MSc Project Management at Reading

MSc Project Management  12 months Full-time
MSc Project Management  24 months Part-time
Why choose Reading?

The School of Construction Management and Engineering enjoys an international reputation for its high-quality built environment research, industry-engagement and teaching.

Our reputation
The reputation of the School is based on the authority of its academic staff, including ten professors. This wide range of expertise and international experience contributes directly to the quality of the School’s degree courses and research programmes. In the most recent UK government Research Assessment Exercise (2008) 70% of its research was rated as internally excellent or above.

Academic excellence and practical relevance
The Reading MSc in Project Management was originally launched in 1983 and very quickly attracted a reputation as the premier programme in project management for the construction industry. Many leading organisations sponsor candidates for the programme on a regular basis, several of whom have now risen to influential positions in the industry. The programme not only attracts applications from the United Kingdom, but also from numerous overseas countries. The programme is unique in the way it combines academic excellence with practical relevance. The programme content is continually updated to reflect best practice in a changing and increasingly global industry.

The Reading difference
• Cutting edge practice: the School’s long-term collaborative relationships with leading international and national construction companies ensure that the programme is at the cutting edge of project management practice worldwide.
• Research-intensive environment: the School’s internationally-leading built environment research informs the programme content and provides a research-intensive environment for students.
• Multidisciplinary ethos: the School’s multidisciplinary approach to the built environment ensures that students are equipped with knowledge-base to understand and solve complex project management problems.
• The degree is accredited by the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).
• Continuous Professional Development: individual modules may also be taken as part of a personal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme. CPD delegates are not assessed and only attend module sessions. University certificate is awarded on completion of each module (counts towards your CPD).
• The School has a proven-track record of successfully delivering Project Management education for 30 years.
Facilities

The University occupies a specious parkland campus of 300 acres. Formerly a private estate, it was extensively landscaped in the eighteenth century. Rich in mature trees and shrubs, the campus includes a lake and a conservation area. It provides a green and tranquil setting for walking or jogging. Despite its parkland nature, the campus is only a mile and a half from the shopping and leisure facilities of the busy centre of Reading. The town is 40 miles west of London between Windsor and Oxford. The train journey from Reading to London Paddington is 25 minutes.

Accommodation

For Full-time mode ...

The University has a range of halls (self-catered, catered) and the different types of rooms (premium en-suite room, en-suite room, townhouse room, standard room with washbasin, and standard room without washbasin). For more information, please visit the accommodation website: www.reading.ac.uk/life/life-accommodation.aspx

For Part-time mode ...

The Cedars Hotel is a purpose built Hotel and Conference Centre on Whiteknights Campus, with 34 double en-suite bedrooms and 2 twin en-suite bedrooms with disabled facilities, available all year round. All rooms are equipped with televisions, desks, telephones, tea and coffee making facilities, fresh towels and linen, Wi-Fi internet, and free on-site car parking.

For bed & breakfast enquiries, please contact reception on +44 (0)118 378 8906 or email thecedars@reading.ac.uk

Local hotels around the campus: We also maintain a list of local hotels and guest houses if you would like to reside in the town rather than within the Whiteknights campus. The list is available online at www.reading.ac.uk/about/about-hotels.asp.

Related subjects

- MSc Construction Cost Management
- MSc Construction in Emerging Economies
- MSc Construction Management
- MSc Design and Management of Sustainable Built Environments
- MSc Renewable Energy: Technology and Sustainability

Research degrees

In addition to taught programmes, we offer research degrees. For more information about the availability of research degrees, please contact k.j.saxelby-smith@reading.ac.uk, phone 0118 378 8982 or visit www.reading.ac.uk/cme-pgr
Employability

A masters degree without a career break

The modular structure provides the opportunity to study for a master’s degree by combining eight intensive residential weeks at the University spread over one year for full-time students and two years for part-time students.

Each module includes internet-based distance-learning support, accessible only to registered students. Modules are taught by academic and industry experts and include a rigorous practice-related assignment. The MSc course is completed by a research-based dissertation on a topic of the candidate’s choice.

Funding

There are a range of possibilities of accessing funding to participate in our programmes. International students seeking funding should contact their local British Council office. Further information is available from their website www.britishcouncil.org.uk

For information on scholarships go to: www.educationuk.org

The University of Reading offers a limited number of scholarships and bursaries to UK and EU students. Please note that there is considerable competition for all these funding sources.

