MSc Rural Land and Business Management
For Students entering in October 2006

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
Faculty of:	Economic and Social Sciences
Programme Directors	Roger Gibbard, Department of Real Estate & Planning Tahir Rehman, Department of Agriculture
Board of Studies:	Postgraduate Studies in Real Estate
Accreditation:	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
Programme length:	12 months, October-September
Date of specification:	August 2006

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to enable students to understand the economic, technological, legal and social concepts and principles that underlie the practice of management in the countryside, and to develop a critical awareness of current problems and new insights at the forefront of the discipline. Students will be given the opportunity to develop originality in the application of knowledge through the exercise of initiative, sound judgment, and the ability to make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations, thereby preparing them for careers in the rural property and business industries at the highest level. The programme aims to draw on the strengths of the two contributing departments to deliver a flexible, challenging and pertinent 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

Students will be admitted onto the programme having elected for one of two pathways labelled ‘Surveying’ and ‘Agriculture’. This choice will dictate the core subjects studied

during the first two terms. Masters students will complete modules to a total of 180 credits: 60 credits each for the first two terms, and a further 60 credits for the Study Tour and Dissertation elements undertaken during the summer.

The list of all proposed modules, including their credit value, level of delivery, and timing within the programme, is detailed in Table 1 below.

Pathway programmes:

Students will follow one of two pathways as detailed in Table 2 below, each contributing modules worth 40 credits for the Autumn term and 40 credits for the Spring term. Students will select modules totalling a further 20 credits for each of these terms to complete their study programme for these terms. In the summer term students will all follow a common programme of a European Study Tour module and a Dissertation module worth a total of 60 credits. The Programme Directors will give the students individual guidance on their choice of elective modules.

Table 1. Proposed Modules:

Code	Module title	Credit	Level	Delivery timing		
				Autumn	Spring	Summer
APME29	Advanced Marketing	10	M	10		
APME55	Agricultural Project planning & management	10	M		10	
APME61	Appraisal of Agricultural & Rural Development Projects	10	M		10	
APMA50	Approaches to sustainable development	10	M	10		
APMADIS	Dissertation	60	M	10		50
REMEBD	Entrepreneurship & Business Diversification	10	M		10	
APMAEST	European Study Tour	10	M			10
APME63	Food Issues in Developing Countries	10	M		10	
APMAHRM	Human Resource Management	10	M		10	
REMIPS	Introduction to Property Studies	10	M	10		
REMLMV	Land Market & Valuation	10	M		10	
APMAMCS	Management Case Studies	20	M	10	10	
IDM019	Organisation, people and change	10	M	10		
APMAECO	Principles of Business Management Economics	20	M	10	10	
REMTAX	Property & Business Taxation	10	M		10	
REMRPP	Rural Policy & Planning	10	M	10		
REMRPL	Rural Property Law	10	M	10		
ECM57	Trade Policies for Developing Countries	20	M	20		
REMWLM	Woodland Management	10	M	10		

Table 2. Pathway programmes

	Surveying pathway	**Agriculture pathway**
Autumn Term: Core *Total 40 credits*	Management Case Studies (10) Rural Policy & Planning (10) Dissertation [methodology] (10) Introduction to Property Studies (10)	Management Case Studies (10) Advanced Marketing (10) Dissertation [methodology] (10) Principles of Business Management Economics (10)
Elective *Total 20 credits*	Principles of Business Management Economics (10) Advanced Marketing (10) Organisation, people and change (10) Woodland Management (10)	Approaches to sustainable development (10) Rural Policy & Planning (10) Organisation, people and change (10) Trade Policies for Developing Countries (20)
Spring Term: Core *Total 40 credits*	Management Case Studies (10) Rural Property Law (10) Property & Business Taxation (10) Land Market & Valuation (10)	Management Case Studies (10) Principles of Business Management Economics (10) Human Resource Management (10) Food Issues in Developing Countries (10)
Elective *Total 20 credits*	Human Resource Management (10) Entrepreneurship & Business Diversification (10) Principles of Business Management Economics(10)	Property & Business Taxation (10) Rural Property Law (10) Entrepreneurship & Business Diversification (10) Land Market & Valuation (10) Appraisal of Agricultural and Rural Development Projects (10) Agricultural project planning and management (10)
Summer *Total 60 credits*	Study tour (10) Dissertation (50)	Study tour (10) Dissertation (50)

Part-time/ Modular arrangements

It is proposed that initially the programme be 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 M level outcomes, although there is some level H technical material contained within them and some teaching is delivered to groups containing both M and H level 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 (ante, s.4). 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, all students follow a research methodology programme assessed by means of a review of literature relevant to their chosen dissertation topic.

The third term and the summer period comprise the research and writing stages of the individual dissertation. At this point, students are expected to spend a further 500 hours study time on researching and writing a dissertation, reflecting their academic and career development intentions.

