



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, CIRENCESTER

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

MBA Advanced Farm Management

NB

The information contained in this document is intended only as a guide to the programme. It does not constitute a legally binding document or contract between the individual and the Royal Agricultural University.

The information contained herein is correct at the time of going to print, but the University reserves the right to make changes to the structure of the programme, assessment methods, etc. at any time without prior notification. Any changes made however will be made known as soon as possible.

Ms Rita Walsh – Programme Manager

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1. Awarding institution	The Royal Agricultural University
2. Teaching institution	The Royal Agricultural University/ Utah State University (USU)
3. Final award title(s)	MBA Advanced Farm Management
4. Academic level on Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Level 7
5. UCAS code(s)	Not applicable
6. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and other reference points, e.g. FD qualification benchmark	QAA FHEQ subject benchmark statement: Master's degrees in Business and Management (2007); type 3
7. Details of accreditation by a professional/statutory body	Not applicable
8. Mode of study	Full-time (a part-time route is also available)
9. Language of study	English
10. Date of production/revision	Periodic review and re-validation February 2015 and current document revised November 2014

11. Educational aims of the programme

11.1 Introduction

This course is designed to enable prospective farmers, farm managers, and farm management consultants to work at the strategic level of management and leadership in the commercial environment of modern farming and agribusiness. Against a background of issues and challenges facing the national and global farming industry, the programme aims to equip its graduates with the relevant tools, mind-sets, capabilities and entrepreneurial spirit to operate successfully within farms and farm/ agri-based businesses across the sector.

11.2 Distinctive features of the MBA Advanced Farm Management – an international/ global perspective

The programme has been developed to create high calibre managers to fill vital key roles in this vibrant and thriving business sector. The SBE has developed a strong partnership with the University of Utah (USU) - a leading, recognised, innovative and renowned institution. This collaborative

partnership therefore provides a unique opportunity for students to experience transatlantic study and the farming and agri-business industry from both a European and USA context and perspective by offering students the option for semester 1 modules of the taught element of the MBA to be undertaken at either of the two partnership institutions: Utah State University, Logan, Utah (USA) and the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester (UK).

11.3 Programme aims

A Philosophical Framework for the Programme

Setting the Scene

Agriculture is a dynamic and fast moving Global sector with increasingly complex imperatives from technology, to soil science, through climate change, to the future viability of the non-corporate farming unit. With an increasing global population, farmers are being challenged to adopt sustainable intensification strategies to produce more food whilst at the same time protecting the environment. This is a demand that points to dilemma. In 2009, the FAO predicted that in order to feed an estimated world population of 9.1 billion by 2050 would require food production to increase by 70%. Farmers face many challenges that include land scarcity, climate change, water availability, food security and authenticity, rapid technological change, access to skilled staff and succession issues, and finding the income streams to retain a farming family business unit.

This MBA is aspirational in terms of equipping its participants for working creatively and in sustainable ways within the pressured dynamics of dilemma.

Philosophical Framework

There are three propositions underpinning the programme philosophy.

Precept 1: Whilst there are obvious challenges for agriculture there will also be opportunities for those capable of identifying and working with them in 'new paradigm' ways that enrich and enhance rather than merely exploit (old paradigm). In this programme, the comprehension, knowledge and skills set required to work in a 'new paradigm' way will be underpinned by a programme design that embraces and enacts the philosophical precepts of *Eco-leadership* grounded through being mindful of each of the following: Profit + People + Planet. The programme is designed upon this precept, and this permeates through teaching and learning to curriculum design.

Precept 2: Individuals running agricultural businesses in the future will need to be business and management adept critical thinkers and analysts, who are also improvisational problem-solvers, show technological awareness, and who have the emotional intelligence to provide values-based leadership in an

environment of complex change (social, political and financial) where integrity and trust within family, community and business stakeholders are vital. This programme is designed with the following theoretical frameworks as core to enabling the breadth and scope of comprehension, knowledge and mindfulness required for *advanced farm management* in the second decade of the 21st century:

- i) Comprehension and knowledge of business and management concepts, constructs, models and theoretical frameworks
- ii) Farming as a Community of Agricultural Practice pervading this MBA programme through a quality of investigatory, critical dialogue among its participants
- iii) Self-development of agricultural practice, and the ability to sustain and express emotional intelligence within times of stress and anxiety in order to carry a business through

In sum, this philosophical underpinning distinguishes this programme from any of its extant competitors. It provides a uniquely attractive focus within the market while simultaneously informing its teaching and learning strategy and curriculum design.