Please see the link below. www.reading.ac.uk/cme-pgr-funding.aspx

Our alumni

Our recently launched exciting Alumni Profiles allows successful graduates to share their Reading experiences in a profile. Alumni are asked between questions about their time at the University and provide a snapshot of them as a person. See profiles from our SCME Postgraduates below: www.reading.ac.uk/cme-pgt-profiles.aspx

‘The Reading programme answered all my questions and I was really impressed by the robustness of the programme in terms of course content and flexibility. The profile of lecturers with both UK and international reputation is unrivalled. This combined with resource persons from the construction and other industries achieved the right balance between theory and practical application.’

Clement Okwegbuna
Project Manager MACE
Project management is traditionally described in terms of the overall planning, control and co-ordination of a project from inception to completion aimed at meeting a client’s requirements and ensuring completion within specified constraints of time, cost and quality.

Whist this definition continues to provide a good starting point, the reality of modern project management is extremely complex. Client organisations are often pluralistic, comprising multiple stakeholders with different objectives. The complexity of the construction process thus leads to inherent uncertainty. The role of the project manager is to integrate the various sectors of the industry in order to manage key interfaces throughout the project supply chain. The successful project manager must therefore have the ability to integrate and lead a multi-disciplinary team in uncertainty. Effective leadership and sensitivity to human issues are vital. Modern clients demand a more integrated and effective approach to the management of their construction projects. The discipline of project management continues to evolve and the Reading MSc in Project Management is at the forefront of these developments.

Entry requirements and applications
Candidates for admission to the programme should hold a good first degree or be a member of a relevant professional body, preferably with some relevant industrial experience.

You can apply online via the University website:
www.reading.ac.uk/pg-applicationform.aspx

If English is not your first language, or your previous education was not predominantly delivered in English, you will be expected to provide evidence of your ability, our normal requirements are:

Test of English for Educational Purposes TEEP  6.5
International English Language Test Score IELTS 6.5

Visas and working in the UK
You will need a visa to study in the UK if you are a national of a country outside the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. If your course is longer than 6 months, you will need a Tier 4 (general) visa. If you require a visa to study in the UK, the University of Reading can act as your sponsor. Visas issued under University of Reading sponsorship are valid for study at Reading only. If you are transferring to Reading from another university, you will need to apply for another visa.

There are UK visa restrictions governing employment taken by international students during their course of studies. Subject to the appropriate leave to remain, students on a full-time degree programme of more than six months may work part-time for up to 20 hours per week during term time.
Who should attend?
The programme is intended for those who wish to progress to a project management role, or acquire a broader understanding of the project management process. The programme will appeal to professionals from a variety of backgrounds:

- Client representatives
- Project sponsors
- Architects
- Civil engineers
- Structural engineers
- Quantity surveyors
- Management consultants
- Construction managers
- Specialist contractors
- Facilities managers

The programme will benefit anyone who wishes to improve their understanding of project management and underpin their practical experience with a robust conceptual framework.

Programme themes

- The aim of the programme is to provide a coherent framework for the discipline and practice of project management. Each module comprises a number of sessions delivered by leading industrialists. The programme is continually informed not only by the latest developments in industry, but also by on-going international research.
- A recurring theme throughout the programme concerns the dynamic nature of construction projects. Not only is it necessary to set clear objectives at the beginning of a project, it is also important to update them continually as the project unfolds.
- A further theme is provided by the need for project managers to provide leadership. This requires a high level of interpersonal skills to motivate diverse team members towards the realisation of project success. Effective project management requires a sound knowledge of tools and techniques. It also requires and ability to think strategically. Traditionally notions of command and control have to be matched with an ability to manage ‘soft’ issues. People management is central to the art of project management.
- A particular emphasis is given to the early stages of construction projects and the interface with complex clients. Projects are not carried out in isolation.

‘I was drawn towards the MSc in Project Management because the prospectus aims and objectives most closely reflected the day to day activities of the role I was performing. Furthermore the modular course structure appeared more manageable with my current family and work commitments…I have particularly enjoyed and valued the relationships built from working and sharing experiences with other delegates, as well as academics and industry professionals from all over the world. Whilst the course demands a high level of hard work, commitment and self-discipline, the University, together with its proactive tutors, support staff and excellent resources makes the whole experience one to enjoy, providing the perfect platform for personal professional development and hopefully a much longer and more successful career in the future.’

Damian Cleveland, Architectural project manager
MSc Project Management, October 2011–2014

Career possibilities

Students graduating from this programme typically develop their careers as Senior project and programme managers, or Built Environment professionals in related disciplines (e.g. architects, quantity surveyors, building surveyors) who want to strengthen their project management capabilities at senior management level.

