

BA (HONOURS) BUSINESS ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1. Awarding Institution	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
2. Teaching Institution	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
3. Programme recognised by:	ICAEW
4. Final Award	BA (Hons.)
5. Programme title	Business Accounting and Finance
6. UCAS Code	NN14
7. Relevant QAA benchmarking group	Accounting
8. Date of production	April 2001 (Revised July 2002, June 2003 and April 2004)

9. Educational Aims of the Programme

- (a) To produce graduates with the following qualities:
 - (i) the knowledge, understanding, key and specific skills and general intellectual development required to make them employable in graduate positions in accounting principally, but also in related fields and to make them capable of undertaking further study appropriate to their needs for future development;
 - (ii) considerable relevant work experience and associated skills development gained through relevant work placements, which form an integral part of the degree;
 - (iii) a capacity for inquiry, abstract logical thinking and critical analysis and the ability to work independently.
- (b) To provide a programme:
 - (i) which offers students the opportunity to gain significantly greater recognition from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) than is allowed on normal accounting degrees;
 - (ii) which includes integrated work placements with PricewaterhouseCoopers, which will contribute to the approved technical work experience required by the ICAEW in order to qualify as a Chartered Accountant;
 - (iii) which combines study of both the conceptual and the applied aspects of the disciplines studied;
 - (iv) which adopts principally a social science perspective based on economics for the study of accounting, finance and related disciplines, whilst addressing a number of different contexts in which accounting operates, but in particular the accountancy profession;
 - (v) in which teaching is informed by scholarship and research and by the Department's strong professional links;
 - (vi) in which accounting and finance is related to a broader business context through both the taught programme and the experience gained through the work placements;
 - (vii) which fully meets the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Benchmark statement for Accounting degrees;
 - (viii) which fully meets the criteria for an honours degree laid down in the QAA's National Qualifications Framework;
 - (ix) which complies with University policies and QAA Codes of Practice in the areas of teaching and learning including the Code of Practice for Placement Learning.

10. (a) Intended Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, discipline-related and general key skills in the following areas:

A) Knowledge and Understanding:

- 1) The business context within which accounting and finance operate;
- 2) UK financial reporting, including consideration of alternative recognition and measurement rules and of the impact of accounting choices;
- 3) The impact of International Accounting Standards on UK financial reporting and the study of the differences between UK GAAP and IASs;
- 4) The principles of management accounting, management control and pricing;
- 5) Business and financial strategy and decision making;
- 6) The context of audit and assurance work, the work of the auditor and the UK and international regulation of auditing;
- 7) UK taxation of income and capital gains, tax planning and the principles of VAT;
- 8) UK commercial and company law;
- 9) Key research in the disciplines studied, critical evaluation of theories and empirical evidence.

B) Subject-Specific/Professional Skills:

- 1) Recording and summarising transactions;
- 2) Preparing and analysing financial statements;
- 3) Analysis of business operations for decision-making purposes;
- 4) Financial projections for decision-making and control;
- 5) Solving business problems using accounting and financial techniques;
- 6) Tax and investment planning;
- 7) Assessing audit risk and analysing control systems;
- 8) Quantitative skills required for accounting and finance;
- 9) Developing the professional attitudes required of a Chartered Accountant;
- 10) Applying technical and conceptual knowledge and skill to interdisciplinary problems.

C) Cognitive Skills:

- 1) Location, extraction and analysis of data;
- 2) Critical evaluation of arguments and evidence;
- 3) Drawing conclusions from structured, and to a lesser extent from unstructured, problems using given data or data acquired by the student.

D) Key (Transferable) Skills:

- 1) Competence in written and oral communication, presentation, numeracy, computer literacy;
- 2) Ability to work independently, through managing own learning, time management, showing initiative and adaptability;
- 3) Ability to work as a member of a team at university and on work placements;
- 4) Dealing with colleagues and client's staff in an appropriate way.

