

## University of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee – Friday 2 October 2015

**Report from Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Academic Board Meeting of 24 June 2015 in response to the Report of Validation Meeting held at SRUC, Aberdeen on 1 April 2015 concerning MSc/PgDip/PgCert in Agricultural Professional Practice**

**Dr Kenneth Hutton, Academic Collaborations Office**

The Validation Panel set just two conditions and made a number of recommendations which were laid out in Section 5 of the Validation Report. This document explains how the core team will meet the conditions and address the recommendations set out in the report. Paragraph numbers in square brackets below refer to those in the report and Section numbers in brackets refer to those in the Definitive Validation Document.

### **Conditions [Section 5.3]**

*However, the panel had concerns about some aspects of the proposal and set the following conditions:*

- a) *In relation to the attainment of technical professional qualifications (e.g. BASIS and AMTRA) to resolve and clarify in final documentation the different learning, assessment and cost requirements to complete i) the postgraduate modules contributing to the PGDip and MSc, and ii) the professional qualifications*
- b) *All module descriptors should be refined to give greater consistency in their content and detail*

### **Responses**

- a) The documentation has been updated see Appendix 1 (Section B 2.4) so that for each module which potentially leads to a technical professional qualification (e.g. FACTS, BASIS and AMTRA), there will be a clear explanation of the requirements to complete the module for the PGDip and MSc, as well as the additional requirements for the professional qualifications. This will include whether any additional study sessions are optional, advisory or mandatory; the costs of the additional study session(s), the location(s) and the cost of examination and certification. Guidance will be provided on the need for any further practical experience which may be required in order to achieve the professional qualification. It will also be made clear that students already holding these professional qualifications may still choose the associated module but will be expected study and satisfactorily complete the module including all formative and summative assessments.
- b) There were several elements to this condition, each of which will be addressed separately.
  - Module descriptors for *Arable Crop Protection Parts 1 & 2* and *Grassland and Fodder Crop Production Parts 1 & 2* (Section C2) have been refined to clarify that they are co-requisites for completion of the associated professional qualification (BASIS) but that they could (although it would be unlikely) be studied individually.
  - All module descriptors (Section C) now have assessments clearly assigned to learning outcomes to avoid over, or double, assessment.

- The title for *Sustainable Nutrient Management* has been modified to become *Nutrient Management* in order to better reflect the content (Section C 2).
- The title for *Project Management for Agricultural Professionals* has similarly been modified to better reflect the content and become *Project Management and Analysis for Agricultural Professionals* (Section C 1.2).
- The *MSc Project* includes, as an annex to the descriptor, see Appendix 2, a timetable which reflects the relative obligations of both the student and supervisor to maintain and monitor progress (Section C 1.3).
- Reading lists have been updated by teaching staff to reflect the most up to date editions of books, and to ensure adequate inclusion of contemporary sources from refereed journals and review articles.

## Recommendations (Section 5.4)

- a) *add the following specific aim which the team had proposed as an objective: 'to provide a student-centred learning environment which stimulates participants to achieve their full intellectual potential and to develop independence of thought and an enquiring mind' and refine the specific objectives for the programme to allow differentiation of those relevant to the postgraduate diploma and to the postgraduate certificate*

### Response

The objective: *'to provide a student-centred learning environment which stimulates participants to achieve their full intellectual potential and to develop independence of thought and an enquiring mind'* was added to the aims of the programme. The specific objectives of the programme now differentiate between those for the postgraduate diploma and the postgraduate certificate, see Appendix 3 (Section B 3.1).

- b) *ensure that the definitive document and any derived documentation such as programme handbooks and promotional literature should clearly explain the programme's potential contribution to the attainment of Institute of Agricultural Management P.Agric status*

### Response

The conditions for the different levels of membership<sup>1</sup> of the Institute of Agricultural Management (IAgrM) are described below:

#### 1 Member (MIAgrM)

Historically the main grade of Institute Membership for individuals engaged in agriculture and associated rural businesses management responsibility including those aspiring to management roles.

A full membership is only awarded following application which has been reviewed by the Professional Affairs Committee of the Institute. This is the membership grade for those who do not wish to take part in the annual review of competence carried out using CPD records.

