School of Natural and Environmental Sciences

BSc(Hons) Agri-Business Management (N280)

Degree Programme Information
ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-2020

Supplement to the School Undergraduate Handbook
Welcome to Agri-Business Management

Welcome to the BSc Agri-Business Management (ABM) degree programme at Newcastle University. Your programme has a strong heritage and reputation. Founded in 1987, it was the first of its kind in the UK. With 30 years of continuing operation, the ABM programme has successfully graduated students to remarkable careers in the UK agri-food industry and beyond. We are pleased to have you as part of the ABM ‘family’ and want to ensure that your studies at Newcastle University are both rewarding and enjoyable.

As Degree Programme Director I am dedicated to your academic progress and achievement. You are making a large commitment in money and effort and we want to provide you with clear guidelines on what you can expect in terms of the learning experience as well as the support available to you. This booklet provides essential information about the ABM degree programme and should be read in conjunction with the School’s Undergraduate Handbook.

The successful delivery of your degree programme is a team effort involving a large number of teaching and administrative staff who are committed to ensuring that your time at Newcastle is happy and productive. Naturally, an effective learning process involves a two-way interaction, so we also want you to be fully engaged, enthusiastic and ambitious. What you get back does reflect what you put in! However, please do speak with your personal tutor or with me if you have concerns about any aspect of your degree programme.

I wish you the very best in your degree studies.

Karl Christensen
(Degree Programme Director)

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BSc Agri-Business Management (ABM) Degree

The ABM degree is primarily aimed at developing students’ knowledge and skills to manage the production, processing and distribution of food and agricultural products from the farm gate to consumers in national and international markets. Students will develop an understanding of core business management disciplines such as marketing, economics, data analysis, accounting and finance and human resource management in the context of their application to agri-food supply chain. We also make the most of our status as one of the foremost and largest universities for agriculture in the country, with a range of topics relating to the operation of rural enterprises and study visits to the University’s own farming businesses and other agro-food businesses in the region.

As well as developing your subject specific technical and knowledge skills, your degree programme also aims to foster your general transferable skills. These are core skills and abilities that can be applied to a wide range of jobs and industries. Such transferable skills include abilities to: manage your time efficiently; communicate effectively in written and oral formats; apply problem solving and analytical capabilities; work in teams or take leadership. We structure our modules such that both knowledge and transferable skills are integrated and naturally acquired throughout the programme. However, your transferable skills can also be developed and enhanced by joining one of the societies and sports organisations of Newcastle University.

Programme Aims and Objectives

Aims

Graduates in Agribusiness Management acquire knowledge on a range of applied social-science disciplines as well as appropriate analytical skills to develop successful careers in business management, particularly, though not exclusively, in the agro-food sector.

Objectives

Graduates should:

a) have an understanding of the principles and relevance of management, and also of economics and marketing, to contemporary public and business issues;
b) have acquired specific knowledge of the agro-food sector;
c) be able to apply social science principles to inform and guide decision-making in business and in the analysis of public policy issues through logical reasoning and ethical judgement;
d) be comfortable with professional terminology and concepts in business management;
e) be comfortable with both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques used in business management;
f) be competent in the use of standard office automation software and, as appropriate, more specialised data analysis software;
g) be able, both individually and as part of a team, to organise, analyse and solve problems using available information and personal judgement; and,
h) be able to understand communication processes and to communicate effectively, both verbally and in written form.
Course Structure

The Agri-business Management degree comprises a mix of business and social science disciplines. You will also have opportunity to take specific modules in agronomic and food sciences.

In Stage 1 you will focus on the foundation disciplines of your degree (finance, marketing, economics, management, agri-food systems). At Stages 2 and 3 you will build upon these core disciplines and develop your professional skills. In addition, you will choose optional modules that enable you to tailor your degree in accordance with your personal and career interests. The choice of option modules is something you may wish to discuss with your tutor. You may also consult individual module leaders.


The listing of modules is also provided towards the end of this supplement. In addition you can find more detailed information on individual modules through the module catalogue: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/module-catalogue/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/module-catalogue/).

Stage 1

In Stage 1 of the Honours Degree programme in Agriculture, there is no choice about which modules you will study, i.e. all ABM students are required to study the same 7 modules (120 credits) at Stage 1. These Modules are listed below and more detail about the content of each of the modules is provided in the Module Outlines, which can be accessed from the School web page.

Students must complete, and satisfy the examiners in all modules at Stage 1 before they can progress to Stage 2.

Stage 2

In Stage 2 you are required to complete 5 compulsory modules (80 credits) and choose a further 40 credits from a list of approved optional modules. The titles of the core and option modules are listed below and further detail about the content of each of the modules can be obtained from the School web page.

Honours students must complete and satisfy the examiners in all modules at Stage 2 before they can progress to Stage 3.

