

Candidate Information Pack



Contents

- Introduction
- The University
- A Brief History
- Our Strengths
- International
- Teaching and Learning
- Research and Knowledge Exchange
- The Rural Innovation Centre
- Farm491
- Growth Hub
- Benefits of Working with Us

Introduction

The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) is going through a period of exciting and dynamic change. At the forefront of agricultural education since its foundation as the Royal Agricultural College in 1845, the University now has some 1,200 undergraduate students from over 45 different countries studying at the historic campus, set in 25 acres of magnificent grounds in the heart of the Cotswolds.

A full University since 2013, the RAU is an acknowledged leader in education and applied research relevant to the land-based industries notably agriculture; rural land management; property and the built environment; the food supply chain; agribusiness; countryside and environmental management and equine management and science.

The University

The RAU offers undergraduate, masters and doctoral programmes with a focus on combining academic rigor with practical application across a range of academic disciplines. Courses are managed and taught by experienced staff and specialist consultants, many of whom are still engaged in professional practice.

Students can choose from more than 30 different degrees, at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Well-established undergraduate degrees include Rural Land Management, Real Estate, Agriculture, Food Production and Supply Management, Business and Enterprise, Environment, and International Equine and Agricultural Business Management. In some subjects, there is also the opportunity for students to progress from Foundation to BSc Honours degrees. At postgraduate level the RAU offers a range of taught MSc programmes.

The University offers a stimulating learning environment designed to address the changing needs of the employment market by combining high academic standards with practically applied research, enhanced by strong industry links. As a result, the RAU produces leaders and innovators across the land-based industries.

A Brief History

The University, known as the Royal Agricultural College (RAC) until 2013, was established in 1845 with Earl Bathurst as President. Funds were raised by public subscription with much of the support coming from the wealthy landowners and farmers of the day. Earl Bathurst leased a site to build the College, and construction in the Victorian Gothic style began in April 1845. Queen Victoria granted the Royal Charter to the College in the same year, and Sovereigns have been Patrons ever since, visiting the University in every reign. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales became President in 1982. The University motto is 'Arvorum Cultus Pecorumque'; a quotation from Virgil's Georgics meaning 'Caring for the Fields and the Beasts' and this is a major part of the University's core values today.

From its early days, the College was staffed with innovators and pioneers, and made a considerable impact on farming practice and agricultural science. The first modern degree programme, started in 1984, was a BSc (Hons) degree in Rural Land Management. The RAC had been independent of government control from its foundation until 2001, when it first received funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), allowing it to widen access to its courses to students of all backgrounds.

In 2013, the Privy Council awarded the College full University Status, in recognition of its provision as a higher education institution.

Our Strengths

- The RAU was the top ranked small specialist Institution in the 2016 People and Planet University League. As one of a very small number of Universities to score 100%, 'Education' and 'Sustainability' is now fully embedded across the curriculum. RAU was the winner of the 'Sustainability' category at the prestigious Guardian University Awards 2016 in March and won two categories at the Green Gown Awards 2016 in October (Best Newcomer and Enterprise and Employability)
- The University has maintained high employability figures across the board according to the national survey organised by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. On average over the past five years, 96% of RAU undergraduates are in employment or further study within six months of leaving the University
- Student Enterprise at the RAU is recognised nationally as being a leader in the field; it was the only Small Specialist Institution to be shortlisted for the very prestigious Duke of York's Student Enterprise Award and several of our graduates have recently been recognised for their business successes
- The RAU was ranked in the top 10 in the UK for academic and facilities spend and degree completion, according to the Complete University Guide 2016. The RAU was placed sixth in the UK for facilities spend because of investment in a range of student facilities, including sports, careers services, health and counselling etc
- The University has a collegiate and supportive atmosphere with a strong welfare and support network

International

The RAU has strong international links and academic partnerships, particularly in Africa, China and South East Asia. Approximately 8% of the student population at the RAU comes from overseas (non-UK and EU). With students from around 45 different countries on campus, the RAU is a diverse and vibrant international community. Recruiting overseas students is important to the RAU, not only because this enables the University to diversify its income streams, but also because it enables it to foster a truly international environment for all students, both home and overseas.

