ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Science, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Business Information Systems**. The specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2015**.

The aims of the programme are:
- to provide an intellectually challenging and relevant comprehensive education for students intending to pursue Management and Business Information System and professional careers, or research;
- to combine academic and practical insights into the subject of Management and Business Information Systems within an international and critical context;
- to develop the ability to critically evaluate current research informed by the research expertise of academic staff;
- to continue lifelong learning skills, and further develop a broad range of transferable personal and technical skills.

The programme is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or up to five years of part- time study (260 weeks).. The programme provides core knowledge of Management and Business Information Systems; offers specialist elective courses in Management and Computer Science and provides students with the opportunity to undertake a dissertation. All of which prepare students wishing to pursue a research-related career or further studies, whilst providing excellent training for those students wishing to pursue an industry-related career.

Further information
Learning outcomes
Teaching, learning and assessment
Details of the programme structure(s)
Progression and award requirements
Student support and guidance
Admission requirements
Further learning and career opportunities
Indicators of quality and standards
List of programmes, with details of awards, degree titles, accreditation and teaching arrangements

This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes
Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding
- IT systems and infrastructures from a computer science perspective and their impact on modern organizations from the perspective of organisational studies and organisational communication;

1

- the role of IT in the globalisation of business;
- systematic knowledge and critical awareness of the historical, political, cultural and institutional forces shaping modern business in both national and international contexts;
- critical understanding of the principal interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives that inform Management and Business Information Systems theory and practice;
- key technologies that underpin the use of IT in modern business, with particular emphasis on network, database and web based technologies;
- current design, project management and decision support technologies as applied to modern computer systems;
- the critical methodologies used in the analysis of Management and Business Information Systems.

Skills and other attributes
- ability to evaluate critically current research and research methodologies within Management and Business Information Systems;
- ability to apply critical methodologies in analysing Management and Business Information Systems and formulating effective solutions to relevant problems concerning IT systems planning and management;
- ability to make well-informed decisions when dealing with both tactical and strategic issues of IT investment;
- appropriate professional levels of attainment in information technology; production and analysis of quantitative data; oral and written communication of complex business information to both professional and non-specialist audiences; independent and team-working skills;*
- introducing, evaluating and testing IT infrastructure;
- self-direction and originality in analysing and solving business problems, using qualitative, quantitative and computer-based techniques;*
- enhanced time management and organisational skills including working to deadlines, prioritising tasks, organising work-time;**
- teamwork and resource sharing on group projects;*
- commitment to continuing professional development and lifelong learning.*

* transferable skills

Back to top

Teaching, learning and assessment
Teaching and learning methods mainly comprise lectures, seminars, workshops and guided individual study but will vary according to the intended outcomes of the particular course or session. Lectures provide coverage of the essential subject matter, literature review, and summaries of the key debates, as well as supplying guidance for further study or library work. Each course provides guided reading and indicative bibliography, and throughout the programme, considerable emphasis is placed on independent study and library work, often in preparation for seminars, workshops and lectures. In addition to consolidating and supplementing lectures, seminars or workshops enable students to practise and develop their analytical, problem-solving and research skills. They employ a range of approaches, including case studies, discussion, role-plays, one-to-one interactions, question and answer sessions, information technology, or computer-based training. Practical and teamwork skills are developed through using appropriate graded coursework often working in groups. Research skills are further developed to a professional level on the research courses, and through the design and production of an independent research dissertation, which involves quantitative and qualitative techniques and also serves to integrate knowledge and skills acquired throughout the programme.

Assessment methods vary, in accordance with the skills and knowledge being tested for a specific topic or course. Many of the assignments involve group work, and assessment is based on both the work of the group as whole and individual contributions to it. Individual projects, in-course tests, group presentations, individual presentations, reports, quantitative analysis and essays are all used as appropriate in the assessment of the programme. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the Department and the Programme Handbook.

Details of the programme structure(s)

The full-time programme lasts 52 weeks, beginning in September, and teaching is spread over the Autumn and Spring Terms. Examinations are held in the Spring and Summer Term, after which students complete a Dissertation.

The first week of the course is dedicated to postgraduate student induction, including registration and an introduction to College facilities. During this week BI5555 (MN5555) *Foundations of Modern Management* is offered as an integral, though non-assessed, part of the programme for Master's students at the School of Management.

The brief outline of the programme is shown below; however students can obtain further details from the Programme Handbook. Credits are indicated in brackets, and indicate proportional weighting towards the MSc classification grade. The programme structure for the Postgraduate Diploma is as below, with the exception that students will not undertake the dissertation while for the Postgraduate Certificate students are required to pass courses worth only 60 credits.