The Advanced Farm Management MBA programme is designed to equip participants with the range of business, management and leadership skills to sustain themselves, their families, and communities.

In order to meet these challenges this MBA programme has at its foundation Simon Western's concept of Eco-leadership (2008), which emphasises the need for future leaders to consider the implications of their business and management decisions on **people, profit and planet**. Core to eco-leadership are ethics, social responsibility and sustainability, which are of particular significance within the agricultural sector. These principles directly apply to the ever changing world of farming and the farm; they impact the way farmers need to personally and professionally develop, how farmers need to hone their understanding of those demanding corporate players with whom they are contracting. The curriculum has been predicated upon this foundational philosophical underpinning in order to give students a thorough grounding across the range of these important areas with ample opportunity to reflect on these in the light of their previous work experience, and with coaching support, to delve deeper into areas of personal, professional and/or practitioner specialism. The programme draws on Lave and Wenger's (1998) notion of Communities of Practice to create a community of shared interest and practice where farmers and others with specialist interest in agriculture can develop the cognitive, business, and emotional intelligence needed to manage and lead a successful sustainable farming business within the global food chain. It is this coherent philosophical underpinning, articulated here for the first time within the AFM programme statement that offers a distinct

depiction of what makes this MBA an *advanced* farm management programme, differentiating it from all of its market competitors, as well as other programmes within the University.

The aim of the programme is to produce graduates who are able to ground their new knowledge within the base of their professional experience. They are able to reflect on and learn from that prior experience and thus be able to integrate new knowledge with past experience and apply it to new situations. They will be able to handle complex situations holistically in order to be able to solve complex, unstructured business problems in the agricultural and related industries.

Although industry-orientated, the programme has a strong academic underpinning, including the adoption of a case study approach to learning and teaching. This provides students with the opportunity to practise and use business and management principles and concepts in a real world context. In addition, this is further complemented by group project work, study visits to organisations and businesses and visits from relevant industry experts and senior professionals.

12. Intended learning outcomes

Learning outcomes describe what the students should know and be able to understand if they make full use of the opportunities for learning that the programme provides. By studying the MBA in Advanced Farm Management, students will acquire knowledge and understanding of the context, core concepts and theories of the subject and further develop key skills that will enable them to apply their academic studies to the industry on graduation.

The learning outcomes below are informed by the QAA benchmark statements: Master's degrees in Business and Management (2007); type 3. They also incorporate the principles of inclusive practice with regard to students with disabilities.

(i) Knowledge and Understanding

- Engagement with extant theoretical and practical management literatures and ideas that underpin management thought and practice (A1)
- A critical understanding of debates within key areas of research in management and business studies (A2)
- An ability to understand how global technological, economic, environmental and social influences shape the modern agricultural business world (A3)
- An understanding of the importance of key personal skills in management and their application in areas such as leadership, communication, presentation and decision making (A4)

Teaching and learning strategies

Knowledge and understanding will be acquired via lectures, seminars, visits, and guided independent and specific group work.

Assessment will be via examinations and coursework including case studies, reflective reports, presentations, the writing of a business plan and through the applied research challenge.

(ii) Intellectual Skills

The student will be able to:-

- interpret data and abstract meaning (B1)
- critically analyse literature (B2)
- identify and solve problems (B3)
- demonstrate independence of thought (B4)
- develop skills of critical self-reflection (B5)
- demonstrate the skills necessary to plan, conduct and report original research (B6)

Teaching and learning strategies

Intellectual skills are developed through the teaching and learning programme. Each programme involves discussion of key issues. Problem solving and analytical skills are assessed through projects and case studies and the dissertation. Through the dissertation students demonstrate their thinking and research skills.