Teaching and Learning

The University's courses are managed by experienced staff, many of whom are involved in consultancy, near-market research and training activities, both in the UK and overseas. Members of staff are engaged in a range of scholarly activities publishing papers, text books and reports to a variety of private and government clients. This expertise is integral in designing, teaching and supervising the taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, as well as research degrees at masters and doctoral levels.

Agriculture

The RAU's agricultural curriculum provides a clear response to the current and future issues which affect the consumer, technology, and the economic and political landscape. The University continually monitors the factors which stimulate the need for a sustainable, socio-economic agricultural management policy in the UK, EU, and globally. Graduates are equipped to take on the challenges ahead, and to create a more sustainable future.

A range of agricultural courses are on offer, which provides a bespoke education to prepare students for the dynamic and highly competitive global market. In addition, students can benefit from up-to-date skills based training at the Rural Innovation Centre.

The underpinning of the RAU's success is based on an extensive network of relationships with farm businesses and rural practitioners, from which technical knowledge is practically applied to coursework and exams. Academic staff are experts within their fields, with the knowledge and experience to debate current issues, form partnerships with agricultural enterprises, progress our Farm491 agri-tech initiative, and conduct research trials on the RAU farms.

Business and Enterprise

All students undertake a work placement as part of their programme, which allows them to gain valuable experience and see how what they are learning is used in practice. All honours degrees have dual accreditation from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), so in addition to their degree students receive a separate qualification from the Institute. The CMI qualification enhances the CVs of RAU students, and makes them more attractive to potential employers.

The University runs an award-winning Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme which has supported many students in starting their own successful businesses. The programme offers "First Steps Funding" to help students test their business idea, and provides help and guidance at all levels of business start-up. Entrepreneurial skills are highly prized by employers who seek to recruit graduates who can demonstrate their creativity and will help the company to evolve and develop.

Environment

The RAU offers students a fantastic opportunity for students to learn how to manage the countryside, wildlife, and rural heritage. The key aim is to equip students with the necessary knowledge and understanding, alongside those practical and leadership skills, that employers are looking for. The RAU offers a range of foundation degree pathways allowing students to develop interests in a particular subject area, with options to progress onto a bespoke top-up degree.

The RAU takes full advantage of the great contacts it has with industry, through guest speakers, field visits, and work-based placements. The University farms, along with the Rural Innovation Centre at Harnhill and a neighboring forestry estate, provide an ideal platform on which to train students in the various vocational skills required by industry such as use of machinery (chainsaws, brush cutters, ATVs, and tractors) and ecological survey work (vegetation and mammal surveys). In essence, the University works to deepen the understanding of the living and physical environment, and promote working in partnership with land managers to contribute to sustainable management for the future.

Equine Management and Science

After 25 years of experience the RAU has discovered that a mixed approach to education produces the most employable dynamic graduates. As such courses deliver a blend of equine science and business, and an international perspective along with agriculture based subject matter. Transferable skills are delivered in science and business through a 20-week industry placement. This equips students for managerial positions in commercial companies across all aspects of the equine industry.

Based in the Cotswolds, the RAU is ideally positioned to take full advantage of world leading sporting venues such as Cheltenham Racecourse, Gatcombe Park and the Badminton Estate to name a few. Due to the close links, we have with these, students gain a first-hand appreciation of the business dimensions and the day to day running of equestrian sporting events. Courses are delivered by a team of research active and industry linked staff with decades of teaching experience between them.

Members of the equine team publish their work in internationally renowned journals, and enjoy industry derived research sponsorship from companies. Overall, the Centre of Equine Management and Science offers a unique learning ecosystem which supports and nurtures any career aspirations in the global equine sector.