Previous dissertation titles include:

- Integrated collaborative design (ICD) process: a case study of team communication in a building project in practice
- The implementation of Build-Own/Operate-Transfer (BOT) projects: a case study from the Sultanate of Oman
- The development and impact of long-term construction frameworks agreements within local government
- The use of private finance in the National Health Service (NHS): long term partners or destined for separation?
- Do standard forms of contract influence the effectiveness of incorporating change in construction contracts?
- Pre-contract tender pricing considerations of supply chains in the UK construction industry
- Learning from projects: an empirical study of project-based learning in a large UK building sector construction client
Our staff

The course is led by internationally renowned and research active academic staff. Specialist expertise is provided by a number of visiting experts who contribute to the course as external lecturers, advisers and research collaborators.

Programme Director: Dr Shu-Ling Lu
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Further details of all staff can be found at
www.reading.ac.uk/cme-staff
Core modules

**Principles of project management 20 credits**

The construction industry is undoubtedly a project-based industry. Effective project management is central not only to project performance, but also to performance on the industry level. The last decades have seen significant changes in the way that construction projects are managed. Traditionally, fragmented approaches have given way to the provision of an integrated project management approach that delivers construction projects to required standards of time, cost and quality.

**Design management 20 credits**

This core module is designed to develop an understanding of current and developing approaches to design management. Participants will gain an appreciation of the various models of the design process and the essential conflict between creative design and the need for control. The module will describe a range of practical measurements for effective design management.

**Human resource management 20 credits**

This module will cover the essential elements of human resource management (HRM) and their implementation in the UK construction industry. Consideration will also be given to the contrasting HRM policies in Europe, Japan, USA and developing countries. It will seek to address the needs and concerns of organisations irrespective of size, including both construction companies and professional firms. It will explain and clarify how an informed, well-structured and participative approach to HRM can deliver substantial benefits to all stakeholders, employers and employees as well as their stakeholders and clients.

**Construction contract law 20 credits**

The procurement of construction work takes place within a legislative framework. Contracts result from agreements between business for all forms of consultancy and construction work, whether they are formally written or not. New developments in statutes, court cases and standard form contracting have a significant impact on the kind of deals that take place in the construction industry. This module seeks to explain the statutory and contractual context of contracts in construction, in order that they will be able to recognise and confront the kinds of problem that can get in the way of successful contract management.

**Dissertation 60 credits**

Dissertations occupy students for the whole period of the programme and are between 12,000 – 15,000 words on a theme of interest to the student, in line with the aims of the degree programme. The dissertation consolidates the academic theories and techniques covered in the modules of the programme by engaging the student in the development of a research proposal. The initial task is to carry out a focused literature review of the selected topic. On the basis of this review, students draw together a research proposal, which details the aims of the research. The task of writing the dissertation is carried out under the guidance of a dedicated supervision.

Dissertations usually comprise the following: a thorough review of the relevant literature; methodological positioning and justification; and, data collection, analysis and thorough discussion. Students frequently choose a topic which is relevant to their chosen career path. The final submission is assessed on critical argument, assembled evidence and practical relevance.
Optional modules

Building information modelling 10 credits
The aim of this module is to gain the basic knowledge and skills needed to use Building Information Modelling (BIM) in professional work.

Construction cost engineering 10 credits
Built facilities have cost of construction, maintenance, refurbishment and operation. The level of the amount of these costs determines the building's value. Meeting the cost involves significant expenditure and investment by the developer, the building owner or the occupier. To maximise the return on this investment the costs must be managed, controlled and engineered. These processes must take place at all stages of the development process; financial feasibility appraisal, design, construction procurement, construction operations, commissioning, maintenance, refurbishment and demolition.

The financial management techniques required for this are specific to construction. Financial managers in construction require cost engineering expertise, which is central to the aims and content of this module.

International construction 10 credits
The world business environment is changing like never before, becoming more complex and demanding. Technology is changing markets and revolutionising information and communications. Globalisation of markets, supply chains, finance and work is creating competition on an unprecedented scale. New employment patterns are creating a growing number of small specialised companies and increasing self-employment. New organisational structures are emerging with the networked organisation, outsourcing of services and the streamlining of corporate centres. There has been a shift from public to private sector funding of infrastructure where appropriate.

Environmental issues are becoming of crucial importance to everybody. International legislation is moving towards the 'polluter pays principle'. The shift is towards taxing environmental impact. This module is an examination of the world's construction market and its growing influence on the nature of construction activity at the macro, meso and micro levels.

