

BSc Agriculture

UCAS code: D400

Degree Programme Specification

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarking Groups:	Agriculture, Food and Forestry Faculty of Life Sciences
Relevance and applicability:	Part 1 Entry in October 2007
Programme Length:	3 years
Date of Specification:	February 2008
Programme Director:	Dr M J Gooding
Board of Studies:	Agriculture, Policy and Development

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide students with a thorough degree-level education in agriculture with emphasis on:

- Scientific, economic and environmental principles underpinning agricultural production and land use
- Appropriate husbandry adopted by farmers and others to apply agricultural knowledge profitably
- Modern business management techniques

(For a full statement of the programme aims and learning outcomes see below)

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to gain experience and show competence in the following transferable skills:

- Career management
- Time management
- Communication (both written and oral)
- Information handling
- Numeracy
- Problem-solving
- Team working
- Use of Information Technology (word processing, using standard and specialist software)
- Use of information sources (internet, library)
- Business awareness

Programme content

The profile that follows states which modules must be taken (the compulsory modules) together with lists of modules from which students must make a selection (the optional modules). The compulsory modules ensure that all students have a grounding in practical farming methods, production and science of crops and animals, agri-business, and agri-environmental science. The optional modules provide a choice of subjects or pathways such that the student can tailor the programme to match their interests and career aspirations. Compulsory plus optional modules must be selected to total 120 credits in each Part.

Part 1 (three terms, 120 credits) 2007/8

Compulsory Modules (100 Credits)		Credits	Level ¹	Term
AP1A02	Introduction to Agricultural & Food Systems	10	C	2
AP1A08	British Agriculture in Practice	10	C	1,2&3
AP1A03	Introduction to Livestock Systems	10	C	1
AP1A18	Digestion and Nutrition	10	C	2
AP1A12	Introduction to Crop Production	10	C	2
AP1A16	Varieties, Seeds and Crop Establishment	10	C	1
AP1EE3	Economics 1	10	C	1
AP1SB1	Introduction to Management	10	C	1
BI1E11	Soil: Principles and Management	10	C	1
AP1A10	Countryside and the Environment	10	C	2

Optional Modules (guided choice of 20 Credits)		Credits	Level	Term
<i>Animal Science and Production Pathway</i>				
BI1BB2	Biochemistry and Metabolism	10	C	2
AM1P11	Introductory Microbiology	10	C	1
<i>Crop Science and Production Pathway</i>				
AP1A17	Crop Appraisal and Agronomy	10	C	3
BI1EC1	Exploiters and Exploited	10	C	1
<i>Agri-Business Pathway</i>				
AP1EF1	The UK Food Chain	10	C	1
AP1EM1	Introduction to Marketing	10	C	2
<i>Agri-Environment Pathway</i>				
BI1EB2	Humans and the Changing World	10	C	2
BI1EF2	Ecology: Species and their Interactions	10	C	2

¹ Level:

C = Certificate, which is Part 1 level
I = Intermediate, which is Part 2 level
H = Higher, which is Part 3 level

Part 2 (three terms, 120 credits) 2008/9

Compulsory Modules (80 Credits)		Credits	Level²	Term
AP2A20	Study Tour (including Career Management Skills)	10	I	3
AP2A33	Agricultural Mechanisation	10	I	5
AP2A36	Animal Production	10	I	5
AP2A42	Agronomy of Root and Tuber Crops	10	I	5
AP2A44	Practical Farm Analysis & Cereal Agronomy	10	I	4,5&6
AP2SB1	Business Management	10	I	4
AP2SB2	Financial Management	10	I	5
AS2A1	Statistics for Life Sciences	10	I	4

Optional Modules (guided choice of 40 Credits)		Credits	Level	Term
<i>Animal Science and Production Pathway</i>				
AP2A24	Applied Animal Nutrition	10	I	4
AP2A25	Grassland Management	10	I	4
AP2A34	Animal Breeding and Reproductive Technology	10	I	4
AP2A35	Animal Health and Disease	10	I	5
<i>Crop Science and Production Pathway</i>				
BI2EG5	Horticultural Crop Production	10	I	5
BI2EA4	Weed Biology and Control	10	I	4
BI2EP5	Crop Pests and Integrated Crop Protection	10	I	5
BI2EC4	Ecology and Management of Plant Diseases	10	I	4
<i>Agri-Business Pathway</i>				
AP2A31	Farm Business Administration	10	I	4
AP2A39	Environment and the Farm Business	10	I	5
AP2EB3	Management of the Non-Profit Organisations	10	I	5
AP2EM1	Marketing Management	10	I	5
<i>Agri-Environment Pathway</i>				
AP2A26	Forestry and Woodland	10	I	4
AP2A37	Practical Nature Conservation	10	I	5
AP2A38	Organic Farming	10	I	4
SS2D5	Sustainable Land Management	10	I	5

Students can opt to undertake a year long period of Industrial Training between Parts 2 and 3, as detailed on Page 5

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Part 3 (three terms, 120 credits) 2009/10

Compulsory modules (50 credits)

