

BSc Regional Science (Geography)
For students entering Part 1 in 2009/0

UCAS code:

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Geography, Economics
Faculty:	Science Faculty
Programme length:	3 years
Date of specification:	01/Nov/2010
Programme Director:	Dr Steve Musson
Programme Advisor:	Dr Graham Crampton
Board of Studies:	Regional Science
Accreditation:	Not applicable

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide undergraduate students with both subject-specific knowledge (in the two disciplines involved) and general skills. It aims:

- to give students a thorough insight into the importance of a geographic perspective on human processes, including the interaction of processes operating at global, regional and local scales
- to develop an understanding of the working of economic processes of production and exchange and its applicability to a wide range of different situations
- to impart knowledge of the theory and practice of both economics and human geography, together with an ability to integrate their perspectives
- to encourage students to make appropriate use of theories and research findings from the social sciences in understanding spatial phenomena
- to develop students' skills in applying theoretical concepts, knowledge and philosophies to the understanding of particular environments, spatial differences and to decision-making
- to develop an understanding of the interaction between various types of social and economic processes in urban, regional and international systems

Transferable skills

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills in line with the University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working and use of information technology and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum.

By the end of the programme students should also have acquired: critical and analytical skills; a basic competence in empirical research; an ability to place issues in a wider context, to make connections between apparently disparate events and issues, and to handle alternative ways of understanding particular situations; an ability to relate theoretical knowledge and ideas to practical real-world situations; writing, reasoning, verbal and presentation skills, and specific technical skills, such as computing, word-processing and statistics.

Programme content

The profile which follows states which modules must be taken (the compulsory part), together with lists of modules from which the student must make a selection in consultation with their programme adviser (the optional part). Students must take a combination of compulsory and optional modules making a total of 120 credits in each Part of the programme. In Part 1 optional modules can be drawn from anywhere in the University subject to any restriction which may be applied to particular module choices. The number of credits for each module is shown after its title.

Part 1 (three terms)

Compulsory modules

<i>Module</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
GG1HGT	Human Geography Skills and Concepts	20	4
EC101	Principles of Microeconomics	20	4
EC102	Principles of Macroeconomics	20	4

And either:				
GG1GT	Geographical Techniques	20	4	
Or				
EC105	Introductory Quantitative Techniques	20	4	
And either:				
EC108	Mathematics for Economics: Introductory Techniques for BA	10	4	
Or				
EC109	Mathematics for Economics: Introductory Techniques for BSc	10	4	

Optional modules: 30 credits chosen from:

GG1SC	Social and Cultural Geography	10	4
GG1HGE	Geography and the Global Economy	10	4
GG1HPP	People and Places in the Global Economy	10	4
EC107	Introduction to Economic Institutions and Policy	10	4

Part 2 (three terms)

Compulsory modules

<i>Module</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
GG2TP	Team Projects	10	5
GG2CDS	Career Development Skills	10	5
GG2FR	Regional Science Fieldclass	10	5
EC201	Intermediate Microeconomics	20	5
EC202	Intermediate Macroeconomics	20	5

Optional modules: 30 credits in Geography chosen from:

 GG2H1	Geographies of Development	10	5
GG2H2	Economic Geography	10	5
GG2H4	Urban Geography	10	5
GG2HP	History and Philosophy of Geography	10	5
GG2ER	Energy Resources	10	5
GG2CG	Cultural Geography	10	5
GG2GIS	GIS and Digital Cartography	10	5
GG2SG	Social Geography	10	5
GG2WP	Web Page Development	10	5

20 credits in Economics chosen from:

EC238	Economics of Social Policy	20	4
EC242	Economics of the Environment and Energy	20	4
EC243	Economic History	20	4
Either:			
EC203	Introductory Econometrics (BA)	20	4
Or:			
EC225	Introductory Econometrics (BSc)	20	4

Part 3 (three terms)

Compulsory modules

Module	Title	Credits	Level
GG3D	Dissertation	40	6

80 credits of Geography modules chosen from the list of approved modules given below (as available):

GG323	Sustainable Development	20	6
GG311	Social Inequalities and Difference	20	6
GG324	Urban Governance	20	6
GG321	Work, Employment and Development	20	6
GG315	Geographies of Children and Youth	20	6
GG344	Culture and Development in Africa	20	6
GG3CC	Climate Change	20	6
GG333	Geographic Information Systems	20	6
GG362	Water Resources	20	6
GG3AP	Air Pollution, Effects and Controls	20	6
GG340	Biodiversity and Conservation Fieldclass	20	6
GG361	Aquatic Environments: Problems and Management	20	6
GG3PR	Human Geography of the Polar Regions	20	6

Progression requirements

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- achieve an overall average of 40% in 120 credits taken in Part 1; and
- achieve an average mark of 40% in the modules taken in Geography or Economics and an average mark of 35% or above for the remaining 30 credits.

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student shall normally be required to:

- achieve an overall average of 40% in the 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- achieve a mark of 40% or above for modules representing 100 of the 120 credits and a mark of 35% or above for the remaining 20 credits.

