

COURSE SPECIFICATION: Student Learning Experience



**ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY • ABERDEEN**

Master of Science [MSc] International Marketing (Session 2022/23)

STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The **Purpose** of the University is:

- To be an innovative, inclusive and professionally focused University that has a positive impact on those we serve.

The **Mission** of the University is:

- To transform people and communities by providing excellent teaching, research and enterprise opportunities to contribute to economic, social and cultural and environmental sustainability.

The **Culture** of the University is:

- To recognise and celebrate the values of curiosity, authenticity, approachability, collaboration, enterprise, ambition, respectfulness, and equality.

Driven by the spirit of curiosity to continually improve, our values and principles will guide us. Our partnerships with other organisations and the communities we serve are also a mechanism to develop and grow our diversity. We have a strong commitment to widening and extending access to our courses, regardless of an individual's background.

At the core of the University's significant achievements is the commitment and dedication of our people. The sense of partnership between our staff and students is strong and supporting our students to succeed in their studies and beyond is deeply ingrained in our culture. These features are reflected in the University's student satisfaction rates, which in recent years have consistently placed RGU in the top 10 of universities in the UK.

RGU has a long history of inspiring highly employable graduates. This is achieved through close, collaborative contact with employers in the design and delivery of our curriculum; the range and breadth of accreditations with professional and statutory bodies; the significant role work placements and work-based learning play within our courses; and the embedding of enterprise across all our activity. In a changing society, we will ensure the continued evolution of our curriculum so that our graduates can continue to succeed in their ambitions and make a positive impact within society well into the future.

To achieve our ambitions, our curriculum must be global in outlook, and we must maximise the international reach of our course portfolio. The University's research activities must have international impact and our enterprise activities must reflect the global reach of the economic sectors we work with and the ambitions of the region.

RGU recognises that the creation of a sustainable future for all is a priority that unites us globally, and which demands expertise, creativity, and innovation from all subject areas and professional disciplines. Consequently, sustainability is integrated into all courses, equipping students with skills and competences that are essential for their future careers and lives.

Marketing is all about people – understanding their needs, wants, tastes and preferences, whether locally, nationally or internationally. It is a subject therefore that lies at the core of a modern, global business. The MSc International Marketing course has been established for a considerable time (previously it was known as the MSc Marketing and then International Marketing Management respectively) and it has a good track record of delivering graduates who are academically sound and who can make immediate, valuable and effective contributions to their employers' business.

The course brings together a mix of theory and practical examples, primarily through the use of case study materials, outside experts and staff's own experiences, in order to prepare the student for the world of work. The educational facilities are of a very high quality, including large state-of-the-art lecture theatres, numerous IT laboratories and several smaller tutorial rooms. There is a very well equipped library, with a large number of study spaces, a project room and computer facilities. The Campus Moodle also aids the teaching and learning experience, by providing the students with access to a wealth of materials, which includes electronic journals, electronic books, videos etc.

The course has various component themes including general marketing, global/international marketing, market research, marketing communications etc. It will prepare the student for a career in a variety of international marketing roles including brand management, advertising and market research.

The overall philosophy of the course team is on the one hand to impart appropriate knowledge in the form of theories, concepts etc to the student and on the other hand, to encourage the student to find out information for themselves by encouraging them to explore multiple sources of information such as journal articles, web information etc in order to get as rounded a picture of the topic as possible. The learning environment is supportive for the individual in class and debate, critical analysis of information is encouraged at all times. The multicultural background of the student cohort is a vehicle for lively debate on contemporary marketing issues. Workshops are a strong feature of the module related to Strategic Digital Communications and the student is able to put theory into practice by developing materials for online usage.

The dissertation / project stage is an important opportunity for the student to explore thoroughly, and in-depth, an issue of their own choice related to international marketing. Topics have ranged from international consumer behaviour to international marketing entry methods to international branding and the growth of the confectionery market in Kazakhstan, to marketing plans for the students' own future business ideas. The student will be matched as far as is possible with a supervisor who has research experience or a special interest in the area in question (as far as this is possible). It is this enquiring and problem examination aspect that the staff wishes to foster and develop. Together the student and the staff member will work to produce a research proposal, which forms the basis for the dissertation itself. Once the student has received feedback on the proposal, they will then continue to work with their tutor over the coming months until the submission date is reached. Exactly the same process applies to online/distance learning students, who are also allocated a tutor with an interest in the topic and contact is maintained by e-mail and or telephone until the submission date for both the proposal and the dissertation is reached.

