

Programme Specification

MSc Food Security and Development (full-time)

PFTZFDSECDHM

MSc Food Security and Development (part-time)

PPTZFDSECDHM

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 Food Security and Development (full-time) - 12 months MSc Food Security and Development (part-time) - 2 years
Accreditation	N/A
Programme Start Dates	September
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	N/A

Programme information and content

Achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture are central to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a critical component of the aim to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030. This degree responds to this challenge by providing students with a multidisciplinary understanding of how global, national and local food systems work and how they can fail to deliver food security in different parts of the world. Throughout the course of the degree, students will explore the main drivers of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty, with a particular focus on how food is produced, distributed and consumed. Through use of case studies and application of assessment frameworks, students will gain the conceptual and practical skills necessary for the analysis and development of planned food security interventions.

Programme Learning Outcomes

-MSc Food Security and Development (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	Understand and critically analyse complex problems associated with the production, distribution and consumption of food in different parts of the world.
2	Understand the multidisciplinary nature of food security and insecurity, incorporating cultural, economic, social, political, historical, environmental and technical influences and factors.
3	Describe and critically analyse a range of theories and concepts in food-related subjects and how these can be operationalised to address complex, protracted problems of food insecurity.

4	Critically review, synthesise and evaluate published materials and evidence from a range of sources and use these to construct reasoned, evidenced arguments.
5	Demonstrate how to search for and identify a range of relevant sources of information and critically analyse the quality of them.
6	Suggest, design, conduct and analyse an independent research project and communicate the results.
7	Communicate scientific and/or social scientific ideas related to food security to diverse audiences.
8	Develop a range of employability skills including team working, time management and communication.

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
ADMDIS	Dissertation	60	M
ADMFSF	Food Security and Development	20	M
ADMRFD	Research for Development	20	M
ADMTPD	Theories and Practices of Development	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 part-time over two years. In the first year of study, a student will normally be required to complete optional modules totalling no less than 60 credits and no more than 80 credits. In the second year of study, a student will normally be required to complete the compulsory module ADMRFD Research for Development, the ADMDIS Dissertation module, and any remaining optional modules. The programme must be completed within.

Placement opportunities

N/A

Study abroad opportunities

N/A

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

You will be taught primarily through lectures, many of which will incorporate a diverse range of classroom-based activities, including group- and class-based discussion and problem solving exercises. Lecturers will draw on a diverse range of case studies from around the world to illustrate food security situations, challenges and potential solutions.

Some modules may include group work and 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

The programme will be assessed by a combination of coursework and formal examination. Coursework extends beyond traditional academic essays to include assessed presentations and a 'reflective diary', which is designed to enhance the reflexivity of the learning process. Feedback is provided primarily in written form. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

Progression

N/A

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

During your programme of study, you will incur some additional costs.

Where applicable, core textbooks recommended for student purchase may cost around £15 to £25 per module; there may be other books/resources which you would find it convenient to buy. Some books may be available second-hand, which will reduce costs. A wide range

of resources to support your curriculum, including textbooks, more specialist studies, and electronic resources, are available through the library.

Printing and photocopying facilities are available on campus at a cost per A4 page of £0.05 (black and white) and £0.30 (colour). Essential costs in this area will be low as most coursework is submitted electronically.

A few optional modules may include study trips of up to 3 to 9 days. For each participating student, the cost of transport and accommodation is not expected to exceed £350.

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.

MSc Food Security and Development (full-time) for students entering in session 2027/28
23 July 2026

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