Optional Placement Year

Upon completion of Stage 2 and before entering Stage 3, candidates have the opportunity to spend the equivalent of one academic year in a placement approved by the Degree Programme Director/Placement Coordinator. Students choosing this opportunity will graduate with a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Agri-Business Management with Placement. The placement may be within the UK or abroad. If a candidate is not successful in securing a placement, or fails the assessment of the placement year, then the candidate will be required to transfer to Stage 3 of N280. Permission to undertake a placement is subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director.
Stage 3

In Stage 3 you are required to take 4 compulsory modules (70 credits) which includes a dissertation with a valency of 30 credits. The remaining 50 credits you choose from the optional modules listed in the programme regulations (see below).

If you are to make the most of the final year, it is important that you are enthusiastic about your subjects, as they will all involve a considerable amount of private study time.

Teaching Methods

Most modules are taught principally by lectures, some will also involve computer practicals, tutorials, visiting speakers and/or study visits.

In Stage 1 you will often find that modules are shared with taught other related degree programmes and the group size can therefore be large. Please do not hesitate to contact the module leader if you need help or advice about additional reading.

Some courses also provide tutorials to augment the lectures. Assignments may be set and discussed in these sessions, and again these may contribute to the final mark for a module. Tutorials provide an opportunity for you to seek clarification of some points, which you may not have understood, from the lectures. The more you contribute to them, the more you are likely to benefit.

Teaching in Stage 3 usually places much less emphasis on formal lectures, and a greater emphasis on seminars, tutorials and projects in which informal discussions between staff and students play a vital role. You will be expected to read and research certain topics prior to seminars and tutorials, and will be expected to contribute to discussions during them. Your contributions (both formal and informal) on these occasions may be assessed. You will be informed in advance if this is to be the case.

Individual modules may also involve visits to farms and other agri-food businesses, linked to projects or other written exercises and/or contributions from visiting speakers.

The dissertation, which has a valency of 30 credits is an opportunity to study a subject of your own choice in depth and to develop your report writing skills. As part of the dissertation, you will be required to make a presentations of your work which will be held in the middle of the first semester. As well as the formal presentation, you will be required to answer any questions raised by staff or fellow students.
Reading and Data Resources

Students are expected to engage in independent reading and study beyond the core lecture/class material. Suggested reading lists will be supplied by each module leader.

In addition, ABM students should keep up-to-date with topical issues through popular business media such as the Financial Times and The Economist. The University library maintains electronic subscriptions of these publication which you can access free of charge. You can also conduct market insight and company searches through news article databases such as https://www.nexis.com/

You should bookmark the Newcastle Library Business page http://libguides.ncl.ac.uk/business which provides useful pointers including links to key market research data providers such as Mintel and Passport.

There are lots of useful data sites providing general economic as well as sector specific statistics:

General:
- Office of National Statistics https://www.ons.gov.uk/
- Bank of England http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/Pages/home.aspx
- UK Data Archive https://www.data-archive.ac.uk/

Agri-food specific data (farming and commodities):
- Farm Business Survey (England): http://www.farmbusinesssurvey.co.uk/
- Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (sector stats and market briefings): https://ahdb.org.uk/

Assessment

Modules are marked according to the convention:

- First Class >70%
- Upper second class 60-69
- Lower second class 50-59
- Third class 40-49
- Fail Honours <40
All modules will be examined by the end of the semester in which they are taught. Most will involve a formal examination and an assessment of coursework. The exact breakdown of marks for each component is either listed in the module outline or will be fully explained at the start of the module. Please ensure that you understand the assessment method for each module.

Formal examinations for modules with a valency of 10 credits will normally be a two hour examination. All modules will be examined by the end of the semester in which they are taught. In-course assessments may take the form of essays, projects, numerical exercises, practical exercises or oral examinations.

You are reminded of the School’s examination conventions with respect to the submission of continuous assessment work. The school has a set policy for late submissions, so you should be careful to submit all assessments well in advance of the deadline. If work is submitted within 7 calendar days of the deadline, it will be capped at the pass mark (40 for undergraduate programmes). If you submit a piece of work more than 7 days after the deadline, it will receive a mark of zero.

You are also required to retain and, if asked, to make available to the examiners, any or all of the continuously assessed work which contributes to your degree and which has been returned to you after marking. You should therefore be able to produce, if required to do so, work from both Stage 2 and Stage 3.

In addition to the normal internal marking, Honours examinations (Stage 2 and 3 Modules) will be subject to scrutiny by an external examiner from another University. This also applies to the dissertation.

**Contribution to Final Degree Classification**

**Stage 1**

There is no formal carry-over of marks from Stage 1 to later Stages of the Degree Programme. However, it is important to remember that you cannot progress to Stage 2 until you have satisfied the examiners in all 7 Stage 1 modules (i.e. you have achieved a mark of 40% or more in each module).