Assessment is carried out by course assessed assignments. Various forms of assessment are used to monitor student progress. The coursework for a module may consist of essays, case studies, oral presentations, reports, as appropriate to the learning outcomes for the module. The assessment requirements are specified in each Module Descriptor and seek wherever to reflect real life marketing problems.

Assessments are related to issues and situations which the student can expect to encounter in the workplace. For example a full time student may have a presentation from an industry expert and the assignment will be based on finding a solution to that company's particular issue for example.

Feedback is provided within 20 working days by the marker and where appropriate, the second marker. The Programme Management Team has an ongoing responsibility for promoting innovative teaching and assessment methods and practice. It monitors developments in these areas, with every module coordinator encouraged to introduce innovations in the teaching methodology and/or assessment techniques. It is recognised that there is an ongoing need to develop and implement ways of challenging the student, developing transferable skills and inculcating a desire for deep learning, particularly, but not exclusively, during the Master's dissertation stage.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

In order to assist the understanding of the teaching, learning and assessment processes, the following information presents a breakdown of the skills and abilities that the student is required to develop over their course of studies.

The MSc International Marketing at Robert Gordon University provides the student with opportunities to:

Develop a sound and comprehensive knowledge of the fundamental principles and theories of Marketing/International Marketing and the ability to apply these in practice.

Develop a clear understanding of the importance of and contribution of International Marketing to contemporary global business.

Develop sophisticated communication, inter-personal and transferable skills relevant to a diverse range of employment scenarios.

The knowledge, subject-specific, practical and transferable skills acquired by the student during the course provide a sound basic ability in international marketing. Learning equips the student for entry to the job market.

Overall Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes describe what a student is expected to know and be able to do if he or she has taken full advantage of the opportunities for learning provided by the course. A student who has successfully completed an MSc in International Marketing should possess the following attributes:

Knowledge and Understanding of:

The principles of marketing and how these relate to contemporary business, both domestically and internationally.

The development of marketing as a business management subject and its contribution to professional business practice.

The social, cultural, economic and technological factors which contribute to the understanding of international consumers' and businesses' behaviour.

The principles of international marketing and their practical application in all the modules of the course.

The Practical Skills to:

Understand those aspects of research methodology appropriate to the specialist areas covered by the course.

Use research and investigative methods in the preparation of coursework and the final dissertation. Search for, evaluate, manage and utilise a range of information sources.

Demonstrate the value of International Marketing to individual clients and to contemporary society generally.

Apply a significant range of complex professional skills, practices and techniques appropriate to International Marketing.

Reflect on and subsequently modify practice, often in an unpredictable variety of contexts.

Be able to create new knowledge and understanding, and make original contributions to the development of management and International Marketing practice.

The Intellectual Skills to:

Use research and investigative methods in the preparation of coursework and the final dissertation.

Search for, critically evaluate, manage and utilise a range of information sources.

Synthesise information in ways meaningful to the topics being researched and cope with complexity, lacunae and/or contradictions.

Select and apply appropriate principles to illustrate clear understanding of the issues being investigated.

Bring together facts, ideas to support an argument or case to professional standards.

Plan and manage work effectively in order to meet deadlines.

The Key Employability, Enterprise and Transferable Skills to:

Express ideas in a clear, cogent manner, either verbally or through written work.

Demonstrate the full range of skills needed to plan and manage a project and produce a report/dissertation/thesis or other suitable research output on same, working to a detailed specification and to professional standards.

Work effectively in a team and independently and show a willingness to learn from others and solve problems.

Working autonomously or with minimal guidance where appropriate, confidently integrate theory with professional/vocational practice.

Evaluate theories, processes, solutions and outcomes critically and effectively and use the evaluations of others critically, reflectively and constructively.

Demonstrate an effective exercise of judgment based on incomplete and/or contradictory information.

Be able to self manage, including time and workload management .

Be innovative, drive and accept change.

Take significant responsibility for the work of others including managers and for a range of resources.

Work effectively with qualified practitioners and demonstrate leadership in tackling and solving problems.

