



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, CIRENCESTER

## **Programme Specification**

# **MSc Rural Estate Management**

**P Guide October 2011**



## ROYAL AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, CIRENCESTER

### PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

### MSc RURAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT

**NB**

*The information contained in this document is intended only as a guide to the programme. It does not constitute a legally binding document or contract between the individual and the Royal Agricultural College.*

*The information contained herein is correct at the time of going to print, but the College reserves the right to make changes to the structure of the programme, assessment methods etc., at any time without prior notification. Any changes made however will be made known as soon as possible.*

**Programme Manager – David Lewis**

<b>1. Awarding institution</b>	Royal Agricultural College
<b>2. Teaching institution</b>	Royal Agricultural College
<b>3. Final award title(s)</b>	MSc Rural Estate Management
<b>4. UCAS code(s)</b>	N231
<b>5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points, e.g. FHEQ, FD qualification benchmark</b>	FHEQ Subject benchmark statements: Building and Surveying Agriculture, Forestry, Agricultural Sciences, Food Sciences and Consumer Sciences
<b>6. Details of accreditation by a professional/statutory body</b>	The programme is accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). As a graduate of the programme you would be required, as a trainee with a firm of chartered surveyors, to undertake a two-year Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) in one of the specialist areas of practice
<b>7. Mode of study</b>	Full-time (one year)
<b>8. Language of study</b>	English
<b>9. Date of production/revision</b>	June 2008

## **10. The programme and its key educational aims**

### **Introduction**

This interesting, rewarding and highly regarded programme will provide you with an education in rural estate and property management and the disciplines that contribute to it, equipping you for a career in this field. Your programme of study will cover the management of rural land, property and business in the countryside within the context of the relevant legal, institutional and policy framework.

### **Distinctive features of the MSc in Rural Estate Management**

The MSc in Rural Estate Management is one of a suite of programmes provided by the RAC that are within a partnership agreement with the RICS which recognises the College as one of the accredited providers of surveying education in the UK. As a graduate of the programme you will be able to register for the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) which culminates in the award of MRICS following a minimum of two years of professional training and experience. The programme has an enviable employment record, with most graduates taking up APC training positions when they leave College.

The programme benefits from close collaboration between the College, the programme management team and firms of rural surveyors who sponsor prizes, provide case study sites and contribute to the teaching and assessment. Furthermore this is a bespoke programme – all of the modules have been designed and tailored to this programme.

This programme offers graduates an intensive twelve month study programme and provides a route for entry to the land management profession to graduates with non-accredited first degrees. The emphasis of the programme is on the practical integration and development of the traditional core elements of a land economy programme; law, rural planning, rural valuation, agriculture, environmental and woodland management, rural policy and business management. The programme also develops the graduate's ability to undertake independent research through a programme of lectures on research methodology and the preparation of a research dissertation. The programme delivery moves from an emphasis on direct tuition in the core areas in the autumn term, through to more student centred learning based on case study and course work and the preparation of the dissertation in the summer.

This will be aided by frequent contact with rural chartered surveyors and other professionals, both on the academic staff and from outside the College and will allow you to gain an understanding of the diverse nature of professional work. This should help you decide on the type of work you would most enjoy in your future career.

There is a commitment to forming close and supportive staff/ student relationships at all levels of the programme, including assisting you in preparation for the world of work.

The programme has been designed to provide you with:

- a master's degree meeting the professional requirements of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS);
- educationally sound and relevant technical content, informed by current and ongoing developments in the land and property profession;
- approaches to teaching, learning and assessment which are varied but well-balanced and relevant to your studies (see Section 15);
- transferable skills, which will be of benefit to you in your academic study but which will also assist you in your future career (see Section 11).

