

**MSc in Rural Land and Business Management (full-time)**  
**For students entering in 2016/7**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Henley Business School at Univ of Reading
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	11/Nov/2016
Programme Director:	
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	HBS Pre Exp BOS
Accreditation:	RICS

**Summary of programme aims**

The MSc Rural Land and Business Management is a professionally accredited degree, which aims to equip students for a career in rural property and business management at the highest level. It provides a fast-track route into professional practice for those with a good first degree in a cognate subject (such as Agriculture or Geography) or a non-cognate subject with relevant work experience and interest. It is accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and recognised by the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers. It has an excellent employment record – 100% for the last four years – and students benefit from long-standing links with the major firms in the sector who regularly recruit from the University.

The programme aims to develop an awareness of the current challenges facing rural businesses and an analytical, strategic approach to managing and advising on rural land and estates. It provides students with a detailed understanding of the economic, technological, legal and social principles and concepts underlying the management of the countryside, and the key skills necessary for a career in professional practice. Real-life case studies, visits to farms and rural estates, and a study tour form a core part of the programme.

**Transferable skills**

The programme will provide the opportunity for students to develop the following transferable skills:

- to be able to structure and communicate ideas effectively both orally and in writing;
- to be able to apply knowledge to solve problems;
- to be able to apply skills of information handling, numeracy, and use of information technology;
- to manage time and work to deadlines;
- to participate constructively in groups;
- to work independently; to be self-reliant;
- to be able to critically assess the relevance and importance of the ideas of others;
- and, career management skills.

**Programme content**

Masters students will complete modules to a total of 180 credits. The autumn term consists of core modules totalling 60 credits and the spring term consists of core modules totally 40 credits. Students will select optional modules totalling a further 20 credits. In the summer all students are expected to attend a Rural Study Tour (20 credits) and complete a 40-credit Dissertation or Rural Business Analysis Project (BAP), adding the final 60 credits to the programme.

Compulsory modules:

Code	Title	Credits	Level
REMMCS	Management Case Studies in Rural Surveying	20	7
REMRDM	Dissertation Methods	10	7
REMRST	Rural Study Tour	20	7
REMIPS	Introduction to Property Studies	10	7

REMTAX	Property and Business Taxation	10	7
REMRPP	Rural Policy and Planning	10	7
REMRPLV	Rural Property Law and Valuation	20	7
APMA101	Business Planning and Control	20	7

Option modules:

**Students choose a total of 20 credits from the following:**

APME29	Advanced Marketing	10	7
APMAHRM2	Human Resource Management	10	7
REMRD	Rural Diversification	10	7
APME61	Appraisal of Agricultural and Rural Development Projects	10	7
APMA91	Environmental Management: Principles and Practice	10	7
APME58	Resource and Environmental Economics	10	7
APMA102	Ecosystem Services	10	7

Students must choose one of the following:

REMRDISS	Rural Dissertation	40	7
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OR

REMRBAP	Rural Business Analysis Project	40	7
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### **Part-time or modular arrangements**

The programme is currently offered in full-time mode only. The potential for the provision of part-time delivery will be closely monitored.

### **Progression requirements**

There are no academic requirements for progression onto the summer term of the programme.

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

Teaching is organised in line with the University's 180-credit modular structure. Modules carry weight of either 10 or 20 credits, representing 100 and 200 hours of student effort respectively. All modules are designed to deliver level 7 outcomes, although there is some level 6 technical material contained within them and some teaching is delivered to groups containing both level 6 and 7 students where appropriate. Within each module, the aim is to move towards students being able to understand the knowledge obtained and be critically aware of the theoretical, strategic and practical implications of the material.

For modules in the first two terms, teaching consists of seminars, group presentation and site-based project exercises. All students follow a core component of modules and select from a suite of elective modules in both terms, as set out in the Programme Content. The relationship between class contact consisting of lectures, seminars and tutorials and student-centred learning in the form of individual research and project/case study is varied across all modules and is set out in the individual Module Descriptors.