10. (b) Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
A) Knowledge and Understanding	<p>The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding is through lectures. These are supplemented by workshops, problem sessions and seminars where students are able to check their learning through practice and through discussion. In addition, some timetabled self-managed workshops will be used to facilitate student learning through team working on directed tasks. The approach reflects the fact that accounting and finance is a subject which is very suitable for a problem-solving based approach to teaching and learning. Students will be encouraged to use various sources of reading – ICAEW manuals, textbooks and articles – to supplement lecture material, to supplement classes. Students will also be encouraged to enhance their learning through student-centred project work and by analysing case studies.</p>
B) Subject-specific/professional skills	<p>Professional skills will be demonstrated in lectures with follow-up in problem sessions and workshops to enable students to develop these skills in a supportive environment where help is available. Developing competence in these skills requires practice which students will gain through workshop activity and private study at the University as well as through work experience while on placement. Development of B10 will come in the final year of the programme, when the knowledge and skills acquired are applied to interdisciplinary cases.</p>
C) Cognitive skills	<p>Data extraction and analysis skills (C1) are principally developed at the University through project work and through skills sessions in induction and within modules. In addition such skills will also be developed on placement. Critical evaluation skills (C2) are principally developed through seminar activity and through writing essays. Problem solving skills (C3) are developed through workshop activity and problem classes, as well as through work experience. Students can further enhance their cognitive skills through private study and through undertaking case study analysis and project work.</p>

D) Key (Transferable) Skills	<p>These are introduced to students through sessions in the induction programme and skills sessions within modules. IT and numeracy skills are taught within specific modules through lectures and workshops, and are used and developed further in other modules. Oral communication skills are developed (in particular) through seminars and presentations, as well as through the work placements. Students have the opportunity to develop their study skills, but there is a limit to the extent to which these can be taught. Project work and worksheets develop these skills further. Teamwork skills are developed through the use of group projects and group presentations in certain modules as well as in the timetabled self-managed workshops. These are also developed through the work placements.</p>
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10. (c) Intended Learning Outcomes	Methods of Assessment
A) Knowledge and Understanding	Knowledge and understanding is primarily assessed by unseen examinations, but also to some extent by various forms of coursework.
B) Subject-specific/ professional skills	Professional skills are assessed by unseen examinations, worksheets, projects and case studies, as well as via the placements.
C) Cognitive Skills	Cognitive skills are assessed primarily through projects and work placements (C1), unseen examinations and coursework (C2 and C3), although problem solving will also form part of the assessment of the placements.
D) Key (Transferable) Skills	The key (transferable) skills will be assessed throughout the placements. In addition, D1 and D2 are assessed through unseen examinations and coursework and D3 is assessed through group projects and presentations.

11. Programme structures and requirements, levels, modules, credits

The programme is studied over four years. Stage 1 shares a common first year with N400 (Accounting and Finance) and is based on the normal academic year with 30 weeks attendance per annum. Stages 2, 3 and 4 are based on a longer year, starting at the normal time in September but finishing in mid-July to accommodate the placement and the taught programme.

Each stage requires the study of modules with a credit value of 120. A 10 credit module consists of 100 hours of student learning time, covering lectures, small group teaching, private study, completion of coursework and revision. Modules vary in size from 10 to 40 credits.

The placements at stages 2, 3 and 4 are each worth 40 credits, as they form an integral part of the degree. They will be assessed against expected performance criteria on a pass/fail basis.

Stage 1 provides a multi-disciplinary foundation covering not only accounting and finance but also law, economics, IT, quantitative methods and management. The emphasis in accounting and finance is mostly on the applied aspects of the discipline, with the key techniques being introduced.

Stage 2 develops students' knowledge and skills, with an emphasis on technical development. Students complete ACC251 Introduction to Placements in advance of completing their first placement. This module is designed to equip students with the necessary knowledge and technical and professional skills required in order to commence their first placement. Students also study two modules (ACC252 Business Finance and ACC257 Accounting 2) which cover learning outcomes of the equivalent ICAEW Professional Stage papers. For these two modules special rules concerning assessment apply. For university progression purposes, students will be required to achieve a mark of 40%. However, to achieve an ICAEW pass, students will need to achieve a mark of 55%. ACC256 Management and Control contributes to the syllabus coverage required for the Professional Stage exemption in Business Management. The placement falls in the period January to March. Thus the teaching programme is split into two blocks, one prior to Christmas and one after Easter. Assessment will take place mainly in July.

Stage 3 covers the most demanding technical aspects of the programme as well as developing students' skills of discussion, application and analysis. The taught modules covered comprise ACC351 Auditing and Assurance, ACC352 Taxation and ACC353 Financial Reporting. As with ACC252 and ACC257, these modules have been designed to cover the learning outcomes of the equivalent Professional Stage papers of the ICAEW. Similarly in terms of assessment, for University progression purposes, students will be required to achieve a mark of 40%. However, to achieve an ICAEW pass, students will need to achieve a mark of 55%. The Stage 3 placement also falls in the period January to March with the result that the teaching programme is split into two blocks, one prior to Christmas and one after Easter. Assessment will take place in July.

