

MSc/Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate Agriculture and Development For students entering in 2008

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading Faculty of Life Sciences
Programme length:	6 months Certificate, 9 months PG Diploma, 12 month MSc
Date of specification:	February 2008
Programme Director:	Dr Peter Craufurd
Board of Studies:	Graduate Institute of International Development and Applied Economics
Web site:	http://www.rdg.ac.uk/apd/pg-taught/apd-pgtcourses.asp

Summary of programme aims

The aim of this MSc course is to enable students to explain the role of agriculture and of agricultural research for development in the context of the research-to-development continuum. More specifically, students will be able to:

- Explain the role and contributions of agriculture to human development as: an economic activity, a source of food and livelihood security, a provider of ecosystem services, and a way of life
- Describe the different physical, economic and social environments in which the agriculture of developing countries is managed and improved
- Elaborate the recent developments in agricultural research in response to international challenges such as climate change, environmental sustainability, ecosystem services, and globalization
- Describe the factors and processes that influence the use of agricultural knowledge, science and technology for development, and explain how to enhance the relevance, quality and impact of agricultural scientific research.

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. In following this programme students will enhance their professional capability in working effectively in their chosen field of expertise along the research-to-development continuum. Students will learn to work independently, under time pressures, and will learn to set priorities and manage their time in order to meet strict deadlines. Students will also have the opportunity to enhance and develop their skills relating to communication (both oral and written), presentations, information handling, data analysis and interpretation, problem solving, teamwork, and the use of information technology.

Programme content

Postgraduate Certificate:

Students take three specialist modules (30 credits) (APMA41, APMA51, PSMA1A) and two core modules (IDM001 and IDM002) (30 credits) to total 60 credits

Postgraduate Diploma:

Students take three specialist modules (30 credits) (APMA41, APMA51, PSMA1A) and two core modules (IDM001 and IDM002) (30 credits) and select a further 60 credits from a wide range of modules, subject to satisfying any module pre-requisites, to total 120 credits

MSc in Agriculture and Development

Students take three specialist modules (30 credits) (APMA41, APMA51, PSMA1A) and two core modules (IDM001 and IDM002) (30 credits) and select a further 60 credits from a wide range of modules, subject to satisfying any module pre-requisites, to total 120 credits from the taught component of the programme. The MSc then additionally involves a dissertation project (IDM030) worth 60 credits.

Module code	Module Title	Credits	Level
Core Modules			
IDM001	Perspectives on Development	20	M
IDM002	Programme Tutorials	10	M
Specialist Modules			
APMA41	Agriculture in the Tropics	10	M
APMA51	Rethinking Agricultural Development	10	M
PSMA1A	Tropical Environments	10	M
Optional Modules (students select 60 credits)*			
APME55	Agricultural Project Planning and Management in Developing Countries	10	M
APMA90	Climate Change and Food Systems	10	M
IDM066	Communication and Innovation for Development	10	M
IDM011	Environmental Problems and Policies	10	M
APMA62	Nematodes as Pests and Beneficials	10	M
IDM013	Participatory Interventions in Development	10	M
ASMC01	Quantitative Methods for the Life Sciences	10	M
IDM067	Research Methods for Development and Communication	10	M

IDM024	Social Policies for Development	10	M
APMA46	Tropical Crops	10	M
APMA89	Water, Agriculture and Irrigation	10	M
IDM030	Dissertation (MSc)	60	M

*** the modules listed above are a sample of the modules available – students may select widely from the modules in the module guide.**

Part-time and Modular arrangements

All students have the modular flexibility described in the ‘Programme content’ section above. Part-time students may build up their modular credits towards a Certificate, Diploma or MSc over an extended period.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is organised in modules. The delivery of materials takes a variety of forms including lectures, classes, seminars and group exercises. Assessment is modular and involves coursework and for some modules unseen examinations. The nature of the assessment is determined by the aims of the module. A dissertation supervisor is appointed for each student.

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

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

Failing categories:

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

For Masters Degrees

To pass the MSc students must normally gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation *and have no mark below 40 in Specialist and Core modules* (IDM001, IDM002, APMA51, APMA41, PSMA1A). 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 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.