#### 2 Professional Member (P.Agric)

This grade can be awarded to new applicants who, following a formal review of application and interview can demonstrate that they meet the criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.iagrm.org.uk/membership/](http://www.iagrm.org.uk/membership/)

The position of P.Agric would be reviewed each year following receipt of the confirmation of CPD for the previous year.

### 3 Fellow (FIAgrM)

A membership grade which is awarded to those individuals who are currently making or have made an outstanding contribution to Agricultural Management and have been proposed and Seconded by a member of the Institute and approved by the Council Institute.

It can clearly be seen that the position of P. Agric. requires evidence of CPD and I AgrM will promote this course to their members who are aiming for the 'Professional Agriculturalist' category of membership. This category involves a formal application to the Institute's Professional Affairs Committee and requires an appropriate mix of formal qualifications and relevant industry experience, backed up by evidence of annual CPD. I AgrM will accept the MSc, plus evidence of relevant practical experience, as being sufficient for P. Agric. Membership status.

This clarification has been included in the definitive document (Section B 2.3.1) and will be part of any derived documentation such as programme handbooks and promotional literature.

- c) *enable completion of the elective modules which may contribute to professional qualifications (e.g. from BASIS or AMTRA), by distance learning i.e. not requiring attendance at a campus or central location*

#### Response

Some of the elective modules which may lead to professional qualifications require mandatory attendance at a campus or central location as designated by the awarding body and thus cannot be completed by distance learning, others have optional attendance and therefore can be completed by distance learning.

Available by distance learning:

- Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine (AMTRA)

NOT available by distance learning i.e. mandatory attendance for study sessions:

- Nutrient Management (FACTS)
- Arable Crop Protection Parts 1 & 2
- Grassland & Fodder Crop Protection Parts 1 & 2

- d) *create a five-year development plan for the programme to include the ability to study only by distance learning and hence also allow student recruitment from outwith the UK*

#### Response

Section 4.4	Create a five-year development plan for the programme to include the ability to study only by distance learning and hence also allow student recruitment from outwith the UK		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Progress</b>

Pilot international distance learning with 1 student and review at end of academic year. Consider possible revisions to programme in light of feedback from all students.	Programme team	2015/16	1 applicant is willing to pilot international distance learning whilst stationed in Afghanistan for 6 months.
Research international market for this type of course provision and review existing course structure in line with market requirements and in the light of 2 years running of the programme.	Programme team	2015-2017	
Ongoing review of support required for international distance learning and how this would be met by SRUC.	Programme team	2015-2017	
Make appropriate changes to course structure and delivery in accordance with results of prior research in order to potentially deliver an international programme by 2018/19	Programme team	2018/19	This would be following delivery of both years of the taught course and review following completion of the MSc.
Following Academic Board approval (and University approval if required changes are major), Deliver an international distance learning MSc Agricultural Professional Practice	Programme team	2018/19	

- e) *expand the narrative regarding entry requirements to suggest the desirability of a quantified level of previous and/or ongoing relevant professional employment in the agriculture sector*

### **Response**

Whilst appreciating the desire for clarity of the level and length of experience required, the team were keen to allow a flexible approach to applications so as to widen access to a diverse range of students. In keeping with recommendation f) that the programme team should manage the final selection of students, then any applicant not meeting the 'normal' entry requirements can be discussed in more detail. The validation document has been amended to read as follows (Section B 8.2):

"The normal entry requirement for the Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma is a relevant degree from a recognised institution. However, acceptance on to the programme is essentially based on an assessment of the applicant's ability to benefit from the programme. While an adequate indication of ability to carry out academic study is essential, no absolute academic prerequisites are laid down.

As the programme is aimed at enhancing professional agricultural practice, to be accepted on the programme, it is expected that normally applicants can demonstrate previous and/or ongoing relevant employment (paid or voluntary) in the sector normally measured in years.