		Credits	Level ³	Term
AP3A47	Cereal Management and Marketing	10	H	7
AP3A81	Dissertation	40	H	6,7&8

Optional modules (guided choice of 70 credits)

Animal Science and Production Pathway

AP3A67	Animal Welfare	10	H	7
AP3A75	Equine Management	10	H	6
AP3A79	Animal Food Products: Meat and Milk	10	H	8
AP3A93	Dairy Production	10	H	7
AP3A83	Practical Animal Nutrition	10	H	8

Crop Science and Production Pathway

AP3A45	Agricultural Systems in the Tropics	10	H	7
AP3A76	Principles and Practice in Biological Control	10	H	7
AP3A77	Agronomy of Combinable Break Crops	10	H	8
AP3A89	Water, Crops and Irrigation	10	H	7
AP3A90	Climate Change and Food Systems	10	H	8
BI3EA7	Environmental & Ecological Weed Management	10	H	7

Agri-Environment Pathway

AP3A68	Wildlife in the Farming Environment	10	H	8
AP3A87	Environmental Management	10	H	7
AP3A90	Climate Change and Food Systems	10	H	8
AP3EP3	Rural Policy and Countryside Planning	10	H	7
SS3A8	Management of Soil Fertility	10	H	8

Agri-Business Pathway

AP3A54	Business Management (Case Studies)	20	H	7&8
AP3A64	Human Resource Management	10	H	8
AP3A74	Business Entrepreneurship	10	H	8
AP3A82	Business Planning and Control	20	H	7&8
AP3EB1	Business Strategy	10	H	8
AP3EB3	Supply Chain Management	10	H	7
AP3EM1	Marketing Strategy	10	H	7
AP3EM3	Advertising and Branding	10	H	7
AP3EP4	Consumer Policy	10	H	7

Other modules may be available in Part 3 across the University subject to timetable constraints.

³ Level:

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Industrial Training

Organisations are increasingly looking to employ graduates with a broad practical knowledge of their industry and this course offers an ideal opportunity to gain or build on existing experience. All students have the opportunity to undertake a year long period of industrial training between Part 2 and Part 3.

Benefits of Industrial Placements

Students and academic supervisors that have been involved with industrial placements have listed several benefits to choosing this option:

- the knowledge and skills developed in Parts 1 and 2 can be applied to ‘real-life’ situations
- students often return to their placement organisation to conduct their final year project
- placement organisations may ‘head-hunt’ students and offer post-university employment
- students gain transferable skills that make them highly sought-after employees, and hence have higher rates of post-university employment compared to those who do not choose this option
- students return to university more focused and motivated
- although some students opt for volunteer work, most receive a salary during their placement, which helps relieve the financial burden of university

Placement Details

In the first instance, students are responsible for organising and arranging their own placements, although advice is available as required. Through course visits and external lecturers, students have the opportunity to network and build a database of potential employers. Students who opt for the industrial placement must be highly motivated, however, as successful selection by an employer will be dependant on an excellent academic record. To ensure the maximum benefit is gained from the experience, the placement organisation should provide details of a training programme for each student. Placement students are allocated an academic supervisor who must authorise the placement and visit the student during the year, as well as an industrial supervisor who will act as a mentor and over-see the training programme. In addition, as the placement is an integral part of the degree programme, students are assessed by their placement supervisor and are required to produce a written report and a presentation on their return to University.

For more information on the benefits of industrial placements, see:

www.get.hobsons.co.uk/

www.work-experience.org/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/p!eLacegf

<http://doctorjob.com/WorkExperience/>

www.studentforce.org.uk/

www.yini.org.uk/

Part 1 Examination and Progression from Part 1 to Part 2

To gain a threshold performance at Part 1 a student shall normally be required to achieve an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1 and a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits. In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2 of this programme a student shall normally be required to achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, and achieve an average mark for Part 1 compulsory modules of not less than 40%.

If you gain a threshold performance at Part 1 and do not proceed to achieve a higher award, you are eligible to receive the award of Certificate of Higher Education. The Part 1 Examination does not contribute to the classification of your degree.

Part 2 Examination and Progression from Part 2 to Part 3

The Part 2 Examination is used to assess a student's suitability to proceed to Part 3 of their programme. It also determines eligibility for the Diploma of Higher Education.

In addition, the marks achieved in the Part 2 Examination contribute to the classification of your degree.

To gain a threshold performance at Part 2 a student shall normally be required to achieve: an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2 (of which not less than 100 credits should normally be at Intermediate level or above), and a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits. In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student shall normally be required to achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, and achieve an average mark for Part 2 compulsory modules of not less than 40%.

If you gain a threshold performance at Part 2 and do not proceed to achieve a higher award, you are eligible to receive the award of Diploma of Higher Education.

