

Programme Specification: MSc Accountancy and Finance Programme (ACCA Pathway)

NOTE: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found (1) at <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/bcbs>, (2) in the Module Specifications and (3) in the Student Handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

1	Awarding Institution / Body:	Birmingham City University
2	Teaching Institution:	Birmingham City University
3	Programme accredited by:	n/a
4	Final Award:	MSc Accountancy and Finance
5	Programme Title:	Master of Science
6	UCAS Code:	
7	QAA Benchmarking Group:	Business & Management

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Aims of the programme

The programme aims to provide learners with:

Advanced preparation for career development in accounting or finance, by extending their knowledge in the core areas of the disciplines, as well as by providing them with the theoretical framework and analytical skills to cope with an increasingly complex and international accounting and finance environment.

It also aims to provide a valuable foundation for those contemplating careers in areas such as financial analysis, investment banking or fund management, all of which are likely to involve extensive use of accounting and financial information.

The course modules and structure are also designed with the aim of contributing substantially to the students' chances of achieving success at ACCA the Professional Level of ACCA examinations.

Students who successfully complete the MSc. in Accountancy and Finance should be able to:

- Critically appraise modern financial theories and models which inform and influence corporate finance, investment analysis and fund management functions.
- Measure, use and critically analyse financial information and data for financial and portfolio management decision-making.
- Undertake evaluation of corporate investment and financing decision from both from strategic and international perspectives.

- Use and critically appraise a range of management accounting issues and concepts relevant to businesses, and how the management accounting function influences aspects of control, evaluation and performance measurement.
- Value securities, appreciate a range of techniques of portfolio management and apply them to certain types of portfolios.
- Critically evaluate current issues and practices relating to the audit functions and business information systems, and appraise their respective adequacies.
- Demonstrate an understanding of current issues in corporate governance as they relate to the accounting and finance functions within the overall context of strategic risk management.
- Critically evaluate the impact of accounting theory in resolving major reporting issues and the importance of relevant academic research to the area.
- Demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of the main issues in strategic business development, organisational dynamics, of concepts, models and techniques associated with strategic decision-making in organisations.
- Evaluate the contributions of accounting and finance to the success of a business and recognise the importance of integration of their functions with the wider business strategy.
- Managed team working activities and evaluate how leadership approaches impact on organisational performance.
- Carry out an independent piece of academic research by adopting the conceptual and methodological frameworks appropriate to the specific topic of investigation.
- Demonstrate a range of transferable skills and competencies necessary to operate effectively and efficiently in a constantly changing and highly competitive global business environment.
- Progress to a doctoral study, should they wish to do so.

For those students whose first language is not English, the course also offers them the opportunity to develop high level of proficiency in the international business language of English.

9 Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated: the programme provides learners with opportunities to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes as follows:

<p>Knowledge and critical understanding of:</p> <p>1. Stage One (Postgraduate Certificate)</p> <p>1.1 The main financial theories on which modern finance is founded.</p> <p>1.2 The major issues of corporate governance issues in accounting and finance as they relate to accounting and finance functions within the overall context of strategic risk management.</p> <p>1.3 Strategic business development concepts, models and practice; the development and implementation of strategic business plans and the integration of Finance and strategy</p> <p>1.4 The analytical and communication competencies necessary for the study of accounting and finance at postgraduate level, including academic and business English (for students whose first language is not English).</p> <p>2. Stage Two (Postgraduate Diploma)</p> <p>2.1 Contextual perspectives for examining the contributions of management accounting on business strategic planning and control as well for improving the overall business performance.</p> <p>2.2 Current conceptual and practical issues in financial reporting, especially for international firms with complex group structures.</p> <p>2.3 The theoretical basis and empirical evidence for using financial ratios and elements of corporate reports in the assessment of risk/return trade-offs of corporate financial instruments and in corporate failure prediction</p> <p>2.4 The development and application of finance techniques in multinational and global contexts.</p> <p>3. Stage 3 (Masters)</p> <p>3.1 Research Skills in accounting and finance.</p> <p>3.2 The development of a research proposal, conduction of a critical literature review and the implementation of a research methodology in the investigation and analysis of research problem.</p>	<p>Teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding are acquired through lectures, workshops, case studies are used to explore concepts applied to real life situations, directed reading and research. • In term one international students, whose first language is not English, need time to adjust to the British higher education system, to the teaching/learning methods used and to the expectation that they become active participants in the learning process. The pace and presentation of lectures within the context of a workshop setting is designed to help students comprehend difficult academic and business English, in addition workshops are used to build confidence and encourage students to contribute to discussions and challenge ideas presented by lecturers or other students. • In terms two and three a similar mix of teaching/learning methods is used, but the pace of delivery is increased and more is expected of students in terms of the extent of research into subject related issues, critical evaluation of material, application of theory to practice and integration and synthesis of learning. • At the Masters stage, the programme is mostly student driven, particularly with regard to the dissertation. • As with teaching and learning, the assessment strategy combines a variety of approaches. These include business reports, academic papers, projects, case studies, presentations and examinations (case-based, open-book and closed-book).
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Skills and other attribute