Optional Induction week course
BI5555 *Foundations of Modern Management*

Students must take the following **MANDATORY** courses:

> BI5642 Dissertation (40 Credits)

Computer science courses:

> BI5621 Information System Design, Development and Management (20 Credits)
> BI5631 Database Systems (10 Credits) (*)
> BI5632 Internet and Web Technologies (10 Credits) (*)

Management courses:

> BI5611 People and Technology (20 Credits)
> BI5665 Information Systems Theory and Practice (20 Credits)
> MN5445 Dissertation Preparation and Research Methods (20 credits)

(*)   Courses marked with (*) must be taken only by students with weaker skills on the academic subjects covered by the courses and not available to students who graduated in Computer Science at Royal Holloway if they took similar undergraduate courses listed in the course specifications. For each student on the programme, the decision on whether those courses need to be taken is made by the Programme Directors based on the student's background and the results of tests taken during the induction week.

and choose options from the following **Computer Science** courses to bring the total value of computer science courses to 60 credits:

CS5810 Programming for Data Analysis (10 Credits)
CS5234 Large-Scale Data Storage and Processing (20 Credits)
CS5502 Business Intelligence Systems, Infrastructures and Technologies (20 Credits)
BI5502 Business Intelligence (10 Credits)
BI5499 Service Oriented Computing Technology and Management (10 Credits)
IY5605 Cyber Crime (20 Credits)
BI5421 Individual Computing Elective (20 Credits)

New options from Computer Science depending on availability

plus choose options equal to 20 credits from the following **Management** courses:

BI5501 Enterprise Systems (20 Credits)
BI5681 Knowledge Management (20 Credits)
BI5651 Technology Management (20 Credits)
BI5691 E-Business (20 Credits)
New options from Management depending on availability

Please note that the list of available courses offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [BIS Course Finder page](#).

Part-time programme structure

The programme can be taken part-time over two to five years beginning in September of year one. Part-time students studying over two years normally take four courses, including BI5665 in their first year, and the remaining courses with BI5641 Dissertation in their second year.

[Back to top](#)

Progression and award requirements
All students on the MSc programme will be eligible to submit a dissertation. Students who have failed a number of taught courses are to be counselled by the Programme Director whether progressing to the dissertation stage is likely to be in their best interest.

Please note that if you hold a Tier 4 (General Student) Visa and you choose to leave or are required to leave (because of non-progression) or complete early (before the end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

Requirements for the award of Master of Science, Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate and Graduate Diploma
To pass the **MSc** a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which constitute up to a maximum of 40 credits, provided that the overall weighted average is at least 50.00%, but a failure mark (i.e. below 50%) in the dissertation cannot be condoned.

The Masters degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Masters degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50% when the student is either ineligible or has chosen not to proceed to the dissertation, or has failed the dissertation on either the first or second attempt. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, but if they are, such condoned fails would be in courses which do not constitute more than 40 credits.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Certificate** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

Students achieving marks of between 40%-49% in all the taught courses may be given the choice of either accepting the award of a **Graduate Diploma** or they may re-sit the failed courses in the summer (in courses where summer resits have been approved by the College) or in the following year, to attempt to achieve the 50% level required to continue on the Master's programme. A student who does not achieve at least 50% in each of the taught courses at the second attempt, but does achieve marks of between 40-49% for all the taught courses, will be awarded a Graduate Diploma. This is an Exit Award only and is an Undergraduate level award.

One resubmission of failed assignments may be allowed at the discretion of the Sub-Board of Examiners. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Board of Examiners.

Back to top

Student support and guidance
- All course lecturers and tutors are available for consultation on academic or other issues related to specific courses, during surgery hours or by arrangement.
- The Programme Directors (one in Management, one in Computer Science), who have administrative oversight of the programme, are available to advise on matters of course or programme registration, programme structures and pathway choices, and administrative or other difficulties encountered on specific courses.
- Detailed Student Handbook and course resources.
- Induction during the first week of the programme, followed by formal advisory sessions on the choice of appropriate courses.
- Representation on the Postgraduate Student-Staff Committee in the Management department, chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies, at which both Programme Directors or their delegates will be present.
- Access to the Student Counselling Service, Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS), the College Careers Service, the Health Centre, the Chaplaincy and the Disability and Dyslexia Services for students with additional needs.
- Dedicated computing facilities, as well as extensive supporting materials and learning resources in the College libraries.
- Wide range of facilities in the Students' Union.

Back to top

Admission requirements
For details of admissions requirements please refer to the Course Finder.

Further learning and career opportunities

MSc Business Information Systems graduates normally follow careers in 'hybrid management' that make full use of their expertise in both management and Information Systems. They embark on a wide variety of careers and postgraduate research programmes in the multi-disciplinary areas, PhDs and other research. Some start their own companies and small businesses, or join the large companies who increasingly require highly skilled hybrid managers, the options are limitless. The usefulness of a Business Information Systems degree is not at all surprising, as students obtain the sort of transferable skills that graduate employers most demand, as according to the Employment Satisfaction Survey. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The scoring system for the REF 2014 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour and 3* indicating research that is internationally excellent. 81% of the College's research profile was deemed to be within the 4* or 3* categories, an increase of over 20% since 2008. The results for the quality of our research outputs placed Royal Holloway 15th in the UK based on an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) score and 20th in the UK for 4* and 3* research.

The School of Management is ranked 14th out of 101 Business and Management Schools in the United Kingdom for the quality of research outputs, based on both GPA and on the proportion of our research that is of 3* and 4* quality.

List of programmes with details of awards, teaching arrangements and accreditation

All programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London and lead to a Masters award of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma lead to awards of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. The programme is subject to accreditation by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), whilst programmes in Computer Science are subject to accreditation by the British Computer Society (BCS). The Banner programme codes for the campus based programmes are given in parentheses.

Master of Science in Business Information Systems

      MSc in Business Information Systems (1038)

Postgraduate Diploma in Business Information Systems

      PG Diploma in Business Information Systems (2303)

Postgraduate Certificate in Business Information Systems

      PG Certificate in Business Information Systems (2877)