

## **MBA in Construction and Real Estate** **For students entering in: 2006**

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading  
Teaching Institution: The College of Estate Management  
Faculty: Science (School of Construction Management and Engineering)  
Programme length: 3 years  
Date of specification: December 2004 Programme  
Directors: Brian Kemp and Bryan Parkes  
Board of Studies: Postgraduate Courses, School of Construction Management and Engineering  
Accreditation: The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Chartered Institute of Building

### **Summary of programme aims**

The MBA in Construction and Real Estate is designed to provide students with an advanced academic understanding of construction and real estate processes with a particular emphasis on international development activity. The MBA is 'specialist' in that it uses examples and case studies from the property industry whereas a 'generic' MBA uses examples from a range of industries. The programme is targeting a worldwide market for both professional and aspiring senior managers to reinforce their skills and develop knowledge and new areas of expertise. The resulting professional qualification at either MBA, Diploma or Certificate level is afforded the prestige of a Masters accreditation by the University of Reading.

### **Transferable skills**

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to develop during their degree programme. By the end of this Programme, students will have developed their skills relating to communication, information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, leadership, negotiation, mediation skills and use of information technology. Oral presentation skills and team working will be encouraged within the limited parameters of the face-to-face elements of the distance-taught programme. These transferable skills are developed in tandem with the specific subject skills of the Programme.

### **Programme Structure and content**

The MBA in Construction and Real Estate extends over three years taught by distance learning starting in either September or March each year. The course of studies has been structured to meet the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), National Qualifications Framework award 'M' grade at Master's level. In addition account has also been taken of the benchmark guidelines, specifically the Specialist Master's degrees, Type III for the QAA, academic standards for Master's awards in business and management. The Programme is divided into directed private study, assignments and dissertation assessed by the course tutors. Students are likely to allocate approximately 15 hours a week to studies for 40 weeks of each of the three years when the dissertation process is taken into account. A minimum of 12 hours a week is expected for completion of the coursework (assignments). All students are required to take the eight compulsory taught modules which carry an allocation of credits (given in brackets after each module code), each

credit equating to some ten hours of study. The research component of the Programme (*Assessed Research Module incorporating the Dissertation Brief, and Execution/Submission*) constitute 60 credits, approximating to 600 hours of study on a practical aspect of a course related subject. This will be undertaken in three stages; a course assignment and literature review plus *Research Methodology* early in year 3, a second assignment in the form of a Dissertation Brief and finally an execution and submission stage later in Year 3.

The eight + ARM compulsory modules comprise:

LEVEL 1	<i>Managerial Accounting (15 credits)</i>	<i>SEMESTER B</i>
	<i>Organisation &amp; People Management (15 credits)</i>	
	<i>Management Science (15 credits)</i>	<i>SEMESTER A</i>
	<i>Marketing Principles and Strategy (15 credits)</i>	
LEVEL 2	<i>Development Finance and Appraisal (15 credits)</i>	<i>SEMESTER B</i>
	<i>Strategic Management/Management of Change &amp; Innovation (15 credits)</i>	
	<i>Development Strategy and Procedure (15 credits)</i>	
	<i>SEMESTER A Knowledge Management/Portfolio Management (15 credits)</i>	
LEVEL 3	<i>Assessed Research Module (15 credits)</i>	
	<i>Dissertation (45 credits)</i>	

### **Modular arrangements**

The course Programme is designed for students who are in the main fully employed in the construction and real estate industry. Each module is allocated credits (15) designated at M level. As such the modules are amenable to integration into a wider suite of distance taught courses. Similarly the Programme may be adapted in the future to contain a group of alternative modules in addition to compulsory core modules.

### **Progression requirements**

All eight modules of the Programme have to be passed. There is no cross-module compensation. Each of the taught modules is made up of equally weighted course-work and examination components. Students must achieve marks of 40% or more in both course-work and examination, but a minimum of 50% is required as the module pass mark. The dissertation also has a pass mark of 50%. Failures are obliged to retake the module the following year.

The award of a Postgraduate Diploma will be dependent upon the successful completion of 120 credits with a minimum of 80 credits at M level of the Masters Programme. A

Postgraduate Certificate will be awarded to students who achieve 60 credits with a minimum of 40 credits at M level. In each case, the award is only made if the course member leaves the programme after Year 2 or Year 1 respectively, or fails to achieve a pass grade in the following year and subsequently leaves the programme without being awarded the MBA.