Final Degree Assessment: marks in Part 2 and Part 3 are weighted in the ratio 1:2.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is organised in modules which typically involve both lectures and either tutorials/seminars or practicals. Modules are assessed by a mixture of coursework and formal examination. The Part 3 optional dissertation, however, is run as a series of tutorials with an individual supervisor, and is assessed only as coursework.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

Grade C or better in English Language and Mathematics in GCSE/O Level

UCAS Tariff: 300 points, 100 points in Geography or Economics

Total points must include at least 2 A2 passes

Total points exclude Key Skills and General Studies

International Baccalaureate: 31 points including 6 in Geography

Irish Leaving Certificate: BBBB

We welcome deferred-entry applications from those wanting to take a gap year between school and university, and from mature students and students with special needs, for whom we may take a broader view of entry requirements. For those with special needs we are happy, when necessary, to take a flexible approach to field-work and practical work requirements, and to make appropriate arrangements for note taking and examinations.

Admissions Tutor: Professor S Morse

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 Directorate. The Student Services Directorate 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 website (www.reading.ac.uk/student).

Career prospects

Regional Science graduates have the broad measure of literacy, numeracy and 'graphicacy' characteristic of geographers, together with a firm understanding of economic principles and processes. Together with the computing knowledge that is also gained, these open up a wide variety of careers. These include accountancy, computer work, management posts in business and industry, banking, insurance and retailing. Some Regional Science graduates wish to pursue a career making direct use of their degree study. This can be in central and local government and in firms engaged in economic development consultancy and similar work, as well as in postgraduate study and teaching.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

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

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. Economic processes of production and exchange
2. The fundamental concepts and techniques of microeconomics and macroeconomics.
3. Fundamental concepts of human geography such as environment, place, spatial variation, and representation of landscape and environment
4. Geographic perspectives on social processes and their interaction at global, regional and local scales.
5. Interaction between social and economic processes in urban, regional and international systems
6. Theory and practice in economics and human geography and the potential for their integration.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Most of the knowledge required for the basic topics is discussed in formal lectures supported by smaller group discussions on set questions.

At Part 2 knowledge is also gained through a 1-week field class and practical work.

In Part 3 the specialised option modules include writing detailed assessments of set topics, making oral presentations and joining in group discussion.

Assessment

Most knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework and unseen formal examinations. Short tests and oral presentations also contribute.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - *able to*:

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1. Think logically
2. Develop a reasoned argument
3. Organise tasks into a structured form
4. Abstract and synthesise information
5. Critically judge and evaluate evidence
6. Assess the merits of contrasting theories, explanations and policies
7. Transfer appropriate techniques and knowledge from one subject area to another
8. Organise and reflect upon their own learning
9. Recognise the moral and ethical issues involved in academic and policy debates.

C. Practical skills - able to:

1. Present a chain of reasoning
2. Apply theoretical concepts and knowledge to the understanding of particular environments and spatial differences and to decision-making
3. Using a variety of techniques and principles, analyse economic and geographic problems
4. Evaluate policies from an economic and geographic standpoint
5. Communicate both orally and in writing critical analyses of economic, geographic and environmental issues
6. Plan, organise and write a report on an independent project

D. Transferable skills - able to:

1. Use IT (word-processing, spreadsheets databases, email and www))
2. Apply skills of numeracy, graphicity and computation to data analysis
3. Communicate ideas in a logical way in both writing and speech
4. Give oral presentations
5. Contribute to group discussions of an economic or geographic problem
6. Use library resources both on- and off-line
7. Manage time
8. Plan career strategy

The need to think logically and analytically permeates the compulsory modules in the course. Skills 2-7 are developed in essay writing, and continuously assessed project work and the dissertation. 8 is developed throughout the entire programme. 9 is developed both in discussion groups, readings and written work.

The more specialist topics provide many opportunities to apply and develop these skills through the analysis of a range of problems in a wide variety of contexts.

Assessment

1-5 are covered extensively in the core modules; 6-8 are given wide scope in the optional modules and the Case Studies module.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The core subjects in economics concentrate on formal economic reasoning. Problem solving forms an important part of class work especially in Parts 2 and 3.

In geography the ability to use all these skills is developed through essay writing, practicals, field work and small group discussions.

In both disciplines the specialised options involve writing detailed assessments of set topics.

Assessment

All skills are tested through a combination of coursework, including both problem solving and essays, and through unseen examinations. 6 is assessed directly by means of the large number of essays prepared in Parts 1, 2 and 3. It is also assessed in a Part 2 project and the (optional) Dissertation.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The use of IT is initiated in the Part 1 IT and Statistics module and further developed in the Part 2 Geographical Techniques module. Word processing is required throughout the Part 2 and 3 course modules

Seminars in Parts 2 and 3 involve group discussions and oral presentations. Part 2 work includes preparation of a group project

Library and internet resources have to be used continuously in the preparation of essays and project work

The highly structured system of deadlines for assessed work requires good time management

Career planning is taught through lectures and self paced computer-based assignments as well as one-to-one meetings with career staff.

Assessment

IT skills are assessed directly at Part I. Most skills are tested indirectly through the preparation of course 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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.