

**MSc in Food Economics and Marketing**  
**For students entering Part 1 in 2012/3**

**UCAS code:**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Life Sciences Faculty
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	17/Aug/2012
Programme Director:	Dr Giuseppe Nocella
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	Graduate Institute of International Development and
Applied Economics	
Accreditation:	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

**Summary of programme aims**

The aim of the programme is to provide a detailed insight into economic aspects of food production, marketing and policy from agriculture through food processing and retailing to the consumer. The programme combines training in the skills of applied economics and marketing - including quantitative and qualitative research techniques - with an opportunity to apply them to a diverse range of contemporary food issues.

The programme enables students to:

- Acquire skills that will enable them to work as professional food and marketing economists in industry or government, or to proceed to a career in research;
- Develop a capacity to undertake research in the economic and social sciences;
- Develop critical, presentational and inter-personal skills

**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 and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum.

In following this MSc programme, students will have had the opportunity to further enhance their skills relating to communication (both written and oral), information handling, problem-solving, team working and use of information technology.

**Programme content**

*Compulsory modules (160 credits)*

<i>Code</i>	<i>Module title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
APME20	Market and Trade Analysis	10	7
APME29	Advanced Marketing	10	7
APME53	Economics of International Food Markets	10	7
APME54	Marketing Research Methods	10	7
APME59	Consumer Behaviour and Food Marketing	10	7
APME65	Advertising and Branding	10	7
APME67	Food Policy	10	7
APME71	Econometrics	20	7
IDM071	Research and Study Skills for Independent Learning	10	7
IDM072	Dissertation	60	7

**Progression requirements**

N/A

**Assessment and classification**

Teaching is organised in modules that typically involve a combination of lectures and seminars. Some lecture based modules are supported by workshops or computer lab sessions. Modules are assessed by a combination of

course work and/or formal examination. Examinations will normally take place at the beginning of the Summer Term.

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

**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. 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 at least 60 in 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 at least 50 in 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. 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 Certificate**

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must 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 a good honours degree (or equivalent from a University outside the UK) in Economics, Agricultural Economics or another subject with adequate training in economic principles and quantitative methods. Students whose first degree is not deemed suitable for direct entry may be allowed entry after following a 4-week pre-session course in economics.

The University requires all overseas students whose first language is not English to take either an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) or TOEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language) proficiency in English test. A minimum test score of 6.5 (with no significant weakness in any area) in IELTS, or 590 (243 computer based test) in TOEFL, is required.

**Admissions Tutor:** The Programme Director is responsible for admissions.

**Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Student Employment, Experience and Careers Centre (SEEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and 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 advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing. 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 and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

A Research and Study Skills module (IDM071) 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**

The broad scope of the MSc programme provides a suitable basis to enter posts in industry, government and non-governmental organisations. After some years of work experience, graduates might be a buyer for a food retailer, involved in business strategy or marketing for a food manufacturer, an economist in agribusiness, developing economic strategy in a government department or working as a policy analyst in an NGO.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

Not relevant during the taught component of the MSc, but with the explicit agreement of the Programme Director the Dissertation may be researched and written away from the University.

## **Programme Outcomes**

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

#### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

How economic forces impact upon the food chain in an international context; and how markets work (or sometimes do not work) to co-ordinate economic activity.

Consumer behaviour, marketing and marketing research methods of relevance to the food industry. The issues that arise when considering the likely economic impact of government intervention, and of the framework, and constraints, within which policy is formulated.

Quantitative and qualitative techniques, including econometrics

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

The compulsory modules in the programme provide the professional 'tool kit' of the applied economist. Various optional modules allow this 'tool-kit' to be expanded, reflecting the individual student's background and interests.

Knowledge and understanding is gained through a framework of lectures, seminars, and practical classes reinforced and extended by guided reading. A variety of course work gives further opportunities for building knowledge and the application of techniques. The dissertation is a significant opportunity for the student to use these skills.

#### *Assessment*

Combinations of coursework and formal examinations are used to assess basic knowledge. The dissertation is seen as a major test of the successful application of these skills.

### **Skills and other attributes**

#### **B. Intellectual skills - able to:**

Assimilate, evaluate and synthesise knowledge from a variety of academic and other sources

To discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information

Think logically

Develop and present coherent, structured and well balanced arguments

Analyse problems and apply appropriate problem solving techniques

Plan, conduct and report on a research project

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Critical evaluation of the literature and the application of economic and business method are developed through a variety of modules. Skills 5 and 6 are addressed explicitly by the dissertation.

#### *Assessment*

Most parts of the programme assess these skills through a combination of coursework and formal examination.

#### **C. Practical skills - able to:**

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Collect, analyse and interpret economic and marketing data  
 Understand survey techniques, and statistical appraisals  
 Assess the role and impact of government intervention  
 Plan and execute a research project  
 Draft written reports  
 and, depending on the options chosen,  
 Construct marketing and business plans

#### **D. Transferable skills - *able to*:**

Use IT (word processing, spreadsheets, statistical packages and databases).  
 Communicate ideas in a variety of written styles and lengths  
 Give oral presentations to small groups  
 Make effective contributions to group discussions and ask well considered questions  
 Effectively use library and WWW resources to search and retrieve information  
 Manage time effectively

**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.**

Development of these skills feature in the compulsory modules, and in preparing the dissertation. For example: skill 2 is addressed by 'Qualitative Research Methods' and 'Quantitative Methods'; skill 3 is the focus of 'Policy Analysis'; and skill 4 is addressed in 'Dissertation Preparation' and reflected in the execution of the dissertation.

#### *Assessment*

These skills are assessed by a combination of course work and examination, and in the dissertation.

#### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Many of the transferable skills are embedded within a wide variety of modules within the degree. Use of IT data management and analysis occurs within individual modules, for example 'Econometrics'.

#### *Assessment*

Transferable skills are largely assessed through course work assignments; but skills 5 and 6 are particularly reflected in writing the dissertation.