### **Summary of teaching and assessment**

The Programme is distance-taught and, as such the variety of pedagogic and assessment methods consist of assignments, workshop lectures and syndicate exercises, both face to face and personal on-line tutorials, online open forums with web assistance, study material in hard copy, CD and on-line formats and unseen written examinations. There are two obligatory residential courses in each year., one per semester. These intensive periods provide for group work and student presentations as well as conventional lectures from University, College and industry guest speakers. The course-work includes two substantial assignments for each taught module. They are designed to test the students' understanding of a significant proportion of the syllabus content that is prescribed in a *programme of studies* and are assessed by the course tutors. Formal unseen examinations are held at the end of each semester (February and August). The dissertation, submitted in the third year, is double marked (or triple where marks vary considerably) and subject to External Examiner review.

**To pass the MBA** students must gain a minimum mark of 50 or more for each module and achieve 40% or more in the equally weighted coursework and examinations components.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a **Distinction**. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a **Merit**.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained: A good (normally upper second class) cognate undergraduate degree and/or a relevant professional qualification plus at least three years post – qualification experience. Applications from suitably qualified candidates living or practising overseas are welcomed, subject to a competency assessment in English language. The suitability of each candidate's application and qualifications will be decided at the discretion of the Course Directors.

Admissions Director: Brian Kemp, aided by Bryan Parkes (with administrative assistance from Gail Martin)

### **Support for students and their learning**

Learning support is provided by the College and includes written study material, material on CD Rom and video tape. In addition the College is committed to web-based learning which provides additional support from tutors, access to College research reports, Athens, course material and discussion groups. All students with access to a PC

and the internet can access the online support provided. Students who live locally (within 35 miles or 30 minutes travel time from Reading) can also join the University of Reading Library as External Borrowers - for further information see: <http://www.library.rdg.ac.uk/about/extern.html>. If you do not live locally and wish to join your local university library, please enquire about membership schemes in your local library. All students who visit the University of Reading for teaching sessions can use the University of Reading Library for reference purposes. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by the Programmes Directors, the University's Disability Advisors, Study Advisors and the Students Union, where applicable to distant learning students.

### **Career prospects**

Nearly 100% of Programme students to date have the benefit of full time employment during their studies and have been seeking the award to further career prospects. Graduates have furthered career prospects within national and international real estate or consultancy practices and construction organisations operating worldwide, as well as in Governmental Valuation Offices and within academic departments

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

Candidates from over twenty countries are regularly present on the course and this demonstrates the true global attraction and nature of the international programme. The overseas locations of the residential seminars are intended to aid students living and practising globally. In order to be more international in flavour, local guest speakers and dignitaries from the major real estate and construction organisations are invited to the seminars to present regional case studies.

### **Educational aims of the programme**

The Programme is designed to provide students with an advanced academic understanding of construction and real estate processes with a particular emphasis on international development activity. There is emphasis on developing advanced professional skills for those in employment and enhancing ongoing career prospects. In Level 1 students will advance their knowledge and skills in areas such as managerial accounting, marketing, management science and organisation and people management. In Level 2, the management and analysis of the development process is closely considered together with knowledge management, managing change, strategic management, development finance and portfolio management. Level 3 concentrates on the production of the dissertation including two related research assignments. Students use research skills and techniques to compile the substantial dissertation about a programme-related subject.

## **Programme Outcomes**

### ***Knowledge and Understanding***

#### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

- 1) The economic framework of construction and real estate markets
- 2) The theoretical and practical problems of real estate valuation and appraisal
- 3) Data presentation and interpretation
- 4) Principles of corporate finance relevant to real estate investment
- 5) Research techniques & their application to construction and real estate problems
- 6) The role of real estate in corporate asset management
- 7) Town Planning & layout considerations in development decisions and its regulatory framework.
- 8) Principles of marketing in a construction and real estate context.
- 9) Principles and application of financial and managerial accounting.
- 10) Structures and methodologies of organisations and the behaviour within them.
- 11) Understanding & dealing with risk.
- 12) The strategic processes associated with the major commercial developments.
- 13) Role and implementation of effective quality systems.
- 14) The principles of effective management of human resources.
- 15) The key concepts and processes involved in knowledge management.
- 16) The strategies and implementation of Facilities Management and its effect upon the real estate processes.
- 17) The key principles concerning the management of change and innovation.
- 18) The processes and techniques associated with Value Management and Value Engineering.
- 19) The objectives, theory and strategy of investments portfolio management.
- 20) The role of corporate strategic management with the construction and real estate industries