Knowledge that you gain from study of Stage 1 modules forms the basis of your future studies in Stage 2 and Stage 3. Therefore, it is beneficial for you to aim to do as well as you can – not just to achieve the minimum pass mark of 40%. Generally, students that perform well in Stage 1 examinations do better in the remainder of their degree programme than students who only achieve a borderline pass at the end of Stage 1. Those at the borderline generally tend to fail more examinations and, as a consequence have more resits.

**Stage 2**

In Stage 2 the normal rule applies, that students must satisfy the examiners in all 120 credits at Stage 2 before they can progress to Stage 3. Also, in this Degree Programme the marks awarded for assessments in Stage 2 contribute to your final degree classification. The weighted mean of your Stage 2 results will contribute 25% of the marks determining your final grade.
Stage 3

The 120 Stage 3 credits contribute 75% to your overall average mark, the remaining 25% having been decided at Stage 2. Your final degree classification is therefore based partly on your performance at Stage 2, but mostly on your performance at Stage 3.

Your final grade is decided on the basis of the Stage 2 and Stage 3 average. A full description can be found in the University Regulations, Undergraduate Examination Conventions.

Information about the dissertation, the rules relating to it and some hints for your guidance are presented as a separate handbook.
Programme Regulations: 2019/20

All Programme Regulations – showing modules for each Stage of study – can be found at: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2019-2020/sciences.php

Health and Safety

All candidates are required to attend direction on best practice in management of health and safety at the university and on-site visits. Health and safety is integral to the ethos of the school of Natural and Environmental Science. The school will make all students aware of the importance of Health and safety at all times during the induction week, however the introduction is intended to encourage all participants to consider how they can better plan and manage health and safety of themselves and their colleagues throughout their time at Newcastle and into their professional status. Failure to attend the health and safety briefing during induction week will preclude a candidate from participating in university activities until the necessary training has been undertaken.

Staff Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
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Management of the BSc Agri-Business Management Degree Programme

The Agri-Business Management and Food Business Management and Marketing degrees are managed by a Teaching Group comprising the programme-specific teaching staff and jointly chaired by:

Mr Karl Christensen (Degree Programme Director: ABM)
Dr Orla Collins (Degree Programme Director FBMM)

External Examiner for BSc Agri-Business Management

The quality and standards of the degree programme are scrutinised by an External Examiner. The University requires its external examiners to:

a) confirm whether the standards of the University’s awards meet or exceed the academic standards specified in external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the UK Quality Code, subject benchmark statements, and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;

b) confirm whether the academic standards of the University’s awards are consistent with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;

c) report on whether the University’s processes for assessment measure student achievement rigorously and fairly and are conducted in line with University policies and regulations;

d) identify, where appropriate, examples of exemplary practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment; comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh-extexam-policy.pdf

The current External Examiner for BSc Agri-Business Management is:

Professor Stefano Pascucci
Business School,
Penryn Campus,
G16 The SERSF Building,
Cornwall,
TR10 9EZ
Student Charter

The University’s Student Charter is available on the internet at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/pre-arrival/regulations/#studentcharter. It is also provided to all students as part of the Student Guide. In the Student Charter, the University undertakes to provide you with access to ‘high standards of teaching, support, advice and guidance’.

The Student Charter requires that students are provided with a ‘programme handbook which details any professional requirements, contact hours, mode of course delivery, assessment criteria, examination arrangements and regulations, academic guidance and support, and appeals and complaints procedures’. The purpose of this summary is to help you locate further details about this key information in your school handbook.

Your school handbook also contains a range of other valuable information, so you should read it thoroughly and retain a copy for future reference.

Your attention is also drawn to the Student Charter Supplementary Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Further information on this can be found at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/pre-arrival/regulations/#studentcharter

Summary of Programme Commitments

BSc Agri-Business Management is a three-year full-time modular programme consisting of 120 credits per year for three years. You will have two types of modules, 10 credit modules run for a semester, while 20 credits modules are taught for two semesters. A 10 credits being equivalent to 100 hours of study time (contact time and private study).

The modules you will study have a variety of approaches to teaching and learning. In some modules the material will be delivery in a class lecture style with a sequence of related topics in a given discipline. In other modules most content is delivered in seminar session. Finally, other modules are taught in a workshop format where a guest lecture or a visit will focus on a series of related themes and current issues.

The Agri-Business Management programme provides training in transferable skills and personal development. The University maps these skills according to the Graduate Skills Framework: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/str-gsf-framework.pdf

Each of your modules will be clearly linked to the learning and teaching activities and some of which will be assessed. You will be able to identify which skills are present in each module by looking at the module catalogue entry (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/module-catalogue/). Identifying the skills present in each module that you take will help you to recognise key skills that you can mention in interviews and on your CV.
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<th><strong>Agri-Business Management BSc</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Average number of contact hours for this stage / programme:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mode of delivery:</strong></td>
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