

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MSc
4	Programme Title	Strategic Planning and Investment
5	UCAS/Programme Code	5156
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Business and Management
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Date written/revised	Revised May 2010

10 Programme Aims

1. To provide students with the opportunity to engage in the advanced study of managerial decision making and investment.
2. To enable participants to prepare for and /or develop a career in management accounting/ financial planning/ corporate investment.
3. To enable participants to develop the ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of management accounting, investment and finance in a thorough, systematic, informed and creative way.
4. To enable participants to convert theory into practice from a critical and informed perspective so as to advance the effectiveness and competitiveness of organisations.

More specifically the aims are:

1. To provide advanced study of managerial accounting decisions in a variety of organisational contexts.
2. To produce graduates with the necessary specialist knowledge and skills appropriate to pursue careers in financial planning and investment.
3. To expose students to a variety of learning experiences.
4. To develop transferable skills including report writing, personal and interpersonal skills, presentation skills, group working skills and an appreciation of working in a multicultural environment.
5. To produce graduates able to understand, explain and apply an integrated approach to financial planning as a means of improving organisational performance.
6. To provide an understanding of the contribution of life long learning and personal development to both individual and organisational development.
7. To produce highly marketable graduates who are able to make an immediate contribution to their organisation.

11 Learning Outcomes

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The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Masters Awards in Business and Management and provides students with opportunities to demonstrate disciplinary competency by developing the key principles and theories in their subject area and combines theory with the application of skills required to generate solutions within their discipline.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 Be able to demonstrate an integrated approach to financial planning and its impact on business performance.
- A2 Understand the importance of organisational context in managerial decision-making, including product/ service type, mode of service, size of company, type of industry, stage in the business life cycle and the degree of internationalisation of the business.
- A3 Be able to critically apply methods of financial planning, managerial control and financial market structures.
- A4 Have a general understanding of the accounting processes and a detailed knowledge of management accounting principles and methods as appropriate to management decision making and financial strategy.
- A5 Be able to define the key components of countries business/financial environments and give examples of how environmental components differ across countries.
- A6 Have the ability to identify ethical issues and make recommendations for appropriate courses of action.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary mode of instruction is via lectures and staff led discussion, supplemented by practical exercises including the use of case studies. Students are encouraged to employ reading lists to broaden subject knowledge and to use appropriate business cases, quantitative examples and new developments in business to ensure up to date knowledge of the theory and practice.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge (A1-4) is assessed by a mix of unseen examinations, supported by assignments which are selected to best reflect the subject being studied. In addition a thesis will be produced.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Have the ability to evaluate evidence critically, reach conclusions and present findings.
- B2 Demonstrate problem solving within the context of the business environment with particular emphasis on financial planning and decision making .
- B3 Have the ability to integrate evidence from a variety of sources to effect improvement in the financial performance of organisations.

B4	Have the ability to contribute effectively to financial planning and management decision making.
Teaching and Learning Methods	
Students learn by completing case studies, group and individual exercises, the presentation of findings.	
Assessment Strategy	
Intellectual skills (B1-4) are assessed by a mix of unseen examinations, supported by assignments which are selected to best reflect the subject being studied. In addition research skills are assessed when a thesis is produced	
Practical Skills	
On completing the programme students should be able to:	
C1	Implement appropriate business strategies, that optimise the financial interests of key stakeholders in various organisational environments.
C2	Be able to systematically collect, analyse and interpret data.
C3	Be able to effectively use bibliographic skills to review the literature, formulate research questions, apply appropriate methodologies for problem solving, collect data, synthesise results and reach logical conclusions.
C4	Provide advice about how to apply financial models, tools and techniques to improve organisational performance.
C5	Understand and apply as appropriate product costing, budgeting, capital budgeting and other management accounting techniques.
Teaching and Learning Methods	
Students are required to apply their knowledge of key skills to practical situations, through individual and group exercises and through a major project.	
Assessment Strategy	
Subject specific skills (C1-5) are assessed by a mix of unseen examinations, supported by assignments and other assessed exercises which are selected to best reflect the subject being studied. In addition a thesis is produced	
Transferable/Key Skills	
On completing the programme students should be able to:	
D1.	use appropriate verbal/written communication skills to convey information tailored in content, style and presentation to the needs of their intended audience.
D2	work independently.
D3	work within a team contributing appropriately and effectively towards the team based activity.
D4	solve problems, including where relevant, demonstrate numerical issues by applying the appropriate computational techniques and interpreting or critically evaluating the results within a business and economic setting.

Teaching and Learning Methods
Students experience problem solving in case studies, group exercises and assignments. (D4) They develop presentation, team-working skills and the ability to work independently. (D1, D2, D3).
Assessment Strategy
Transferable skills (D1-4) assessed by unseen examinations, and supported by assignments which are selected to best reflect the subject being studied. In addition skills are assessed when a thesis is produced.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
Please see attached diagram.
Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
<p>The programme aims to prepare students for senior managerial positions within organisations, by providing a strong foundation of knowledge and analytical skills for understanding strategic planning, decision making and managerial control of the firm. The programme contains a significant portion of both finance and management accounting, providing necessary tools for quantitative assessment of corporate performance. The management accounting and business strategy dimensions reflect the fact that the programme is designed particularly for those working within organisations. The dissertation involves students choosing a real-world company and using available information to produce a consultant's report, along with recommendations regarding performance and strategy.</p> <p>The above features significantly differentiate this programme from conventional taught Masters programmes in Accounting and Finance.</p>
Programme regulations (link to on-line version)
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/

13 Criteria for admission
<p><i>Entry qualifications</i> First degree</p> <p><i>Admissions policy/selection tools</i> First degrees at a level equivalent to UK HE institutions at the upper second class level. English language ability at IELTS 6.5 or equivalent. Evidence of numeracy is required, equivalent to UK GCSE grade B.</p> <p><i>Non-standard Entry Requirements</i> Industrial or commercial experience and/or vocational/professional qualifications considered the equivalent of the above, for mature applicants.</p> <p><i>Additional Requirements</i></p> <p><i>Level of English Language capability</i> See above – IELTS 6.5</p>

14 Support for Student Learning
<i>Induction</i>

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.

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid.

Help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre.

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. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions/workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues eg. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Union Society operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

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.

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.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

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 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 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is run by Newcastle University together with the Higher Education Academy and is sent out every year to students on taught postgraduate degrees at Newcastle University. PTES is an anonymous online survey aimed at identifying, at both local and national level, areas where improvements could be made and efforts targeted to further enhance the provision of postgraduate taught degree programmes.

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. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Common Marking Scheme

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

<50

Fail

50-59	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit
70 or above	Pass with Distinction

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies.

The External Examiner is expected to:

- See and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

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.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules MSc Strategic Planning and Investment

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Compulsory in Bold)
A1	NBS8233, NBS8001
A2	NBS8224, NBS8227, NBS8233, NBS8235, NBS8001, NBS8045, NBS8046
A3	NBS8233, NBS8235, NBS8001
A4	NBS8224, NBS8227, NBS8235
A5	NBS8045, NBS8233, NBS8244,
A6	NBS8045, NBS8233, NBS8244
B1	*
B2	NBS8223, NBS8001
B3	NBS8233
B4	NBS8233, NBS8235, NBS8001
C1	NBS8233, NBS8235, NBS8001
C2	NBS8233, NBS8325, NBS8001
C3	Dissertation
C4	NBS8233, NBS8235, NBS8001
C5	NBS8235, NBS8224
D1	*
D2	*
D3	NBS8045
D4	NBS8233, NBS8235, NBS8001, NBS8046

* all modules include this to a greater or lesser extent