## Programme aims

The programme aims to:

- provide you with a significant understanding of the nature, theory and practice of rural estate management;
- prepare you for a career in rural property management and meeting the professional requirements of the RICS;
- ensure you have a clear understanding of the application of professional and business ethics to land and property;
- provide you with opportunities to develop your academic knowledge and practical professional competence associated with the subjects within the MSc programme;
- develop your intellectual, professional, business and interpersonal skills;
- encourage originality and creative thinking.

## 11. Intended learning outcomes

Learning outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do if you make full use of the opportunities for learning that the programme provides. By studying rural estate management at the RAC, you will acquire knowledge and understanding of the context, core concepts and theories of the subject and develop key skills that you will be able to apply to both your academic studies and the wider world of work once you have graduated.

The learning outcomes given below are informed by the QAA subject benchmarks for Building and Surveying and Agriculture and incorporate the principles of inclusive practice with regard to students with disabilities.

### i. Knowledge and Understanding

- A1 The complex and dynamic legal, economic, financial, governmental, business, management, technological and environmental principles and practices governing rural land and property markets;
- A2 Discipline specific principles relating to the work of the surveyor;
- A3 The roles performed by rural surveyors and related surveying disciplines;
- A4 Research methodology and its application in practice.

Knowledge and understanding outcomes are achieved mainly through workshops, seminars, tutorials and reading. Students are given directed learning tasks, and are encouraged to increase their depth of their knowledge and understanding through private study and completion of coursework.

### ii. Intellectual Skills

- B1 Apply the skills needed for academic study and enquiry, and be able to adapt and apply these skills to a continually changing professional rural property environment;

- B2 Research and critically evaluate information relating to a variety of rural property scenarios;
- B3 Synthesise information from a number of sources in order to gain a coherent understanding of theory and practice;
- B4 Demonstrate the skills necessary to plan and conduct some original research and write up as a dissertation;
- B5 Utilise problem-solving skills.

Intellectual skills are developed by a variety of means including lectures, tutorials, seminars, directed learning and problem based and experiential case studies.

### iii. **Practical/Professional Skills**

- C1 Offer advice, make decisions and implement them in relation to the purchase, sale, letting, management, investment, planning and development of rural property at strategic, operational and tactical levels, and in doing so, be able to visually and critically appraise and value rural property for operational, investment, development and statutory purposes.
- C2 Interpret and analyse complex and dynamic rural property markets and be able to understand the physical, legal, business and socio-economic context in which the rural property markets exist.
- C3 Be able to visually survey, analyse and report on the financial, constructional, natural and aesthetic aspects of land and buildings.
- C4 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs, perspectives and character of individuals and organisations that currently occupy rural land and property and be able to assist in identifying and articulating their future requirements.

Practice and professional skills are developed by a variety of means including site visits, lectures from key personnel in industry and case study project work, based on actual projects.

### iv. **Transferable Skills**

- D1 Communication skills  
The ability to express the ideas you have obtained verbally as well as through written and visual work in a form which is appropriate to the intended audience.
- D2 Interpersonal skills  
The ability to work effectively as a member of a team or on your own, including the ability to motivate yourself and others, to show and take initiative and to demonstrate negotiation skills.
- D3 Organisational skills  
The capacity for independent and self-managed learning, including the ability to analyse and reflect on your own personal strengths/weaknesses and formulate strategies for improvement.
- D4 Numerical skills  
The ability to apply basic statistical and numerical skills to rural land management information.

**D5 IT skills**

The ability to use Information Technology e.g. email and internet, databases, spreadsheets and word processing.

Transferable skills are incorporated within the case studies and related to relevant assessments as appropriate. Strategies for this include tutorials, seminars, directed learning, group projects and case studies.

<b>12. Programme structure and requirements</b>
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The MSc in Rural Estate Management consists of a one-year full-time programme which comprises eight taught modules and a research dissertation which is equivalent to four modules.

Each module is equivalent to about 150 hours of study and is worth 15 credit points towards your degree. For the award of a master's degree you must accumulate 180 credits, comprising 120 credits from the eight taught modules of the programme and the dissertation (worth 60 credits).