The summer term will also include a one-week European Study Tour, after the written examinations have been taken, based overseas in a European country. Coursework counting for 10 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) 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 programme will adopt the University's guideline for Masters classification 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

Distinction: A Weighted Average Mark of 70 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation AND the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.
OR
A Weighted Average Mark of 66 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 70 or more in 90 credits AND a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.

Merit: A Weighted Average Mark of 60 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.
OR
A Weighted Average Mark of 58 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 60 or more in 90 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.

Pass: A Weighted Average Mark of 50 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation AND the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.
OR
A Weighted Average Mark of 48 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 50 or more in 90 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation AND the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.

For PG Diplomas

Distinction: A Weighted Average Mark of 70 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation AND the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.
OR
A Weighted Average Mark of 66 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 70 or more in 60 credits AND a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.

Merit: A Weighted Average Mark of 60 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.
OR
A Weighted Average Mark of 58 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 60 or more in 60 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.

Pass: A Weighted Average Mark of 50 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation AND the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.
OR
A Weighted Average Mark of 48 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 50 or more in 60 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation AND the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits AND no mark below 40.

For PG Certificate

Passed and Failed categories only will be awarded for PG Certificates as follows:

Passed: A Weighted Average Mark of 50 or more over 60 credits AND no mark below 40.
OR
A Weighted Average Mark of 48 or more over 60 credits AND a mark of 50 or more in 30 credits AND no mark below 40.

Failed: A performance which fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications.

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.

International students must be able to demonstrate written and oral proficiency in English. (IELTS minimum score 7.0)

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

Admissions Tutors: Roger Gibbard (Surveying pathway)
Tahir Rehman (Agriculture pathway)

Support for students and their learning

The University of Reading operates a formal personal tutoring system. All students admitted to this programme will be allocated a personal tutor who will be their pastoral guide and academic mentor through the course. It is envisaged that the Programme Director(s) will assume this role in the first year, but that in subsequent years this may be widened to include other members of the programme team. Students will be expected to meet their tutors at least twice formally during each academic term.

Additionally, students will have their individual dissertations monitored by a supervisor: a member of academic staff with an interest in the particular field of study chosen by the student, and with experience of supervising dissertations. It is anticipated that the dissertation supervisor will be a member of the programme team, although it could involve other academics from either of the contributing departments, (or beyond, within the University: for example the Department of Law) by arrangement.

The Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisors, Hall Wardens, and the Students' Union Welfare Office provide other student guidance and welfare support.

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 programme, which involves a language component

The Department of Agriculture, part of the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development is housed in a new building with state-of-the-art facilities. These include teaching rooms equipped with technology desks allowing access to worldwide computing resources and digital presentations. The twelve main teaching and lecture rooms are all equipped with audio-visual facilities. The building has its own ITS computer labs with 36 networked PCs which are available for student use 24 hours a day through security-card access.

The Department of Real Estate & Planning (formerly Land Management and Development) is part of the newly formed Business School and occupies the upper floors of the 'URS' building. The Department has shared access to teaching rooms, including lecture facilities equipped with technology desks. All teaching rooms have audio-visual facilities. Students have access to two ITS computer labs with fifty 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 Department has its own 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 content of this section has been agreed by the RICS Education and Membership department)

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 Surveying pathway of the programme will satisfy the academic requirements of the RICS for admission to the Asssessment of Professional Competence (APC).

It is expected that graduates from the surveying pathway will find employment as trainee chartered surveyors with firms having a rural specialism or undertaking substantive rural work. The Department 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.

The School of Agriculture, Policy and Development also has an excellent reputation as a provider of high-quality education in the agriculture and related sector, which translates into recognition of the employability of its graduates. The School enjoys enviable links with agricultural organisations and national firms, many regularly taking graduate product into their employment. Consequently students following the agriculture pathway of this programme will have a variety of potential career prospects, 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 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

The proposed programme is entirely UK based and does not provide for overseas study, apart from the one-week European Study Tour. Many students do however come from abroad to study in the Departments of Real Estate & Planning and the Department of Agriculture.

Programme aims and outcomes

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

(a) 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.

Programme Outcomes

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

Outcome	Teaching & learning strategy	Assessment
Knowledge and understanding The acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the economic, technological, legal and social principles which underlie the practice of management in the countryside. A critical awareness of current problems and new insights.	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. Testing of the knowledge base is through a combination of unseen written examinations and assessed coursework, coursework reports, essays and presentations.
Intellectual/cognitive skills To develop the student's ability to obtain and organise relevant information; to analyse, evaluate and criticise current research and advanced scholarship in the subject. To conceptualise and formulate argument logically and coherently, and to make sound judgements in the absence of complete data.	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	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

	through a number of media, including the web.	issue in a limited time period. The execution of a dissertation allows the student to demonstrate cognitive skills to the highest level
Professional and practical skills 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.	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 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.
Transferable skills To 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. To exercise initiative and personal responsibility. To manage time and work to deadlines. To participate constructively in groups, and to work independently. To find information and use information technology constructively.	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.	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.

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.