Food Supply and Management

Everyone has to eat, and the agri-food sector is booming – worth around £97 billion and employing more than 3.5 million people in the UK alone. The sector is also the key to providing safe foods in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable manner to a growing world population on an ever-decreasing cultivatable land footprint. The effects of changing consumer demands, government edicts about dietary diseases; such as obesity, diabetes, and heart attacks, and natural disasters mean this fast-moving industry requires confident, reliable, enthusiastic employees with an excellent understanding of food production, and the skills to manage complex supply chains on a local and global scale. The Centre aims to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to lead this industry; either from within a large corporation, or through an entrepreneurial business start-up.

Real Estate

Employers have a high regard for RAU courses, evidenced by the excellent employability of our graduates who occupy leading positions within the real estate industry in the UK and overseas. These courses embrace the theories, methodologies, and practice of urban and rural property investment, development, and management. The BSc (Hons) Real Estate degree is accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

Academic staff are fully qualified members of the RICS, and hold teaching qualifications in higher education. Experts in their fields, they offer extensive professional and academic experience and knowledge of current issues and policy. Sessions are regularly organized with high profile speakers, who are drawn from the University's national and global network of real estate professionals.

Rural Land Management

The RAU has a long history and enviable reputation as a supplier of education and training of rural land and property professionals. The ways in which the rural, agricultural, residential, commercial, and leisure elements of land and the associated property are managed has a major impact on the quality of our lives and the environment, as pressure of demand on land use intensifies at both global and local levels.

The RAU course embraces the theories, methodologies, and practice of rural land management, providing a clear understanding of the multi-functionality of land in the UK. The partnership between the University and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors has its roots in the accreditation of our course since the 1930s. The University is proud of the substantial contribution made to the development of the global surveying profession by its alumni and staff.

Employers have a high regard for this course, evidenced by the excellent employability record of our graduates. Students benefit directly from the close association with employers and the rural land management profession and graduates follow a range of career pathways.

Research and Knowledge Exchange

The RAU engages in applied, near-market research across a range of key land-based subject areas. From sustainable bi-cropping, to smart-city urban development, rural land policy, sustainable soil management and equine nutrition and behaviour, staff work closely with industry, solving real-life problems.

Active commercial research projects dovetail with innovative problem solving so many of our research students tackle interesting industry relevant questions. Our research mission at RAU is to engage in applied and near-market research and knowledge exchange activities relevant to the land-based sector. To forward this mission we work at the interface of research and end-user, supporting decision making and translating good practices into innovative products and practices that have real impact.

The research community at RAU is small and so research degrees are validated by the University of Gloucestershire. This gives staff and students access to a range of expertise and courses that help develop student's skills and our portfolio of research. Research collaborations are encouraged and we are involved with projects at the University of Oxford, the Countryside and Community Research Institute at Gloucestershire, the University of Nottingham, University College Dublin, University of Aberystwyth and Rothamsted Research in Devon.

The Rural Innovation Centre

The RAU Rural Innovation Centre is an important development for the agricultural sector. It enables the sharing of cutting-edge knowledge between those involved in agricultural production and those undertaking applied research. The Centre is based at the University's Harnhill Manor farm, which totals 491 hectares and offers very different farming system situations, allowing for a wide variety of on-farm research trials, bridging the gap between the laboratory and the farmer. The Centre encompasses teaching, training and event rooms, a laboratory research workshop, a machinery workshop and a demonstration hall, and it has extensive external training capacity.

Alongside the sharing of scientific research, the University now delivers its vocational rural skills training from the Rural Innovation Centre. The University is a well-established provider of professional rural training to both the public and private sector, with courses delivered to organisations from the Environment Agency, Natural England, and the Wildlife Trust, to local councils, schools, farmers and agronomy companies.