The final part of the course will take the form of a research based dissertation. This is devoted to personal research for a dissertation on a subject of your choosing, under the guidance of a member of academic staff with expertise in this specialist area. The requirement for each student to formulate an initial proposal for their chosen dissertation topic and the subsequent allocation of supervisors at the start of the second term will allow individual feedback and discussion (and refinement where necessary), prior to commencing the dissertation.

The dissertation will be submitted by the 30<sup>th</sup> September of the same year. An extension to the dissertation submission date of one year may be granted (subject to an additional cost) by agreement with the supervisor and the dissertation module manager. If a student wishes to request such an extension using these provisions, the request must be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> August of the year in which the dissertation should originally have been submitted. (Requests for extensions in a situation where there may be mitigation are covered by the normal College regulations regarding mitigating circumstances.)

The assessment regulations are in accordance with the College regulations, and are provided in the student handbook.

## Programme structure

<b>Module</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Rural Property Law	15
Rural Valuation	15
Rural Planning and Development	15
Agriculture	15
Business Management	15
Environmental and Woodland Management	15
Rural Policy and Implementation	15
Rural Asset Management	15
Taught element	120
Dissertation	60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>

### 13. Student support services

The programme manager is David Lewis. Additional support is also available from Katharine Foot.

In addition, your learning will be supported by:

- an induction programme when you join College which will introduce your programme of study and the study skills you need to complete it successfully;
- the RAC Student Handbook
- module handbooks, describing in detail the teaching programme for each module you study;
- extensive library and other learning resources, including study skills packages;
- a personal tutor, whose role is to assist you with the progress of your academic studies as well as advise on pastoral care issues;
- student email and open and personal access to academic staff, including the Programme Manager;
- access to a Student Liaison Officer, the College health centre and a counselling service;
- access to a Disability Officer, who provides assistance and guidance on teaching and learning support for students with dyslexia (or other forms of specific learning difficulties) and other disabilities, including a dyslexia specialist to help you develop your learning skills.

### 14. Criteria for admissions - What you will need to join the programme

You will need to satisfy the general admissions requirements of the Royal Agricultural College:

The standard entry requirement is the minimum of a BSc (Honours) degree at a 2:1 classification or equivalent. Students with lower academic achievements with relevant experience (such as farming, property or countryside management) may be considered for admission.

**Overseas students**

The English requirement would be a minimum IELTS level 6.5 or equivalent. Students must provide written evidence of this level prior to an offer being made, together with verification of previous qualifications and experience gained. Students will also be interviewed where possible.

**Pre-College work experience**

Although not a pre-condition for entry, you are encouraged to undertake some practical farming and professional experience before embarking on your programme of study, perhaps during a gap year. The Programme Manager would be happy to provide further guidance to you about the type of work experience that would be particularly suitable for your individual circumstances.

<b>15. Teaching, learning and assessment</b>
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The curriculum is designed to enable you to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of the subject, intellectual/ thinking, practical/ professional and key transferable skills which correspond to those developed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. As you progress through the programme you will be encouraged to expand your understanding and critical appreciation of key rural estate management topics and issues.

This programme is inclusive of disabled people with particular regard to teaching, learning and assessment, in accordance with Part 10: Inclusive Practice of the College's Teaching Quality Handbook and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. However, due to the particular requirements of this programme, i.e. it requires students to visually appraise buildings, woodlands and sites which is a core feature of the programme. Students who are severely visually impaired are advised to contact the College's Disability Officer so that appropriate support may be provided. Students have the right to request that the nature of their impairment be treated as confidential.

**Teaching and learning**

A carefully planned and diverse programme of teaching and learning, guided by the explicit aims and identified learning outcomes of the programme, will be used in rural estate management. Your workload will be challenging but manageable.

