

MA Research (Education) For students entering in 2006

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences	Programme length: 12 or 24 months
Date of specification: October 2006	
Programme Coordinator:	Dr Ghazala Bhatti
Board of Studies:	Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences Committee for Postgraduate Research Studies
Accreditation:	MA

Summary of programme aims

The aim of the programme is to prepare students for research careers either in academia or in non-academic organisations where educational research skills and knowledge are required.

More specifically the programme aims to:

- To provide students with an appropriate grounding in the main philosophical approaches to social science research.
- To develop students' understanding of the ways in which epistemological and theoretical debates in the social sciences have influenced both general research approaches in education and its sub-areas and specific theoretical debates within the subject
- provide training in a wide range of quantitative and qualitative social science and educational research methods.

Transferable skills

Research methods, bibliographic and computing skills, report writing; seminar presentation; internet skills, research management and team working, career development skills.

Programme content

The following mandatory modules, with the credit weightings as noted:

EDMES2	General Research and Transferable Skills	10 credits Level M
EDMES1	Essentials of Research Methods(web based)	20 credits Level M
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RESEARCH METHODS COURSE		
EDM058	Module 1 Getting started in Social Sciences Research: Relating existing research to your enquiry	10 credits Level M
EDM059	Module 2: Design and Conduct of Social Research	10 credits Level M
EDM060	Module 3 Qualitative Research Methods of Data Collection and analysis	10 credits Level M
EDM061	Module 4: Quantitative Research Methods of Data Collection and Analysis	10 credits Level M
EDM062	Module 5: Practical Philosophies of Social Research	10 credits
Level M		
EDM063	Module 6: 1)Complementary Perspectiveson Data Collection and Analysis 2.) Producing a Thesis and communicating research	10 credits Level M
EDM064	Advanced and Specialist Workshops	10 credits Level M
EDM004	Module from Teaching and Learning : Practitioner –based research	20 credits Level M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme may be taken over 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time.

Assessment and Progression requirements*Assessment*

Each 10 credit module will be assessed by an essay of 2,000 – 2,500 words in length.

The dissertation will comprise 15,000 – 20,000 words in length.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark	Interpretation
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

Progression

Candidates must achieve an overall average mark of 50% or better in the taught modules in order to progress to do the Dissertation. Candidates not presenting a Dissertation may be awarded a **Postgraduate Diploma** if their performance in the taught modules is satisfactory (see below).

Master's Degree

To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits. 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 eligible for a Merit.

Postgraduate Diploma

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits. Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more 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 degree at the equivalent of UK 2.1 honours or better in a social science. However, motivated applicants with other degree backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.

Admissions Tutor: Prof Brian Richards

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories.

1. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme.
2. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by the Programme Director, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Departmental support is provided through:

- The course coordinator and the student's project supervisor
- A detailed course handbook.
- Departmental Postgraduate committee – on which students are represented.

Each student will have a supervisor with expertise in the subject area of the student's dissertation project. It is the responsibility of the *supervisor* to give guidance to the student through regular meetings. For full-time students we expect meetings between supervisor and Higher Degree students to take place fortnightly in term time, more frequently at critical stage of the work and less often in vacation periods when an supervision timetable must be agreed in advance. For part-time students meetings normally take place monthly. It is the responsibility of the *student* to raise with the supervisor any difficulties or problems which occur in the course of the work and to submit coursework and progress reports as required by the course handbook.

Career prospects

The programme particularly attracts graduates who intend to undertake a higher degree by research and/or to work in the future in consultancy. Some of the latter may already be in employment, and wish to complete the MA Research course on a part-time basis, working on a research project relevant to their job.

Educational aims of the programme

The main educational aim is to prepare students for research careers either in academia or in non-academic organisations where educational skills and knowledge are required. Therefore the programme aims to:

- provide broadly based training in social science research philosophies and methodologies
- examine the ways in which philosophical and epistemological debates in the social sciences have been engaged with in education
- provide training in subject-specific methods
- train students in the skills required to investigate a proposed research topic and establish the extent of published knowledge in the field, understand and summarise that knowledge and be able to report formally, both orally and in writing.
- prepare students to undertake a higher degree by research in a specialist area .

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Research methods and skills in both the social sciences in general and education in particular</i>2. <i>The principles of research design and strategy, including their ethical and legal implications.</i>3. <i>The theoretical, political and ethical implications of different research approaches</i>	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Modules on general & transferable skills (EDMES2), & research methods and skills (EDMES1, Research Methods Programme) <p>Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Seminar Presentation .2. Written assignments3. Portfolio for web based work and personal audit4. Final dissertation
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Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Present an argument using research data.</i>2. <i>Present and/or verify qualitative and quantitative arguments.</i>3. <i>Critically assess the social science literature on a particular topic.</i>4. <i>Identify interesting and feasible research questions & problems</i>	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Modules on general & transferable skills EDMES2), & research methods and skills (EDM058, EDM059, EDM060, EDM061, EDM062, EDM063)2. Final dissertation. (EDMDISS) <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Oral reports and seminar discussions2. Written assignments3. Final dissertation.
<p>C. Practical skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Design a programme of research</i>2. <i>Select and use research methods appropriate to different problems.</i>3. <i>Undertake practical work in the field.</i>4. <i>Select and use appropriate methods for analysing data.</i>5. <i>Use computers for recording and analysing data.</i>	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Modules on general and transferable skills (EDMES2), & research methods and skills (EDMES1 and Research Methods Programme)2. Carrying out dissertation research with the support of a supervisor. <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Advanced and Specialist workshop (EDM064)2. Final dissertation (EDMDISS)

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. *Undertake individual research through planning to completion.*
2. *Write formal reports.*
3. *Disseminate the outcomes of research to a range of audiences using appropriate communication skills.*

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1. Modules on general and transferable skills, & research methods and skills
2. Carrying out dissertation research with support of a supervisor
3. *Assessment*
 1. Seminar presentations and discussions
 2. Coursework assignments and reports
 3. Final dissertation

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.