For PG Diplomas

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must normally gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in Specialist and Core modules* (IDM001, IDM002, APMA51, APMA41, PSMA1A). 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 eligible for a Merit.

For PG Certificate

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

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained an honours degree or its equivalent in agriculture, forestry, botany, biological, soil, environmental, or social sciences; in rural development, development planning and management or a related subject. Applicants with other qualifications and who have at least 2 years' professional experience in a relevant field of agriculture and development are also eligible to apply for admission to this programme. References are also taken into account.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Peter Craufurd

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.

A Study Skills module is available to support learning throughout the taught component of the programme and to develop independent learning skills required for successful completion of the Dissertation

Career prospects

Graduates from the MSc in Agriculture and Development are well suited to careers in agricultural research within international and national institutions, in governmental and non-governmental organisations operating in the tropics, and in international development and humanitarian assistance agencies.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

With the agreement of the supervisor, students may be allowed to study abroad or take up placements during the Summer Term as part of their dissertation work.

Educational aims of the programme

The Agriculture and Development programme is designed to provide an understanding of the different physical, economic and social environments in which the agriculture of developing countries is managed and improved. It also describes the processes of agricultural production and the ways in which they are modified and constrained by environmental characteristics. The focus is on agriculture in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the developing world, principally in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The historical and ideological forces which have shaped the theory and practice of planned development interventions;2. The influence of economic, physical, social and political environments in which planned development interventions take place3. Agricultural development in tropical regions and the contribution of crop science to development.4. The mechanisms of yield accumulation and how these are influenced by the environment5. The effects of environmental and soil factors on the growth, development and yield of crops	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies Mixture of lectures, seminars, directed reading, group and individual project work, individual and group presentation, guided readings and guidance on key sources of reference material. Feedback and guidance are important elements complementing and emphasis on self-directed study.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i> By coursework and, in some cases, formal examinations; coursework to include essay assignments and presentations</p>
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Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:

1. Structure, analyse and evaluate theoretical and conceptual issues and the bases for their relevance in the context of planned development intervention.
2. Think logically and analytically and to understand the difference between positive and normative statements relating to development processes
3. Identify key development approaches and evaluate them with reference to practice and outcome.
4. Comprehend the rapidly evolving discourse of development and the factors influencing both the change and the pace of change.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Students are frequently challenged in all teaching situations to complete logical arguments, analyse problems, seek and evaluate alternative explanations, and justify held beliefs. Long essay, debate, group work and presentations provide the principle vehicles by which intellectual skills are developed.

Assessment

By formative tests and presentations. Other assignments, including coursework and, in some cases, formal examinations; dissertation

C. Practical skills – able to:

1. Evaluate the bases of alternative development policy approaches
2. Evaluate the bases of the multiple meanings of key concepts in the discourse of planned development intervention
3. Evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of alternative development implementation strategies.
4. Effectively apply a range of frameworks useful in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions and processes.
5. Identify, access, evaluate, synthesise, analyse, collate and represent data relevant to the critical evaluation of development policy and practice.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Students are required to undertake and understand a wide range of reading, from traditional published sources, web-based material and other grey literature relating to development policy and practice. This includes both directed reading and through researching their own sources of information. Discussion in lectures and seminars emphasises the use of empirical evidence, and the strengths and weaknesses of alternative theories, methodologies and practices.

1-5 are achieved through lectures, seminars, presentations, case studies, group work, and dissertation

Assessment

Long essays, presentations and unseen examinations

D. Transferable skills – able to:

1. Communicate knowledge and opinions effectively to a wide range of people through choosing and using among a variety of means
2. Reflect and evaluate his/her own academic progress and its implications for emerging/changing professional practice
3. Identify, access, evaluate, synthesise, analyse, collate and represent data relevant to the issue at hand.
4. Manage time and prioritise workloads in the context of changing demands

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 the skills listed in 1-5. This is complemented and reinforced by enhanced oral skills, developed through lecture and seminar discussions, tutorials and group activities.

Assessment

By formative tests and presentations. Other assignments, including coursework and, in some cases, formal examinations; 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.