

Programme specification

1. Overview / factual information

Programme/award title(s)	BSc (Hons) Rural Business Management Top Up
Teaching Institution	University Centre Kingston Maurward
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of first OU validation	May 2024
Date of latest OU (re)validation	n/a
Next revalidation	n/a
Credit points for the award	120
UCAS Code	D404
HECoS Code	1000078, 1000517
LDCS Code (FE Colleges)	n/a
Programme start date and cycle of starts if appropriate.	September 2024
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	QAA Subject benchmark statement for Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Sciences (2019) QAA Subject Benchmark Business and Management (2023)
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes. For apprenticeships, the standard or framework against which it will be delivered.	n/a
Professional/statutory recognition	n/a
For apprenticeships fully or partially integrated Assessment.	n/a
Mode(s) of Study (PT, FT, DL, Mix of DL & Face-to-Face) Apprenticeship	FT, PT, face to face
Duration of the programme for each mode of study	1 years FT, 2 Years PT
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the students handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Date of production/revision of this specification	April 2024
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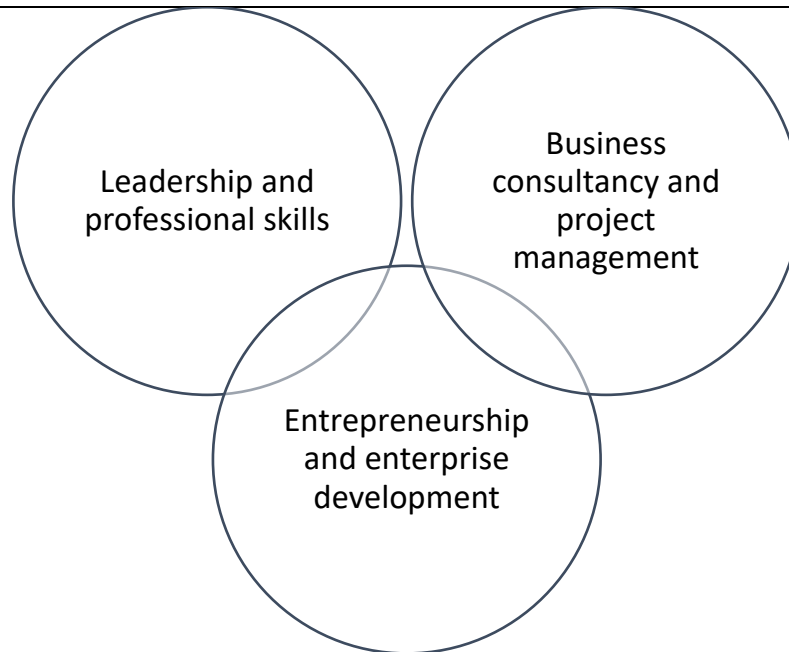
2. Programme overview

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

This course aims to provide a progression route to a full bachelor degree in Rural Business Management from FD Rural Business Management at University Centre Kingston Maurward. The Top Up degree develops business skills at Level 6 that also incorporates skills specific to business need in rural contexts e.g. agriculture, equine, tourism and strategic goals for business development and change that fit the demands of the diversity in agribusinesses.

The programme will provide graduates with a range of skills to work effectively in the rural business sector. This could be in developing strategy for existing businesses, applying entrepreneurial skills in business concepts or start ups and acting in an advisory capacity to other businesses.

The programme aims to develop skills in three key areas to create graduates with confident and professional business skills, alongside analytical skills to strategise business planning.



Roles within the sector allow for the application of skills to start up new rural businesses, fostering the use of diversification or enterprise that supports rural supply chains. This programme aims to develop skills in setting up a business from concept to success.

Another key part of the rural business sector is consultancy, where individuals and companies advise rural and agribusiness to improve production and performance. The programme will develop skills and knowledge in professionalism and project management in this area. There is development of understanding who the customers or consumers of products and services are in the sector, and how to gain a market share and foster a customer base.

The programme also develops further skills from those gained during the foundation degree such as leadership, particularly as graduates at this level will find themselves in increasingly strategic roles. The programme will develop skills in this area to support learners to understand strategic decision-making and how to apply it within organisations.

The programme is also designed for progression to master's programmes in business and professional skills.

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards

(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)

This programme allows for progression from both FD in Rural Business Management and Diploma HE in Dairy Herd Management at UCKM.

It would also provide a suitable Top Up route for other FDs, Dip HE and HNDs in suitable subjects such as agriculture, farm and business management.

It would allow progression into postgraduate study in business such as taught masters programmes.

2.3 For Foundation Degrees, please list where the 60 credit work-related learning takes place. For apprenticeships an articulation of how the work based learning and academic content are organised with the award.

n/a

2.4 List of all exit awards

BSc (Hons) in Rural Business Management

Ordinary Degree in Rural Business Management

3. Programme structure and learning outcomes

(The structure for any part-time delivery should be presented separately in this section.)