You will:

- attend lectures, participate in seminars and tutorials, undertake case studies and carry out practical work both in class and out in the field, for example on site visits;
- be given directed learning tasks both in class and for private study time to help increase your knowledge and understanding of topics and issues covered in class;
- be encouraged to engage in and take responsibility for your own learning enabling you to work as an independent self-directed learner;

- have the opportunity to participate in group work, for example in case studies, to develop your ability to work co-operatively with others as a member of a team.

### **Assessment methods**

A variety of student-focused and appropriate assessment methods which are consistent with the learning outcomes (see section 11) are used in the programme, all of which will enable you to demonstrate your achievements and understanding of issues to the highest level, along with your ability to use specialist study as well as other key skills acquired during your academic studies. You will experience a good balance between formal assessment activities, for example, essays, examinations, oral presentations, group or individual reports, alongside non-assessed tasks and experiences which together contribute to your overall development. Assessment criteria are designed to be clear and specific for both you and the teaching staff (see section 17 for marking guidelines).

Assessment is addressed as an integral part of the programme design, is reviewed regularly by the Programme Management Team and is subject to confirmation by the College's Academic Quality and Standards Committee and ratification by Academic Board.

### **Site visits**

A wide variety of study/ site visits are undertaken to local farms, properties and rural estates where owners, occupiers and their professional advisors/ managers provide invaluable insights into contemporary issues arising in the profession of rural land management.

In addition, you will visit the College's own arable and livestock farms which will provide opportunities to supplement your academic studies with practical demonstrations of a range of farm enterprises, both conventional and organic, together with conservation principles and other property management issues.

### **Guest speakers**

Leading professional practices offer support to your programme through the provision of experts who regularly visit the College to provide a contemporary practical framework against which you can reflect your theoretical studies.

### **Case studies**

Your coursework will often be based on case studies which will, again, help you to see practical application of the subjects you are studying.

## 16. Quality assurance procedures

The framework of policies and structures of the College, which form the basis for the assurance and continued development of quality standards for academic programmes, are set out in the Teaching Quality Handbook.

The function of the Programme Management Team is to ensure that the programme provision aligns with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and recognises and adheres to the expectations of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice in terms of academic quality and standards.

### **Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

The Programme Management Team undertake a range of activities to ensure the quality and standards relating to the teaching, learning, assessment, and outcome standards are continually reviewed and improved. Mechanisms for review and evaluation of the programme include:

- Preparation of annual module reviews by module leaders to identify areas of good practice and consider further development of each module in the programme.
- Regular Programme Management Team meetings.
- Submission of annual reports by External Examiners, commenting on the quality and standards of the programme.
- Preparation of an annual programme report by the Programme Manager, which is approved by the Dean of the School of RELM and considered by the College Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
- Periodic review and revalidation of the programme on a five year cycle, involving external panel members.
- Regular partnership meetings with the RICS.

### **Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards:**

- Programme Committee (including student representation).
- College Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC).
- College Examination Boards (to consider marks, progression and awards).

### **Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience:**

- Student representation at the Programme Committee
- Evaluation of modules and programme (based on questionnaires: Student Perception about Modules (SPAM) and Student Perception of Course and College (SPOCC)).

### **Staff development priorities include:**

- Institutional staff development courses.
- Attainment by all staff of formal teaching qualification.

### **Stakeholder feedback**

Feedback from existing and past students, employers, External Examiners and the School of RELM Advisory Council is regularly received and considered in the annual and periodic review process.

### **17. Marking guides and assessment regulations**

The marking criteria for coursework and examinations and the regulations for assessment and progression are available on the College intranet under Student Resources.

### **18. Ownership of programme specification**

The Programme Management Team, under the auspices of the School of Real Estate and Land Management, has responsibility for the programme.

### **19. Curriculum map**

The map provided at Appendix 1 shows you how the programme outcomes relate to module outcomes.

### **20. Career prospects**

Your studies will equip you to undertake the wide range of work that characterises the surveying profession.

