

Programme Specification

MSc by Research Agricultural Science and Sustainability (full-time) PFTZAGSUSTHS

MSc by Research Agricultural Science and Sustainability (part-time) PPTZAGSUSTHS

For students entering in 2027/28

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	MSc by Research Agricultural Science and Sustainability (full-time) - 12 months MSc by Research Agricultural Science and Sustainability (part-time) - 24 months
Accreditation	N/A
Programme Start Dates	September
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	N/A

Programme information and content

The programme aims to prepare students for a subsequent career in research and/or doctoral studies in agriculture, ecology and environmental science by providing them with:

- Rigorous training in research methods and statistical analyses commonly used in agriculture, ecology and environmental science;
- A multi-disciplinary appreciation of the underlying environmental, social and economic issues surrounding contemporary agricultural systems;
- Critical appraisal skills of research literature at the interface between agriculture, ecology and environmental science;
- The ability to plan, manage and conduct an in-depth independent research project.

Programme Learning Outcomes

-MSc by Research Agricultural Science and Sustainability (full-time)

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

Learning outcomes	
1	Appraise and contrast different approaches to research in agriculture, ecology, the environment and their interaction

2	Identify a research question, form appropriate, testable hypotheses, and design an appropriate experimental study
3	Select, apply, interpret and present results from relevant statistical methods
4	Contribute to debates with academic staff, visiting speakers and peers on a range of contemporary issues in agricultural issues, demonstrating a range of communication skills
5	Critically appraise and synthesise research outputs from a range of scientific disciplines and your own research, and convey the outcomes in oral and written formats
6	Plan, manage and conduct an independent research project and communicate the results

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

Module information

The programme comprises 180 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.

Compulsory modules

Module	Name	Credits	Level
ADMRAS	Rethinking Agricultural Systems	20	M
ADMREP	Research Project: Agriculture, Ecology and Environment	120	M
ADMRES	Research Skills in Agriculture, Ecology and Environment	20	M

Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available in the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development or from an approved list of modules.

Part-time or flexible modular arrangements

The programme can be taken on a part-time basis over two years. In the first year, a student will be required to complete the compulsory 20 credit modules ADMRES and ADMRAS. The student will normally start the compulsory Research project module ADMREP in the first year of study and continue this into the second year. The student can take any remaining optional modules in either year. The programme must be completed within two years.

Placement opportunities

N/A

Study abroad opportunities

Students may be allowed to study abroad in a collaborator's lab or to take up placements during the Summer Term as part of their dissertation work, subject to visa restrictions. Students should seek agreement from the Programme Director.

Optional modules

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery

With its 120-credit extended research project module this programme focuses on learning by doing. In preparation for this, you will also be taught through a combination of lectures, seminars, tutorials and practical sessions. The mixture of these modes of teaching will vary depending on the optional modules you choose, and some modules may include group work.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

N/A

Assessment

Assessment is modular and involves coursework, in addition optional modules may include written examinations. The nature of the assessment is determined by the aims of the module. Typical assessments from both compulsory and optional modules include short assignments/essays, in-class tests, a lab notebook, a reflective photo diary and an annotated bibliography.

Progression

Part-time and modular progression requirements

Students will be required to complete both compulsory modules during the first semester (ADMRES and ADMRAS) of their first year. Those students will then be able to take their optional module (20 credits) and undertake the intensive research project (ADMREP) over the course of the subsequent months.

Classification

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 Master's Degree

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Master's degree:

Award of a Master's degree

(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 180 credits

(ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 120 credits

(iii) no credits with a mark below 40%

(iv) a mark of 50% or more for the Dissertation

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Master's degree, the following **further** conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 180 credits and marks of 70% in at least 90 credits

AND

Where the dissertation is included in the conditions for the award of a Master's degree, a mark of at least 60% in the dissertation

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 180 credits and marks of 60% in at least 90 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

For Postgraduate Diploma

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma:

Award of a Postgraduate Diploma

(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 120 credits

(ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 80 credits

(iii) no credits with a mark below 40%

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, the following further conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 120 credits and marks of 70% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 120 credits and marks of 60% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

For Postgraduate Certificate

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate:

Award of a Postgraduate Certificate

(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 60 credits

(ii) No credits with a mark below 40%

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the [Assessment Handbook](#) under:

- Section 19: Awards: Postgraduate Master's, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate

Please note that there may be a specific version for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

You should ensure that you have a waterproof coat (≥£45) and trousers (≥£20) and a pair of wellington boots (≥£20) and/or sturdy footwear e.g. walking boots (≥£45) for field practicals and visits (should you need to purchase these, approximate costs are in brackets).

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2026.

Students may consider purchasing a laptop to help support their learning. Information on recommended device specifications can be found on the [DTS Student Hub](#).

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

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4 August 2026

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