- f) *the final selection of students during the admissions process should be managed by the programme team*

**Response**

The programme team is keen to be involved in the admissions process and the validation document has been amended as follows (Section B 8.3):

“The timely and effective administration of enquiries about, and applications for, admission to a programme is the responsibility of SRUC’s Admissions Manager. However, the Programme Leader plays a major role in providing programme-specific guidance in the first instance for applicants. The final selection of students will be managed by the programme team and where there is any question about an applicant’s suitability in terms of either academic or work experience, then the team has the option to request an interview which may be by phone, web or tele-conferencing tools or, if appropriate, in person.

- g) *elective modules should be placed in a single pool and should not be year-specific*

**Response**

The elective modules have been placed in a single pool (Table 4.1)

<b>Module</b>	<b>SCQF credits (all level 11)</b>	<b>Year of study*</b>
<b>Year 1 (PG Cert) 4 modules</b>		
Professional Leadership and Management (Core)	15	1
Food and Agricultural Policy (Core)	15	1
Business Planning and Decision Making (Core)	15	1
<i>Plus 1 elective module:</i>		
<b>Year 2 (PG Dip) 4 modules</b>		
Project Management and Analysis for Agricultural Professionals (Core)	15	2
Topical Issues in Modern Agriculture (Core)	15	2
<i>Plus 2 elective modules:</i>		
<b>Elective Choices</b>		
Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine	15	
Animal Feed Technology	15	
Arable Crop Protection Part 1**	15	
Arable Crop Protection Part 2**	15	
Grassland and Fodder Crop Protection Part 1**	15	
Grassland and Fodder Crop Protection Part 2**	15	
Integrated Agricultural Management	15	
Nutrient Management	15	
<b>Additional Elective*</b>	15	
<b>Year 3 (MSc)</b>		
MSc Project	60	3
*‘ <b>Additional Electives</b> ’ can be chosen to take any module that is running on an MSc distance learning programme offered at SRUC, subject to timing/assessment requirements/study period attendance, and in consultation,		

and with the agreement of, the Programme Leader and/or Advisor of Studies.		
** Both Part 1 and Part 2 of these modules should be chosen in order to be able to complete the professional qualification.		

- h) *further detail should be provided to students in relation to the timing and accessibility of alternative ('free choice') electives.*

**Response**

Information will be made available to students in the Programme Handbook and other course documentation with regards to the timing and accessibility of 'Additional Elective' available each academic year. The 'Agenda for Adviser of Studies Meetings with Students' (Paper No: EMG-2012-18) includes discussion of elective choices with individual students and these meetings, which will be carried out by phone, online or in person as appropriate, will enable students to explore the various elective module options best suited to them.

- i) *clarify whether attendance at study weekends was mandatory, or if not, what alternative learning approaches could be taken, and include further details of the nature and content of study weekends in the validation documentation and hence in derived promotional literature and programme handbooks (including sample programmes)*

**Response**

Although attendance at study weekends is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended as a means of developing and maintaining students' engagement and developing a strong learning community. SRUC experience with similar DL PGT programmes is that this contributes to a high retention rate. However, the team appreciates the internationalisation aims of SRUC and with this in mind has already committed to piloting a completely distance learning experience for 6 months of the first academic year of the programme. This will involve recording study sessions at each study weekend and placing a link on the VLE (currently Moodle) which will allow the student to access the recording. Any interactive sessions will make use of VC or web conferencing technology as advised and supported by the E-learning team. A sample study weekend programme has been included in the validation document (Appendix 9, referred to in Sections B 5.3.2 and B 8.3.1) and will also be included in the programme handbooks and other promotional literature.

**B 5.3.2 Induction**

New students have an induction programme during the first study weekend. At the induction weekend, online distance learning students are given introductory sessions in the use of Moodle, SRUC student email accounts and the online library site and database searches. However, all students will receive information on how to access their student email account and Moodle prior to the start of the academic year. For students unable to attend the first study weekend they will be given access on Moodle to recordings of the various sessions. The study weekends are also designed to foster relationships between students and staff, and among students to encourage peer to peer learning and support beyond the study weekends. A typical study weekend timetable is included in Appendix 9.