(iii) Practical / Professional Skills

The student will be able to:-

- evaluate business performance (C1)
- write for different audiences (C2)
- locate and critically appraise data and information from a variety of sources (C3)
- critically investigate a bibliographically-based piece of research (C4)
- choose between theories appropriate to various business situations (C5)
- manage project work effectively (C6)
- produce a business plan to a professional standard (C7)

Teaching and learning Strategies

Practical skills will be developed through the teaching and learning programme and via the coursework and dissertation. Skills are further developed through feedback on written coursework and through supervision sessions throughout the construction of the applied research challenge. Practical based skills are assessed via examination, coursework and the applied research challenge.

(iv) Transferable Skills

The student will be able to:-

- learn through self-reliance (D1)
- produce work in groups (D2)
- work effectively independently (D3)
- communicate effectively through presentations (D4)
- use information technology (D5)

Teaching and learning strategies and assessment

Transferable skills are acquired and assessed through examinations, coursework, presentations, seminars and the applied research challenge.

13. Programme structure and requirements

The MBA Advanced Farm Management consists of a one-year full-time programme which comprises six taught core business modules, two taught core industry-specific modules, 30 credits of elective choices (allowing further specialisation / focus) and an Applied Research Challenge module (in place of a 'traditional' dissertation).

The programme starts in September with the first term's studies being undertaken at Royal Agricultural University (RAU) but with an option to take the first term modules at the University of Utah (USU) the second and third terms are taught at the (RAU). During the third term students will be working on the Applied Research Challenge module, with the report being submitted on 30th September

