

BA (HONOURS) ACCOUNTING STUDIES 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 (Honours)
5. Programme title	Accounting Studies
6. UCAS Code	Not Applicable (NN49)
7. Relevant QAA benchmarking group	Accounting
8. Date of production	May 2001 (Revised July 2002, 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) a capacity for inquiry, abstract logical thinking and critical analysis and the ability to work independently.
- (b) To provide a programme:
 - (i) which combines study of both the conceptual and the applied aspects of the disciplines studied;
 - (ii) 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;
 - (iii) in which teaching is informed by scholarship and research and by the Department's strong professional links;
 - (iv) in which accounting and finance is related to a broader business context;
 - (v) which fully meets the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Benchmark statement for Accounting degrees;
 - (vi) which fully meets the criteria for an honours degree laid down in the QAA's National Qualifications Framework;
 - (vii) which complies with University policies and QAA Codes of Practice in the areas of teaching and 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. 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. 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.

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 gain through workshop activity and private study. 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 through project work and through skills sessions in induction and within modules. 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. Students can further enhance their cognitive skills through private study and through undertaking case study analysis and project work.</p>

D. Key (Transferable) Skills	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, but are further used and developed in other modules. Oral communication skills are developed (in particular) through seminars and presentations. 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.
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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.
C. Cognitive Skills	Cognitive skills are assessed primarily through projects and work placements (C1), unseen examinations and coursework (C2 and C3).
D. Key (Transferable) Skills	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

There is no stage 1 for this programme, as the programme exists to take transfers from NN14 at the end of stages 1, 2 and 3. Stages 2, 3 and 4 are based on an extended academic year, starting at the normal time in September but finishing in mid-July with a break from December to March.

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 can vary in size from 10 to 30 credits.

Stage 2 develops students' knowledge and skills, with an emphasis on technical development. Students also study two modules (ACC252 Business Finance and ACC257 Accounting 2) which cover learning outcomes of the ICAEW's Professional Stage papers. ACC256 Management and Control contributes to the syllabus coverage required for the Professional Stage exemption in Business Management. ACC222 Interpreting Company Accounts completes the programme of study. 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. In terms of assessment, for University progression purposes, students will be required to achieve a mark of 40%. If students have subsequently completed Stage 2 of the Business Accounting and Finance programme, they will also be able to achieve an ICAEW Professional Stage pass by achieving a mark of 55%. 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 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 set out below.

Stage 2		Credits	Compulsory	Hons	Core
ACC222	Interpreting Company Accounts	10	Y	Y	Y
ACC252	Business Finance	25	Y	Y	Y
ACC256	Management and Control	20	Y	Y	Y
ACC257	Accounting 2	25	Y	Y	Y
Stage 3					
ACC351	Auditing and Assurance	25	Y	Y	Y
ACC352	Taxation	25	Y	Y	Y
ACC353	Financial Reporting	30	Y	Y	Y
Stage 4					
ACC451	Contemporary Issues in Accounting and Finance	20	Y	Y	Y
ACC452	Case Studies in Business, Accounting, and Finance	20	Y	Y	Y
ACC453	Financial Analysis	20	Y	Y	Y
ACC454	Strategy	20	Y	Y	Y

Honours modules count for degree classification purposes. Core modules must be passed with a mark of at least 40% before a student can proceed.

12. Criteria for Admission

Students may transfer onto the programme from NN14 Business Accounting and Finance at the end of stage 1, the end of stage 2 or the end of stage 3. There is no entry direct onto the programme.

13. Support for Students and Their Learning

- Induction programme for orientation and introducing study skills;
- Sessions within taught modules on skills development;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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

- Board of Studies;
- Business School undergraduate Degree Programme Director meetings (to include aspects of teaching and learning);
- Staff Student Committee;
- Departmental Employers' Panel;
- Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee;
- University Teaching Committee;
- Examination Board.

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 pass mark 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 2 and 3 modules must be passed before students can proceed. There are two resit opportunities;
- Degree classification is based on the weighted average result for stages 2, 3 and 4 of all taught modules. 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.

16. Indicators of Quality and Standards

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