**B 8.3.1 Induction**

New students have an induction programme during the first study weekend, see Appendix 9 for a typical induction weekend timetable. This covers learning resources available, particularly Moodle, Go-To-Meeting and library resources. In addition, they are introduced to

their peers, teaching staff, facilities and study skills. For those students unable to attend, sessions will be recorded and a link to the recordings put on Moodle. All students will receive information about logging on to the SRUC systems in advance of the commencement of the academic year. Go-To-Meeting sessions will be arranged if required for additional induction support.

- j) *put in place a clearer scheme for the development of critical thinking through the three years of the programme*

**Response**

A table has been prepared, Appendix 4, which maps the five SRUC Graduate Attributes with their provision through the five Core Modules. This has been included in the Validation Document in Section B 5.2. and clearly shows the development of critical thinking through all three years of the programme.

- k) *reduce the reliance on assessment by oral presentations but ensure that the relevant attributes are systematically developed and assessed for all students within the programme perhaps by concentrating this within the core modules*

**Response**

The team noted the concerns of the validation panel but wished to highlight that there was one oral presentation per academic year via a core module and the remainder were to be found in the elective modules. This leads to on average between one and two oral presentations per academic year which was felt to be appropriate to a programme aimed at professional practice. This can perhaps be clarified with reference to Tables 4.1 and 6.1 of the Validation Document and by showing the presentation requirements by year of study in the table below.

<b>Year 1 (PG Cert)</b>	<b>Assessment by Oral Presentation (% of total mark)</b>
Professional Leadership and Management (Core)	None
Food and Agricultural Policy (Core)	None
Business Planning and Decision Making (Core)	Presentation (25%)
Plus 1 elective module:	One possible presentation depending on elective chosen.
<b>Total Presentations Year 1</b>	<b>1 - 2</b>
<b>Year 2 (PG Dip)</b>	
Project Management and Analysis for Agricultural Professionals	None
Topical Issues in Modern Agriculture	Present a seminar (50%)
Plus 2 elective modules:	Two possible presentations depending on electives chosen.
<b>Total Presentations Year 2</b>	<b>1 - 3</b>
<b>Year 3 (MSc Project)</b>	Oral assessment or presentation (10%)

<b>Total Presentations Year 3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL PRESENTATIONS OVER 3 YRS</b>	<b>3 - 6</b>

In terms of managing distance learning presentations, the intention is to use 'Go to meeting' or similar facilities to record the presentations for quality assurance purposes. Other possible approaches would be to use presentations for formative rather than summative assessment. The team would keep this under review as part of annual monitoring

- l) *the provision of opportunities for anonymous student feedback e.g. using questionnaires, should be **mandatory** for all modules*

#### **Response**

Experience tells us that students rarely complete online forms and that the most effective feedback is gathered by handing out short paper questionnaires which can be completed anonymously and returned immediately to the tutor. The intention is to use such questionnaires at the end of all modules (including the Project) at the study weekend (based on a standard for taught degree programme being currently developed in SRUC), and also send them to students unable to attend in person for completion and return by post. Example evaluation forms are included at the end of this document.

- m) *make available to students clear and explicit information well in advance (including at the time of making an application) about the timing and costs associated with all learning activities including study weekends and elective modules delivered on campus*

#### **Response**

Further detail has been added to the validation document and will also be included in the programme handbook and other promotional literature to clarify timing and costs of study periods and elective modules, see Appendix 1. (Section B 2.4).

There are two residential study weekends per academic year with attendance strongly recommended, the induction weekend is held in mid September and the second weekend is in early February. For those unable to attend, alternative arrangements will be made to record sessions and these will be made available on the SRUC VLE (currently Moodle). Travel costs will obviously depend on the student's proximity to the Aberdeen campus, and where possible accommodation will be offered in student halls, which currently (June 2015) costs £30 per night for Bed & Breakfast, plus £10 for an evening meal. This option is available for the Induction weekend in September, but not in February when our on campus students are in residence. At this time alternative accommodation will be required and there are several budget hotels nearby. Tea/coffee and a 'soup and sandwich' (or packed) lunch is provided by SRUC. Study weekend dates for the 2015/16 academic year are September 11- 13, 2015 and February 5 – 7, 2016.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1 (Section B 2.4)

