

**MSc in Atmosphere, Ocean and Climate (full-time)  
For students entering in 2014/5**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Science Faculty
Programme length:	1 year
Date of specification:	19/Sep/2014
Programme Director:	Dr Andrew Charlton-Perez
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	School of MPS PG taught programmes
Accreditation:	The programme is approved by the Royal Meteorological Society as appropriate training for meteorologists seeking the qualification <i>Chartered Meteorologist</i> .

**Summary of programme aims**

The aim of the Atmosphere, Ocean and Climate MSc programme is to provide the scientific background for research and other careers across a broad spectrum of meteorology-related science. It focuses particularly on a quantitative description of the physical processes that produce weather, the ways weather systems combine to form climates and the techniques used to simulate weather systems and climate on computers. Students graduating from this programme should have the knowledge and the technical and computing skills to equip them to carry out quantitative scientific research and technical projects not only within meteorology but also within related areas of environmental science.

**Transferable skills**

The following transferable skills will be gained by students during this degree programme

- Presentation skills (written and oral)
- Word-processing
- Writing technical reports
- Teamworking
- Solving numerical problems related to environmental science
- Reviewing and synthesizing information in a specific field of interest
- Practical measurement skills
- Applications of standard software packages (spreadsheets, databases, image analysis) to environmental science
- Accessing academic and technical information via library and online facilities
- Writing computational software.

**Programme content**

MSc and Diploma module listing

The modules offered as part of the taught part of the programme are listed below.

Module Code	Module Title	Core/Option	Credit	Level
<i>Autumn Term</i>				
MTMG01	Introduction to weather systems	C	10	7
MTMG02	Atmospheric physics	C	10	7
MTMG05	Professional skills (1) - Weather analysis/ forecasting	C		7
MTMG34	Experiencing the weather	C	10	7
MTMW11	Fluid dynamics of the atmosphere and ocean	C	20	7
MTMW12	Introduction to numerical modelling	C	10	7
MTMG04	Weather & Climate Discussion			7
<i>Spring Term</i>				
MTMW14	Numerical modelling of the atmosphere and oceans	C	10	7
MTMD01	Environmental Data Exploration	O	10	7
MTMG05	Professional skills (2) Team Project	C		7

MTMW15	Extratropical weather systems	O	10	7
MTMG16	Climate change	O	10	7
MTMG19	Tropical Weather Systems	O	10	7
MTMW20	Global circulations of the atmosphere and oceans	O	10	7
MTMG21	Oceanography	O	10	7
MTMG38	Remote sensing	O	10	7
MTMG04	Weather & Climate Discussion			7

#### *Summer Term*

MTMG05	Professional skills (3) Forecasting course	C	10	7
MTMG04	Weather & Climate Discussion			7
MTMG99	Dissertation (MSc), Essay (Diploma)	C	60(MSc)	7 30 (Dip)

#### *Notes on module listing*

Where a module is taken over more than one term (e.g. MTMG05) the credit weighting is given in the final entry only.

### **Specification for MSc**

Students must complete all core modules (140 credits) and also choose FOUR modules in the Spring Term from those marked optional (40 credits). A dissertation worth 60 credits must be completed by the end of August.  
*Total credit value of MSc = 180.*

### **Specification for Diploma**

Students must complete all core taught modules (80 credits), then the following two routes are available:

#### **EITHER:**

Students must choose FOUR modules in the Spring Term from those marked optional (40 credits);

#### **OR**

Students must choose ONE module in the Spring Term from those marked optional (10 credits) and complete an extended essay worth 30 credits by the end of June.

*Total credit value of Diploma = 120.*

### **Specification for Certificate**

Students must complete all assessed modules (60 credits) in the Autumn term.

*Total credit value of Certificate = 60.*

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

Students who wish to do the MSc programme part time over two years should contact the Programme Director to discuss details. The Team Project and Forecasting Course (MTMG05 Parts (2) and (3)) can be done in either year.

### **Progression requirements**

Not applicable for MSc programme.

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

The programme is in three major sections.

1. The Autumn term provides a broad introduction to the science of meteorology. No prior knowledge of the subject is assumed, but it is expected that students are familiar with the relevant mathematics and physics. Autumn term modules are assessed by coursework (including laboratory reports) by examinations (normally early in the New Year) or a mixture of the two. The sixth week of term is free of teaching.

2. More advanced and specialised modules are presented in the Spring Term. The 'Numerical modelling of the atmosphere and oceans' module MTMW14 is compulsory. The modules are assessed by coursework, by examination (at the end of the Easter Vacation) or a mixture of the two.

