

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MSc
4	Programme Title	Rural Development and Resource Management
5	UCAS/Programme Code	5024
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Masters
9	Date written/revised	February 2008

10 Programme Aims

- 1 to provide sufficient education to equip graduates with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to contribute to the practice of, and development of further research into, rural development.
- 2 to equip graduates with the advanced conceptual understanding, supporting factual knowledge, and analytical skills appropriate for careers in the area of rural development
- 3 to provide a programme which meets the FHEQ at Masters level
- 4 to generate practical understanding of the problems of rural areas and human/environmental interaction and case study knowledge of action to address these problems
- 5 to generate the ability to analyse and develop alternative policies and management strategies for rural development

11 Learning Outcomes

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

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 Demonstrate a sophisticated knowledge and understanding of a range of rural development principles, mechanisms, systems and issues
- A2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of rural development policy at a variety of governmental scales.
- A3 Comprehend and be able to critically analyse the work of rural development institutions.
- A4 Comprehend the economic forces and flows shaping rural areas and the use of resources in rural areas.
- A5 Comprehend the major social structures and relations shaping the socio-economic character of the OECD's rural areas.
- A6 Demonstrate an understanding of research principles, methods and project management and be able to interpret research programmes and results relating to rural development

Teaching and Learning Methods

Knowledge and understanding of principles, mechanisms, systems, policies issues, institutions, economies, social structures are research methods are primarily imparted via

lectures, seminars and workshops supported by reference materials (academic, policy and web based materials) and student study undertaken as part of the compulsory modules on the degree. Knowledge and understanding are further promoted, where applicable, by case studies and field trips. Programme content and delivery strategies are under regular review by both programme lecturers themselves, and the programme Board of Studies. Throughout the taught component of the course, students are expected and encouraged to engage in independent reading and thinking, and are supported in this by the provision of extensive reading lists and reference material related to each module. Students are strongly encouraged to co-operate through group discussions of course material, especially for student-led seminars, and reflection on case studies, as an important aid to the development of critical understanding.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding are assessed by: seen and unseen written examinations; continuous assessment (written and oral); and a final (60 credit) dissertation. A range of approaches is used to: a) allow students to display their particular strengths adequately; b) objectively assess student abilities. The range of assessment methods used also tests student's abilities to apply material from the courses to real-world situations and issues. The balance of approaches is subject to continual review by the Board of Studies, in the light of experience and comments by the Board of Examiners. The final blend of assessment to produce the summative performance grade is subject to moderation and final approval by the programme Board of Examiners, including the External Examiner. At the discretion of an External Examiner, a *viva voce* examination is also included in the programme regulations, to clarify, as necessary, the indicative summative student performance.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 apply qualitative and quantitative research skills to the study of rural development
- B2 analyse rural development issues and problems and present this analysis in written and oral form
- B3 Use logical and rhetorical skills in presenting and arguing cases
- B4 Use synthetic and evaluative skills in employing knowledge from different disciplines to real world rural development issues
- B5 Gain a basic understanding of rural development practice through engagement with rural development professionals and organisations

Teaching and Learning Methods

There is a specific compulsory 20 credit module on B1. Research skills are practised in the compulsory 60 credit dissertation. All other modules contribute to achieving B 2 – 4. B 5 is taught through a compulsory 20 credit module 'learning and rural development' where students attend events and seminars from rural development professional and an optional 20 credit module 'rural development work placement'.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment on the compulsory modules is mainly through continual assessment including coursework and oral presentation. These modules assess B2 – 4. B1 is assessed through the research methods and project management module and the dissertation. B5 is assessed by coursework and an oral exam which assesses their engagement with practitioners.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Network effectively with rural development practitioners.
- C2 Apply knowledge and understanding to practical issues in rural development