<b>POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES 2015/16</b>	
<b>Taught Postgraduates (Part-time, Flexible Learning)</b>	<b>£</b>
Postgraduate Diploma (if studying over two years) – Year 1.....	2,760
Postgraduate Diploma (if studying over two years) – Year 2.....	2,760
MSc Project (following successful completion of PG Dip Part-time).....	2,000
Individual Postgraduate Modules (for all taught MSc and PG Dip programmes offered by Flexible Learning).....	690 (per module)

In addition to the Taught Postgraduate Fees set out above, there may be additional costs for travel and accommodation at residential study periods, and for the additional examination and certification fees for any professional qualifications such as FACTS, BASIS, and AMTRA, as shown in Table 2.4.2.

There are two residential study weekends per academic year with attendance strongly recommended, the induction weekend is held in mid September and the second weekend is in early February. For those unable to attend, alternative arrangements will be made to record sessions and these will be made available on the SRUC VLE (currently Moodle). Travel costs will obviously depend on the student's proximity to the Aberdeen campus, and where possible accommodation will be offered in student halls, which currently (June 2015) costs £30 per night for Bed & Breakfast, plus £10 for an evening meal. This option is available for the Induction weekend in September, but not in February when our on-campus students are in residence. At this time alternative accommodation will be required and there are several budget hotels nearby. Tea/coffee and a 'soup and sandwich' (or packed) lunch is provided by SRUC.

Table 2.4.1 Study weekend dates and costs

<b>Year 1 2015/16</b>	<b>Costs</b>
September 11-13, 2015	Accommodation available if required in SRUC Craibstone Halls of Residence, £30/night for B&B, plus £10 for an evening meal.
February 5–7, 2016	Accommodation if required should be arranged by the student at their own expense.
<b>Year 2 2016/17</b>	
September 9 – 11, 2016 (tbc)	Accommodation available if required in SRUC Craibstone Halls of Residence, £30/night for B&B, plus £10 for an evening meal.(Charges may increase for 2016/17)
February 3 – 5, 2017 (tbc)	Accommodation if required should be arranged by the student at their own expense.

The modules taught in conjunction with existing professional qualifications are:

- Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine (AMTRA)
- Nutrient Management (FACTS)
- Arable Crop Protection Parts 1 & 2 (BASIS)
- Grassland and Fodder Parts 1 & 2 (BASIS)

Additional fees for teaching and professional certification may be required for these modules. Some also require attendance at short study residential courses. Some of the elective modules which may lead to professional qualifications require mandatory attendance at a campus or central location as designated by the awarding body and thus cannot be completed by distance learning, others have optional attendance and therefore can be completed by distance learning.

Students already holding these professional qualifications may choose the relevant module, but must study and satisfactorily complete the module, including all formative and summative assessments.

The additional requirements for each module are explained below.

#### B 2.4.1 Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine

Students completing this module will have received all the necessary teaching required to sit the AMTRA exam to become a Suitably Qualified Person to supply and/or prescribe medicines for pets, horses or farm animals.

Study for this module can be undertaken in two ways. Students can attend an intensive study week, currently delivered at the SRUC Barony campus (Dumfries) in either April or October. Those attending the study week as part of the module would not be required to pay any additional teaching costs. They would need to meet any associated costs for accommodation and food during the study week period. Alternatively, the module will be delivered on-line as a distance learning programme. This teaching would be delivered over the semester through normal on-line methods. There is no additional fee for examination and certification for the AMTRA qualification.

#### B 2.4.2 Nutrient Management

Students on completing this course may sit the FACTS exam. This qualification allows individuals to advise on crop nutrition and sell fertilisers. There is an additional fee associated with this course. Students wishing to do FACTS will also be required to pay additional fees to BASIS, see Table 2.4.2. This module cannot be done via distance learning and involves attendance at a course at SRUC Aberdeen.

