

MSc International Business

For students entering in 2007

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences Programme length: 9 or 12 months
Date of specification: May 2007
Programme Director: Prof R. Narula
Board of Studies: MA/MSc Economics
Accreditation: N/A

1. Summary of programme aims

The programme examines the strategic choices multinational firms need to make to compete in an increasingly global economy, while simultaneously paying close attention to the development and policy challenges that the actions of multinational firms create in an interdependent world, both from a developing and developed country perspective. This requires a holistic view of the international business environment, in terms of the competitive and investment milieu, which in turn is determined by the policies and regulations established by governments and supra-national institutions.

The programme introduces conceptual frameworks and practical methodologies that make sense of the interaction between firm strategies, economic and development policies and changing environments in a rapidly globalising world.

2. Transferable skills

The programme requires a substantial amount of independent reading, research and study and students are expected to take personal responsibility and show initiative in developing their knowledge and understanding of the field of study. They will also need to enhance their skills in communications (both written and oral), information handling, and analysis of context and cases in development. Students will work under pressure of time throughout the programme and will learn to set priorities and manage their time in order to meet strict deadlines. Career planning will be an integral part of the programme, both in the choice of programme and in its elective components.

3. Programme content

Students register either for a 9 month taught programme with a research project, or a 12 month programme comprising taught modules and a dissertation. Students may request a transfer between 9 month and 12 month programmes. Such requests must be made by the end of the Autumn Term to the Head of Department of Economics. Appeals against the decision may be made to the Head of the University of Reading Business School whose decision is final.

Compulsory Modules		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
ECM20	<i>Theoretical Approaches to the Multinational Enterprise</i>	20	M
ECM19	<i>Business Analysis</i>	20	M
ECM 79	<i>Contemporary Issues in International Business</i>	20	M
ECM 81	<i>International Business Strategy and Environment</i>	20	M
ECM65	<i>Industrialisation and the Multinational Enterprise</i>	20	M
ECM66	<i>Research Methods</i>	10	M

9 month programme

ECM59 *Research Project* 20 M
Plus 50 credits of modules selected from the elective list provided below and subject to fulfilling the pre-requisites for these modules

12 month programme

ECM 70 *Dissertation* 30 M
Plus 40 credits of modules selected from the elective list provided below and subject to fulfilling the pre-requisites for these modules

:ELECTIVE LIST

ECM02	<i>International Management and Business Culture</i>	20	M
ECM10	<i>Econometrics</i>	40	M
ECM61	<i>New Issues in Globalisation</i>	10	M
ECM18	<i>Regulation</i>	20	
ECM68	<i>The WTO and the Developing Countries</i>	10	M
ECM69	<i>Regional Integration and Development</i>	10	M

Alternative optional modules may be selected from the elective list with the permission of the Director of Postgraduate Studies - Economics.

Students are also required to attend ECM13 Fundamental Economics Methods (0 Credits).

4. Part-time / modular arrangements

The programme may be studied part-time over two consecutive years with the permission of the Director of Postgraduate Studies - Economics. The dissertation will be presented by 5.00pm on the first Friday in September at the end of the second year of study.

5. Progression requirements

Students wishing to proceed to a higher degree by research should normally have taken the 12 month degree, and obtained an average of at least 60% in the modules and at least 60% in the dissertation.

6. Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is organised in modules. The delivery of material varies among the modules, especially in the proportion of time allocated to lectures, classes and seminars. All modules involve coursework, (weight 30%) which takes a variety of forms reflecting the aims of the module. Final assessment of the modules involves a 2 hour examination (weight 70%) and coursework (weight 30%). A dissertation/research project supervisor is appointed for each student. The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark

70 – 100%
60 – 69%
50 – 59%

Interpretation

Distinction
Merit
Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40 – 49%
0 – 39%

Work below threshold standard
Unsatisfactory Work

To pass the MSc students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked between 40-49% must not exceed 55 credits and no module mark must fall below 40%. A mark of 50% or more in the dissertation/research project is also required.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or above, including a mark of 60% or more in the dissertation and 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 in the dissertation and have no mark below 40% will be eligible for a Merit pass.

Those who do not pass the MSc may be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate.

