SPA Electrical Installation	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC Electrical installation	<input type="checkbox"/>
NC Access to Science	<input type="checkbox"/>
HNC Applied Science	<input type="checkbox"/>
HND Applied Chemistry	<input type="checkbox"/>
HND Applied Biological Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>
HND Biomedical Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>
HND Environmental Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>
HNC Electrical Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>
HNC Electronic Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>

By signing this document, you are agreeing to the conditions contained therein. These conditions will be applied fairly but rigorously.

For ALL assessments that I will be expected to undertake, the following conditions will apply:

- No holidays will be agreed within term times.
- I agree to work continuously throughout the academic year.
- Any absence from an assessment will require a medical certificate to document the absence.
- Mitigating circumstances, intimated prior to absence from an assessment, will be taken into consideration.
- I agree to submit assessments by the due date(s).

- Coursework submissions must be made on time – if not, late submissions will be considered to be a fail, and 1 resit only allowed.
- Any coursework found to have been copied from another student will be disallowed for both students and may result in disciplinary action.
- Progress to Semester 2 will be conditional on having no more than 2 units outstanding.
- Absence from a written assessment, unless covered by a medical certificate, will be recorded as a fail. Only 1 further attempt will be allowed.
- Any coursework copied from published work e.g. newspapers, journals, books and websites will be disallowed and penalized. Penalties which may be applied include a fail result for the unit concerned or for the entire course.

Signed:

Date:

## Science and technology 3A policy

Below is an overview of the policy currently in use in the Institute of Engineering, Construction and Science.

The three "A"s are:

- **Attendance:** lack of good timekeeping or repeated absence from classes (especially lab practical classes)
- **Attitude:** behaviour in class and laboratories, dealings with staff and other students, treatment of college property and infrastructure etc.
- **Achievement:** lack of coursework and lab report submissions, number of resits required, attainment of units etc.

Anything which you do, either as a one off (if it is serious enough) or on a repetitive basis which causes a member of staff (both lecturing **and** support staff concern or difficulty) will be documented on a 3A form. This form will be passed to your Curriculum Head and held on your file.

Once a student has accumulated **three** such 3A forms in their record they will receive an Institute warning and formal Student Disciplinary Procedure may be started against that student. All of the three "A"s listed above are directly linked with student achievement. If you do not attend classes, do the work in class as outlined by the lecturer, and repeatedly not hand in coursework by the deadline date given, you will not be successful on your course. Behaviour in class has an effect on the learning of your fellow students and therefore their achievement.

A serious one-off incident will immediately bring into force the College's formal Student Disciplinary Procedures.

This policy works in conjunction with the college Student Code of Conduct and students should make sure they read both of these policies.