#### B 2.4.3 Arable Crop Protection Parts 1 and 2

To obtain the BASIS qualification students will need to attend two courses at SRUC Edinburgh and sit a final exam. The benefits of the BASIS qualification are that it allows individuals to advise clients on crop protection issues. It is also a legal requirement for those making pesticide recommendations. As this is a professional course there is an additional fee associated with this. There is also an additional fee for those students wishing to sit the BASIS exam and project. As part of BASIS students have to perform a project. This will not be assessed as part of the APP programme, but it could form the basis of other coursework done in this course. These modules may be done separately and as stand alone modules for those not wishing to sit the BASIS examination. This course is not available via distance learning.

#### B 2.4.4 Grassland and Fodder Crop Production Parts 1 and 2

To obtain the BASIS qualification students will need to attend two courses at SRUC Edinburgh and sit a final exam. The benefits of the BASIS qualification are that it allows individuals to advise clients on crop protection issues. It is also a legal requirement for those making pesticide recommendations. As this is a professional course there is an additional fee associated with this. There is also an additional fee for those students wishing to sit the BASIS exam and project. As part of BASIS students have to perform a project. This will not

be assessed as part of the APP programme, but it could form the basis of other coursework done in this course. These modules may be done separately and as stand alone modules for those not wishing to sit the BASIS examination. This course is not available via distance learning.

Table 2.4.2. Additional fees required for elective choices with professional qualifications

<b>Additional fees*</b>	<b>Teaching Fee</b>	<b>Examination and Certification Fee</b>	<b>Teaching Location</b>
Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine	Nil	AMTRA Examination and Certification £265-£345	Various locations (attendance optional)
Nutrient Management	£250	FACTS Examination and Certification £250	SRUC Aberdeen campus (attendance mandatory)
Arable Crop Protection Parts 1 & 2	£1005	BASIS Examination and Certification £355	SRUC Edinburgh campus (attendance mandatory)
Grassland and Fodder Crop Protection Parts 1 & 2	£525	BASIS Examination and Certification £355	SRUC Edinburgh campus (attendance mandatory)

\* Additional fees are correct at time of printing

Dates from 2014 courses are provided below as a guideline. Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine is a week long course taught by SRUC staff. Nutrient Management is also a week long course, taught in conjunction with FACTS. Both Arable Crop Protection and Grassland and Fodder Crop Protection are divided into two modules (parts 1 and 2) as these BASIS courses occur over two separate weeks. In order to obtain the BASIS qualification students will be required to attend both weeks.

Table 2.4.3. Approximate dates of elective choices with professional qualifications

<b>Module</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Approximate Date</b>	<b>Teaching Location</b>
Animal Health and Veterinary Medicine	AMTRA course	Spring and Autumn	SRUC Barony campus or distance learning
AMTRA exam		Following after course	SRUC Aberdeen or Barony campus
Nutrient Management	FACTS Course	7 <sup>th</sup> - 11 <sup>th</sup> December	SRUC Aberdeen campus
FACTS exam		14 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> December	SRUC Aberdeen campus
Arable Crop Protection Part 1	Crop Walk (Optional)	5 <sup>th</sup> June	Dependent (attendance advisable)
	Pre – Basis (Optional)	23 <sup>rd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> September	SRUC Edinburgh campus (attendance optional)
	Agronomy Course	10 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> November	SRUC Edinburgh campus (attendance mandatory)
Arable Crop	Crop Walk	26 <sup>th</sup> November	Dependent

Protection Part 2			(attendance advisable)
	Safety Course	19 <sup>th</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	SRUC Edinburgh campus (attendance mandatory)
BASIS Examination	Revision Day and Exams	26 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> February or 17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> June	SRUC Edinburgh campus
Grassland and Fodder Crop Protection Part 1	Agronomy Course	27 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> October	SRUC Edinburgh campus (attendance mandatory)
Grassland and Fodder Crop Protection Part 2	Safety Course	21 <sup>st</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> January	SRUC Edinburgh campus (attendance mandatory)
	Farm Walk		Dependent (attendance advisable)
BASIS Examination	Revision Day and Exams	18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> February	SRUC Edinburgh campus

## Appendix 2

### 1) MONITORING COMPLETION OF THE MSc PROJECT

It is important that you monitor progress in carrying out the MSc project and you should agree with your supervisor a timetable of key stages. You should maintain regular contact with the project supervisor – the frequency may change during the project although weekly contact may be appropriate. Contact may be by email, phone etc. as appropriate.