The teaching and learning strategy adopted on the course aims to ensure that the modules and their outcomes are of direct relevance to the student and the reality of the workplace. Staff recognise that the learning experience is a shared one and the cultural diversity of the student intake on the course affords the opportunity for real dialogue to take place and for everyone to learn about the practices and customs in other countries. Through tutorial and seminar sessions both staff and students can learn from each others' experiences and this provides a rich learning environment for all involved. Assessments are based as far as is practical on real issues and the students are given comprehensive, detailed feedback to enable them to learn from what has been done and apply these lessons to their future work. All staff are very supportive of the individual student and will provide if necessary one-to-one sessions, if a student is experiencing difficulty with a particular concept. The aim is to produce students who are capable and confident in their knowledge of the subject and who can with assurance articulate their thoughts and ideas.

Knowledge and understanding are effected through lectures and seminars. The student is supported in their studies by directed study to text books, academic journals (print and online) and professional/Marketing related commercial publications. The student's intellectual skills (eg analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving) are demonstrated through active learning processes such as assignments related to real life situations, group learning through discussion in seminars/tutorials and obviously through the dissertation. Transferable skills, such as written communications etc are developed through preparation of assignments, reports and the dissertation; oral skills are developed in class discussion and through the presentation of materials in seminars etc.

Team work is part of several modules and the student is often required to work as part of the group. A more informal method of developing these skills is that students are provided with the opportunity to act as course representatives, which involves attending meetings to put forward issues which may be affecting the class. Understanding entrepreneurship is encouraged through the use of case studies materials and also there is the opportunity for the student to study a module which involves setting up a new small business.

The University's Teaching and Learning Strategy is available at
<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/academicaffairs/quality/page.cfm?pge=1856>

ASSESSMENT

The assessment methods are designed to support the teaching and learning strategy. Various forms of assessment are used to monitor student progress. Assessment will follow the guidelines in the University's handbook. In particular, the assessment will be designed to:

- ensure that learning outcomes have been met;
- provide feedback to students and thus support and guide future learning;
- demonstrate that appropriate standards are being maintained;
- motivate students to undertake appropriate work, and
- provide opportunities for the students to communicate with peers and staff.

Assessments are self contained within modules and are designed to assess the module learning outcomes. Where there is more than one assessment within a module it is expected that different learning outcomes will be assessed. The coursework for a module may consist of essays, case studies, oral presentations, etc as appropriate to the learning outcomes for the module. The assessment requirements are specified in each Module Descriptor for the module and seek whenever possible to reflect real life marketing /international marketing problems.

All modules are assessed mainly by coursework as it has been recognised that for Masters level courses it is not possible to assess students' critical and analytical skills at the appropriate level through traditional time limited unseen examinations. All assessments are moderated internally within the department responsible for setting the coursework and then sent to the appropriate External Examiner for comment and approval prior to issuing it to the students. Comments from the External Examiner are considered and confirmation sent to the examiner as to how their comments have been taken into account.

In accordance with University policy, a sample of all coursework assignments is double marked to ensure consistency of marking and a smaller sample is subsequently sent to the appropriate external examiner for comment, before grades are reported to and approved by the Assessment Board. All assignments are marked according to a criterion referencing system which seeks to ensure consistency and objectivity in the marking exercise.

The Programme Management Team has an ongoing responsibility for promoting innovative teaching and assessment methods and practices. It monitors developments in these areas, with every module coordinator encouraged to introduce innovations in the teaching methodology

and/or assessment techniques. It is recognised that there is an ongoing need to develop and implement ways of challenging the student, developing transferable skills and inculcating a desire for deep learning, particularly but not exclusively during the Masters dissertation stage. Assessments are related to issues and situations which the student can expect to encounter in the workplace.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The University provides a number of means of supporting teaching and learning:

- student induction organised on a course or School basis;
- an ongoing scheme of personal/pastoral support for students, including online support, provided by the *Inclusion Centre*;
- an extensive programme of student study skills delivered through *Student Life* and the *Library*;
- an extensive library of learning resources;
- close collaboration with industry and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- the University's active participation in the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Enhancement Themes, www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk;
- support for staff from the *Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA)*, including credit rated teaching, learning and assessment provision;
- extensive opportunities for student placements with companies or organisations, academic overseas exchange programmes, and support for entrepreneurial activity and community engagement opportunities;
- access to a range of professionally qualified, quality assured careers professionals to support individual students and graduates career planning and opportunity search, supported by a range of bespoke and contemporary online advice and information including the extensive RGU eHub;
- *Moodle*, <http://campusmoodle.rgu.ac.uk/>, the University's dedicated virtual learning environment;
- a commitment to knowledge exchange and technology transfer through focused research activity, which contributes to the critical underpinning for all taught courses;
- the expanding provision of state-of-the-art, purpose-built facilities and buildings.

