MSc/Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Urban Sustainability
For students entering in 2009

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading Faculty of Science

Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s) (if applicable): Not applicable
Programme length: 12 months full-time, 24 months part-time

Date of specification:	July 2009
Programme Director:	Dr Steven Musson
Board of Studies:	Geography Taught Masters Board of Studies
Accreditation:	Not applicable

Summary of programme aims

This programme aims to develop a broad understanding of urban sustainability that is informed by approaches from the human and physical sciences. It aims to prepare students for careers in urban planning, development and regeneration and to enable students already in employment in these areas to develop new and specialised skills. The programme can also be completed on a part-time (day release) basis over 24 months. It draws on research interests across the Department of Geography and incorporates cognate modules from across the University. The programme aims to provide training in a wide range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and enables students to generate their own understandings through a research-based dissertation.

Transferable skills

A range of transferable skills have been incorporated into the programme following consultation with employers and practitioners. These include research methods, report writing, presentation and oral communication, project management, strategic thinking, team working, leadership and information technology skills. The programme is designed to ensure that students develop these skills, through generic research training, specialised modules and a final dissertation.

Programme content

The MSc in Urban Sustainability is a 180 credit programme, of which 100 credits constitute compulsory modules, 60 credits are research training in the Graduate School of the Social Sciences (GSSS) and/or the Department of Geography, and a further 20 credits are drawn from a wide-ranging list of optional modules. The aim is to enable students to choose their own individual learning paths.

The compulsory element of the programme comprises four core geography modules which are specific to the urban sustainability programme (40 credits). Two human and two physical geography modules draw on current research within the Geography Department. Research training comprises 60 credits. It includes a choice from seven 10 credit modules provided by GSSS and/or a 40 credit subject-specific research methods training module (GGMGRP), shared with the MRes in Human Geography. We advise students that module GGMGRP is taught at a more advanced level and should only be attempted by those who can engage with its theoretical content. A compulsory dissertation of around 15,000 words is required (60 credits). In addition to these compulsory elements, 20 credits must be drawn from other programmes, including Part 3 options in the Department of Geography. This enables students to tailor elements of the programme to their own learning interests.

Compulsory modules (100 credits)

Mod Code	*Module Title*	*Credits*	*Level*
GGMUGP	Urban Governance and Planning (Dr S Musson)	10	7
GGMUEH	Urban Climate, Hydrology and Hazards (Dr A Wade, Dr S Gurney and Dr M Shahgedanova)	10	7
GGMUE	Spatial Analysis and Urban Environments (Dr G Griffiths and Dr K White)	10	7
GGMSUC	Sustainable Urban Communities (Dr S Bowlby, Dr S Lloyd-Evans)	10	7
GGMDUS	Dissertation (c. 15k words)	60	7
	Total compulsory credits	**100**	

Research training (select any 60 credits from the list below)

Mod Code	*Module Title*	*Credits*	*Level*
GSM001	Module 1: Principles of Research Design 1	10	7
GSM002	Module 2: Principles of Research Design 2	10	7
GSM003	Module 3: Data Collection and Analysis 1: Statistics for Educational and Social Research	10	7
GSM004	Module 4: Data Collection and Analysis 2: Interview and Observation	10	7
GSM005	Module 5: Data Collection and Analysis 3: Questionnaires and Surveys	10	7
GSM006	Module 6: Data Collection and Analysis 4: Analysis of Language- and Text-based Data	10	7
GSM007	Module 7: Data Collection and Analysis 5 Using Electronic and Other Sources	10	7
GGMGRP	Geographical Research	40	7
	Total research training credits	**60**	

Optional modules (20 credits)

Optional modules may comprise one 20 credit module or two 10 credit modules. These should be compatible with the programme aims and outcomes described in this document and must be agreed in advance by the MSc Urban Sustainability Programme Director and appropriate Module Convenor. Optional modules with timetables that clash with those of the compulsory modules described above may not be selected. Optional modules may include those taught at Masters Level and Part 3 Level.

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme may be taken over 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time. The GSSS Research Methods Programme takes place on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning throughout the three terms. This course is modular and the modules run in alternating slots from year to year

thus giving part-time students the option of taking all the modules over two years in the morning or afternoon slot.

Modules taught within the Geography Department will generally take place on Thursday mornings, and Friday afternoons. Part time students would be expected to take 90 credits in each year of study, but will be required to complete the 60 credit dissertation in their SECOND YEAR of study.

Modules taught outside the Geography Department will take place as timetabled throughout the week. Some modules, such as Sustainable Design, Construction and Operation (CEMIB9) runs in intensive modular form on 5 consecutive days in March and as such may not be appropriate for part-time students.

Progression requirements
To progress from the taught elements to the dissertation, students must have gained an average mark of 50 or more overall and have no overall mark below 40 for the modules GGMUGP, GGMSUC, GGMUEH and GGMUE.

Summary of teaching and assessment
Teaching is organised in modules that involve a range of lecture, seminar and practical-based learning approaches. Modules are assessed by a mixture of coursework and formal examination. Some modules are assessed wholly by coursework or by examination; details are given in the module descriptions. The final dissertation will be on a topic of the student's choosing but in a research area relevant to urban sustainability.