Teaching and Learning Methods
C1 is a component of the compulsory module 'Learning and Rural Development'. C1 is also practised in the optional module 'Rural Development Work Placement'. C2 is practised through the dissertation which normally involves a research placement in a rural business or rural development organisation and through participation in a practice learning network as part of the compulsory 'Learning and Rural Development' module.
Assessment Strategy
C1 is assessed through an oral exam for 'Learning and Rural Development'. C2 is assessed through the dissertation and coursework for 'Learning and Rural Development'.
Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: D1 Communicate clearly and effectively in ways which would be expected by a rural development professional. D2 Be able to make effective use of a range of published literature (in paper and virtual form) in the written and oral communications including using non-peer reviewed material in an appropriate manner. D3 Make effective use of ICTs including using the internet and a range of appropriate software packages (power point, word, excel) D4 Plan, organise and prioritise work effectively and independently to meet deadlines
Teaching and Learning Methods
Transferable skills are taught formally in the research methods and project management module. In particular, dedicated sessions on information and database skills are delivered by library professionals at the start of this module. Management of workload in order to meet deadlines is promoted by means of a strict coursework timetable, and students are assisted in this by provision of time management guidelines and timetable proforma in the degree programme handbook. The mode of delivery of taught modules provides students with the opportunity to improve their communication, library, IT and time management abilities. The dissertation project provides students with further opportunities to develop all of these skills. Students are provided with the opportunity to develop and practice all key skills as part of compulsory core modules. Compliance with continuous assessment methods obliges students to make appropriate use of library and IT facilities. Transferable skills are also developed as part of compulsory modules, via student participation in case studies, group discussions and informal class presentations. D2 is specifically developed during dedicated library use sessions. The experience of preparing and executing the dissertation provides students with the opportunity to apply all key skills under the guidance of the supervisor.
Assessment Strategy
Communications, library and IT skills and the ability to meet deadlines are assessed indirectly by coursework (assignments, seminars, case studies, etc.). All key skills are indirectly assessed by the experience of undertaking the dissertation.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
The degree can be taken as either a one year full time degree or a two year part time degree. It consists of two parts: a <i>taught component</i> , which runs from late September until mid-May, and a <i>project</i> , for which a dissertation is submitted in early September. Part times will split the taught component over four semesters and complete the project by September of year 2. For both pt and ft successful completion of the taught component (120 credits) is required in

order for a student to progress to the dissertation project (60 credits).

The taught component of the course consists of 5 compulsory modules (4 double, 1 single) adding up to a value of 90 credits from a required 120 for this component. There are several routes for the optional modules.

During the dissertation project, students may undertake a research placement. Dissertation projects may involve desk or literature studies, or a topic relating to a research placement, as well as (or instead of) conventional social science primary research or simulation/evaluation of secondary data. We encourage and support students who wish to publish the results of their dissertations, and several past M.Sc. students have been successful in this area. We also encourage projects with a particular focused application, such as the production of a business strategy or marketing plan, which might not admit of publication but which should pass the test of being practically beneficial to either public or private managers.

Research placements associated with the production of the dissertation are regarded as an innovative practice, as an encouragement and opportunity for students to put their learning into practice during the degree programme. Otherwise, students are encouraged to follow dissertation projects in the fields and areas of research interest being pursued by supervising members of staff.

The programme consists of the following modules: Research Methods & Project Management (20 credits); Learning and Rural Development (20 credits); Environmental & Resource Economics (10 credits); The Contemporary Countryside (20 credits); Environmental Controversies (20 credits). There are 50 compulsory credits in semester one and 40 in semester two. The key elements of knowledge and understanding and intellectual skills necessary for Rural Development and Resource Management are contained in these modules, which are compulsory for all students on the programme. The design of these modules allows students to demonstrate their appreciation and acquisition of these skills, as well as developing their key skills (D1 – D6).

The remaining taught component credits (30 in all to be taken), are provided so far as possible with an equal balance between the first and second semesters. These optional credits have are specified in detail in the Degree Programme Handbook. These options allow students to pursue their knowledge and understanding in more detail. Students can take any M or UG stage 3 level module at the discretion of the DPD..

The final component of the programme is a supervised individual research project culminating in the submission of a written dissertation (60 credits).

