

MA in Public Policy For students entering in 2012/3

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Arts, Humanities and Social Science Faculty
Programme length:	1 year
Date of specification:	25/Jul/2012
Programme Director:	Prof Geoff Meen
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	
Accreditation:	

Summary of programme aims

The MA in Public Policy is a multidisciplinary programme that seeks to help graduates develop a deep understanding of the making and impact of public policy across a whole range of institutions at different levels. It gives students both breadth and depth of understanding of public policy in a systematic way and combines theoretical, methodological and practical issues relevant to the study of public policy. Students will also have a general familiarisation with the full range of quantitative and qualitative research skills. All students will engage in a sustained piece of independent and critical research within the context of not only close and supportive academic supervision but also, wherever possible, direct practical experience. While designed to appeal in particular to students who have a first degree in Politics and/or Economics, applications are also welcomed from other related first degree disciplines who share a desire to work in the wide-ranging new public sector and non-profit sector in such employment areas as: government officials, administrators, policy analysts, budget analysts, programme managers or as employees of private sector companies that work under contract to governments.

Transferable skills

Amongst a range of transferable skills, this programme will provide students with those skills necessary for employment where there is a requirement for the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision-making in complex and often unpredictable situations, and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development. Students will also enhance their skills in communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, the use of information technology and using primary and secondary sources. 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. Career planning will be an integral part of the programme, particularly in terms of the choice of pathway options and placement opportunities.

Programme content

The programme is based around core taught modules, specialist pathways that reflect major public policy challenges, and a research dissertation or applied research project. There will also be opportunities, wherever possible, to undertake a placement, an internship or a short period of study abroad. The core modules provide a range of threshold concepts and key tools for a critical analysis of the Economics of Public Policy and the Politics of Public Policy. Increasingly evidence-based policy and research demands familiarity with key quantitative and qualitative techniques. As a consequence of this, the third core module relates to Research Training. The pathways are designed to give students the ability to tailor their studies to reflect personal or national interests as well as provide an issue-based focus for further in-depth analysis. In conjunction with this, students can also undertake dissertation and research projects that relate directly to their own work and national situations. Students may combine modules from different pathways or choose to specialise in a particular pathway. Up to (but not more than) 40 credits of pathway options may be taken from outside the School of Politics, Economics and International Relations. All pathway options are also subject to availability. Outline Programme structure (12 months):

Core modules Pathways (60 credits) (60 credits)

Economics of public policy (20 credits) Global and Regional Governance and Institutions
Politics of public policy Security and Rights in the Modern World

Research Project / Placement (60 credits)

Dissertation (60
credits)

or

(20 credits)
Research
training (20
credits)

International Development and Emerging Markets

Independent applied
research project and
placement/internship
(60 credits)

Sustainable Environments
Welfare and Social Policy

Compulsory modules:

Code	Title	Credits	Level
ECM184	Economics of Public Policy	20	7
PIM49	Politics of Public Policy	20	7
EPIM50	Research Training	20	7
either PIM51	Dissertation in Public Policy	60	7
or PIM52	Applied Research Project and Placement/Internship	60	7

Pathways and Optional modules:

Global and Regional Governance and Institutions			
PIM11	International Security Studies	30	7
PIM15	Political Integration in Europe	30	7
ECM123	Regulation	20	7
ECM134	International Money and Finance	20	7
IDM046	Governance, Accountability and Development	10	7
LWMTF	European Legal Frameworks: Constitutionalism, Citizenship and Democracy	20	7
Security and Rights in the Modern World			
PIM11	International Security Studies	30	7
PIM42	Conflict in the Middle East	30	7
PIM43	Terrorism in a Globalising World	30	7
LWMTIL	International Law in Theory and Practice	20	7
LWMTCI	Contemporary Issues in International Law (only taken in conjunction with LWMTIL)	10	7
International Development and Emerging Markets			
ECM160	Macroeconomics for Developing Countries	20	7
ECM161	Microeconomics for Developing Countries	20	7
ECM145	Financial Development in Emerging Economies	20	7
IDM001	Perspectives on Development	20	7
APME61	Appraisal of Agricultural and Rural Development Projects	10	7
APMA92	Rethinking Agricultural Development	10	7
Sustainable Environments			
ECM180	Urban Economics	20	7
ECM181	Economic Theory for Climate Change	20	7
ECM182	Climate Change and Economic Policies	20	7
ECM183	Carbon and Renewable Energy Economics	20	7
IDM073	Environment and Development : Problems and Policies	10	7
IDM074	Environment and Development: Case Studies	10	7
REMP02	Planning Theory, Politics and Practice	20	7
Welfare and Social Policy			
ECM185	Economics of Social Policy	20	7
ECM186	Social Policy of Health and Ageing	20	7
REMF28	Housing Economics	20	7
IDM021	Poverty, Inequality and Livelihoods	10	7
IDM024	Social Policies for Development	10	7

Part-time or modular arrangements

The programme can be followed part-time over a period of 24 months. It can also be taken on a modular basis for a period of up to but not exceeding 72 months.