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

For Masters Degrees
To pass the MSc students must 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 modules GGMUGP, GGMSUC, GGMUE and GGMUEH*. 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.

For PG Diplomas
To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in modules GGMUGP, GGMSUC, GGMUE and GGMUEH*. 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 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 Certificates
To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in modules GGMUGP, GGMSUC, GGMUE and GGMUEH.* In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits. *

* The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied his or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

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 geography, planning or a social or environmental science. However, well-motivated applicants with other degree backgrounds and students returning to higher education are strongly encouraged to apply. Students whose previous education was not in English will be required to provide evidence of their ability to study in English in line with University of Reading postgraduate entry requirements.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Steven Musson

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 Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and includes the Careers Advisory Service, the Disability Advisory Service, Accommodation Advisory Team, Student Financial Support, Counselling and Study Advisors. Student Services has a Helpdesk available for enquiries made in person or online (www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk), or by calling the central enquiry number on (0118) 378 5555. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions on everything from accommodation to finance. The Carrington Building is open between 8:30 and 17:30 Monday to Thursday (17:00 Friday and during vacation periods). Further information can be found in the Student Diary (given to students at enrolment) or on the Student website (www.reading.ac.uk/student).

Career prospects
It is anticipated that graduates from this programme will gain employment in the fields of urban planning, economic development, regeneration and environmental consultancy. The programme has been developed in consultation with leading employers in the south east region, including SEEDA, Reading Borough Council and the Thames Valley Economic Partnership. Graduates will

have a range of specialised and transferable skills that will enhance career prospects in urban planning and regeneration with a particular focus on urban sustainability. Furthermore, students already in employment can opt to study part time as part of their career development in the field of urban planning, regeneration and sustainability.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements
Not applicable

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
1. Human and physical geography approaches to urban sustainability that reflect current staff research interests within the Department of Geography 2. The way in which the concept of urban sustainability cuts across such approaches and the intellectual and policy challenges this poses 3. The principles of research design and strategy, including an awareness of the strengths of different research methodologies 4. A range of case-studies in urban sustainability and other examples of principles in practice	Teaching and learning is promoted through lectures and tutorials, seminars, field visits and guided reading. This includes modules on general & transferable skills; research methods and skills, research-led optional modules in geography and elsewhere in the University and the dissertation. *Assessment* Details of specific forms of assessment are contained within module descriptions. Across the programme, this includes: 1. Seminar presentations 2. Written essays 3. Exams 4. Final dissertation

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to: 1. Critically engage with a range of contrasting approaches to urban sustainability 2. Reconcile human and physical geography research methodologies and data, including synthesising complex and varied information 3. Present and verify qualitative and quantitative arguments drawing on a range of information and data from academic sources and beyond 4. Identify interesting and feasible research questions and problems in the field of urban sustainability that are informed by academic research in the field 5. Critically assess existing research on a particular topic and assimilate it into self-led research	**Teaching/learning methods** Teaching of intellectual skills is primarily undertaken in optional and compulsory course modules. A range of methods are employed, including direct lecturing, guided reading, seminars and group discussion. In addition, research methods training contributes to the identification of research questions. These modules draw on research from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and are taught in an informal, student-led environment. The dissertation represents a self-led learning opportunity for intellectual skills, particularly for points 4 and 5. *Assessment* In addition to dissertation research carried out with the support of a supervisor, formal assessment in this area includes coursework essays and examination answers. A range of other informal approaches are also employed, including seminars, presentations and discussions.
C. Practical skills – able to: 1. Select and use research methods appropriate to different problems and data analysis challenges 2. Undertake practical work in the field using a range of human and physical geography research methods 3. Use a range of appropriate software packages to recording, analysing and represent data 4. Manage an individual research project 5. Participate in group practical activities work as part of a team and as a group leader 6. Communicate research findings to a range of audiences using appropriate methods	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies** Modules on general and transferable skills including EDMES1 and 2 are important to teaching and learning in this area. In particular, they deal with the selection of research methods and their application. Optional modules in geography and elsewhere are also relevant, particularly where they involve practical training in software techniques. Dissertation research with the support of a supervisor enables students to utilise these practical skills. *Assessment* Includes practical workshop sessions, group and individual presentations and the final dissertation.

D. Transferable skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
1. Manage an individual research project through planning to completion, including the selection of appropriate research techniques and the identification of strategic priorities within the project 2. Communicate ideas through the preparation of formal essays and reports 3. Disseminate the outcomes of research to a range of audiences using appropriate oral communication techniques 4. Work as part of a team on a range of practical and intellectual tasks 5. Use a range of specialised software packages including statistical analysis and GIS software in a research environment	Modules on general and transferable skills including EDMES1 and 2 are important to teaching and learning in this area. In particular, they deal with the selection of research methods and their application. Optional modules in geography and elsewhere are also relevant, particularly where they involve practical training in software techniques. Dissertation research with the support of a supervisor enables students to utilise these practical skills. *Assessment* 1. Seminar presentations and discussions 2. Coursework essays and reports 3. Final dissertation (GGM XX)

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.