The College has an excellent employment record supported by its enviable contacts with the rural surveying profession. In recent years the vast majority of those seeking graduate employment in the profession have been successful. As a student, you will have the opportunity to attend regular employer presentations and careers events at College in your final year of study. Recent job opportunities have included APC training posts with national, regional and local firms of chartered surveyors, auctioneering firms, private estates and other large landowners such as the National Trust.

If you choose not to follow a career in surveying, you will have many other career options open to you, for example, in law or accountancy, as well as the normal graduate opportunities in industry and business; options which are again supported by the College's excellent networks in related employment fields.

### **21. Further information**

Further information on the programme is available from the College website ([www.rac.ac.uk](http://www.rac.ac.uk)).

## 22. Module reference sheets

The modules you will study are as follows:

**Level 4:**

Rural Property Law

Rural Valuation

Rural Planning and Development

Agriculture

Business Management

Environmental and Woodland Management

Rural Policy and Implementation

Rural Asset Management

The module reference sheets are available on the College's Gateway system.

**APPENDIX 1: CURRICULUM MAP(1)  
MSc RURAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT**

Programme outcomes		Agriculture	Rural Policy & Implementation	Environmental & Woodland Management	Business Management	Rural Planning & Development	Rural Asset Management	Rural Valuation	Rural Property Law	Dissertation
Knowledge and understanding of:										
A1	The complex and dynamic legal, economic, financial, governmental, business, management, technological and environmental principles and practices governing rural land and property markets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A2	Discipline specific principles relating to the work of the surveyor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A3	The roles performed by rural surveyors and related surveying disciplines		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A4	Research methodology and its application in practice.		✓							✓
<b>Intellectual skills:</b>										
B1	Apply the skills needed for academic study and enquiry, and be able to adapt and apply these skills to a continually changing professional rural property environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B2	Research and critically evaluate information relating to a variety of rural property scenarios	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B3	Synthesise information from a number of sources in order to gain a coherent understanding of theory and practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B4	Demonstrate the skills necessary to plan, conduct and report a programme or original research and write up as a dissertation		✓							✓
B5	Utilise problem-solving skills	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

**APPENDIX 1: CURRICULUM MAP(2)**  
**MSc RURAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT**

<b>Professional Skills</b>		<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>Rural Policy &amp; Implementation</b>	<b>Environmental &amp; Woodland Management</b>	<b>Business Management</b>	<b>Rural Planning &amp; Development</b>	<b>Rural Asset Management</b>	<b>Rural Valuation</b>	<b>Rural Property Law</b>	<b>Dissertation</b>
C1	Offer advice, make decisions and implement them in relation to the purchase, sale, letting, management, investment, planning and development of rural property at strategic, operational and tactical levels, and in doing so, be able to visually and critically appraise and value rural property for operational, investment, development and statutory purposes.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
C2	Interpret and analyse complex and dynamic rural property markets and be able to understand the physical, legal, business and socio-economic context in which the rural property markets exist.		✓				✓	✓	✓	
C3	Be able to visually survey, analyse and report on the financial, constructional, natural and aesthetic aspects of land and buildings.	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
C4	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the needs, perspectives and character of individuals and organisations that currently occupy rural land and property and be able to assist in identifying and articulating their future requirements.			✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Transferable skills:</b>										
D1	Communication skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D2	Interpersonal skills			✓			✓			✓
D3	Organisational skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D4	Numerical skills			✓	✓		✓	✓		
D5	IT skills				✓	✓		✓		✓

**APPENDIX 2****MSc Rural Estate Management: Modules**

<b>Module Number</b>	<b>Module Name</b>
4002	Agriculture
4003	Business Management
4007	Dissertation
4019	Rural Property Law
4029	Environmental & Woodland Management
4030	Rural Planning & Development
4031	Rural Policy & Implementation
4033	Rural Valuation
4043	Rural Asset Management