Programme Structure - LEVEL 6					
Compulsory modules	Credit points	Optional modules	Credit points	Is module compensatable?	Semester runs in
Consultancy for Rural Business	20			Y	2
Entrepreneurship and Enterprise	20			Y	1
Understanding Consumer Behaviour	20			Y	1
Strategic Leadership	20			Y	2
Independent Research Dissertation	40			N	Both

Intended learning outcomes at Level 6 are listed below:

Learning Outcomes – LEVEL 6

3A. Knowledge and understanding

Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>A1 Describe and apply underpinning knowledge of business practice and ethics to respond to challenges in rural business settings.</p> <p>A2 Demonstrate aptitude in business start-up and solutions in agribusiness and rural enterprise.</p> <p>A3 Critically evaluate methods to analyse and respond to consumer behaviour.</p> <p>A4 Analyse and apply principles and qualities of strategic leadership.</p> <p>A5 Apply principles of organisational behaviour in the workplace at a strategic level.</p>	<p>Key modules Strategic Leadership, Consultancy for Rural Business and Entrepreneurship and Enterprise aim to link together to meet A1, A2, A4 and A5. Understanding Consumer Behaviour will clearly develop A3, but will also link to A1, A5 and A2.</p> <p>The Entrepreneurship and Enterprise module links specifically to A2, but will also relate to all other modules to ensure that new farm or rural businesses ensure economic viability, follow budget forecasts and are industry compliant.</p> <p>Within module delivery there is opportunity for formative feedback through discussion, peer feedback, group work and assignment support sessions. Taught sessions may include some lecture style sessions, but will also regularly include group work, discussion and research-based tasks rather than more formal teaching styles. Where possible sessions will aim to include practical and offsite opportunities to provide applied learning opportunities.</p> <p>Assessments will be based on ‘authentic’ principles for design, with tasks expected to represent industry-based outcomes such as protocols, business planning and practical tasks. Opportunity will be taken for learners to relate assessments directly to their own industry practice whether employment or internship in the industry.</p>

3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>B1 Critically analyse financial performance to develop business solutions.</p> <p>B2 Critically evaluate business concepts for viability, market share and sustainability.</p> <p>B3 Use analytical skills to interpret and analyse consumer behaviour data.</p> <p>B4 Seek out, analyse, synthesise, summarise and evaluate information from academic literature and other sources of information.</p> <p>B5 Seek out, analyse, synthesise, summarise and critically evaluate information.</p> <p>B6 Show a well-developed ability to integrate lines of evidence from a wide range of sources to formulate and test hypotheses.</p>	<p>Business Consultancy and Strategic Leadership will be key modules to develop B1 and B2. B2 will be the key focus of Entrepreneurship and Enterprise, but this will also include links to B1 and B3. Understanding Consumer Behaviour will develop B3. Independent Research Dissertation will develop skills in B4, B5 and B6, although the other modules will require the use of active research and evaluation of information.</p> <p>Modules will use a range of assessment methods including timed presentations, written reports, practical tasks. Some assessments will be conducted in time controlled conditions.</p> <p>The majority of tasks will aim to frame the assessment within an industry relevant, authentic scenario. Examples of these are the development and application of leadership principles, business start-up, and advice and guidance to business owners using realistic scenarios.</p> <p>All assessments will include the need for clear referencing and citations to demonstrate evidence of research. Some assessments include the task of a providing an annotated bibliography to show evaluation of sources.</p> <p>The applied nature of many assessments within the programme requires the use of an multidisciplinary approach. This includes the application of compliance and continuity in the context of rural businesses.</p>

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3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>C1 Suggest, plan, conduct and present an independent investigation using appropriate support from a supervisor.</p> <p>C2 Relate investigations to prior work, be aware of recent research developments and reference it appropriately.</p> <p>C3 Demonstrate effective techniques in strategic leadership decisions.</p> <p>C4 Synthesise solutions to improve business performance through the application of consumer behaviour and market information.</p>	<p>Independent Research Dissertation will develop skills in C1 and C2, but may also apply to the other criteria, as topics will be focussed on solutions to business related issues. The analysis of data from the research dissertation will meet C6.</p> <p>Within the other modules, learners will apply business analysis skills, as well as underlying principles to directly relate to industry to form part of responses to assessment. Strategic Leadership will meet C3 and C5, although these will also be developed in Entrepreneurship and Enterprise. Understanding Consumer Behaviour will principally meet C4, with Entrepreneurship and Enterprise also meeting this outcome. Consultancy for Rural Business will require application of outcomes C3, C4 and C5.</p>

3C. Practical and professional skills

C5 Demonstrate appropriate professionalism to lead and advise others in business decision-making.