Part 3 Examination

The classification of the degree will normally be based on the marks for Part 2 and Part 3 modules, weighted in a ratio of 1:2. Full details of classification conventions (that is, the rules for determining your final degree award) can be found in your Programme Handbook.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is organised in modules that typically involve both lectures and practical classes. Modules are assessed by a mixture of coursework (which may include tests) and formal examination. The Part 3 Dissertation is assessed only as coursework.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

- UCAS Tariff: Minimum 280 points including at least 2 full A Levels.
Two sciences at A-level, including biology, are preferred, but one science with relevant practical experience may be acceptable.
- HND Candidates who achieve good results in HND Agriculture can be exempted from the first year of the degree course allowing them to obtain an honours degree in two years.
- A special arrangement with Sparsholt College allows selected students to complete an honours degree in 3 terms after studying at Sparsholt.
- National Diploma students are normally required to have obtained Distinction:Merit:Merit

Admissions Tutor: Dr M J Gooding

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 resources both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules on the Institution Wide Language Programme.

Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Within the Department of Agriculture additional support is given through practical classes in IT. There is a Programme Director to offer advice on choice of modules within the programme.

Practical experience

Due to the nature of the programme it is expected that students will have gained some practical experience of agriculture prior to commencement of the course. Further advice and information can be sought from the Programme Director. It is recommended that students get appropriate experience in each of the long vacations.

Career Prospects

The programme provides a sound base for graduates to pursue careers both in agriculture as well as in fields of expertise not directly related to agriculture. Graduates have followed careers in farming, technical, advisory and consultancy work in both the UK and abroad, accountancy, land agency, teaching or research. They have also done completely different things too.

Opportunities to Study Abroad

The Department of Agriculture encourages students, provided they have passed Part 2, to consider the possibility of studying abroad for a term or a year.

Educational Aims of the Programmes

The programme aims to provide a thorough degree-level education in Agriculture, with emphasis on the scientific and business aspects, along with courses in Information Technology. It aims to produce agriculturalists with the scope to tackle problems along the length of the food chain, dealing with difficult environmental, animal welfare, political, social and economic issues.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the fundamental concepts and techniques of maintaining and enhancing soil fertility2. the characteristics of farming systems and their interaction with the countryside and the environment3. the basis of crop and animal science. The importance of animal welfare4. biodiversity and the sustainability of agriculture worldwide5. the fundamentals of economics and business management, including human resource management6. the difficulties of managing profitable agricultural systems that appear to be at conflict with alternative views7. the place of numeracy and statistics in agricultural science.8. a selection of more specialised optional topics9. a language (optional)	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>The knowledge required for the basic topics is delineated in formal lectures, supported by practicals and projects, some carried out in groups, others by the students on their own.</p> <p>In all parts these are supported by tutorials and practical classes through which students can obtain feedback on assessed and non-assessed work.</p> <p>In later parts of the programme students are expected to work at additional problems on their own and in groups, seeking help when required, using the office hours of staff. Model solutions are provided of mathematical and other problems.</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>Most knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework and unseen formal examinations. Dissertations and oral presentations also contribute.</p>
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Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. think logically2. analyse and solve problems3. organize tasks into a structured form4. understand the evolving state of knowledge in a rapidly changing area5. transfer appropriate knowledge and topics from one topic within the subject to another.6. plan, conduct and write reports on independent projects.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>As science is the fundamental basis of agriculture, logic is a fundamental part of its processes. Agricultural problems need solutions. The quality of a solution is substantially determined by the structure of that response: analysis, synthesis, problem solving and knowledge transfer from one topic to another. These attributes are intrinsic to high-level performance in the programme.</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>1 to 3 are assessed indirectly in most parts of the programme, while 5 contributes to the more successful work. 6 is assessed in the dissertation. 4 contributes to many modules.</p>
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C. Practical skills – able to:

1. understand and construct reports using word-processing, databases, spreadsheets, and presentation software
2. understand and construct farm and business accounts
3. analyse business accounts
4. formulate animal rations, cropping plans & rotations
5. choose appropriate seeds, treatments and fertilizer for a cereal crop
6. assess environmental, social and economic impacts of agriculture
7. understand the economic implications of agricultural policy

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Farming business and accounting is taught in Part 1 & 2 and reinforced in Practicals in Part 3.
Introduction to Livestock Production and other livestock modules are taught in lectures in Part 1 and 2.
Biology and Production of Crop Plants is taught in Part 1.
Students are taught about environmental, social and economic impacts of agriculture in various modules.
Economics is taught in Part 1.

Assessment

All 7 are tested either formatively in coursework or summatively in examinations.

C. Transferable skills – able to:

1. use IT (word-processing, using standard and statistical software)
2. communicate scientific ideas
3. give oral presentations
4. work as part of a team
5. use library and other information resources
6. manage time
7. plan their career

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The use of IT is embedded in many modules, as well as specialised modules offered in the programme.
Effective communication of scientific ideas, oral presentations and team work are embedded in modules from Part 1 onwards (e.g., British Agriculture in Practice)
Time management is essential for timely and effective submission of work and completion of the course.
Career management is part of a Part 2 Module and tutorial support is also available.
Library resources are required for many modules, especially the completion of the dissertation, and contribute to the best performances throughout.

Assessment

1-4 are assessed through coursework. 5-7 are not directly assessed but their effective use enhances performance in 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 expect 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 module and programme handbooks.