An induction is provided for incoming students. The students are briefed in detail about Campus Moodle, IT provision and the library service. They are also given detailed information on plagiarism and on what they can expect in terms of assignments and classroom teaching style. The international students also participate in a tour of Aberdeen and surroundings and other events organised by the International Office. Student handbooks are prepared each year which give the students (full time and online/distant) useful information on the course, structure, contacts, assignment schedule etc. Every module has a scheme of work and a module handbook which are issued to the student at the start of study.

Particular use is made of the Campus Moodle where this represents the main mode of delivery for both teaching and support activities. Students are provided with an induction module, which they are expected to work through in order to familiarise themselves with how the Campus works. Apart from teaching materials, students can locate course and module handbooks, reading lists, e-books, discussion fora, and a messaging service through this facility. The PowerPoint presentations provided to the full-time students are made available to the online students through Campus Moodle and any guest lecturer's /outside speaker's presentation is recorded and also made available to these students.

Students who are working on their dissertation are allocated a supervisor who either has experience or an interest in the topic area. The supervisor provides advice to the student in the preparation of the research proposal until completion of the dissertation.

The Course Leader acts as Personal Tutor and also offers pastoral care to the students on the course.

MONITORING OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS

The University employs several mechanisms for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching, learning and assessment, including:

- *Annual Course Appraisal Reports* are prepared for each course and reviewed and approved by Course/Programme Management Teams and School Academic Boards which consider, amongst other things, feedback generated from student questionnaires;
- *Institution-Led Subject Review*, involving external panel members, on a six-yearly basis to formally review its major subject provision, followed by a three year interim review to

- monitor progress against actions/issues raised through the review process;
- *External Examiner Annual Reports*;
- Ongoing liaison with industrial/professional liaison groups.

Formal Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards:

- Staff/Student Liaison Committees, or equivalent;
- Course/Programme Management Teams;
- School Academic Boards;
- Assessment Boards;
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and associated Sub-Committees.

The School is committed to the highest standards of quality and best practice in pedagogy and research within an environment which values all associated stake holders. Formal feedback on individual modules is gathered through the Module Evaluation Questionnaires, which are issued on completion of each module, and at the end of the academic year summative Student Course Evaluation Questionnaires are issued to allow students the opportunity to comment in detail on all aspects of the programme as well as the general environment, support services and facilities. External Examiners' comments are also fed into the appraisal exercise.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

The University and RGU:Union work in partnership to create an environment which stimulates:

- the participation of students, by empowering them to proactively provide views and opinions;
- a supportive learning community where students and staff engage in meaningful dialogue; and
- the engagement of students in the design of solutions and enhancements.

This approach is underpinned by the *Student Partnership Agreement* which promotes the ethos of partnership at all levels of the University. Further information can be found at the Student Representation and Partnership CampusMoodle Area: www.rgu.ac.uk/studentpartnership.

There are a variety of opportunities for students to provide feedback to the University, and to become actively involved in shaping their learning experience. These opportunities are integral to the University's approach to the quality assurance and enhancement of teaching and learning, and the holistic student experience. Mechanisms through which students are engaged and supported include:

- participation in student evaluation questionnaires and where relevant the *National Student Survey (NSS)*;
- staff/student liaison arrangements at course/programme level;
- support for Student Representatives;
- student representation on Institution-Led Subject Review Panels and Validations;
- student representation on key University committees.

From students:

The University has a system of student representation, via the appointment and training of student representatives for each course, who in turn represent the interests of their peers at Programme Management Team meetings and at the Staff-Student Liaison meetings held each semester. Each student cohort is encouraged to elect two representatives in order to ensure that everyone's opinions are properly and fully represented at these discussion fora. Students can, by appointment, meet with individual members of staff and the Course Leader to discuss any areas of concern and seek advice.

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NOTE

This document constitutes one of two course documents that should be read together:

Course Specification: Core Award Data

Course Specification: Student Learning Experience

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In compiling this information the University has taken every care to be as accurate as possible, though it must be read as subject to change at any time and without notice. The University reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of courses, to discontinue, merge or combine courses, and to introduce new courses.

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