

**MSc in Business Economics**  
**For students entering in 2012/3**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Economics
Faculty:	Arts, Humanities and Social Science Faculty
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	18/Jul/2012
Programme Director:	Dr Nigel Wadeson
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

The programme provides a thorough postgraduate education in the analysis of business both at firm and industry level. Compulsory modules provide detailed and up-to-date introductions to the relevant literatures on Business Economics, Regulation and Research Methods. These courses (and supporting specialist options) provide the techniques and evidence to understand how industries are structured, how firms behave within them and the impact of these factors on the performance of firms.

**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. They will also need to enhance their skills in communications (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, and the use of information technology. Students will work under pressure of time throughout the programme and will learn to set priorities and manage their time in order to meet strict deadlines.

**Programme content**

Students register for a 12 month programme comprising taught modules and either a dissertation or an applied research project.

Compulsory modules

Code	Title	Credits	Level
ECM601	Microeconomic Theory	20	7
ECM620	Economics of Corporate Strategy	20	7
ECM122	Small Business Economics	20	7
ECM123	Regulation	20	7
ECM121	Strategic Diversity and the Political Economy of Multinationals	20	7
and either			
ECM607	Advanced Econometrics	20	7
or			
EC313	Business & Financial Forecasting	20	6
and either			
ECM109	Applied Research Project	20	7
or			
ECM110	Dissertation	40	7

The choice between ECM607 and EC313 will be made by the student. The Programme Director will offer advice to help the student make a choice that fits their educational background and future career progression. In addition students must take 40 credits (20 credits for those doing the dissertation module) of electives chosen from:

- ECM120 The Economics of the Multinational Enterprise (20 credits)
- ECM130 The Microeconomics of Banking (20)
- ECM132 The Economics of Financial Markets (20)
- ECM135 The Economic Foundations of Corporate Finance (20)
- ECM621 Topics in Business Economics (20)

### **Part-time or modular arrangements**

The programme may be studied part-time over two consecutive years with the permission of the Director of Taught Postgraduate Studies. The dissertation will be presented by 5.00pm on the first Friday in September at the end of the second year of study.

### **Progression requirements**

Students wishing to proceed to a higher degree by research should normally have obtained an average of at least 60% in the modules and at least 60% in the dissertation.

### **Summary of Teaching and Assessment**

Teaching is organised in modules. The delivery of material varies among the modules, especially in the proportion of time allocated to lectures, classes and seminars. All modules involve coursework, which takes a variety of forms reflecting the aims of the module. Final assessment of the modules involves a 2 hour examination. 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 Master's Degree**

To qualify for Distinction, students must gain an overall average of 70 or more over 180 credits, a mark of 60 or more for the Dissertation or Applied Research Project, and must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for Merit, students must gain an overall average of 60 or more over 180 credits, a mark of 50 or more for the Dissertation or Applied Research Project, and must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for Passed, students must gain an overall average of 50 or more over 180 credits and a mark of 50 or more for the Dissertation or Applied Research Project. In addition, the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

#### **For PG Diploma**

To qualify for Distinction, students must gain an overall average of 70 or more over 120 credits and must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for Merit, students must gain an overall average of 60 or more over 120 credits and must not have any mark below 40.

To qualify for Passed, students must gain an overall average of 50 or more over 120 credits. In addition, the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

#### **For PG Certificate**

To qualify for a Postgraduate Certificate, students must gain an overall average of 50 or more over 60 credits. 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 Upper Second class honours degree or equivalent in economics, or in a degree in which economics was a significant component, or have obtained an Upper Second class honours degree or equivalent in a subject other than economics and have significant work experience in the field of business.

**Admissions Tutor:** Programme Director

### **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 (SECC), 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)

The Programme Director acts as personal tutor to the student and also meets every student before the beginning of term to offer advice on the operation of the degree programme and on the choice of options. Many of the students are from countries outside the UK and tutors are therefore careful to ensure that students settle down in their new surroundings and understand the requirements of the MSc programme. Most Autumn term modules set a test sometime during the term with the primary purpose of familiarizing students with the UK examination system and the requirements of the programme. Students who fail overall on their modules are identified and invited to discuss their problems with their tutor. In addition to lecture and class times, each module lecturer has appointed office hours during which they may be consulted without prior appointment. The Department of Economics also provides a Handbook covering the postgraduate programmes as a whole, including details of members of staff, the modules and methods of assessment.

### **Career prospects**

The course provides understanding of firm's behaviour and would provide a very strong foundation for employment in small, medium and large firms as well as in institutions that invest in these firms. Since it is concerned with the behaviour and performance of firms, candidates undertaking the programme would also be ideally suited to employment in government, anti-trust bodies. It is also expected to provide the foundation necessary for further education by research.

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

None

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

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

1. Economic models of the firm and industry.
2. Most recent theoretical and applied analyses of the behaviour of firms.
3. The institutional environment affecting firms and industry.
4. Alternative competition policy scenarios in a European and a British context.
5. Explicit addressing of issues at the interface of (1-2) and (3-4).

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

Formal lectures, discussions, individual and group presentations, guided reading and guidance on key sources of reference material. Feedback and guidance are important elements complementing an emphasis on self-study.

##### *Assessment*

Unseen examinations and coursework comprising long essays, projects and tests as appropriate for the module.

#### **Skills and other attributes**

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

1. Structure, analyse and evaluate theoretical and policy issues and problems.
2. Think logically and analytically and to understand the difference between normative and positive statements.
3. Identify key economic relationships and to test these against the evidence.
4. Comprehend the rapidly evolving state of knowledge and institutional environment in the subject area.

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

Students are frequently challenged in all teaching situations to complete logical arguments, analyse problems and alternative policies, and justify statements. Long essays, debate and presentations provide the principal vehicles for developing intellectual skills.

##### *Assessment*

Unseen examination and coursework with 3. being assessed mostly in essays and project work.

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

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

1. Draw on the knowledge base in the field of study to suggest policies and strategies to achieve social and economic objectives.
2. Evaluate alternative policies.
3. Evaluate current theoretical and empirical research in the field of study.
4. Identify potential sources of information and analysis relevant to the issue and problems in the field of study.

Students are required to undertake a wide amount of reading, both of specific references and through researching their own sources of information. Discussion in lectures and seminars emphasises formal economic reasoning, the use of statistical and empirical evidence and the strengths and weaknesses in alternative theories and methodologies.

*Assessment*

Long essays and unseen examinations are the principal methods of assessment.

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

1. Communicate orally and in writing
2. Use IT, including word processing and website searches.
3. Use library and web based resources.
4. Organise extended pieces of work from planning to completion.
5. Manage time and prioritise work to achieve goals.

**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 of the skills listed in 1-5. This is reinforced by the breadth and depth of the syllabuses for each module and the highly structured system of deadlines for assessed work, and examinations, which develop the students' skills of time management. Oral skills are developed through lecture and seminar discussions and individual and group presentations.

*Assessment*

Unseen examination and coursework with 3. being assessed mostly in essays 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.**