

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BA (Honours)
4	Programme Title	BA (Honours) Business Accounting and Finance/BA (Honours) Accounting Studies
5	UCAS/Programme Code	NN14/NN49
6	Programme Recognised by	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Accounting
8	FHEQ Level	Honours
9	Date written/revised	May 2007

10 Programme Aims

To produce graduates with the following qualities:

- 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;
- considerable relevant work experience and associated skills development gained through relevant work placements, which form an integral part of the degree;
- a capacity for inquiry, abstract logical thinking and critical analysis and the ability to work independently.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas:

- an understanding of accounting and finance in a business context through an approach which combines study of both the conceptual and the applied aspects of the disciplines studied;
- practical experience of the subjects studied through integrated work placements;
- the opportunity to complete the degree as part-qualified Chartered Accountants arising from the significantly greater degree recognition/credit afforded to the degree programme by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), compared with other accounting degrees;
- the recognition/credit comprises both academic progress through performance in relevant University modules and integrated work placements with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), which contribute to the approved technical work experience required by the ICAEW in order to qualify as a Chartered Accountant.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have knowledge and understanding of:

- A1 - The business context within which accounting and finance operate;

A2 - Financial reporting, including consideration of alternative recognition and measurement rules and of the impact of accounting choices;
A3 - The impact of accounting standards on financial reporting both in terms of international and UK standards;
A4 - Principles of management accounting, management control and pricing;
A5 - Business and financial strategy, valuation and decision making;
A6 - Audit and assurance, the work of the auditor and auditing standards;
A7 - Taxation of income and capital gains, tax planning, VAT and other relevant taxes and developments in the taxation system;
A8 - UK commercial and company law;
A9 - Relevant research in the disciplines studied, critical evaluation of theories and empirical evidence.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding is through lectures and classes. Classes whether they be workshops, problem sessions or seminars enable students to develop their learning through practice and through discussion. 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 and to supplement classes. Students will also be encouraged to enhance their learning through student-centred project work and by analysing case studies.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding is primarily assessed by unseen examinations, but also to some extent by various forms of coursework.

Practical/Professional Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:
B1 – Appropriately record and summarise accounting transactions;
B2 - Prepare and analyse financial statements;
B3 - Analyse business operations for decision-making purposes;
B4 – Prepare and understand financial projections for decision-making and control;
B5 - Solve business problems using accounting and financial techniques;
B6 – Demonstrate an understanding of tax and investment planning;
B7 - Assess audit risk and analyse control systems;
B8 – Apply relevant quantitative skills required for accounting and finance;
B9 – Demonstrate the professional attitudes required of a Chartered Accountant;
B10 - Apply technical and conceptual knowledge and skill to interdisciplinary problems.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Practical/professional skills will be demonstrated in lectures and classes. Follow-up classes include 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.

Assessment Strategy
Practical/professional skills are assessed by unseen examinations, worksheets, projects and case studies, as well as via the placements.
Intellectual Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: C1 – Identify, extract and analyse of relevant data; C2 – Undertake critical evaluation of arguments and evidence; C3 - Drawing conclusions from structured, and to a lesser extent from unstructured, problems using given data or data acquired by the student.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Data skills (C1) are principally developed 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 intellectual skills through private study and through undertaking case study analysis and project work.
Assessment Strategy
Such 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.
Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: D1 – Demonstrate competence in written and oral communication, presentation, numeracy and computer literacy; D2 – Demonstrate the ability to work independently, through managing own learning, time management, showing initiative and adaptability; D3 – Demonstrate the ability to work as a member of a team at university and on work placements; D4 – Demonstrate professionalism in the interaction with colleagues and client’s staff in the workplace and in personal presentation and conduct.
Teaching and Learning Methods
These are introduced to students through sessions within modules, including during the Introduction to Professional Practice module in year one. 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 throughout the programme. Teamwork skills are developed through the use of group projects and group presentations in certain modules. These are also developed through the work placements.

Assessment Strategy

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.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

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

Each stage requires the study of modules with a credit value of 120. Modules vary in size from 10 to 40 credits. Placements are offered for the Business Accounting and Finance degree programme 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. Placements are not offered for the Accounting Studies degree programme and accordingly stages 2, 3 and 4 of this programme comprise 80 taught credits. Students are not recruited directly to this programme and it exists only to provide a fall back route to graduation for students from the Business Accounting and Finance degree.

