


MSc in Public Administration & Development

University of Birmingham

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

 Text-based
distance learning

Qualification

On successful completion of the programme you will be awarded a MSc in Public Administration and Development.

Awarding Body

University of Birmingham

The University of Birmingham was founded in 1900, and is the earliest of the so-called “red brick” universities. As a highly respected and major research-led institution, it currently has over 18,000 undergraduate and over 11,000 postgraduate students.

The university ranked 16th in The Guardian’s 2006 rankings and 33rd out of 109 higher education institutions in The Times 2007 Good University Guide. It is ranked fifth nationally for Research Excellence. In October 2006, the University was also ranked equal 90th best in the world by the Times Higher Education Supplement.

Course Description

This course will provide you with a programme of study and assessment to enable you to consolidate, develop and demonstrate key management skills which underpin effective management at all levels. You will be encouraged to apply your learning in your work, and to take effective action using new knowledge and skills.

Mode

Text-based distance learning (blended)

Course Content (Modules)

Comprises six modules. (They may be studied in any order)

Year 1

At the beginning of the programme, you will complete a compulsory two-week induction module online, followed by four core modules:

1. Public Management

This module explores public sector management from an international perspective and examines institutional and organisational reforms in the public sector in developing and transitional countries, drawing on the experiences of developed countries.

This module will provide you with an in-depth understanding of the theoretical and practical reasons for reforms and of the nature of change and innovations in public administration and management. Content includes:

- Overview of new public management
- Civil service reforms
- Executive agencies and decentralised management
- Public-private partnerships
- Regulation
- Service delivery
- Performance management
- Managing change
- Capacity building in the public sector

2. Making Policy

This module will introduce you to key concepts associated with policy analysis and a set of tools to analyse the process and content of policy-making. These include:

- The theory of policy-making and analysis
- Agenda setting and principal-agent relationships
- Interest and pressure groups
- Policy networks
- Economic and public choice analysis
- Analysis of policy decisions and policy outcomes

This module draws on a range of disciplines, particularly political science and economics,

and therefore provides a multi-disciplinary approach to the understanding of policy analysis.

3. Managing Public Money

The aim of this module is to introduce you to concepts and practices in public sector financial management with an emphasis on management at the organisational level. This module covers approaches applicable in developed, transitional and developing countries.

This module does not seek to be a technical programme in detailed accounting but rather seeks to enable you to understand financial concepts, undertake financial analyses and thereby participate fully at a strategic level in financial decision-making.

4. Understanding Organisations

This module is concerned with understanding the theory and practice of organisational analysis in the public sector and focuses on the problems of organisations that are specific to the public administrative context. The module reviews different ways of looking at organisations and diagnosing organisational problems.

Particular attention is paid to the dual nature of public bureaucracy, as analysed by Weber, Simon and later theorists. In order to analyse case studies from public administration in different national and institutional settings, you will be given a grounding in the rational, political and cultural models of organisation, all of which have a particular relevance to the public sector and which provide a framework for understanding the changes that have occurred in government and the public sector over the last twenty years. The dissolution of organisational boundaries and the rise of network, project and virtual models of organisation are discussed in the context of the long-term development of bureaucratic



organisations, with an emphasis on how government organisations have evolved in developing, transitional and newly-industrialised countries.

This module explores approaches to organisation change in public organisations, focusing on the choice between competitive and collaborative, radical and incremental approaches.

This module is taught largely through the analysis of a series of complex cases, each of which illustrates a particular set of problems characteristic of public administration in different geographical contexts.

Year 2

Comprises two core modules plus a six-month research project leading to a dissertation. At the start of the six-month project you will also complete a compulsory two-week research methods module online. The core modules are:

1. Leadership and Management Development

The aim of this module is to develop your skills and knowledge of leadership in a public administrative context, the distinction between leadership and traditional approaches to public management and administration, and the role of leadership in bringing about cultural change within public organisations, in order to improve services to citizens.

At the outset you will be required to draw up a personal action plan which identifies a series of personal development activities in relation to each skill/competency that you will address over the duration of your studies. Progress will be monitored by your academic tutor and you will be expected to compile a portfolio of evidence of improved competency with regard to each element of the action plan, which provides the main data for the competency assessment.

2. Governance

Governance is implicitly and explicitly at the centre of many development debates. This module explores what governance is and reviews the debates surrounding governance in the development sector.

- The principles of governance/good governance
- The role of the state, civil society and the private sector in governance
- The dynamics of relationships between state and non-state actors in different contexts
- Democracy and democratisation
- Human rights and access to justice
- Corruption and accountability
- Institutions of global governance.

Assessment

A combination of written assignments and time-limited assignments (in lieu of examinations). This will be backed up by the submission of a 10,000 word dissertation at the end of the programme.

Duration of Programme

Minimum two years; maximum four years. This means approximately four assessed modules in year one, and two assessed modules plus the six-month project leading to the dissertation in year two.

Entry Requirements

- An Upper Second Class Honours degree (or equivalent) from an approved university, or an equivalent professional qualification in a relevant field, or a Lower Second Class degree or equivalent from an approved university, combined with suitable work experience.
- Adequate capacity in written and spoken English. For those whose first language is not English, evidence of this capacity is required in the form of at least 6.5 in the IELTS or 580/237 for TOEFL.

What's Included

All required study materials and student handbooks are supplied. You will have access to the University's WebCT discussion boards, which are integral to the programme and building a learning community. You will interact regularly with academic tutors primarily on WebCT and email but also by telephone if necessary. You will also have access to a student support co-ordinator for administrative and pastoral support. You will complete an online induction on using WebCT and the online library and an online research methods module prior to doing your dissertation.

Workload

We recommend an average of 12-15 hours study time per week for this programme.

Exemptions

For this qualification, we may allow you to count credit for study you have already done elsewhere. Exemptions are considered on an individual basis when you submit an application form. Please note that we cannot consider work experience alone for exemptions.

How to Apply

In addition to a completed application form, provide two references, preferably from an academic or current employer, and original or certified copies of your qualifications.



Apply online

Visit our website www.rdi.co.uk



Email us

Email applications@rdi.co.uk



Call us

Contact us today on **FREEPHONE 0800 COURSES / 0800 268 7737**