

MSc in Food Security and Development (full-time)
For students entering in 2014/5

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences
Faculty:	Life Sciences Faculty
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	19/Sep/2014
Programme Director:	Dr Alex Arnall
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	Graduate Institute of International Development and Applied Economics
Accreditation:	N/A

Summary of programme aims

The course aims to prepare students for a career in the food security and international development sector by providing them with:

- A multi-disciplinary understanding of the structure and operation of food systems in developing countries, and the main drivers of global food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty;
- An awareness of how food systems interact with human development policies, institutions and interventions at international, national and local levels; and
- The conceptual and practical skills necessary for the analysis and development of planned food security interventions.

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. In following this programme, students will also have the opportunity to enhance and develop their skills relating to communication (oral and written), presentations, information handling, problem solving, teamwork, and the use of information technology. Students will learn to work independently, under time pressures, and will learn to set priorities and manage their time in order to meet strict deadlines. Career planning, via choice of modules, will be an integral part of the programme.

Programme content

Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits)

The Postgraduate Certificate programme is a flexible programme comprising any 60 credits drawn from the MSc taught modules (excluding the dissertation) subject to agreement by the Programme Director.

Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits):

The Postgraduate Diploma programme is a flexible programme comprising any 120 credits drawn from the MSc taught modules (excluding the dissertation) subject to agreement by the Programme Director.

MSc Food Security and Development (180 credits):

Students take six compulsory modules (IDM001, IDM071, IDM088, APMA41, APME21 and FBMFRA) to total 80 credits and select a further 40 credits from a wide range of taught modules, subject to satisfying any module pre-requisites, to total 120 credits from the taught component of the programme. The student then additionally undertakes a dissertation project worth 60 credits.

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
Compulsory modules (80 credits)			
IDM001	Perspectives on Development	20	7
IDM071	Research and Study Skills for Independent Learning	10	7
IDM088	Food Security and Development	20	7
APMA41	Agriculture in the Tropics	10	7
APME21*	Policy Analysis	10	7
FBMFRA	Risk Analysis in the Food Chain	10	7

Optional modules (students select 40 credits)***

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
FBMNS1**	Fundamentals of Human Nutrition	10	7
FBMNH1	Nutrition in Health & Disease	10	7
FBMNCR	Food Choice and Regulation	10	7
APMA89	Water, Agriculture and Irrigation	10	7
APMA90	Climate Change and Food Systems	10	7
APME67	Food Policy	10	7
APME72	Agricultural Project Planning and Management in Developing Countries	20	7
APME61	Appraisal of Agricultural and Rural Planning	10	7
IDM024	Social Policies for Development	10	7
IDM093	Poverty, Wealth and Inequality	10	7
IDM046	Governance, Accountability and Development	10	7

Dissertation (60 credits)

IDM072	Dissertation		7
			60

Support Module (non-credit bearing)

IDM089****	Personal and Professional Development for International Students		0 7
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* Prerequisite for optional module APME67 Food Policy

** Prerequisite for FBMNH1 Nutrition in Health and Disease

*** The optional modules listed are a sample of those available. Students may select widely from the modules available in the module guide subject to timetabling constraints.

**** the Personal and Professional Development programme is for international students (although employability events are open to all students)

Part-time or modular arrangements

All students have the modular flexibility described in the 'Programme content' section above. Part-time students may build up their modular credits towards a Certificate, Diploma or MSc over an extended period.

Progression requirements

N/A

Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Teaching is organised in modules. The delivery of materials takes a variety of forms including lectures, classes, seminars and group exercises. Assessment is modular and involves coursework and for some modules unseen examinations. The nature of the assessment is determined by the aims of the module. A dissertation supervisor is appointed for each student.

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 an honours degree or its equivalent in a related subject, including but not restricted to: environmental studies/sciences, agricultural science/studies, nutritional sciences, development studies, geography and environmental economics. A basic understanding of nutritional science would be an advantage but is not a prerequisite for this course. Applicants with other qualifications approved by the Senate, and who have at least 2 years' professional experience in a relevant field of development work, are also encouraged to apply for admission to this programme. References are also taken into account.

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 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

A comprehensive 'Programme Handbook', which includes a detailed outline of the programme, its constituent modules and assessment guidelines, can be found on the Graduate Institute's Blackboard site. Day to day queries regarding academic matters (e.g. time-tabling) should be addressed in the first instance to the Postgraduate Student Office in the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development or, where necessary, the Programme Director.

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 Msc in Food Security and Development prepares students for work in a wide range of agencies and organisations engaged with international development. These include national governments, nongovernmental organisations, international organisations, media and private sector consultancies.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

With the agreement of their dissertation supervisor, students may be allowed to study abroad or take up placements during the Summer Term as part of their dissertation work.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

The structure and operation of food systems in developing countries
The main drivers of global food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty
How food systems interact with human development policies, institutions and interventions at international, national and local levels

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Mixture of lectures, seminars, directed reading, group and individual project work, individual and group presentation and guidance on key sources of reference material. Feedback and guidance are important elements complementing an emphasis on self-directed study

Assessment

By coursework and, in some cases, formal examinations; coursework includes essay assignments, presentations and a dissertation

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills -able to:

Engage with and draw upon different scientific fields to develop a holistic and multi-disciplinary view on the problems of food security and poverty in developing countries
Structure, analyse and evaluate theoretical and conceptual issues and the bases for their relevance in policy analysis of food security and development
Identify key policy approaches to food security and poverty reduction and evaluate them with reference planned development interventions
Think logically and analytically, and to understand the difference between positive and normative statements relating to food security and development processes

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Assessment

By formative tests, presentations and completion of a dissertation. Other assignments include coursework and, in some cases, formal examinations

C. Practical skills -able to:

Evaluate the bases of food security and development policy approaches in developing countries by a range of actors, including governments, international agencies and the private sector
Evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of food security interventions in eradicating poverty in developing countries
Identify, access, evaluate, synthesise, analyse, collate and represent data relevant to the critical evaluation of food security and development policy and practice

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Students are required to undertake and understand a wide range of reading, from traditional published sources, web-based material and other grey literature relating to food security and development. This includes both directed reading and through researching their own sources of information. Discussion in lectures and seminars emphasises the use of empirical evidence, and the strengths and weaknesses of alternative theories, methodologies and practices
Development of practical skills is achieved through lectures, seminars, presentations, case studies and group work

Assessment

Long essays, presentations, unseen examinations, dissertation

D. Transferable skills -able to:

Communicate knowledge and opinions effectively to a wide range of people

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The presentation of well-researched written work is a fundamental element of the programme and

Work independently, responsibly and professionally
Reflect and evaluate his/her own academic progress
and its implications for emerging/changing
professional practice
Identify, access, evaluate, synthesise, analyse,
collate and represent data relevant to the issue at
hand.
Manage time and prioritise workloads in the context
of changing demands

requires the application of all the skills listed in 1-5.
This is complemented and reinforced by enhanced
oral skills, developed through lecture and seminar
discussions, tutorials and group activities

Assessment

By formative tests, presentations and completion of
a dissertation. Other assignments include
coursework and, in some cases, formal examinations

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.