Construction economics 10 credits
Construction economics concerns a range of issues encountered in the construction process. On the microeconomic level, it concerns the behaviour of individual economic agents (clients, contractors, architects, engineers and surveyors) at various stages of development of a constructed facility. On the mesoeconomic level, it concerns the interaction between the construction sector and all the other sectors comprising the national economy. On the macroeconomic level, it concerns broad economic aggregates such as construction cycles, as well as the role of construction activity at different stages of economic development.

The module will aim to provide a coherent idea of the construction process at all levels of economic analysis. It will also offer the background to facilitate further learning in this field.

Sustainable design, construction and operation 10 credits
This module reflects the construction industry’s response to challenges posed by ecologically sustainable development. Sustainable construction is the analysis and implementation of environmental best practice in the construction industry.

This module provides a self-contained introduction to sustainable construction theory and practice. The module proceeds from a critical analysis of current environment science, through analysis of current environmental impact of the built environment, to a specific focus on the whole life cycle of construction projects.

The module aims to study environmental impacts and assessment; main facts and key trends; management and policy making with regard to the interaction of environment and buildings.

Strategic management 10 credits
This module is designed to study strategic management in organisations. Strategic management is the process for producing strategies within an organisational infrastructure responding to an environmental context.

The module aims to explain the role of corporate strategic management within the construction industry. It examines the evolution of strategic management concepts from the 1960s to the present day. These concepts are then related to current research and thinking about the creation, culture and context of strategy.
Innovative developments in construction 10 credits

Over the past few decades, the UK construction industry has developed a notorious reputation due to lack of efficiency, effectiveness but most of all as a result of a perception of its inability to innovate and be creative in its practices and management processes. This module: reviews the current status of the industry; provides evidences of some of these misconceptions whilst challenging others; presents an overview of innovative practices and developments in construction; and, examines all of these issues within the light of the latest theoretical frameworks and thinking which pertain to design, construction and management of projects.

This module aims to provoke a critique of the construction industry through investigating the extent to which current practices enable or hinder innovative developments in design, construction, operation and management of construction projects and the potential for the industry to rapidly evolve in response to challenging and varying technical, environmental and economic landscapes. Participants will benefit by being better equipped to question and challenge current routines within their own organisations and being in a position to promote innovative developments, thinking and practices in their specific areas of expertise.

Learning from other industries 10 credits

The essence of this module will be learning to break down barriers for the transfer of innovative management concepts and technologies across different industries. Our mission will be to appreciate, evaluate and employ advanced capabilities necessary to achieve global excellence in construction. This will be achieved by means of addressing issues such as global trends in manufacturing; process modelling in the IT sector; project management in the petrochemical sector; project scheduling; lessons from the automotive sector and lean supply chain management, to name a few.

The primary aim of the module will be to identify and evaluate how the issues raised within the module has been practised and applied to other industries. Some of these issues have already been exercised to some extent in construction, whilst others have started to find their way in the construction industry. It will be an integral part of the module to assess the extent to which such emerging concepts and technologies can be applied to construction.

Risk and value management 10 credits

Not so long ago risk management and value management were theoretical concepts seldom used in the construction industry. They are now fundamental components of construction best practice and are widely recommended as essential activities in the search for best value.

Clients are interested in risk management because all projects involve risk. Risk is an essential characteristic of every construction project and comprises perhaps the least well-managed aspect. An essential first step in managing risk is to identify it. An essential first step in managing risk is to identify it. Organisations that adopt a systematic approach to risk management are less prone to unforeseen disasters and more able to work within tight margins. The ultimate challenge is to integrate risk and value management into a single framework that evolves throughout the project life-cycle.

Real estate development: analysis and appraisal 10 credits

The aim of this module is to enable students to develop understanding of the key elements of the real estate development process. Students will understand how real estate development encompasses a range of skills and knowledge derived from a number of disciplines. Students will be able to apply different techniques to the financial analysis of development opportunities and critically evaluate different techniques for the pricing and appraisal of development opportunities with a particular emphasis on risk management. Students will be able to evaluate the various aspects of the feasibility of development. Students will appreciate the roles of the various ‘actors’ in the development and understand the key elements of the process such as planning consent and finance, procuring construction services and design.
The University of Reading is committed to equal opportunities and diversity.

Whilst the University of Reading makes every effort to ensure that the contents and statements made in this publication are fair and accurate, it can accept no liability for omissions, errors or subsequent changes.

The statements made and information provided are a general guide and there may be changes following publication which affect the contents. Programmes or modules may be altered or withdrawn without notice and assessment arrangements may be changed. For details of any changes made since publication, please refer to the website address at the bottom of this page.

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Silver Award