C6 Interpret and present data and results in a logical manner using tools for data visualisation and reporting techniques with an appropriate level of supervision.

All assessments will be expected to be referenced and cited correctly, and feedback will be provided in all assessment on the use of these skills. Academic writing within the dissertation will specifically develop these skills and principles within delivery and assessment, but business plans and protocols will need to be at an expected professional standard.

Several units will involve active investigations into business-orientated tasks and analysing data in both formative and summative assessment. The accuracy of record keeping is essential within this learning. The application of these investigations will be to present, interpret and analyse results appropriately.

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Learners will complete statistical analysis using a range of resources. Statistical analysis is possible using on line platforms - Stats Kingdom (www.statskingdom.com) and Stats Cloud (www.statscloud.app) without subscriptions or licences. All students have access to Office 365 and can use the Data Analysis Add-on in Excel as part of this application. Access to Office 365 also provides access to microsoft analytics such as PowerBI and Fabric.

3C. Practical and professional skills	
	Assessments are designed to be 'authentic' where possible and linked to industry. Examples include business plans, protocols, data reports, and meeting industry standards.
3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>D1 Lead, advise and work with others to achieve business aims using effective communication and interpersonal skills.</p> <p>D2 Select, justify and apply a range of appropriate methods to solve challenging problems in an independent and authentic manner.</p> <p>D3 Demonstrate effective time management and organisational skills to meet deadlines and expectations.</p> <p>D4 Manage their own motivation, tasks and behaviour in enterprising, innovative and professionally appropriate ways.</p>	<p>Module delivery will support the use of group discussion, presentations and practical activities, with scope for peer learning and feedback.</p> <p>Consultancy for Rural Business, Entrepreneurship and Enterprise and Strategic Leadership modules will consider models and methods of communication, as well as expectation for business and industry professionalism. They will be key to meeting D1 and D2.</p> <p>Learners will be expected to meet deadlines for assessments throughout the programme, and communicate with teaching and technical staff as appropriate. Time management, organisation and communication will also be key to Consultancy for Rural Business (D3).</p> <p>Independent Research Dissertation will require excellent project management skills to meet expectations for timescales and to meet the ambitions of the planned project, as well as individual motivation and self-management (D4).</p>

[BSc (Hons) in Rural Business Management]

4. Distinctive features of the programme structure

- **Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features such as:**
 - where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression
 - any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules
 - where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route
- **Additional considerations for apprenticeships:**
 - how the delivery of the academic award fits in with the wider apprenticeship
 - the integration of the 'on the job' and 'off the job' training
 - how the academic award fits within the assessment of the apprenticeship

The key feature of this programme is its industry focus and aim to provide skills for the rural and agribusiness sector that meets future demands of production and the rural economy.

Key distinctive features of the programme are the practical nature of some modules and the use of 'authentic' assessments. These features prepare graduates for entry into a rural business with experience of both practical elements of the subject and experience of industry standard documentation or formats. Examples include:

- Consultant reports
- Business plans
- Proposals
- Data analytics
- Management accounts

Alongside the practical nature of some elements of the programme the programme still retains key elements for strategic business management and development. Modules promote and assess skills in leadership, advice and consultancy, understanding consumer behaviour and entrepreneurship. These activities include:

- Development of business plans and business continuity
- Analysis of direct data collections, including statistical testing
- Operational planning for business set up
- Planning for business change and diversification
- Cogent report writing to act as consultant

5. Support for students and their learning

(For apprenticeships this should include details of how student learning is supported in the workplace)

Kingston Maurward College has a dedicated Student Support team which provides help and advice on personal, emotional and / or practical problems and can also provide a confidential counselling service. Access to specialist support services, such as sex health services, community police, chaplaincy and drug and alcohol services, are also available either on campus or in the local community.

We encourage students to contribute to the running of the College and have a very active and influential Student Council which includes HE representatives and an HE student ambassador.

We are proud of our commitment to equality and diversity, supporting students of all abilities and from all backgrounds.

The careers library at the College includes computer packages which students can use to explore ideas about different occupations and skills such as writing applications.

The College has a dedicated careers service based within the LRC building. The college employs a careers advisor and students can book appointments for advice and guidance at any time. The service also offers support with work placements, as well as wider skills for searching and applying for employment.

The College is fully committed to widening access and improving the quality of the support offered to students with Additional Learning Needs (ALN's). They offer help in accessing the Disabled Students' Allowance from Local Education Authorities and in obtaining exam concessions within the College. They also give advice on assessments for dyslexia and offer individual tuition sessions as well as liaison with Local Education Authorities, academic and support staff, and other organisations. Additionally, there are specially designed classrooms for 1:1 tutoring which are equipped with software such as Claro Read, Text Write and Inspiration.