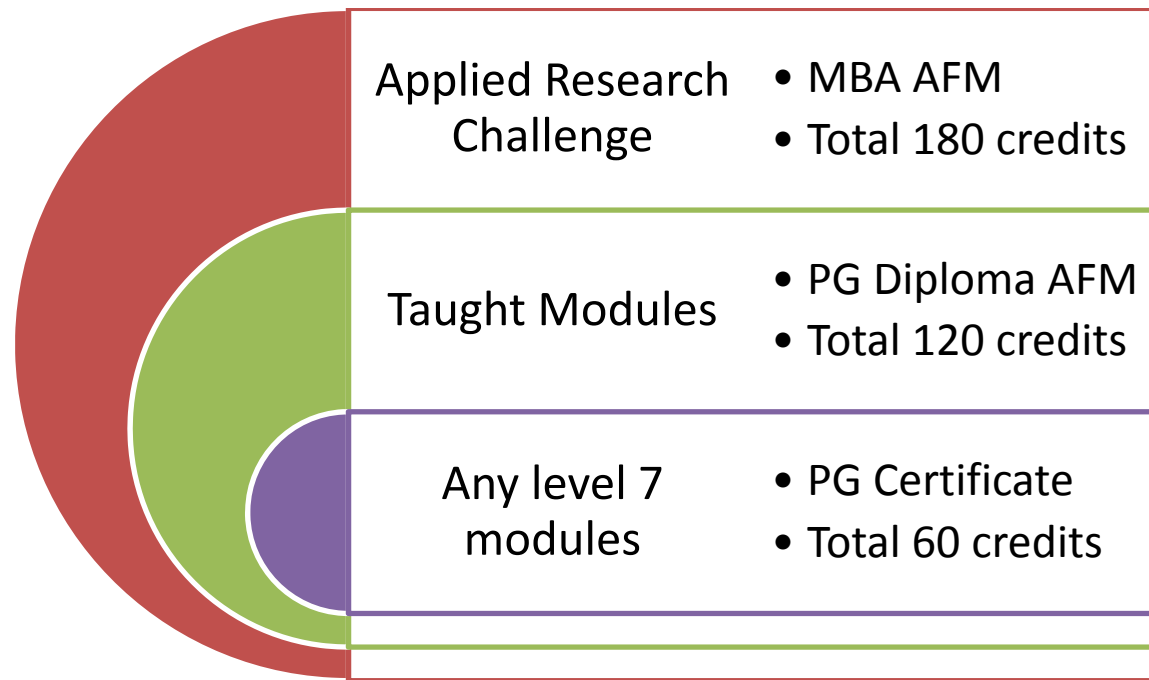
13.2 Programme Modules

Core Business Modules (10 credits)	(4214) Sustainable Business Strategy	Total 60 credits
	(4023) Operations Management	
	(4215) Agricultural Economics	
	(4216) Leadership and Change	
	(4217) International Marketing Management	
	(4076) Financial Management	
Core Industry-specific Modules (15 credit)	(4219) Sustainable Agricultural Business Principles	Total 30 credits
	(4012) Farm Business Management	
Elective Modules	<p>Choice of two electives from:</p> <p>International Business (4078); Corporate Finance (3041); Development Project Management (4080); Beverages and the supply chain (4239) Small Scale Farming and Local Food Supply (4203); Adaptive management in a complex world (4229) Agricultural Management (4001) New product development in the agri-food industry (4228) Rural events management (4227) Entrepreneurship for rural tourism and events (4226) Entrepreneurship (3084)</p>	Total 30 credits
Applied Research Challenge Project	(4220) Applied Research Challenge	Total 60 credits

13.3 Programme Structure

Semester 1										
	Financial Management		International Marketing management		Leadership and Change		Agricultural Economics		Operations Management	
										Sustainable Business Strategy
Credits	10		10		10		10		10	
Semester 2										
	Elective 1		Sustainable Agricultural Business Principles				Farm Business Management		Elective 2	
Credits	15		15				15		15	
All year	<p style="text-align: center;">Applied Research Challenge Hand in Applied Research Challenge project September</p>									60 credits
Credits	60									

13.4 Programme Awards/ Credit Accumulation



In order for a student to be awarded the MBA Advanced Farm Management they must achieve 180 credits in total. Interim awards are also offered at Postgraduate Certificate level (60 credits) and Postgraduate Diploma level (120 credits). The award of MBA will be based on the average of the overall mark for both the taught modules and applied research challenge mark (details of the weightings can be found in the Academic Regulations available on the University website). The final MBA classification will be graded on the weighted average as follows: Pass – 40-59%; Merit – 60-69%; Distinction – 70% and above.

13.5 Student workload

All full-time academic programmes at the RAU are constructed using a selection of modules, each of which requires engagement with a variety of learning activities. Successful completion of module assessments will result in the award of credits, and students are required to achieve a total of 180 credits over the 12 months of the full-time programme.

The credit system is used to ensure a balanced workload across each programme, with each credit point representing a notional learning time of 10 hours of student work. Thus a 15-credit module will require a notional input of 150 hours of work, a 10-credit module will require a notional input of 100 hours of work, and a complete academic year of 120 credits will require 1200 hours of work, or approximately 40 hours per week.

Within this total time, students can expect to participate in formal timetabled activities; such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, practicals and visits; for approximately one third of the total time – usually around 2 hours per week for a 10-credit module studied over 10 weeks of the year. Thus the majority of module activities; such as reading around the subject, preparing for tutorials and seminars, preparing for, and completing, module assessments and revision for, and sitting, examinations; will take place outside of these scheduled activities, but are an essential part of a student's learning journey.

Students are encouraged to utilise and engage with all the learning opportunities, resources and support available throughout the duration of their studies at the RAU in order to progress successfully through the course..

14. Student support services

Students are supported academically by the programme management group, plus the Dean of the School of Business and Entrepreneurship and all the leaders of the constituent modules of the programme. In addition, students have access to and can use the following people, resources and activities to support them during their time at the RAU:

- an induction programme on joining the University which will introduce the programme of study and the study skills they need to complete it successfully;
- the RAU Student Handbook and virtual learning environment (Gateway);
- module handbooks, describing in detail the teaching programme for each module of study;
- extensive library and other learning resources, including study skills packages;
- a personal tutor, whose role is to assist the student with the progress of their academic studies as well as advise on pastoral care issues;
- student email and open and personal access to academic staff, including the Programme Manager;

- access to a Student Liaison Officer, Student Welfare Officer (who can provide counselling on personal problems) and the University health centre;
- access to a Disability Officer, who provides assistance and guidance on teaching and learning support for students with dyslexia (or other forms of specific learning difficulties) and other disabilities, including a dyslexia specialist to help develop learning skills;
- English language support (for students whose first language is not English);
- Careers advice sessions with careers guidance personnel and Agri-industries, Business Management & Food Careers & Placements Fairs.