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Acquisition of knowledge in the modules of the Programme is promoted through distance education resources including customised text material, core textbooks, video, CDs, web-based material and communication channels. These are complemented and supplemented by tutorials intensive lecture, guest lectures, seminars and team project work in face -to-face sessions.

In the dissertation module, self directed learning and problem solving combined with supervisor consultation further embraces knowledge and understanding.

## **Assessment**

Students are required to complete extensive pieces of coursework in the modules which are assessed within strict time frames. Modules are also examined using the unseen closed book method. Dissertations are assessed according to strict guidelines and a common marking scheme

### ***Skills and other attributes***

#### **B. Intellectual skills – able to:**

- 1) Integrate theory and practice.
- 2) Research, collect and synthesise information from a variety of sources.
- 3) Analyse and interpret.
- 4) Think logically and critically.
- 5) Define, solve and advise on problems.
- 6) Select and apply appropriate quantitative techniques of analysis and appraisal.
- 7) Plan, execute and write a report to a client brief.
- 8) Adapt and apply knowledge and skills in a changing professional environment and to other contexts.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

These skills are developed through lectures, prescribed reading, coursework and detailed feedback. The reading includes core texts, papers and relevant web-based material. Coursework varies across the modules but collectively covers skills 1-8. Feedback includes direct coursework comment, e-mailed advice and web-based answer guides. Web-based discussion/forums between tutors and students are also facilitated. The dissertation process further embraces intellectual skills 1-6.

## **Assessment**

Intellectual skills are assessed through coursework assignments, problems, reports and appraisals and through unseen examination and dissertation production.

#### **C. Practical skills – able to:**

- 1) Locate info sources, assemble and present info in a variety of contexts.
- 2) Collect, record, analyse and present statistical material
- 3) Adopt appraisal techniques for real estate and other assets.
- 4) Use quantitative techniques
- 5) Write clear report standard English.
- 6) Assess and implement techniques of team building.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Skills 1-2 are mainly developed through the Dissertation Module. Detailed guidelines are provided and explained in seminar sessions.

Skills 3-6 are variously developed in face-to-face syndicate exercises and coursework within the taught modules and 4-5 are extended through the dissertation process.

### **Assessment**

Relevant assessment of these skills is undertaken mainly through module coursework. Skills 3-6 are also assessed through unseen examination.

### **D. Transferable skills – able to:**

- 1) Communication skills
- 2) IT skills
- 3) Literacy
- 4) Numeracy
- 5) Problem-solving skills
- 6) Time management skills
- 7) Autonomous learning
- 8) Research skills
- 9) Business awareness

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies Communication skills:** whereas oral communication is limited by the medium of the Programme, written communication is central to the success of students in the Programme.

**IT skills:** The majority of MBA students are expected to have access to PCs, e-mail and the internet. The Programme is supported by the open areas of the College web-site, but more importantly, by the dedicated course-specific *Blackboard* site. There are already discussion forums established on the MBA Blackboard site.

Students are given the option of submitting their course material by e-mail. This necessitates familiarity with Word for text and Excel for graphical inserts. The College web-site has continued to expand and students are encouraged to access both feedback on coursework, and on-line power-point presentations. Support and advice on IT aspects of the course is available to students.

**Literacy and Numeracy:** These not only relate to desirable minimum requirements for the Programme but are skills that are encouraged and developed through assignment tasks and tutor feedback on style as well as content. Assessment requirements include a mixture of essays, calculation, formal valuations, reports, graphical presentations as well as dissertation writing. Guidance on the nature of these formats is provided throughout the course.

**Problem-solving skills:** These are particularly encouraged in the Management Science, Organisation and People Management, and Management of Change, Modules.

**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 he/she 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 description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**