Finally Stage 4 concentrates on developing higher level academic skills, appropriate to an undergraduate programme. These include skills of analysis and critical evaluation, knowledge of research issues and their impact on practice and the requirement to apply knowledge in an integrated manner thereby demonstrating the ability to synthesise knowledge from different subject areas. The Stage 4 placement falls in the period November to March and the teaching programme is again split into two blocks, one in an 8 week period starting in early September and the other after Easter. Assessment will take place mainly in July.

The programme is structured as follows:

Stage 1	Module	Credits	Compulsory	Core
ACC101	Foundations of Accounting	20	Y	Y
ACC102	Introduction to Information Technology	10	Y	Y
ACC106	Introduction to Business Finance	10	Y	Y
BUS101	Introduction to Management and Organizations	20	Y	Y
ACC109	Quantitative Business Methods	20	Y	Y
ECO101	Economic Analysis	20	Y	Y
LAW154	Introduction to English Law and the Law of Contract	20	Y	Y
Stage 2		Credits	Compulsory	Hons
ACC251	Introduction to Placements	10	Y	Y
ACC252	Business Finance *	25	Y	Y
ACC256	Management and Control	20	Y	Y
ACC257	Accounting 2 *	25	Y	Y
ACC255	Stage 2 Placement *	40	Y	N
Stage 3				
ACC351	Auditing and Assurance *	25	Y	Y
ACC352	Taxation *	25	Y	Y
ACC353	Financial Reporting *	30	Y	Y
ACC354	Stage 3 Placement *	40	Y	N
Stage 4				
ACC451	Contemporary Issues in Accounting and Finance	20	Y	Y
ACC452	Case Studies in Business, Accounting and Finance	20	Y	Y
ACC453	Financial Analysis	20	Y	Y
ACC454	Strategy	20	Y	Y
ACC455	Stage 4 Placement *	20	Y	N

Modules marked “*” have specific relevance in terms of progress towards the ICAEW Chartered Accountant qualification. Modules ACC252, ACC257, ACC351, ACC352 and ACC353 cover the equivalent papers from the ICAEW’s Professional Stage syllabus. In order to achieve an ICAEW Professional Stage pass, for each of these modules, students will be required to achieve a mark of 55%. However, for University purposes, in terms of progression and awards for the degree programme, these modules will be considered in the usual way.

The other modules marked with an “*” are the placement modules ACC255, ACC354 and ACC455. These modules contribute to the approved technical work experience required by the ICAEW to qualify as a Chartered Accountant. However, if students satisfy the University’s requirements for progression, but fail to achieve an ICAEW pass in any of the modules ACC252, ACC257, ACC351, ACC352 or ACC353 after two attempts, then this will usually affect whether subsequent placements continue to contribute to the approved technical work experience required by the ICAEW to qualify as a Chartered Accountant.

12. Criteria for Admission

A/AS Levels and AVCE Qualifications

AAB from 18 units including a minimum of two A levels and excluding General Studies. AVCE (Double Award) in Business accepted if offered with an A level. GCSE Mathematics grade A required if not taken at A or AS level.

Scottish Qualifications

AAAB at Higher Grade. Mathematics required at Standard Grade 1 (or equivalent at Intermediate 2) if not offered at Higher Grade. Combinations of Highers and Advanced Highers accepted.

International Baccalaureate

A minimum of 36-8 points in the IB with three subjects at grade 5 or above at Higher Level including Mathematics.

Irish Leaving Certificate

AAABB at Higher Level. Junior Certificate Maths required at Grade A if not offered at Higher Level.

Access Qualifications

For candidates offering Access to HE courses, a module in Business Studies is desirable (at Distinction level for HEFC).

BTEC National Diploma

BTEC National Diploma at overall at DDD/DDM. Business-related subjects preferred.

Overseas students

Appropriate overseas qualifications will be considered as well as A levels. Evidence

of adequate English language skills to complete the programme and undertake the work placements required.

Mature students

Each case will be considered on its merits, although evidence of successful recent study and relevant work experience is advantageous.

Applications are welcomed from students with disabilities.

Admissions procedures

Applications will be via UCAS. Based on the UCAS form, selected applicants are asked to complete a supplementary application form, which together with the UCAS form is used to decide who to invite for interview. Short-listed applicants are invited to attend an Open Day/Selection Centre. This allows students to visit the University and meet staff and students in an Open Day format. The selection centre involves an interview and other assessment tasks and will be conducted with the help of our partners PwC, although ultimate responsibility for recruitment rests with the University.