15. Criteria for admissions

15.1 Standard entry requirements

Students will be expected to have:

- An honours degree from a UK university (usually a minimum 2:1 classification) or an equivalent academic qualification from a comparable international institution;
- A minimum of two year's post-graduation work experience;
- Students whose first language is not English must have achieved a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 (or equivalent).

15.2 Non-standard entry

Mature candidates with significant relevant work experience and lower academic qualifications may also be considered for entry, following personal interview with the programme manager. Students with other qualifications, including overseas awards (and alternative English Language qualifications) will be required to contact the Registry before submitting an application to discuss the suitability of their ward for entry onto the programme

16. Teaching, learning and assessment

The curriculum is designed to enable the student to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of the subject, intellectual/thinking, practical/professional and key transferable skills which correspond to those developed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Students will be encouraged to expand their understanding and critical appreciation of key farm and farm-based industry management topics and issues as they progress through the programme.

16.1 Teaching and Learning Strategies

Students will experience a carefully planned and diverse programme of teaching and learning, guided by the explicit aims and identified learning outcomes (as outlined above in sections 11 and 12) which will include:

Lectures (which complement the applied farm management activities), seminars (where discussion is encouraged around how management techniques work in practice), visits, workshops, co-operative work, group project work, reflective reports, presentations, the writing of a business plan, industry visits, and problem-based and experiential case studies for both group and individual work in real world situations.

Students are also given directed/ guided independent learning tasks and are encouraged to increase their depth of knowledge and understanding through private study and completion of assessments and to develop their particular management strengths.

In addition, students will have access to a study enrichment programme - consisting of regular/ annual lectures and talks (Bledisloe and Cator lectures), enterprise and entrepreneurial activities, Cirencester Agricultural Discussion Society (CAD), a programme of research seminars and access to the Rural Innovation Centre (see section (16.2 below).

16.2 Site visits and the Rural Innovation Centre

A wide variety of study/ site visits are undertaken to local farms and industry-relevant businesses where owners/ occupiers/ managers provide invaluable insights into contemporary issues affecting the sector.

Students will also have opportunities to visit the University's own arable and livestock farms which will provide opportunities for students to supplement their academic studies with practical demonstrations of a range of farm/ agri-business enterprises. In addition, students will have access to the University's Rural Innovation Centre, an important development for the agricultural sector, which:

- enables the sharing of cutting-edge knowledge between those involved in agricultural production and those undertaking applied research;
- 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;
- hosts a variety of trials for private agronomic companies, including BASF, NIAB and Agrovista;
- encompasses teaching, training and event rooms, a laboratory research workshop, a machinery workshop, and demonstration hall;
- will lead the international discussion on how individuals and communities are empowered to adopt entrepreneurial mindsets that deliver business success, personal development and community growth;

thereby enabling and helping to encourage MBA Advanced Farm Management graduates to be the advocates of the future for the farming, agri-food and land based sector.

16.3 Assessment Strategies

Assessment will be via examinations and coursework including case studies, reflective reports, presentations, the writing of a business plan and through the applied research challenge.

This programme is inclusive of disabled people (e.g. hearing impaired, vision impaired, speech impaired, dyslexic and mobility impaired) with particular regard to teaching, learning and assessment, in accordance with Part 10: Inclusive Practice of the University's Teaching Quality Handbook and the [Equality Act 2010](#). Students are encouraged to disclose any impairment to the Disability Officer so that the appropriate support can be provided. Students have the right to request that the nature of their impairment be treated as confidential.

The learning outcomes are generally achievable by people with disabilities. However, it is felt that the strongly vocational nature of the programme means that people with severe visual or mobility impairment problems may have difficulties in achieving some of the learning outcomes.

17. Work-based learning

Not applicable.

18. Quality assurance procedures

The framework of policies and structures of the University which form the basis for quality assurance and standards for academic programmes are described in the Teaching Quality Handbook and include procedures for:

- Programme and module development, monitoring and review;
- Students assessment, progression and awards;
- Assessment, moderation and External Examining.