An additional component in the Spring Term is the 'Team Project' (MTMG05), undertaken by students working together in small groups. Week 6 during the term is devoted to researching and presenting this project. Assessment is based on a written report and an oral presentation.

3. The final part of MTMG05 (Forecasting Course) takes place during the Summer Term. After completing this course, almost all student time is spent (for MSc students) in preparing a dissertation on a selected topic which must be completed by mid August or (for some Diploma students) in preparing an extended essay on a selected topic which must be completed by the end of June.

In both cases, the student chooses the topic in consultation with members of staff.

The MSc dissertation must contain a substantial review of current and recent research in the chosen field and will usually also contain some original research in the form of experimental work and/or data analysis. Students will be asked to give a brief oral, non-assessed, presentation on their progress around the end of the summer term.

The Diploma essay will normally be a literature review.

Throughout the year, students are encouraged to attend departmental seminars and are expected to attend the Weather & Climate Discussion (MTMG04) held weekly in term time. The 'Applications of Meteorology' module (MTMG41) is a series of seminars and visits to relevant institutions organised especially for MSc students who are expected to attend. While these activities are not examined, they are an important component of the students' education. They contribute to their general understanding and to possible choices of dissertation topic and career.

Much of the teaching on the *Atmosphere, Ocean and Climate* programme is in common with the other Meteorology MSc programmes. First year PhD students and Met Office staff undergoing training also attend many of the modules, thus class sizes may be as high as 50 in the Autumn Term when all modules are core. In the Spring term when students choose from a range of options, class size is typically 10 to 20.

### **Programme Classification**

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

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 - 100%	Distinction
60 - 69%	Merit
50 - 59%	Good standard (Pass)
40 - 49%	Work below threshold standard (Fail)
0 - 39%	Unsatisfactory Work (Fail)

#### *For Masters Degrees*

**Distinction:** A weighted average mark of 70 or more over 180 credits  
AND  
a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation  
AND  
no mark below 40.

**Merit:** A weighted average mark of 60 - 69 over 180 credits  
AND  
a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation  
AND  
no mark below 40.

**Pass:** A weighted average mark of 50 - 59 over 180 credits  
AND

a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation  
AND  
no significant weakness (i.e. no mark below 40 in modules agreed at validation to be of special significance to the programme)  
AND  
no absolute weakness (ie the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits)\*.

**Failed** A performance that fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications.

### *Postgraduate Diploma*

A diploma is awarded on successful completion of 120 module credits.

Students must complete all compulsory modules (70 credits) and then either of the following two routes are possible:

- Students must complete FIVE optional modules in the Spring Term (50 credits)
- Students must choose TWO modules in the Spring Term from those marked optional (20 credits) and complete an extended essay of about 10,000 words on a topic chosen in consultation with a member of staff. The extended essay is worth 30 credits and must be submitted by the end of June.

**Distinction:** A weighted average mark of 70 or more over 120 credits  
AND  
no mark below 40.

**Merit:** A weighted average mark of 60 - 69 over 120 credits  
AND  
no mark below 40.

**Passed:** A weighted average mark of 50 - 59 over 120 credits  
AND  
no significant weakness (ie no mark below 40 in modules agreed at validation to be of special significance to the programme)  
AND  
no absolute weakness (ie the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits)\*.

**Failed** A performance which fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications.

### *Postgraduate Certificate*

A certificate is awarded on successful completion of 60 module credits.

Students must complete all assessed modules (60 credits) in the Autumn term or a combination of modules from the Autumn and Spring Terms. 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\*.

\*Note: the provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate has applied him or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from an examination, for example, without reasonable cause.

Oral examination of some or all the candidates may be held at the Examiners' Meeting in September. During the oral examination, candidates are expected to show an understanding both of the background to their dissertation and of the general course work. These brief interviews are for the guidance of the External Examiner and do not normally count towards the overall result.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a good honours degree in a physical, mathematical or engineering science. Students with other backgrounds should discuss their interest in the programme with either the Admissions Tutor, Dr Tom Frame (t.h.a.frame@reading.ac.uk) or Programme Director, Dr Andrew Charlton-Perez (a.j.charlton.ac.uk).

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Tom Frame

### **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-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, 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](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

The Department of Meteorology provides modern laboratory facilities and an atmospheric observatory for teaching purposes. In addition to the central University facilities, the Department has its own PC labs for teaching and student use and a professionally staffed library with copies of all recommended texts and runs of major meteorological periodicals. The Meteorology Department library houses a learning resource centre and adjacent to the library is a purpose-designed student study area.

