

## **QMU MSc Gastronomy Course info**

*Current at 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018*

### Course Content

The Gastronomy MSc programme consists of 6 modules, with 4 core modules divided across two semesters, a Research Methods module that runs across semester 1 and 2, and the Gastronomy Project which is the final piece of independent research done in semester 3. Part-time students complete modules 1 and 3 in their first year, and modules 2, 4, 5 and 6 in their second year\*.

#### 1. Food and Drink: the relationship to people and place [*Semester 1*]

This module looks at why we eat what we eat and where we eat it. Through the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and history, we investigate the notion of food culture and food traditions.

#### 2. The Science of Food [*Semester 1*]

This module looks at how science informs our understanding of how food is grown, processed and assessed for quality. We draw on agricultural, nutritional and biological sciences to better understand our food industry and its impacts upon human and environmental health.

#### 3. The System: from field to market [*Semester 2*]

In this module we consider how to conceptualise and understand the food system. We look at how the journey our food takes is shaped by politics, economics and industry.

#### 4. Food Communications and Consumption [*Semester 2*]

This module looks at how the idea of food is both communicated (via different media formats) and consumed. This includes understanding the psychology behind advertising, the philosophies that have shaped how we think about food, and how communication technology is changing how we understand what we're eating.

#### 5. Research Methods [*Semester 1 & 2*]

The research methods module outlines the methods required to do academic research and prepares you to undergo your final project.

#### 6. The Gastronomy Project [*Semester 3*]

Sometimes referred to as a dissertation, this 12,000-word piece of independent research will be on a topic agreed between you and a supervisor from the Gastronomy teaching team.

### Class times/attendance requirements

The MSc is structured with the mature student in mind, and anticipates that most students will be working part-time alongside their study. Full-time study includes attending classes at the QMU campus two days a week on Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:00 to 16:30, between early September and mid-December (Semester 1), and mid-January to the beginning of April (Semester 2). For the rest of the week students can be on campus, in the Library, or working remotely (many – though not all – texts are available online). Occasionally, some classes take place away from campus.

**For the 2018-19 session, Induction Week starts on Monday 10 September, and takes place on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of that week. If at all possible, aim to attend all three days 0900 to 1630. During induction week you will be provided with valuable introductions to the course and the university, including matriculation, registration, orientation, learning about the library, computer systems, support systems – as well as meeting your fellow students.**

From mid-April to August students are engaged in their Gastronomy Project and are not expected to attend classes.

For those enrolled in part-time study, the degree programme is conducted over two years. The student attends Monday classes in the first year, and Tuesday classes in the second year, as well as completing the Gastronomy Project in year 2. The workload in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year is higher due to the addition of the Gastronomy project and preparations for it. (See also Note below\*.)

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the material studied and the imperative for group work, hands-on experience and face-to-face encounters, we cannot offer any kind of distance learning alternative to attending classes. In the past, students have successfully commuted from as far as Aberdeen to attend classes on Mondays and Tuesdays.

As a full-time course, you would be expected to devote around 35 hours per week to study, classes, preparation, reading, revision etc. Some students work part-time and therefore flex their study around the hours available. From experience, we can say that it's really not possible to fit the study around a full-time job as simply attending the classes on Mondays and Tuesdays is insufficient to complete the work expected.

\* Note: Any students beginning part-time study in September 2018 should be aware that it is expected that a revalidated version of the course will commence in September 2019 with a slightly altered module structure. For anyone entering the second year of a part-time course in September 2019 the accumulation of credits will take a slightly different pattern from the one outlined above.

### Field trips

In addition to set class times, the programme provides the opportunity to attend a number of field trips between September and April. The field trips are usually part-day or full-day in length and take place on class days (ie. Mondays and Tuesday), but they rarely run beyond the normal hours. In Semester 1 (generally late October) a multi-day field trip is organised.

All field trips falling in semesters 1 and 2 are conducted within Scotland, and in the past we have visited producers, processors, vendors, foragers and restaurateurs, and more, in Central Scotland, Fife, the Borders, Dumfries and Galloway and the Western Isles. Students are informed of the dates of all planned trips at the beginning of the programme.

In September 2019, following the completion of the project (and therefore the course) for full-time students, we are expecting to be able to organise a special 5-day field trip to Italy to attend the biannual Cheese Festival in Bra, Piedmont. This trip is heavily subsidised by a benefactor of the course to allow students to consolidate and apply their gastronomic education in the setting

of a major international food gathering. In previous years this trip has included visits to wine producers, hazelnut growers, the campus of the University of Gastronomic Sciences and two days attending the talks, tastings and events at the festival itself. Further details of this will be provided when you arrive to study.

### Pre-course preparation

In a separate document you will be provided with a suggested reading list. As hinted there, you are encouraged to use our suggestions as a launch pad to discovering materials beyond this list.

You will be provided with module-specific reading lists for the first semester in the weeks before the course starts.

One thing we would particularly encourage you to practise over the summer is your writing. You will be writing a lot during your course, both informally (e.g. lecture notes and summaries of articles) and formally (e.g. essays, presentations and, eventually, a dissertation for assessment). The latter in particular will be 'academic writing', which won't be familiar ground for some of you. At this stage, however, any form of writing practice is helpful, but in particular we would suggest you develop a good habit of taking notes of the reading you do. This should include short precis of chapters, summaries of articles and gathered notes and reflections on items you encounter. Not only will this help you create a useful resource of relevant reading, but it will help you develop useful habits around identifying key facts and theories, consolidating arguments and accurately representing viewpoints that aren't necessarily your own.

You may wish to consider exploring the following additional resources to help you prepare for studying Gastronomy at Masters level.

- The Study Skills Handbook by Stella Cottrell, part of the Palgrave Study Skills series. Now in its fourth edition (older editions are valid too).
- Warren Belasco's Food: The Key Concepts (one of the core texts in the reading list) includes regular tasks or activities which include research and writing practice. Try working through some of these, or adapt the tasks to apply to other material you're encountering.
- There are many guides and short courses online that address postgraduate study skills. One you can explore is the free-to-use [Open Learn](https://openlearn.org/) site from The Open University (open.edu/openlearn). There's online module within the Education & Development topic titled 'Succeeding in postgraduate study'. Not everything in this is directly applicable, but there's plenty in it that you will need to be familiar with once your studies are underway. There are other courses and resources on the site about specific skills such as reading, note-taking and researching which you might find helpful, as well as some food-related stuff once you pick up that particular tag.