18.1 The Programme Group (PMG)

The function of the Group is to ensure that the programme provision:

- aligns with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ – Level 7) and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA);
- recognises and adheres to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code in terms of academic quality and standards and to subject

benchmark statements: Master's degrees in Business and Management (2007); type 3.

18.2 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

The PMG will undertake a number of activities to ensure its function in relation to continuous maintenance, review and improvement of quality and standards relating to teaching, learning and assessment. These will include mechanisms such as:

- preparation and scrutiny of annual module leader review reports to identify any issues, areas of good practice for dissemination and consideration of future development;
- regular PMG meetings;
- responses to External Examiner reports regarding commentary on quality and standards of the programme;
- preparation of the Annual Programme Manager Report (APMR), approved by the Dean and scrutinised by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee;
- periodic review and revalidation (including external consultation and input);
- regular stakeholder meetings with industry representatives/ employers via, for example, the School Advisory Board.

18.3 The Programme Committee

The role of the Committee (which includes student representation) will be to discuss general issues relating to teaching, learning resources, curriculum and careers guidance. The Committee which will normally meet twice a year will consist of the following:

- The programme manager (with responsibility for all aspects of the day-to-day academic management and administration of the programme);
- The Dean of SBE;
- Academic staff representatives (module leaders and those with significant responsibility for or input to the programme);
- Two student representatives, elected by their peers.

19. Marking guides and assessment regulations

Details of the University's marking criteria for coursework and examinations and the regulations for assessment and progression are available on the intranet/ and Gateway: <http://www.rau.ac.uk/study/academic-policies-and-procedures/assessment-regulations-and-marking-criteria>

20. Ownership of programme specification

The Programme Management Group, under the general auspices of the School of Business and Entrepreneurship, has responsibility for the management of the programme.

21. Curriculum map

The curriculum map, showing where programme learning outcomes relate to module outcomes, is appended at **Annex 1** below.

22. Career prospects

This MBA will equip students for management careers across a number of business disciplines (finance; marketing; human resource management) within businesses in the farm/ farm-related industry sector. In addition, business consultancy, innovation and entrepreneurial skills are developed and honed throughout the programme enabling the option of own business start-up opportunities.

23. Further information

Further information is available on the University website and, for current students, via the intranet and programme and module pages on Gateway.

24. Module reference sheets

(4214) Sustainable Business Strategy*
(4023) Operations Management*
(4215) Agricultural Economics*
(4216) Leadership and Change*
(4217) International Marketing Management*
(4076) Financial Management*
(4219) Sustainable Agricultural Business Principles*
(4012) Farm Business Management
(4220) Applied Research Challenge*

Choice of two electives from: International Business (4078); Corporate Finance (3041); Wine Industry (3096); Economics of the Environment (new);

Development Project Management (4080); Critical Issues in Ethical Leadership (4205); International Business, Negotiation and Trade (New); Rural Business Diversification (3011); Family Business Management (3213); Practical E-business and E-commerce (3211); Small Scale Farming and Local Food Supply (4203); Agricultural Management (4001). (Other Level 7 modules are also currently being written and so this list is not exhaustive).

* denotes new modules.

Annex 1: Curriculum Map (for specific detail of outcomes and where assessed)

Programme outcomes	Sustainable Business Strategy	Operations Management	Agricultural Economics	Leadership and Change	International Marketing Management	Financial Management	Sustainable Agricultural Business Principles	Farm Business Management	Applied Research challenge
Knowledge and Understanding									
A1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
A2	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
A3	x		x	x		x	x	x	x
A4	x			x	x	x		x	x
Intellectual Skills									
B1	x	x				x	x	x	x
B2	x		x	x		x	x	x	x
B3	x	x	x				x	x	
B4		x	x	x	x		x	x	x
B5				x					x
B6		x			x		x		x
Practical/ Professional Skills									
C1		x				x		x	
C2	x		x	x	x			x	x
C3	x	x	x			x		x	x
C4		x		x			x	x	x
C5	x	x	x	x		x		x	x
C6		x					x	x	
C7		x						x	
Transferable Skills									
D1	x			x		x	x	x	x
D2					x		x	x	
D3	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
D4					x		x	x	
D5			x					x	x