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more over 120 credits. In addition, among these 120 credits, the total credit value of the modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits, and the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits. Students who, over 120 credits, gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of Distinction. Students who, over 120 credits, gain an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more over 60 credits. In addition, among these 60 credits, the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

7. Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained an upper second class honours degree or equivalent in economics or management, or have obtained an upper second class honours degree or equivalent in a subject other than economics or management, and have significant work experience.

Admissions Tutor: Professor R. Narula

8. Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. 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. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

The Programme Director acts as personal tutor to the students and also interviews every student before the beginning of term to offer advice on the operation of the degree programme and on the choice of options. Many of the students are from countries outside the UK and tutors are therefore careful to ensure that students settle down in their new surroundings and understand the requirements of the MSc programme. The initial interview is also useful in detecting whether students have some language problems (despite obtaining an IELTS score of 6.50), in which case they are strongly advised to

register for language tuition. All 20 credit modules have a test set at the end of the term with the primary purpose of familiarising students with the UK examination system and the requirements of the programme. Students who fail overall on their modules are identified and invited to discuss their problems with their tutor. In addition to lecture and class time, each module lecturer has appointed office hours during which they may be consulted without prior appointment. The Department of Economics also provides a Handbook with details of each module and a Handbook covering the MSc programmes as a whole, including details of the method of assessment of programmes.

9. Career prospects

The programme draws on cutting edge management and economic theory, providing the appropriate tools and methodological skills that enable graduates to succeed, whether they choose to work in international agencies like the World Bank, the UN, NGOs, major firms, or professional consultancies. The course material would also provide a very strong foundation for employment in international institutions or for a valuable role in higher education.

10. Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

None

11. Educational aims of the programme

The programme seeks to 'deconstruct' the complex interdependencies associated with a rapidly globalising world, drawing from academic work in both Economics and Management to understand the international business environment, from both the perspective of profit-oriented multinational firms and from the perspective of policy-making institutions and development organisations. It thus seeks to inculcate an understanding of the relevance of the central institutional environments (firms, markets, economies, governments) and to produce International Business Specialists with knowledge and expertise that can be applied valuably in these institutions.

12. Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Economic models of the multinational enterprise.2. The managerial aspects of organising and managing MNEs as organisations and competitive entities with global perspectives.3. The international institutional environment and how it affects the interaction between MNEs and the growth of developing and developed economies.4. The external environment that the MNE faces, combining concepts from technology policy, economic geography and political economy.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Formal lectures, discussions, individual and group presentations, guided reading and guidance on key sources of reference material. Feedback and guidance are important elements complementing an emphasis on self-study.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Unseen examinations and coursework comprising long essays, projects and tests as appropriate for the module.</p>
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Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Structure, analyse and evaluate theoretical and policy issues and problems.2. Think logically and analytically and to understand the difference between normative and positive statements.3. Identify key economic relationships and to test these against the evidence.4. Comprehend the rapidly evolving state of knowledge and institutional environment in the subject area.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Students are frequently challenged in all teaching situations to complete logical arguments, analyse problems and alternative policies, and justify statements. Long essays, debate and presentations provide the principal vehicles for developing intellectual skills.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Unseen examination and coursework with 3. being assessed mostly in essays and project work.</p>
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C. Practical skills – able to:

1. Draw on the knowledge base in the field of study to suggest policies and strategies to achieve social and economic objectives.
2. Evaluate alternative policies.
3. Evaluate current theoretical and empirical research in the field of study.
4. Identify potential sources of information and analysis relevant to the issue and problems in the field of study.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Students are required to undertake a wide amount of reading, both of specific references and through researching their own sources of information. Discussion in lectures and seminars emphasises formal economic reasoning, the use of statistical and empirical evidence and the strengths and weaknesses in alternative theories and methodologies.

Assessment

Long essays and unseen examinations are the principal methods of assessment.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. Communicate orally and in writing
2. Use IT, including word processing and website searches.
3. Use library and web based resources.
4. Organise extended pieces of work from planning to completion.
5. Manage time and prioritise work to achieve goals.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The presentation of well-researched written work is a fundamental element of the programme and requires the application of all of the skills listed in 1-5. This is reinforced by the breadth and depth of the syllabuses for each module and the highly structured system of deadlines for assessed work, and examinations, which develop the students' skills of time management. Oral skills are developed through lecture and seminar discussions and individual and group presentations.

Assessment

Unseen examination and coursework with 3 being assessed mostly in essays and project work.

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.