Progression requirements

None

Summary of Teaching and Assessment

The teaching and assessment arrangements for each module varies in terms of the proportion allocated to lectures, seminars and classes. All modules involve assessed coursework, but again the ratio between coursework, examinations and other forms of assessment will vary from module to module. Full details are provided in each module description form.

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 Degree To qualify for Distinction, students must gain an overall average of 70 or more over 180 credits and a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation, 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 and a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation, 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. 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 at least an Upper Second class Honours degree or its equivalent. For students whose first language is not English, an IELTS score of 6.5 is required (including for writing skills). In the case of applicants who offer a high level of professional experience the normal degree admission requirements (although NOT the language requirements) might be relaxed (provided, of course, that such applicants can show evidence of sufficient academic ability to undertake study at this level). We also very much welcome applications from students who may wish to do the programme on a part-time basis with the support of their employer.

Admissions Tutor: Professor Geoff Meen

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

Career prospects

Students with a postgraduate degree in Public Policy may be able to pursue careers in a wide range of areas in government, civil service, business, research, journalism, teaching and the work of non-governmental

organisations. This degree is of particular relevance to those wishing to pursue a career in the international sphere of public service or with the domestic or foreign service of their home State. Students may also go on to further postgraduate studies at PhD level.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

Study abroad, internships and placements are a part of the degree programme and will be coordinated by the Development Officer for the School of Politics, Economics and International Relations. The ability to offer placements may depend on visa requirements.

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:

Key issues in public policy, including political, economic, strategic, legal and social issues, together with the process of interdisciplinary analysis of national, international and global aspects of policy making.

The inter-relationship of political and economic processes in the making of public policy.

How proposals and ideas are translated into policies.

A range of research methodologies sufficient to formulate appropriate and relevant research questions and conduct independent research in public policy methodologies and techniques.

A select range of pathway options to broaden, as well as deepen, understanding of the making and impact of public policy at an advanced level.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The basic knowledge in all taught modules is provided by seminars, although some modules may include lectures and other forms of teaching strategy. All seminars allow a student to gauge his/her progress in that module and will require significant input into the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. The critical input into learning is provided by a student's own reading and preparation for group discussions, as well as through engagement with both secondary and primary sources.

Assessment

Modules adopt a variety of assessment methods but all modules utilise either summative assessed work or an end of year unseen, timed examination. The majority of modules utilise a combination of both methods of assessment.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - *able to:*

Formulate research questions and identify strategies for exploring them.

Recognise and evaluate methodological issues arising from the selection and use of data.

Think logically and coherently.

Analyse problems and issues.

Discriminate between relevant and irrelevant material.

Understand technical material.

Apply relevant knowledge effectively.

Construct defensible arguments and exercise critical judgement.

Communicate the evaluation and conclusions of key issues effectively, both in written and in oral form

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Logic, analytical skills and the ability to apply relevant knowledge is inherent in the study of all aspects of the programme and these skills are particularly encouraged and developed in seminars.

Assessment

Both formative and summative assignments assess all these skills either directly or indirectly.

C. Practical skills - *able to:*

1. Draw on the knowledge base in the field of study to analyse critically policies and strategies designed to achieve political, economic and social objectives.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Students are required to undertake a wide amount of reading, both of specific references and through researching their own source information.

2. Evaluate alternative policies and strategies.
3. Evaluate current theoretical and empirical research in the field of study.
4. Identify potential sources of information and analysis relevant to the issues and problems in the sphere of policy making.

Discussion in lectures, seminars and workshops emphasises formal academic reasoning, practical experience, the use of statistical and empirical evidence and the strengths and weaknesses in alternative theories, methodologies and approaches.

Assessment

Written and oral forms of summative assessed work and/or formal examinations. The dissertation and/or applied research project will also require all these practical skills.

D. Transferable skills - able to:

Engage in independent study.
Evaluate evidence using reasoned arguments.
Structure complex arguments.
Articulate one's own thoughts in a coherent fashion.
Oral presentations with and without visual aids (Power Point).
Identifying themes and trans-disciplinary questions.
Effective management of time and work-loads.
Demonstration of self-direction and independence in exercising own initiative and personal responsibility.
Use IT (e.g., internet sites and electronic databases) and other scholarly sources.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These skills are taught by means of seminars with student presentations and structured discussions, some individual tutorials, essay writing, workshops and the writing of a dissertation and/or applied research project. Additional training is available to students through study visits to the library and other research resources, and through the support of Study Advisers.

Assessment

The transferable skills developed during the programme form an integral part of knowledge and intellectual skill acquisition and are assessed throughout the programme in coursework, examinations, the dissertation and/or applied research project as well as in placement opportunities.

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.