

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

for the award of

**MSc Applied Accounting**

**Managed by Oxford Brookes Business School delivered by the  
Department of Accounting, Finance & Economics**

<b>Date approved:</b>	July 2016 (Programme first validated in July 2016)
<b>Applies to students commencing study in:</b>	September 2020, January 2021, September 2021

### RECORD OF UPDATES

<b>Date amended*</b>	<b>Nature of amendment**</b>	<b>Reason for amendment**</b>
30.11.2018	Updated the name of two ACCA P papers	ACCA changed the name of two of the P papers
31.01.2019	Change to entry requirements (section	

## SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Awarding body:</b>	Oxford Brookes University
<b>Teaching institution and location:</b>	Oxford Brookes University, Oxford
<b>Language of study:</b>	English
<b>Final award:</b>	Master of Science
<b>Programme title:</b>	MSc in Applied Accounting
<b>Interim exit awards and award titles available:</b>	none
<b>Brookes course code:</b>	MSC-AAC
<b>UCAS code:</b>	60274
<b>JACS code:</b>	N400
<b>HECoS code:</b>	See guidance note G2.2, section 1
<b>Mode of delivery:</b>	Distance learning
<b>Mode/s and duration of study:</b>	1 Year for Part time
<b>QAA subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:</b>	<p><a href="#">Master's Degrees in Business and Management 2015</a></p> <p><a href="#">QAA Master's Degree Characteristics</a></p>
<b>Professional accreditation attached to the programme:</b>	None
<b>University Regulations:</b>	<p>The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at:  <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/">http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/</a></p> <p>Specific Regulations for  <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/specific/">http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/specific/</a></p>

## **SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?**

### **2.1 Rationale for the programme**

The accounting profession has a long history of rigorous programmes of learning and assessment for those entering the profession. These professional qualifications are intellectually demanding and have been a major influence on the design of many UK accounting degree programmes at both undergraduate and masters' levels. The professional qualifications have been recognised by a number of Universities as equivalent to study at masters level, as evidenced by their acceptance as a route to enter masters level degree programmes with credit for substantial parts of accounting or other business subject matter.

Oxford Brookes University is committed to leading the intellectual, social and economic development of the communities it serves through teaching, research and creativity that achieve the highest standards, and this programme will provide students with the opportunity to extend their education to master's level. The MSc in Applied Accounting is designed to enable students to opt for a distance-learning approach to their masters; the particular distinctiveness of this MSc Applied Accounting programme is that it has been constructed so that students build on their professional qualifications by studying online for an affordable master's qualification. As such it widens access to university learning and qualifications by enabling ACCA students from across the world and members of other UK accountancy bodies (see section 6.1) to obtain an Oxford Brookes University masters level degree. The programme is global in its reach with the expected student profile being that of a wide and diverse international student body; it also has global dimensions in relation to the nature of the technical and transferable skills achieved by our master's level accounting graduates. Students have the flexibility of being able to join the programme with credit entry, provided they have ACCA Professional Level papers equating to 120 credits, or are eligible for membership of the professional Accountancy bodies listed in section 6.1. This programme is open to all students who meet the entry criteria, irrespective of their global location, including those who have previously been international online students with Oxford Brookes University through the BSc (Hons) Applied Accounting.

### **2.2 Aim of the programme**

The programme aims to extend to students worldwide the opportunity to study for an MSc that is designed to enable students to obtain a thorough grounding in the key areas of knowledge that make up Accounting as a discipline. It then seeks to build on this knowledge by providing students with the ability to identify, analyse and critically evaluate a range of accountancy related issues and problems, develop a range of possible alternative responses to these issues and problems and from these options select the most appropriate course of action, bearing in mind the wide variety of stakeholders upon which accounting and finance decisions impact.

Internationally focussed organisations are looking for individuals who have not only theoretical knowledge but also the skills and competencies to enable acquired knowledge to be applied practically to good effect. There is an increasing emphasis worldwide on the need for employees to be comfortable and effective in use of these skills and competencies virtually. Thus this programme aims to provide students with current thinking in accounting and finance whilst providing opportunities for students to develop skills and attributes valued by prospective employers to enhance employability.

## **SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes:

### **3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY**

1. Develop and demonstrate a systematic understanding of relevant knowledge about accounting and finance within organisations and their external context.
2. Apply relevant knowledge flexibly and creatively to a range of complex situations, and synthesise ideas and information in innovative ways bearing in mind the wide variety of stakeholders upon which accounting and finance decisions impact.
3. Approach and critically evaluate a problem or issue from a variety of perspectives and to accept that more than one right answer to a question might exist.

### **3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY**

4. Demonstrate understanding of theories, methodologies, approaches and tools underpinning systematic accounting and finance analysis and research, and the ethical issues that inform research methods used to develop and interpret knowledge in accounting and finance.
5. Demonstrate the ability to synthesise a range of information in the context of new situations and undertake a sustained piece of substantial research on a topic relevant to the context and content of accounting and finance.

### **3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY**

6. Identify, evaluate and maintain capabilities and qualities to support effective communication (both orally and in writing, using a range of media) in a range of complex and specialised contexts.
7. Demonstrate the ability to self-manage, learn independently and operate effectively in a variety of roles.

### **3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY**

8. Construct a complex argument using information drawn from a variety of sources, integrating, synthesising and critically evaluating this information when required.
9. Become a confident, agile adopter of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use; become skilled thereby in collaboration.