Stage 1 provides a multi-disciplinary foundation covering not only accounting and finance but also law, economics, IT, quantitative methods and business. The emphasis in accounting and finance is mostly on the applied aspects of the discipline, with the key techniques being introduced. The Introduction to professional practice module is designed to start the development of students' practical, professional and transferable skills.

Building on Stage 1, Stages 2 and 3 aim to develop students' knowledge and skills, with an emphasis on the technical and professional aspects of accounting and finance. The syllabus includes modules that have been designed to satisfy the learning outcomes of the ICAEW's Professional Stage examinations.

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 starting in early September and the other after Easter. Assessment takes place in June.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

A key feature of both the Business Accounting and Finance and the Accounting Studies degree programmes is the progress that they enable students to make towards the ICAEW's Chartered Accountant Qualification

Modules ACC1001 Foundations of Accounting, ACC1051 Introduction to Professional Practice, LAW1054 Introduction to English Law and the Law of Contract, ACC2052 Business Finance, ACC2056 Management and Control and ACC2058 Principles of Taxation allow exemption from corresponding papers in the ICAEW Professional Stage examinations, subject to students achieving a mark of 50% or more in the module assessment (an ICAEW pass). Modules ACC2059 Financial Accounting for Business, ACC3051 Auditing and Assurance, ACC3052 Taxation and ACC3053 Financial Reporting also allow exemption from corresponding papers in the ICAEW Professional Stage examinations, subject to students achieving a mark of 55% or more in the module assessment (an ICAEW pass). However, for University purposes, in terms of progression and awards for the degree programme, these modules will be considered in the usual way.

Modules ACC2055 Stage 2 Placement, ACC3054 Stage 3 Placement and ACC4055 Stage 4 Placement contribute to the approved technical work experience required by the ICAEW to qualify as a Chartered Accountant. The placements form part of the Business Accounting and Finance degree programme but are not offered with the Accounting Studies degree programme.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

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, and GCSE English grade B required if not taken at A or AS level.

Scottish Qualifications

AAABB 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. Students will be expected to demonstrate English language skills to the equivalent of an IELTS score of 7.0.

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.

14 Support for Student Learning**Induction**

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming_to_newcastle/orientation.phtml)

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification.

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml> In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare.phtml>

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/acfacilities.phtml>

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language test in the Language Centre. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The Language Centre houses a range of resources for learning other languages which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/facilities/langcen.phtml>

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

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and/or at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. Further information is at www.thestudentsurvey.com/ With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Accreditation reports

Relevant staff from the University and ICAEW meet periodically to review and monitor progress and to identify and resolve an operational issues. An annual meeting is held between the University and the ICAEW at which the External Examiner for the programme attends and delivers a report.

Additional mechanisms

A Project team comprising representatives from the University, PwC and the ICAEW oversees the operation of the degree programme including the placements. Where relevant, agreed policy (especially with regard to the placements) is taken forward to the Board of Studies for approval.

16 Regulation of assessment

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations and Undergraduate Examination Conventions.

In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage for the Business Accounting and Finance degree and 80 credits at each of Stages 2, 3 and 4 for the Accounting Studies degree. All modules are core and require a pass at 40%. There are resit opportunities, with certain restrictions.

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/teaching plans. All stage 1, 2 and 3 modules must be passed before students can proceed. There are two re-sit opportunities for the taught modules, but there is no re-sit opportunity for the Placement modules.

Where students fail to meet PwC's or the ICAEW's professional standards of conduct or performance they will normally leave the Business Accounting and Finance degree programme. Depending on the circumstances, such students would normally transfer to the Accounting Studies degree programme.

Overall 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:

Mark	Degree Class
□ 70%	First
60-69%	Upper second – Second Class First Division
50-59%	Lower second – Second Class Second Division
40-49%	Third Class
< 40%	Fail

Role of External Examiner

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;
- Provide assurance to the ICAEW concerning quality and standards relating to the course modules which correspond to the ICAEW's Professional Stage;
- Report back to the University.

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

- The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>);
- The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk);
- The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/>);
- The Degree Programme Handbook;
- The Programme Area Brochure;
- The Programme Brochure;
- The Programme website (see www.ncl.ac.uk/flyingstart).

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.