

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
2	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
3	<b>Final Award</b>	MSc
4	<b>Programme Title</b>	Strategic Planning and Investment
5	<b>Programme Code</b>	5156
6	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	N/A
7	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	Business and Management
8	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	7
9	<b>Last updated</b>	Revised April 2014, Revised June 2014

### 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.

<b>11 Learning Outcomes</b>
<p>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.</p>
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>
<p>On completing the programme students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A1 Be able to demonstrate an integrated approach to financial planning and its impact on business performance.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>A3 Be able to critically apply methods of financial planning, managerial control and financial market structures.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>A5 Be able to define the key components of countries business/financial environments and give examples of how environmental components differ across countries.</li> <li>A6 Have the ability to identify ethical issues and make recommendations for appropriate courses of action.</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
<p>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.</p>
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
<p>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.</p>
<b>Intellectual Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B1 Have the ability to evaluate evidence critically, reach conclusions and present findings.</li> <li>B2 Demonstrate problem solving within the context of the business environment with particular emphasis on financial planning and decision making.</li> <li>B3 Have the ability to integrate evidence from a variety of sources to effect improvement in the financial performance of organisations.</li> </ul>

B4 Have the ability to contribute effectively to financial planning and management decision making.
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
Students learn by completing case studies, group and individual exercises, the presentation of findings.
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
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.
<b>Practical Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C1 Implement appropriate business strategies, that optimise the financial interests of key stakeholders in various organisational environments.</li> <li>C2 Be able to systematically collect, analyse and interpret data.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>C4 Provide advice about how to apply financial models, tools and techniques to improve organisational performance.</li> <li>C5 Understand and apply as appropriate product costing, budgeting, capital budgeting and other management accounting techniques.</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
Students are required to apply their knowledge of key skills to practical situations, through individual and group exercises and through a major project.
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
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.
<b>Transferable/Key Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D1 Use appropriate verbal/written communication skills to convey information tailored in content, style and presentation to the needs of their intended audience.</li> <li>D2 Work independently.</li> <li>D3 Work within a team contributing appropriately and effectively towards the team based activity.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>

<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
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).
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
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**

**Programme – Semesters 1 & 2 except: \* = S1 only and \*\* = S2 only**

The MSc SPI programme consists of seven compulsory taught modules, plus a dissertation. These modules will enable you to acquire a firm understanding of many of the major areas of knowledge in accounting and finance. These modules are listed below:

Code	Credits	Descriptive title
NBS8001	(30)	International Finance and Capital Markets
NBS8301	(20)	Managerial Economics & Organisational Architecture
NBS8135*	(10)	Introduction to Financial Reporting
NBS8224*	(10)	Performance & Decision Management
NBS8233	(20)	Managerial Decision Making & Control
NBS8401	(10)	Business Context & Operations
NBS8235	(20)	Financial Planning & Investment
NBS8223	(60)	Dissertation

Detailed aims and objectives for each module can be found in the module outlines which can be found on the website: <https://mofs.ncl.ac.uk>.

**Dissertation**

The dissertation is worth 60 credits and is the opportunity for students to integrate and apply their learning to real world situations and problems. Specifically, students produce a detailed report – including in-depth analysis and future assessments – relating to a major corporation. The dissertation is a major piece of work (no more than **15,000 words**) which will enable you to apply the knowledge and skills developed during the taught element of the Newcastle MSc SPI to your chosen company. Students will be expected to demonstrate evaluative and analytical ability.

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

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.

The above features significantly differentiate this programme from conventional taught Masters programmes in Accounting and Finance.

<b>Programme regulations (link to on-line version)</b>
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<a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/</a>
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<b>13 Criteria for admission</b>
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*Entry qualifications*

First degree

*Admissions policy/selection tools*

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 with no sub score below 6.0. Evidence of numeracy is required, equivalent to UK GCSE grade B.

*Non-standard Entry Requirements*

Industrial or commercial experience and/or vocational/professional qualifications considered the equivalent of the above, for mature applicants.

*Additional Requirements*

*Level of English Language capability*

IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent)

<b>14 Support for Student Learning</b>
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The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

*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.

*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 and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

*Academic and Pastoral support*

Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.\*

A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.

\*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. 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 Student Union 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 team 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 Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. 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 Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

#### *Programme reviews*

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. The FLTSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

#### *External Examiner reports*

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience 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 results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

*Mechanisms for gaining student feedback*

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

*Faculty and University Review Mechanisms*

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

*Accreditation reports*

None.

*Additional mechanisms*

None.

## **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. There are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40% is possible for candidates who commenced their programme in 2013/14 or earlier. For students starting their programme in 2014/15 or later, no compensation is possible.

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 the University following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

- i. See and approve assessment papers
- ii. Moderate examination and coursework marking
- iii. Attend the Board of Examiners
- iv. Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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

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

The School Brochure <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <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

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	B	C	D
NBS8001	Compulsory	1, 2, 3	2, 4	1, 2, 4	2, 4
NBS8135	Compulsory	2, 4	2, 3, 4	2, 4, 5	2
NBS8223	Compulsory	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 2	3	1
NBS8224	Compulsory	2, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, 4	5	2
NBS8233	Compulsory	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	2, 3, 4	1, 2, 4	1, 2, 3, 4
NBS8235	Compulsory	2, 3, 4	4	1, 2, 4, 5	2, 4
NBS8301	Compulsory	2,	1	2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4
NBS8401	Compulsory	6	1, 2, 3, 4	2	1