

MSc in Research (Human Geography) (full-time)
For students entering in 2013/4

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| Awarding Institution: | University of Reading |
| Teaching Institution: | University of Reading |
| Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s): | Geography |
| Faculty: | Science Faculty |
| Programme length: | 1 year |
| Date of specification: | 12/Aug/2013 |
| Programme Director: | |
| Programme Advisor: | |
| Board of Studies: | MSc Research (Human Geography) |
| Accreditation: | None |

Summary of programme aims

The MSc (Research) in Human Geography aims to provide advanced study and research training, primarily as a foundation for further research at a Doctoral level. It also aims to provide advanced research skills for students who wish to pursue a career in non-academic research in Human Geography.

- To provide students with an appropriate grounding in the main philosophical approaches to social science research
- To develop students understanding of the ways in which epistemological and theoretical debates in the social sciences have influenced both general research approaches in geography and its sub-areas and specific theoretical debates within the subject
- To provide training in a wide range of quantitative and qualitative social science and geographical research methods.

Transferable skills

In following this programme students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to research, communication of complex material (both written and oral) to specialist and non-specialist audiences, information handling, time management, problem-solving and decision making, self-directed learning and use of information and communication technology. The MSc (Research) Human Geography will enable students to develop skill such as: synthesising and evaluating data from a range of sources; providing a coherent overview and critique of competing theories and positions on a topic; developing arguments on the merits and limitations of these; and self-direction and originality in independent planning and production of a substantial piece of research under supervision in the dissertation, as a potential foundation for further study and continuing professional development.

Programme content

| | <i>Code</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Credits</i> | <i>Level</i> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| | HEM01 | Research Skills and Career Learning | 10 | 7 |
| | GVMT | Geography Research Tutorial | 40 | 7 |
| | GVMRS | Geography Research Seminars | 10 | 7 |
| | GVMDIS | Dissertation | 120 | 7 |
| TOTAL | | | 180 | |

Module GVMT involves attendance at the Reading Researcher Development Programme and other training events, for example those organised by the ESRC South East Doctoral Training Centre.

Before commencing this degree programme, each student will undertake a learning needs assessment with the programme director. This assessment will take into account the prior research experience of the student and their personal aims and objectives. Training requirements for the dissertation module will also be taken into account. Following this learning needs assessment, the student will be offered a bespoke combination of training modules that meets their requirements, drawn from the RRDP and ESRC SE-DTC programmes. Students may also attend outside training events, such as the Essex Summer School in Data Analysis and short courses offered by external training providers (within and beyond the HE sector) where appropriate.

The programme director must approve the combination of training modules before the student begins their degree.

Part-time or modular arrangements

The programme may be undertaken over two years on a part-time basis. Selection of modules between the two years will be agreed at the commencement of the programme. It is anticipated that students will normally complete at least 60 credits' worth of modules in Year 1 complete the dissertation in Year 2. Modules will be assessed in the year that they are taken.

Progression requirements

None

Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Teaching is primarily by attendance at the training events specified in the individual learning needs assessment. Twice twice-termly tutorial meetings with a Personal Tutor will support this teaching. Students will be allocated to a dissertation supervisor in the Autumn Term and will meet regularly with this supervisor throughout the dissertation process in Spring and Summer Terms. In the Autumn Term, students will undertake dissertation preparation, attending relevant training modules and making a presentation on their proposed dissertation topic to members of the department.

Assessment will be by the dissertation and by two supervised essays, produced following the first tutorial meeting in each Term. At the tutorial meeting, the tutor and student will discuss recent training events the student has attended. Following this meeting, a 5,000 word essay will be set by the tutor. This essay will invite the student to critically reflect on recent training events and contextualise their learning in wider philosophical and/or methodological debates in Human Geography. This essay will be marked and feedback given in the next tutorial meeting. Students will also participate in the School of Human and Environmental Science taught masters training programme, engaging with advanced-level teaching in Archaeology and Environmental Science. They will also attend all research seminars in the Department of Geography and Environmental Science, reflecting on these in a research diary.

Mark Interpretation

100% Distinction

69% Merit

59% Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories

49% Work below threshold standard

39% Unsatisfactory Work

Further information on the classification conventions, including borderline criteria, are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/exams/PGclassification-post-2008.pdf>

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.

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 a degree at the equivalent of UK 2.1 honours or better in geography or a social science. However, motivated applicants with other degree backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.

Admissions Tutor: The 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 Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-sessional 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, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. 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

The programme particularly attracts graduates who intend to undertake a higher degree by research and/or to work in the future in consultancy. Some of the latter may already be in employment, and wish to complete the MSc course on a part-time basis, working on a research project relevant to their job.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

None

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

Research methods and skills in both the social sciences in general and human geography in particular; The principles of research design and strategy, including their ethical and legal implications; The theoretical, political and ethical implications of different research approaches;

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Attendance at agreed research training events including module HESM01
Independent study relating to philosophical and methodological approaches in Human Geography
Discussions with Personal Tutor in twice-termly meetings for GGMT

Assessment

Essays for modules GGMT
Coursework for module HESM01
Research diary for GGMRS
Final Dissertation GGMDIS

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - able to:

Formulate and present an argument using research data;
Present and/or verify qualitative and quantitative arguments
Critically assess the social science literature on a particular topic;
Identify interesting and feasible research questions & problems.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Attendance at agreed research training events
Independent study relating to philosophical and methodological approaches in Human Geography
Discussions with Personal Tutor in twice-termly meetings for GGMT
Discussions with Dissertation Supervisor and related independent study and research

Assessment

1. Essays for modules GGMT
2. Research diary for GGMRS

3. Final Dissertation

C. Practical skills - able to:

1. Design a programme of research
2. Select and use research methods appropriate to different problems
3. Undertake practical work in the field
4. Select and use appropriate methods for analysing data

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Attendance at agreed research training events including module HESM01
Discussions with Personal Tutor in twice-termly meetings
Discussions with Dissertation Supervisor and related independent study and research

Assessment

1. Essays for modules GGMT
2. Coursework for module HESM01
3. Final dissertation GGMDIS

D. Transferable skills - able to:

1. Undertake individual research through planning to completion
2. Write formal reports
3. Disseminate the outcomes of research to a range of audiences using appropriate communication skills.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

1. Attendance at agreed research training events including module HESM01
2. Independent study relating to philosophical and methodological approaches in Human Geography
3. Discussions with Dissertation Supervisor and related independent study and research

Assessment

Coursework for module HESM01
Final dissertation GDMDIS

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.