Assessment is by a combination of unseen written examinations and coursework in the form of individual and group assignments including applied problem solving, essays, literature reviews, reports and presentations, as indicated on the Module Descriptors. Examinations, where appropriate, take place at the commencement of the summer term. Additionally, in preparation for their dissertation or rural BAP, all students follow a research methodology programme assessed by means of a review of literature relevant to their chosen topic.

Students are encouraged to work towards their dissertation/project in the spring term; the third term and the summer period comprise further research and writing stages of the individual dissertation/project. Students are expected to spend approximately 500 hours study time on researching and writing a dissertation/project, reflecting their academic and career development intentions.

The autumn term commences with an induction study tour in Gloucestershire, hosted by the Ernest Cook Trust. The purpose of the tour is to familiarise students with principal concepts in rural estate management, and offer an introduction to agricultural systems and various estate enterprises. The tour is formative only and conducted in an especially supportive manner, equipping students with the best possible foundation for their future course. The summer term will also include a one-week Study Tour, after the written examinations have been taken. Coursework counting for 20 credits will be based on the study tour visits.

The University owns two farms, both within easy reach of the main campus. Additionally both departments enjoy good relations with neighbouring landowners, including the Englefield Estate (Theale) the Eling Estate (Newbury), the Windsor Estate, and the Stratfield Saye Estate. Consequently, wherever possible, teaching is augmented by site visits, allowing the practical application of taught techniques and material, as well as credible site-based assessment.

#### **Award classification**

The Marking Criteria and Classification Framework for Taught Postgraduate Programmes may be found at: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/exams/pgaward08-09.pdf>

Work will be assessed on a University wide conventional scale, 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 Degrees**

To pass the MSc students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation or an average mark of 48 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more in 90 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 for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 or gain an average mark of 68 or more overall and a mark of 70 or more in 90 credits including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation or an average mark of 58 and a mark of 60 or more in 90 credits including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

#### **For PG Diplomas**

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more over 120 credits or an average mark of 48 over 120 credits and a mark of 50 or more in 60 credits. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more over 120 credits and have no mark below 40 or an average mark of 68 or more over 120 credits and a mark of 70 or more in 60 credits will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more over 120 credits and have no mark below 40 or an average mark of 58 or more over 120 credits and a mark of 60 or more in 60 credits will be eligible for a Merit.

#### **For PG Certificates**

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more over 60 credits or an average mark of 48 or more over 60 credits and a mark of 50 or more in 30 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 expected to have obtained a good (normally upper second class honours) degree in a cognate subject such as Agriculture, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Management, Rural Resource Science or Management, Land Management, Economics, Geography, Rural Resource Management or any other related discipline. Students who do not hold a degree in a cognate subject will be expected to show experience of working or studying in rural resource based enterprises.

International students must be able to demonstrate written and oral proficiency in English. (IELTS minimum score 6.5)

Where practicable, all applicants will be expected to attend an interview at the University before being offered a place.

**Admissions Tutor:** Angela Cropley (a.cropley@reading.ac.uk)

### **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 School of Real Estate & Planning is part of the newly formed Henley Business School and occupies part of the new Business School building. The School has shared access to teaching rooms, including lecture facilities equipped with technology desks. All teaching rooms have smart board technology. Students have access to two ITS computer labs with forty PCs, some fully networked, and with access to specific property based information sources such as Egi and BCIS as well as the online FOCUS databases provided by Property Intelligence plc. The School has its own Academic Resources Centre, affiliated to the main campus library, where students can access academic and professional material along with lecturers guided material, course notes and recommended reading.

### **Career prospects**

The MSc Rural Land and Business Management has been brought within the RICS/University of Reading partnership with effect from the September 2003 intake. This will mean that graduates from the programme will satisfy the academic requirements of the RICS for admission to the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC).

It is expected that graduates will find employment as trainee chartered surveyors with firms having a rural specialism or undertaking substantive rural work. The School of Real Estate & Planning has long-standing and well-established links with a number of such firms through its existing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. A number of the larger firms actively recruit from the University on a regular basis, and it is anticipated that the addition of a Masters programme will strengthen the University's position within the profession in terms of its recognition as one of the leading providers of rural estate management education. The programme recognises the RICS employment threshold standard applying to all partnership courses and the programme team are confident that the conditions can be met.