Learning support is provided by a tutor system and optional class tutorials given with some modules. Each student is assigned a tutor at the start of the programme. Tutorial groups normally consist of three or four students. Weekly tutorials are compulsory during the Autumn term and thereafter may be continued if desired by mutual agreement between tutor and tutees. For team projects and the dissertation, guidance is given by a project supervisor.

A self teaching package is available for those students who need remedial support with Maths and Physics. This package is also provided as a pre-course 'warm-up' for those students who need to improve their Maths and Physics skills before the start of the programme in October.

### **Career prospects**

The *Atmosphere, Ocean and Climate* MSc has an excellent record in placing graduates in relevant employment. Of the students graduating in the last three years, the great majority are working in meteorology or related disciplines including a number undertaking PhDs. Others are working as forecasters or researchers at the UK Met Office, with others working in financial services related industries.

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

Dissertation projects have been successfully arranged in collaboration with a number of institutions including the Met Office, Willis Re insurance, Oxfam, EDF and Deutsche Bank.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

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

1. the physical processes which drive the

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

Knowledge and understanding for items 1 to 5 is

- atmospheric system giving rise to weather and climate;
- the feedback between the Earth's surface and the atmosphere and the impact of these feedback processes on weather, climate and land surface characteristics;
  - methods of modelling and data analysis appropriate to simulating atmospheric and oceanographic processes and an appreciation of the limitations and uncertainties of the measurements and data
  - impacts of weather, climate and climate change on society and ecology
  - advanced, specialist weather and climate topics.

achieved through lectures, seminars, discussions and tutorials and computer laboratories. Lectures often include problem sheets and guided reading as additional material  
 In addition, knowledge and understanding of measurement techniques (3) is gained through laboratory classes and a field course.  
 In addition to taught modules, item 5 is achieved by independent reading and library searching for the dissertation and team project.

*Assessment*

Knowledge is tested through written assignments, project reports and examinations as well as oral presentations

**Skills and other attributes**

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

- apply knowledge and understanding gained to a variety of familiar and unfamiliar situations;
- analyse data with a critical awareness of possible weaknesses and uncertainties
- formulate and test hypotheses
- show independence and initiative in approaches to problem solving
- present conclusions clearly to expert and non-expert audiences in written and oral forms
- critically review, synthesise and evaluate published research.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

1, 2 3 and 4 are developed by a combination of problem sheets, worked examples, coursework assignments, computing classes project work and dissertation  
 5 is addressed through lectures, tutorials and also through team project and dissertation reports and presentations.  
 6 is covered in lectures and through the team project and dissertation.

*Assessment*

1 and 2 are assessed through coursework and exams  
 3, 4 and 5 are mainly assessed through team project and dissertation presentations and reports

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

- plan, conduct, and report on investigations, including the use of secondary data
- collect, record and analyse data using appropriate techniques in the field and laboratory
- undertake field and laboratory investigations in a responsible and safe manner
- reference work in an appropriate manner

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Laboratory, IT, field work and field classes are designed to enhance skills 1 and 2. 3 is emphasised through guidelines and advice given to students in connection with practical work and the field course.  
 4. is emphasised through guidelines issued to students in connection with project and dissertation work.

*Assessment*

1 and 2 are tested formatively in coursework connected with laboratory and field classes. 3 is not assessed. 4 is assessed in team project and dissertation

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

- communicate knowledge effectively through written and oral presentations.
- appreciate issues relating to the selection and reliability of field and laboratory data;

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Skill listed under 1 and 2 are developed throughout most of the programme, but especially through practical work, field course, team project and dissertation. 3 is encouraged through team-working

preparing, processing, interpreting and presenting data; solving numerical problems using computer and non-computer based techniques; using the Internet critically as a source of information - numeracy and C & IT.

3. work with others as a team, share knowledge effectively; recognise and respect the views and opinions of other team members - Interpersonal skills.
4. manage personal and professional development: study skills, independent learning, time management, personal responsibility and decision making in complex situations
5. effectively use the library resources - library skills.

within laboratory, field course and team project. 4 is encouraged throughout the programme and particularly in the team project and dissertation. 5 is covered by a study skills module and practiced in tutorials, team project and dissertation.

#### *Assessment*

1 is assessed through coursework, exams, project work and dissertation. 2 is assessed through laboratory, field course and computing modules and in the team project and dissertation. 3 is indirectly assessed in the field course and team project. 4 and 5 are indirectly assessed in coursework assignments, team project and dissertation

**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.**