13. Support for Students and Their Learning

- Induction programme for orientation and introducing study skills;
- Sessions within taught modules on skills development;
- Skills development whilst on placement;
- Student handbooks and module guides;
- Website;
- All students allocated a personal tutor to assist them with personal problems and to take an overview of their progress;
- Student e-mail and personal access to the Degree Programme Director and tutorial staff;
- Students on placement will be allocated a member of academic staff as their placement tutor. S/he will be in contact by telephone or e-mail with students on placement to check progress, and will also meet with each student during the placement, as well as liaising with relevant PwC staff;
- While on placement students will be allocated a Placement Manager by PwC, who will monitor their progress and meet them periodically to check on progress;
- Placements will include a launch event by way of induction and a wrap-up event at the end where the assessment of the placement will be settled. Regular contact will be maintained between the University and PwC throughout the placements to ensure that problems are addressed and managed in a proactive manner;
- Access to the Disability Unit which provides assistance and guidance;
- Access to Student Counselling Service;
- Access to Careers Service;
- Excellent University Library facilities including CD ROMS and on-line services;
- Research library of accounts of top 100 UK companies in the Department;
- Up-to-date IT facilities throughout the campus.

14. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards

- Student questionnaires issues to graduates, finalists and students at stages 1, 2 and 3;
- Module and staff member questionnaires;
- Biennial course review;
- Recognition by ICAEW;
- Peer observation of teaching;
- Internal subject review;
- External examiner reports;
- Annual module review;
- Annual review of progression rates, degree classes achieved, graduate employment statistics.

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- A separate Board of Studies including representatives from PwC;
- Business School undergraduate Degree Programme Director meetings (to include aspects of teaching and learning);
- A Staff Student Committee specifically for this degree programme including representatives from PwC;
- Employers' Panel;
- Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee;
- University Teaching Committee;
- Examination Board including representatives from PwC.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience

- Staff Student Committee;
- Student representation on the Board of Studies;
- Student evaluation questionnaires;
- Informal discussion between students and staff.

15. Regulation of Assessment

Assessment rules and Honours classification

- Minimum passmark is 40% for every module;
- Modules are assessed by varying combinations of unseen written examinations and coursework, including 100% coursework and 100% examination;
- Information on assessment will be available in the degree programme handbooks and on the module outlines, which will be available on the website;
- All stage 1, 2 and 3 modules must be passed before students can proceed. There are two resit opportunities for the taught modules;
- Being dismissed as an employee by PwC would mean failing the placement and normally result in disciplinary action by the University leading to being dismissed from the programme;
- Failing a placement would normally mean failing the programme;
- Degree classification is based on the weighted average result for stages 2, 3 and 4 of all taught modules, i.e. excluding the placements. The weightings are 25% for Stages 2 and 3 and 50% for stage 4;
- Honours marks are based on the following University scale:

<i>Mark</i>	<i>Degree Class</i>
≥ 70%	First
60-69%	Upper second
50-59%	Lower second
40-49%	Third
< 40%	Fail

Role of external examiners

The external examiner(s) is/are (a) distinguished member(s) of the academic or professional community appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee and his/her/their role is to:

- Approve assessment on modules which count for honours;
 - Review samples of examination scripts and coursework to check standards and assessment procedures;
 - Attend the Examination Board meeting;
 - Ensure that ICAEW standards are met on the five key modules which correspond to the ICAEW's Professional Stage examinations;
 - Report back to the University.
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16. Indicators of Quality and Standards

- Recognition by ICAEW as covering the material in the Professional Stage of the Institute's examinations;
- Recognition that the placements will contribute to the approved technical work experience required by the ICAEW in order to qualify as a Chartered Accountant;
- Provision of placements and support by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

As this is a new programme, it is more difficult to provide clear evidence of indicators of quality and standards. However, the Accounting and Finance subject group (within the Business School) achieves very good graduate employment rates and enjoys excellent relations with the major accounting firms and with other employers of accountants in the region.

17. Other Sources of Information

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes which a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. More detailed information will be available in due course in the degree programme handbook and in module documentation. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Key information about the programme can be found in:

- The degree programme regulations;
- The University's Undergraduate Prospectus;
- The Department's Undergraduate Brochure;
- The Programme Brochure (as revised from June 2002);
- The Programme website (www.ncl.ac.uk/flyingstart).