Graduates will also be well qualified to pursue wider career paths in areas such as the agricultural sector, the food supply industry, rural management, and the wider agri-business profession encompassing consultancy and accounting.

It is also anticipated that some graduates will use this higher degree pathway as an entry qualification into the wider professional business management sector.

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

The proposed programme is entirely UK based and does not provide for overseas study. Many students do, however, come from abroad to study in the School of Real Estate and Planning, although the majority of students on this programme are from the UK.

### **Programme Outcomes**

This section has been informed by the QAA FHEQ Framework for Masters (M) level courses.

### **Educational aims of the Programme**

The programme is a blend of academic rigour and applied practical analysis, which aims:

To develop a systematic understanding of the economic, technological, legal and social principles which underlie the practice of management in the countryside, along with a critical awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of the discipline.

To enable the student to understand the techniques applicable to the management of agricultural land and other related businesses, and to be able to apply such techniques in a creative, practical and original manner.

To enable the student to develop originality in the application of knowledge along with a conceptual understanding which enables them to critically evaluate research and methodologies, and to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively.

To develop the student's personal qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment in advising those who own and occupy rural property, and those who are responsible for running businesses in the countryside.

To assist the development of those who have the potential to become successful managers, leaders and communicators through the exercise of initiative, sound judgment, and the ability to make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations.

The programme provides the opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge, understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

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

1. the economic, technological, legal and social principles which underlie the practice of management in the countryside. A critical awareness of current problems.

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

Acquired through lectures, seminars, essays, case studies and guided independent study, including web-based learning. The departments from which the course team is comprised are acknowledged to be at the forefront of their academic disciplines. Effective communication of ideas in the presentation of all areas of students' work.

#### *Assessment*

Testing of the knowledge base is through a combination of unseen written examinations and assessed coursework, coursework reports, essays and presentations.

### **Skills and other attributes**

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

1. develop the student's ability to obtain and organise relevant information; to analyse, evaluate and criticise current research and advanced scholarship in the subject:
2. conceptualise and formulate argument logically and coherently, and to make sound judgements in the absence of complete data.

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

Each module involves discussion of key issues, practice in applying concepts both orally and in writing, analysis and interpretation of material and individual feedback sessions on submitted coursework. Role-play exercises will be included where appropriate.

Students will be required to acquire material from a

variety of providers, and through a number of media, including the web.

#### *Assessment*

Assessment of cognitive skills is through coursework and examinations. Coursework allows the student to demonstrate the ability to source material, assess alternatives and produce reasoned solutions.

Examinations provide the student the opportunity to apply skills in producing a clear, concise argument and analyse an issue in a limited time period. The execution of a dissertation allows the student to demonstrate cognitive skills to the highest level

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

1. To enable the student to assimilate and synthesise relevant information, to assess and evaluate alternative strategies and to make informed decisions on behalf of work colleagues and clients.

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

Students will be encouraged to present coursework in a professional format. Regular feedback will be given on the presentation of submitted written work.

Regular involvement of outside professionals, in case study and feedback sessions forms an important part of the teaching strategy.

#### *Assessment*

Assessment through coursework requiring submissions to be presented in a professional manner.

Oral presentations and written examinations will contribute to the assessment of professional skills of analysis and knowledge where appropriate.

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

1. deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively. To develop the student's ability to present information effectively in written and oral forms and to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
2. exercise initiative and personal responsibility;
3. manage time and work to deadlines;
4. participate constructively in groups, and to work independently;
5. find information and use information technology constructively.

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

Seminar discussion and interaction and student presentation. IT skills developed through individual learning.

Development of presentational skills through coursework feedback.

Group work encouraged in formal group presentations.

Time management skills developed through coursework programme and dissertation. The student will learn to structure varying and sometimes conflicting deadlines.

#### *Assessment*

Time management assessed by use of coursework deadlines. IT skills are assessed indirectly through students' ability to refer to web-based material, to analyse and present numerical data through spreadsheets and to use word-processing effectively.

Other transferable skills are assessed throughout by coursework and group presentation.

#### Standard declaration

**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.**