You should submit draft chapters of the dissertation to your supervisor as you write them. Please give the supervisor time to read and comment on the chapters although you should receive feedback within 5 working days of submission. Do not amend the chapter until you receive feedback.

Useful dates are given below. These will vary according to the nature of your topic but key dates are given in bold.

**By mid November** - carry out a literature search; design experiments or questionnaires; make contact with relevant organisations, companies, research contacts; as appropriate. **Submission of project proposal (contributes 10% of assessment mark) and oral presentation of your project proposal.** The project proposal will be discussed and agreed with the project supervisor; the agreement will be signed by both student and supervisor.

By mid December – submission of draft Introduction and Literature Review to the project supervisor. The project supervisor will respond with written comments in January.

By mid February - oral presentation of progress on your project, including any preliminary results if appropriate.

By mid March – all data collection for the project should be completed; the literature review should be completed.

By end March - you should be editing the final draft for submission to your supervisor.

**By submission date (Monday of week 4 in April at 23.55)** - the final weeks are used to polish your project report and to incorporate any comments from your supervisor on the final draft. **The project report contributes 80% of assessment mark for the MSc Project.**

**By end May – final oral presentations of your project (contributes 10% of assessment mark).**

## **Appendix 3**

Specific objectives of the programme are:

- To provide an education programme that helps to develop appropriate graduate attributes aligned with the benchmark standards of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and of the Scottish Credit & Qualifications (SCQF) framework, and reflecting developing expectations in the sector;
- To appraise research information and apply this to sustainable agricultural practice;
- To develop the specialist knowledge, and the critical and analytical skills of the students to produce an MSc project that may have a direct impact on a current agricultural issue.

**In addition, a successful graduate of the PGCert element of the course will:**

1. Develop key skills required for professional practice in Agriculture, particularly communication skills including presentation skills, networking, facilitating meetings, customer relations and dealing with the media.
2. Further develop their knowledge, skills and attributes to allow graduates to fulfil leadership roles within the agricultural industry;
3. Be able to participate in the policy debate surrounding the future direction and development of the agricultural industry;
4. Identify their own personal, career and leadership goals and add to their qualifications either for CPD purposes or as a means of changing careers and entering the rural and agri-business management market;
5. Develop the technical and management skills required in modern Agricultural Professional Practice, and an appreciation of ethical issues facing an agricultural professional;
6. Take responsibility for their own work and significant responsibility for the work of others.

**In addition, a successful graduate of the PGDip element of the course will:**

1. Apply critical analysis and evaluation to issues at the forefront of developments in modern agriculture, which may include any technical, managerial, business or policy aspects of livestock, arable or mixed farming systems, along with any environmental impacts.
2. Integrate, consolidate and apply knowledge from specific businesses and across the width of the sector to produce professional level recommendations and reports.
3. Be able to plan a project, manage resources and monitor progress, as well as analyse and interpret data arising from an investigation.

**In addition, the MSc graduate will:**

1. Plan, execute and report on a significant project of research.

## Appendix 4

Table 5.2 Mapping of SRUC Graduate Attributes against Core Modules

	<b>Academically Competent</b>	<b>Critical Thinkers</b>	<b>Desire for Learning and Personal Development</b>	<b>Responsible Members of Society</b>	<b>Employability</b>
<b>Professional Leadership and Management</b>			The reflective nature of personal development planning and CPD affords students the opportunity to consider how they manage this personally and for the wider benefit of their organisation and society.		Students will develop leadership and management knowledge and skills underpinned by theory.
<b>Food and Agricultural Policy</b>	This module provides students with a breadth and depth of knowledge of policy issues and the ability to effectively communicate this knowledge within situations relevant to them.	Critical thinking allows participants to collect, synthesise and analyse different policies to inform reasoning and problem solving within particular circumstances.		Through this module, students are able to appreciate the local, national and global responsibilities of rural businesses and understand the principles of sustainability.	By developing greater insights into local and international perspectives of policy, students are able to utilise and apply their understanding of these perspectives in the course of employment, adding value to their workplace contribution.