Farm491

Farm491, funded by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), offers space for innovators to grow their businesses by applying technology into agriculture. As well as providing high-spec facilities created to foster entrepreneurship, ideas generation, and collaboration - it includes 491 hectares of Cotswold farmland for research and testing.

Farm491 offers start up space both at the RAU's main campus in Cirencester (the new building will be completed in 2018) and at the farm-based Innovation Centre at Harnhill: affordable and flexible co-working environments where budding agri-tech entrepreneurs can run and grow their businesses. This pioneering new initiative creates a vibrant incubation environment with the potential to influence and benefit the wider agricultural and food production industries.

Growth Hub

The Growth Hub will help to grow the Gloucestershire economy by assisting local businesses of all sizes and from all sectors to accelerate their growth and exploit their full potential. The Growth Hub will also build on the RAU's existing areas of expertise by supporting businesses working in agri-technology or based in rural environments across the county. Promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in the area, the Growth Hub will provide personalised support to businesses of all types in the region, from pre-start through to existing companies and organisations looking to grow. It will deliver business development, business support networks, strategy and advisory services, business information and enterprise support. The Growth Hub will form part of an expanding network of Growth Hubs created by Gfirst LEP in strategic locations across the county of Gloucestershire.

Benefits of Working with Us

We have over 200 dedicated employees, who are proud to work for us. Over the last year, we've continued to invest in our people. Whether our people are permanent, or join us for a few months, we genuinely take their health, wellbeing, and development seriously.



Supporting Our People

We believe in investing in development and happiness at work and have a good range of benefits for our people which include:

General Working Benefits

- Magnificent historic offices and grounds in the Capital of the Cotswolds
- Free and guaranteed parking on campus
- Complimentary hot beverages throughout your working day
- Subsidised three-course lunches for only £2.00
- Complimentary shuttle bus from campus to Cirencester Town Centre
- Free Library membership with access to 1,000s of print books and journals
- 35 hour working week

Financial Benefits

- We offer a competitive salary to attract and retain great people. We reward performance enabling you to progress through your pay band
- If you become ill, you are entitled to our sickness pay benefit scheme after a qualifying period of six months
- Access to RAU Car Share scheme
- Childcare vouchers

Health and Family Benefits

- We'll do everything we can to help you find a healthy work-life balance. Our people can sometimes work flexible work patterns i.e. in job shares and part-time
- Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) ensures you have unlimited access to a 24-hour free, confidential telephone helpline. The service gives you free advice on a wide variety of issues such as legal and financial information and counselling services
- Free membership to gym on campus
- Cycle to Work scheme with Dr Bike free check ups
- Occupational Health Service
- Free annual flu vaccination
- Eye care vouchers for eye examinations and contribution toward VDU glasses
- Long term disability and life cover (provided as part of the Friends Life Y1 Pension Scheme below)

Reward and Recognition

- A generous 25 days annual leave entitlement for non-academic staff and 30 days for senior and academic staff (Grade 8 upwards) pro rata per annum in addition to 8 statutory bank holidays for all. A week's holiday during the Christmas period is given at the Vice-Chancellor's discretion
- Learning and development opportunities including RAU Management Training Programme
- Long service award – at 25 years, we give you a cash sum

Pension Schemes

- 'Friends Life Category X' – All eligible RAU employees (except teachers) are automatically enrolled - employees minimum contribution would be 1% and RAU would contribute 2% (3% from October 2017)
- 'Friends Life Category Y1' - RAU Group Pension Scheme' (defined contribution) – employees are able to upgrade to this scheme before their 6 month probation – employees minimum contribution would be 4% and RAU would contribute 6.5% - Life assurance is also an additional benefit (two times annual salary) plus income protection (permanent disability insurance)
- 'Teachers' Pension' (for academic staff) - employees contribution according to salary scale – between 7.3% and 11.7% - RAU contributes at 16.48%. Life Assurance is an additional benefit (three times annual salary) plus incapacity pension (permanent disability insurance)