<p>B. Intellectual / cognitive skills:</p> <p>1. Stages One and Two (Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma)</p> <p>1.1 Conceptual thinking. 1.2 Critical analysis, evaluation and application of critical judgement. 1.3 Relating theory to practice and vice versa. 1.4 Enquiry and research skills. 1.5 Problem definition and solution, innovation in ideas generation. 1.6 Reflection on personal practice and modification of strategy in response to analysis and evaluation. 1.7 Advanced enquiry and research skills. 1.8 Holistic thinking, integration and synthesis.</p> <p>2. Stage Three (Masters)</p> <p>2.1 Advanced enquiry and research. 2.2 Integration of theory and practice in a variety of contexts. 2.3 In-depth critical understanding of relevant theories, concepts and models. 2.4 Ability to think strategically and reframe problems. 2.5 Critical awareness of the limitations of studies and conclusions.</p>	<p>Teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As holders of first degrees, entrants to the course are assumed to have the basic intellectual and cognitive skills required to cope with and benefit from study at Masters Degree level. They are therefore likely to have some ability to think conceptually, but may well be unfamiliar with the approach in British higher education in which students are expected to challenge accepted theories and concepts, to compare and contrast different conceptual models and to apply these to practical business and management situations in a critically evaluative way. In both terms one and two therefore, these skills are developed through lecturer exposition and through discussion and application of the ideas in workshops. Assignment briefs are written to explain what the student has to do, what research is to be undertaken, and how the material collected is to be processed. Students are then expected to undertake the necessary information collection, reading and analysis, and to prepare draft assignments in order to demonstrate that they have the required intellectual and cognitive skills. Where it becomes evident only after marking of assessments that students do not possess a sufficiently high level of ability in these skills, individual tutorials are offered to provide feedback on the reasons for failing an assessment and guidance on how to prepare for re-assessment. By the masters stage, most students have developed the basic intellectual and cognitive skills required and, through individual and group work both inside and outside the classroom, further develop these skills through wider reading, information gathering, and the preparation of assessments. The development of intellectual and cognitive skills throughout the course is achieved through discussion and critical evaluation of ideas relating to the strategic importance of Accounting and Finance. Further intellectual development takes place through the dissertation process where students have to develop and implement their individual research methodology, search for relevant secondary data, undertake primary research, analyse and synthesise the findings from these studies to present an individual written report which is logical, coherent and insightful.
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<p>C. Practical, research and independent learning skills:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enquiry and research skills, leading to the development and implementation of a research methodology for a major individual project. 2. Time management and prioritisation. 3. Progressing from dependent to interdependent relationships with tutors and peers. 4. Management of own learning; experiential learning. 	<p>Teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Research Skills module acts as a firm basis for achieving an understanding of research methodology and information management, and conceptualises the study in relation to a relevant body of theory, national or international context, and organisational context. • Independent learning and student self-directed study is achieved throughout the programme via appropriately designed assignment briefs, the availability of web-based resources, library resources and assessments both within the specialist modules and in relation to the dissertation.
<p>D. Transferable / key skills:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication skills – written; listening and comprehension; speaking and presentations. 2. Team working; sensitivity to others' feelings, values and beliefs. 3. Project management. 4. IT skills. 5. Self-confidence and self-reliance. 	<p>Teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</p> <p>All students whose first language is not English are required to undertake diagnostic exercises during the induction programme and are then encouraged to attend English classes which are held on a weekly basis for at least one hour. There is a continuing focus on each of the four skills (oral, aural, written and reading) and students are able to focus on those areas where their development needs are greatest. Students are also encouraged to relate the development of their English language skills to their course related learning so that they are able to learn more quickly and effectively, and so that their assessment performance is not impaired by weaknesses in English language.</p> <p>Key transferable skills are introduced at the beginning of the programme and represent a development theme, which is reinforced throughout the programme. These skills, therefore, form the basis of formative learning through the programme. However, formal summative assessment throughout the programme is on an individual basis.</p>

10 Evaluation and improvement of quality and standards

Committees: Board of Studies Examination Board Faculty Academic Planning and Development Committee Faculty Board Professional and Postgraduate Programmes Group	Mechanisms for review and evaluation: Review and validation events Annual Monitoring Report Student feedback questionnaires External Examiners' Reports Course team meetings QAA Benchmark
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11 Regulation of Assessment

Details of the mechanisms and criteria for assessment in individual modules, and the means of differentiating awards, are published widely. Standard Postgraduate Assessment Regulations are available on the University's intranet at <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/jaws>, and individual and collective guidance is given by academic staff on their operation at appropriate times throughout the programme.

To qualify for a **Postgraduate Certificate** a student must successfully complete all required assessments and obtain a minimum of 60 credits at level 7. The pass-mark in all modules is 50%.

The award of Postgraduate Certificate is not differentiated.

To qualify for a **Postgraduate Diploma** a student must successfully complete all required assessments and obtain a minimum of 120 credits at level 7. The pass-mark in all modules is 50%.

The award of Postgraduate Diploma with Commendation is made to students who achieve an average mark of 60-69% at the first sitting in the marks awarded for Stage 2 modules equivalent to at least 60 credits.

The award of Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction is made to students who achieve an average mark of 70% at the first sitting in the marks awarded for Stage 2 modules equivalent to at least 60 credits.

To qualify for a **Master's Degree** a student must successfully complete all required assessments and obtain a minimum of 180 credits at level 7. The pass-mark in all modules is 50%.

The award of a Master's degree with Commendation is made to students who achieve an average mark of 60-69% at the first sitting in the marks awarded for Stage 3 modules equivalent to at least 60 credits.

The award of Master's Degree with Distinction is made to students who achieve an average mark of 70% at the first sitting in the marks awarded for Stage 3 modules equivalent to 60 credits.

External Examiners are appointed. Their work includes:

- Approving coursework assignments and assessment criteria.
- Approving examination papers.
- Monitoring standards through moderation of completed assessments.
- Attending Examination Boards.

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