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Four features make the programme distinctive in comparison to it UK competitors:

- 1) The opportunity to complete the dissertation through a research placement with a business or rural development organisation. This enables the student to practice research skills in a professional environment and to appreciate the value of good research skills to the practice of rural development.
- 2) Students engage closely with practitioners throughout the course through attending a practice based learning network as part of the compulsory module 'learning and rural development'.
- 3) Students practice and are assessed in the use of networking skills (in 'learning and rural development'). Practitioner feedback has shown that networking skills are important in professional practice but are rarely practised during the students time in higher education.
- 4) In Environment Controversies and in Research Methods and Project Management students are taught about the vital importance of inter-disciplinarity in approaching rural development problems. They are given opportunities to practice inter-disciplinary research in their dissertation which are problem rather than subject orientated. This directly reflects the problem orientated nature of rural development practice.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

13 Criteria for admission*Entry qualifications*

A good honours degree (2:i) in any relevant subject (countryside management, environmental science, economics, geography, agri-business management etc) is preferred. Students with 2:11 and 3rd class degrees or with non standard qualifications are considered if they can demonstrate (in their personal statement and CV) relevant work experience and a commitment to the study of rural development.

Admissions policy/selection tools

Applications are considered by the DPD through the E2R system. Candidates are invited to contact the DPD by phone or email to discuss the programme and its suitability for their needs. The programme is only suitable for those interested in rural development in OECD countries.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

These are considered on an individual basis

*Additional Requirements**Level of English Language capability*

IELTS 7.0

14 Support for Student Learning*Induction*

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/arrival/jan/index.phtml>)

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects through the research methods and project management module.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid. Further details are available at:

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/news_details.php?news_id=159 Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre. Details can be obtained from Alicia.Cresswell@ncl.ac.uk

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml>

In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare/index.phtml>

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities, see

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/facilities/index.phtml>

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See

<http://ncl.ac.uk/langcen/index.htm>

15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. Further information is at www.thestudentsurvey.com/ With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/agss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Accreditation reports

NA

Additional mechanisms

The DPD collects additional feedback on modules and the programme coherence based on informal student feedback collected as part of the tutoring system.

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdepr.pdf>) and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdeprexamconv.pdf>). Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Common Marking Scheme

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

<50	Fail
50-59	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit
70 or above	Pass with Distinction

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies.

The External Examiner is expected to:

- See and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Annex

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Either

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Compulsory in Bold)
A1	ACE8050; ACE8015; ACE8054; ACE8035; ACE 8017; ACE8003; ACE8047; ACE8021; BIO8025; ACE8028; LAW2008; LAW2053; ACE3009; ACE8031; ACE8032
A2	ACE8050; ACE8015; ACE8035; ACE8017; ACE8047; ACE8003
A3	ACE8050; ACE8035; ACE8054; ACE8015; ACE8017; ACE8047; LAW2008; LAW2053
A4	ACE8015; ACE8054; ACE8017; ACE8003; ACE8004; GEO8007; BIO8025; ACE8028; ACE3009
A5	ACE8035; ACE8054; ACE8031; ACE8032
A6	ACE8001; ACE8095; ACE8004; GEO8007; BIO8014
B1	ACE8001; ACE8095; ACE8015; GEO8007; ACE8004; BIO8014
B2	ACE8035; ACE8050; ACE8054; ACE8015; ACE8001; ACE8095
B3	ACE8050; ACE8054; ACE8021; LAW2008; LAW2053
B4	ACE8054; ACE8001; ACE8035; ACE8095; ACE8017
B5	ACE8035; ACE8047
C1	ACE8035; ACE8047
C2	ACE8095; ACE8017; ACE3009
D1	ACE8050, ACE8035; ACE8054; ACE8001; ACE8095; ACE8047
D2	ACE8050, ACE8035, ACE8054; ACE8001; ACE8095; ACE8047
D3	ACE8050, ACE8035, ACE8054; ACE8001; ACE8095; ACE8047
D4	ACE8050, ACE8035, ACE8054; ACE8001; ACE8095; ACE8047