Students can be assessed for eligibility for exam access arrangements (EAA) such as extra time, readers, scribes, rest breaks and IT support.

Pastoral support, help and advice is offered through the College 1-2-1 student support services. They provide information in relation to a variety of issues and details of relevant agencies and counselling services as applicable. Students studying on the FD Rural Business Management may also raise academic matters with the Programme Manager, First Year Tutor, Student Services Manager or HE Coordinator as well as individual module leaders.

Part-time students are also fully eligible to access support from student services and are expected to engage in pastoral support such as tutorials as full-time

students are. There may be a need for flexibility with this to reflect the hours in college expected for a part time student to attend based on modules selected in an academic year.

The College's HE Team offers international students advice on the following issues:

- Immigration
- Fee status
- Money matters
- Health matters
- Welfare issues
- Academic issues

6. Criteria for admission

(For apprenticeships this should include details of how the criteria will be used with employers who will be recruiting apprentices.)

These regulations conform to the principles set out in the current version of the College's Academic Policies, Regulations and Procedures.

Applicants should confirm their ability to study on the Top Up degree by presenting evidence of:

a. achievement of 240 credits to Level 5 in a suitable subject or qualification:

- I. Foundation degree in Rural Business Management, or equivalent
- II. Diploma HE in Dairy Herd Management
- III. 240 credits to Level 5 achieved in suitable subjects such as Business Management, Farm Management, Agriculture or equivalent. At least 120 Credits should have been achieved at Level 5.

International students required to meet IELTS (Academic) 6.0 or above (with minimum 5.5 in each component).

b) Potentially suitable students may be interviewed so that their interest, motivation and academic suitability can be assessed.

7. Language of study

English

8. Information about non-OU standard assessment regulations (including PSRB requirements)

9. For apprenticeships in England End Point Assessment (EPA)

(Summary of the approved assessment plan and how the academic award fits within this and the EPA)

n/a

10. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Each programme has at least one External Examiner who monitors all aspects of the assessment process. This is in line with the advice and guidance provided by the QAA regarding External Expertise which emphasises that external examining is one of the principal means for maintaining UK threshold academic standards within autonomous higher education institutions. The role of the External Examiner will include meeting with delivery staff and students to discuss the structure, delivery and quality of the programme. This may include recommendations to adapt and improve the programme further during re-validation opportunities.

Each programme has a Programme Board which meets at least twice a year to discuss, inter alia, the student experience (including feedback) but may also discuss programme design and planning. The SEG includes representatives of each level/ year of each programme, programme leaders and the Head of Higher Education, as well as a senior manager to discuss student feedback. Any actions and the minutes of these meetings will be presented within the Higher Education Academic Board where necessary, particularly where feedback or other matters need consideration by the board such as changes to programme structure or delivery, or wider cross college impact.

Student feedback both qualitative and quantitative is collected for each module studied through internal surveys (Student Unit Evaluation SUE). In addition, the University Centre actively engages in the National Student Survey (NSS) and publishable data from this survey also informs quality improvement actions.

The Head of Higher Education completes an annual Self-Assessment Review of provision that is reviewed and ratified by the College Governing body Quality and Standards committee. This report is informed by programme reports completed by Programme Leaders to review performance of programmes. As part of the exam board process there will be a module review board where unit tutors will review outcomes to 3-year trends and benchmarks. The department SAR also includes an annual Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which feeds into the overall College SAR and QIP.

Other measures to monitor, evaluate and improve programme delivery include graded lesson observation of teaching staff, regular professional development opportunities and the College appraisal process.

UCKM has an Ethics and Research Policy and process. This requires students that are planning to undertake research projects/ dissertations, or projects that may include data collection and analysis, to submit an ethical review of their proposal via their module tutor or project supervisor. The Ethics and Research Review panel (ERRP) will consider proposals. This may include co-opted panel members, for example the manager of the College Farm, to advise the panel on the suitability of proposals. The aim of the panel is not necessarily to stop projects going ahead but to advise students to adjust project proposals to fit within ethical and research guidelines. Projects should not be initiated unless projects have been approved by the ERRP to go ahead.

10. Changes made to the programme since last (re)validation

Annexe 1: Curriculum map

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes.

Level	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes																				
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	D1	D2	D3	D4
6	Independent Research Dissertation									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			✓	
	Consultancy for Rural Business	✓					✓			✓	✓						✓	✓	✓			✓
	Entrepreneurship and Enterprise		✓					✓						✓			✓	✓		✓		
	Understanding Consumer Behaviour			✓					✓							✓				✓		
	Strategic Leadership				✓	✓									✓		✓		✓	✓		

