MSc International Banking and Financial Services
For students entering in 2006

Awarding Institution	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution	The University of Reading
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences	Programme Length: 9 or 12 months
Date of specification: October 2006	
Programme Director:	Dr. Mark Guzman
Board of Studies	MA/MSc Economics
Accreditation:	N/A

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide a thorough postgraduate education in the specialist area of international banking and financial services. The compulsory modules provide a critical understanding of current theories and empirical research in the field of knowledge and students will develop a practical understanding of the application of this knowledge within an institutional framework. They will learn to evaluate alternative theories and methodologies and to make judgements on their applicability to complex issues where there is incomplete information.

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. They will also need to enhance their skills in communications (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, and the use of information technology. Students will work under pressure of time throughout the programme and will learn to set priorities and manage their time in order to meet strict deadlines.

Programme content

Students register *either* for a 9 month taught programme *or* a 12 month programme comprising taught modules and a dissertation.

Students may request a transfer between 9 month and 12 month programmes. Such requests must be made by the end of the Autumn Term to the Head of Department of Economics. Appeals against the decision may be made to the Head of the University of Reading Business School whose decision is final.

Module Code	*Module Title*	*Credits*	*Level*
	Compulsory Modules		
ECM77	The Microeconomics of Banking	20	M
ECM78	Banking and the Macroeconomy	20	M
ECM08	Corporate Finance	20	M
ECM09	Financial Markets and Corporate Governance	20	M
ECM22	Financial Markets	20	M
ECM23	Financial Regulation	20	M
	9 month degree		
ECM59	Research Project	20	M

40 credits of modules selected from the elective list, and subject to fulfilling the pre-requisites for these modules

12 month degree

20 credits of modules selected from the elective list, and subject to fulfilling the pre-requisites for these modules.
ECM66 Research Methods (10 credits)
ECM70 Dissertation (30 credits) of not more than 12,000 words on a topic agreed by the Director for Dissertations and Projects.

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme may be studied part-time over two consecutive years by arrangement with the Director of Studies for MSc Programmes. The dissertation, if selected, will be presented by 5.00 p.m. on the first Friday in September at the end of the second year of study.

Progression requirements

Students wishing to proceed to a higher degree by research should normally have followed the 12 month programme and obtained an average of at least 60% in the modules and at least 60% in the dissertation.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching is organised in modules. The delivery of material varies among the modules, especially in the proportion of time allocated to lectures, classes and seminars. All modules involve coursework, which takes a variety of forms reflecting the aims of the module. Final assessment of the modules involves a 2 hour examination and coursework. A supervisor is appointed for each student selecting a dissertation.
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

To pass the MSc students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked at 40-49% must not exceed 40 credits and no module mark must fall below 40%. For the 12-month programme 50% or more in the dissertation is also required.

Students who gain an average mark of 70% or above, including a mark of 60% or more in the dissertation (if applicable) will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining a mark of 60%, including a mark of 50% or more in the dissertation (if applicable) may be eligible for a Merit pass.

Those who do not pass the MSc may be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate.

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more over 120 credits. In addition, among these 120 credits, the total credit value of the modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits, and the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits. Students who, over 120 credits, gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of

Distinction. Students who, over 120 credits, gain an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more over 60 credits. In addition, among these 60 credits, the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

Admission requirements

(a) Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained an upper second class honours degree or equivalent. The additional requirements for the programme can be obtained from the pre-requisites of the core modules of the programme.

(b) Admissions Tutor: Dr. Mark Guzman

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers, and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses 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 are provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Adviser, Study Advisers, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

The Programme Director acts as personal tutor to the student and also interviews every student before the beginning of term to offer advice on the operation of the degree programme and on the choice of options. Many of the students are from countries outside the UK and tutors are therefore careful to ensure that students settle down in their new surroundings and understand the requirements of the MSc programme. The initial interview is also useful in detecting whether students have some language problems (despite obtaining an IELTS score of 7.00), in which case they are strongly advised to register for language tuition. All Autumn term modules set a test at the end of the term with the primary purpose of familiarising students with the UK examination system and the requirements of the programme. Students who fail overall on their modules are identified and invited to discuss their problems with their tutor. In addition to lecture and class times, each module lecturer has appointed office hours during which they may be consulted without prior appointment. The Department of Economics also provides a Handbook with details of each module and a Handbook covering the MSc programmes as a whole, including details of the method of assessment of programmes.

Career Prospects

Most of the students come from outside the UK and return to employment in their home countries. UK students enter a variety of occupations, mainly in financial institutions.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

None

Educational aims of the programme

The programme provides a thorough postgraduate training in international banking and financial services, with an emphasis on the application of theory and technique. It aims to

produce economists who are well placed to enter employment in financial institutions or consulting firms.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:		***Teaching/learning methods and strategies***
1. Evolution and workings of financial systems. 2. Advanced theory and practice of banking activity. 3. Numerical skills required in risk management. 4. Advanced theory and practice of financial markets, and financial regulation.	→	Formal lectures, discussions, individual and group presentations, guided reading and guidance on key sources of reference material. Feedback and guidance are important elements complementing an emphasis on self-study. *Assessment* Unseen examinations and coursework comprising long essays, projects and tests

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - able to		***Teaching/learning methods and strategies***
1. Structure, analyse and evaluate theoretical issues and problems. 2. Think logically and analytically. 3. Identify key issues in banking and finance, and evaluate them using recent advances in theory. 4. Comprehend the rapidly evolving state of knowledge and institutional environment in the subject area.	→	Students are frequently challenged in all teaching situations to complete logical arguments, analyse problems and justify statements. Long essays, debate and presentations provide the principle vehicles for developing intellectual skills. *Assessment* Unseen examination and coursework with 3. being assessed mostly in essays and project work.

C. Practical skills - able to		***Teaching/learning methods and strategies***
1. Draw on the knowledge base in the field of study. 2. Evaluate alternative policies. 3. Evaluate current theoretical and empirical research in the field of study. 4. Develop the numerical skills necessary to the field of study.	→	Students are required to understand a wide amount of reading, both of specific references and through researching their own sources of information. Discussion in lectures and seminars emphasises formal economic reasoning and the use of numerical exercises. *Assessment* Long essays and unseen examinations are the principal methods of assessment.

D. Transferable skills **-** able to		***Teaching/learning methods and strategies***
1. Communicate orally and in writing. 2. Use IT, including word processing and Website searches. 3. Use library and Web based resources. 4. Organise extended pieces of work from planning to completion. 5. Manage time and prioritise work to achieve goals.	→	The presentation of well-researched written work is a fundamental element of the programme and requires the application of all of the skills listed in 1-5. This is reinforced by the breadth and depth of the syllabuses for each module and the highly structured system of deadlines for assessed work, and examinations, which develop the students' skills of time management. Oral skills are developed through lecture and seminar discussions and individual and group presentations. *Assessment* Unseen examination and coursework with 3 being assessed mostly in essays and project work.

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 processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.