<p><b>Business Planning and Decision Making</b></p>		<p>The preparation of the business plan will develop the capacity to analyse information in a reasoned manner.</p>	<p>The identification and planning of a suitable rural business development will help graduates to develop the ability to recognise, create and capitalise on entrepreneurial opportunities as part of their own personal development.</p>	<p>The development of the business plan will develop a responsible attitude to ethical and environmental issues, along with an understanding of the principles of sustainability, through the study of Corporate Social Responsibility.</p>	
<p><b>Project Management and Analysis for Agricultural Professionals</b></p>			<p>This module will encourage students to reflect on and update their personal development plans and prepare students for the MSc project. The analytical approach taught in this module is relevant to commercial and research based projects.</p>	<p>A key aspect of project management is to consider health and safety and environmental considerations associated with projects.</p>	<p>The approach taught will be useful for all forms consultancy and advisory work.</p>



<p><b>Topical Issues in Modern Agriculture</b></p>	<p>This module provides students with a breadth and depth of knowledge of topical issues that affect the agricultural industry but also the ability to discuss how issues may affect their profession. Issues discussed are from a wider area including livestock and arable farming, the environment and agriculture, and agricultural businesses and policy.</p>	<p>Critical thinking allows participants to collate, synthesise and analyse how current issues will impact on their profession by making informed judgements and problem solving.</p>	<p>Within this module students will research an issue that directly affects their profession and discuss the various ramifications.</p>		
<p><b>MSc Project</b></p>	<p>The MSc dissertation or report will develop skills in the critical appraisal of literature in terms of their validity. The discussion of the study findings will allow the student to contextualise new knowledge and ideas. The MSc project will develop written and verbal communication skills to a professional standard.</p>	<p>The MSc project will enable the capacity for independent and creative thinking. In carrying out the project, the student will demonstrate the ability to identify and solve problems, and to collect, synthesise and analyse information in an objective and analytical manner.</p>	<p>The issue addressed during the MSc project will be one that is of specific interest to the student, and one that is likely to be a problem that needs to be addressed in order to benefit the agricultural industry.</p>		<p>The topic of the project will be of direct interest to the agricultural industry. It will give the student confidence in effectively applying their acquired knowledge, understanding and skills to the workplace. The ability to organise a large, independent piece of work will develop a diverse set of transferable skills including project management and organisational skills, problem solving, communication skills, and independent working.</p>

**APPENDIX 9 – TYPICAL INDUCTION WEEKEND TIMETABLE PGDip/MSc Agricultural Professional Practice Year 1  
(DRAFT)**

**Induction weekend 11 – 13 September 2015**

	9.00-10.30 a.m. -12.30 p.m.		1.30-3.00 p.m.		3.30-5.00 p.m.	evening
			1.30 – 2.30	2.30 – 3.30	4-5	
<b>Friday 11<sup>th</sup></b>			Welcome, Introduction & Icebreaker  Caroline Daniel & team	General IS Session (Student desktop, UnitE registration and email) <i>Student availability for Education Office queries</i>	Introduction to Professional Leadership and Management (Personal and Professional Development)	LIBRARY OPEN UNTIL 5pm  BBQ 6 pm  BAR OPEN 7.30 – 11pm
<b>Saturday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	Introduction to Moodle  9 - 10	Professional Leadership and Management (Leadership & Management)  Jim Booth, SAOS (tbc) Alister Laing, SAC Consulting (tbc)	Professional Leadership and Management (Communication)  Jane Smernicki (SRUC Head of Communications) Ken Rundle (Senior Communications Officer)		Library induction and database searching	LIBRARY OPEN 12.30 - 6pm Buffet meal 6pm CEILIDH 8 pm HUNTER BAR OPEN 7.30 pm – midnight
<b>Sunday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Introduction to Food & Ag Policy module  9 – 10 Dr Nick Prince	Industry Visit for Food and Agriculture Policy Dairy and distilling Industry  Glasgoforest and Rothes Dr Nick Prince & Nathalie Micoud		Study skills & feedback		LIBRARY OPEN 12.30 – 6pm  BAR OPEN 7 – 11pm