

MSc Food Security and Development (full-time) **For students entering in 2017/8**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	16/10/2017
Programme Director:	Dr Alex Arnall
Board of Studies:	Graduate Institute of International Development,
Agriculture and Economics	

Summary of programme aims

This course will 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 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.

Compulsory modules (70 credits)

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
IDM071	Research and Study Skills for Independent Learning	10	7
IDM095	Theories and Practices of Development	20	7
APMA41	Agriculture in the Tropics	10	7
APME21	Policy Analysis	10	7
IDM077	Food Security and Development	10	7
IDM098	Global Issues in Nutrition and Health	10	7

Optional modules (students select 50 credits)*

Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
APMA90	Climate Change and Food Systems	10	7

APMA96	Plants, Greenspace and Urban Sustainability	10	7
APMA103	Rethinking Agricultural Development (including Horticulture): Implementing Solutions	20	7
APME58	Resource and Environmental Economics	10	7
APME59	Consumer Behaviour and Food Marketing	10	7
APME67	Food Policy	10	7
IDM096	Addressing Poverty and Inequality through Social Policy	20	7
FBMFRA	Risk Analysis in the Food Chain	10	7

Dissertation (60 credits)

IDM072	Dissertation	60	7
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Support Module (non-credit bearing)

IDM089**	Personal and Professional Development for International Students	0	7
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** The modules listed above are a sample of the modules available; Students may select up to 20 of their optional credits from the modules available in the module guide subject to timetabling constraints.*

*** The Personal and Professional Development programme is for international students (although some events will be open to all masters 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. 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, In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support teams and IT Services. 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 the Support Centres. If a student has a general enquiry and is unsure where to seek help, they should visit their Support Centre. There are five Support Centres across the University, including one based at the London Road Campus. The Support Centre will be able to advise on matters such as extenuating circumstances, module selection, suspensions, withdrawals, timetable queries and transferring programme. The Support Centre will also be able to signpost students to Carrington building where other University services related to disability, financial support, counselling and wellbeing, accommodation and careers can be found. More information on what student services are available can be found here: <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>.

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 Support Centre (GU06) in the Agriculture Building or, where necessary, to 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

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.

How food systems interact with human development policies, institutions and interventions at international, national and local levels

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 to planned development interventions

Think logically and analytically, and to understand the difference between positive and normative statements relating to food security and development processes

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

Assessment

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

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

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

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

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

Manage time and prioritise workloads in the context of changing demands

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.