### **3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

- 10 Demonstrate a critical understanding of different business and socio-economic environments around the world.
- 11 Recognise the importance of ethical considerations and social responsibility within international accounting and finance decision making and apply notions of corporate social responsibility to different business environments.
- 12 Demonstrate a range of behavioural and interpersonal competencies in relation to cross cultural communication in accounting and finance within organisations.

## SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

### 4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module Title	Credits	Level	Status	Coursework: Exam ratio
ACFI-7003	Research Methods	10	7	Compulsory	100% CW
ACFI-7004	Advanced Accounting and Finance Project	50	7	Compulsory	100% CW

### 4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

None

### 4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable

## SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

### 5.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Oxford Brookes University has a very student-centred approach, the relationship between tutors, supervisors and students, albeit not face to face, will seek to encourage dialogue and mutual understanding throughout the learning process. Research Methods classes, which are provided in the form of asynchronous online workshops, are designed to provide sequencing and integration within the Research Methods module and the Advanced Accounting and Finance Project. Active participation is considered compulsory and student success will be supported by students actively participating in online seminar discussions and discussions with their supervisor.

The structure and content of the MSc Applied Accounting programme enables students to use their professional level accountancy knowledge and skills as a platform from which students subsequently identify, analyse and critically evaluate a range of issues and problems related to accounting and finance, develop a range of possible alternative responses to these issues and problems, and from these options select the most appropriate course of action while bearing in mind the wide variety of stakeholders upon which accounting and finance decisions impact.

#### The Brookes Attributes

The MSc Applied Accounting programme is designed so that it develops the following five core Brookes' attributes:

##### **a) Academic literacy**

The programme develops students' ability to engage in current critical debates within the accounting and finance discipline and their ability to communicate complex ideas to both expert and non-expert audiences, even in the absence of a complete set of data. This is fully addressed in the Research Methods module and the Advanced Accounting and Finance Project module.

##### **b) Research literacy**

The programme develops students' ability to design and undertake a research project in the accounting and finance discipline, use appropriate methodology and solve complex problems in novel situations. Our research-active staff ensure that students are aware of current research within the discipline, and are able to critically evaluate it. This is fully addressed in the Research Methods module.

### **c) Critical self-awareness and personal literacy**

The programme develops students' ability to demonstrate commitment to continuous self-improvement. Our graduates will be able to lead and organise themselves and others; take personal responsibility in unpredictable and complex situations; make sound and appropriate decisions; and to inspire and interact with others in diverse environments. This attribute is practised and assessed in the Research Methods module and the Advanced Accounting and Finance Project module.

### **d) Digital and information literacy**

The programme develops students' ability to become confident, agile adopters of a range of technologies for personal, academic and professional use. They will be able to use appropriate technology to search for high-quality information; critically evaluate and engage with the information obtained; reflect on and record learning, and professional and personal development; and engage productively in relevant online communities. Virtual team working and digital and information literacy more generally is seen as core to the programme as a whole and is practised in the Research Methods module and the Advanced Accounting and Finance Project module.

### **e) Active Citizenship**

The programme develops students' ability to demonstrate understanding of different business and socioeconomics environments. Our graduates will be able to recognise the importance of ethical considerations and corporate social responsibility within different environments. This is seen as core to the programme as a whole and is fully addressed in the Research Methods module and the Advanced Accounting and Finance Project module.

## **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods**

The teaching, learning and assessment strategies of the programme are interrelated and are designed to develop the Brookes' attributes. The aim of the programme team is to provide an online learning environment where students will readily participate in the learning process; specifically an environment in which the online student experience approaches as closely as possible that of on-campus learning.

The programme has an emphasis on the development and application of research skills, reflecting the view that a career in accounting and finance is likely to depend increasingly on the capacity for conducting well-grounded empirical and literature-based research and analysis. Tutors have a wide range of research experience and interests and this body of research and expertise will be available to students to facilitate and guide their own research projects and assignments. These research interests also feed into the teaching process and provide a core of research on which students may draw in the course of their learning. In the Research Methods module students will undertake directed self-learning and the use of forums. Students will have four directed readings each of which will be assessed using linked multiple choice sets. Students will have one online meeting with their supervisor to assist in the formulation of their proposal. Students will undertake directed research under online supervision in the Advanced Accounting and Finance Project module with the supervisor providing feedback on the draft Advanced Accounting and Finance Project. At the end of the module, the student will present their findings in an online viva voce presentation to their supervisor and will submit a final written report.

Assessment methods are designed to support the teaching and learning process and test the application of learning to workplace activities. The assessment strategy is informed by the Brookes Assessment Compact. To find out more about the Brookes Assessment Compact, please visit:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/ocslid/consultancy/consultancy-areas/>

Assessment is designed at programme level, to ensure an appropriate mix of types of coursework (there are no examinations). Assessment at module level measures the achievement of all module learning outcomes, and for each component of assessment, the particular module learning outcomes which are being assessed are identified. The module learning outcomes have been designed so that when all modules have been passed, the programme learning outcomes will have been achieved.

Programme activities prepare students for the assessment process through structured activities with both peer and tutor feedback. The programme team places real importance on the value of feedback, therefore students receive ongoing formative and summative feedback throughout their studies commencing with induction activities and including early feed forward assessments in the first module taken.

Assessment criteria set out within the assignment activity will assist internal and external assessors to reach a decision regarding the student's work. Assessors will provide written and/or verbal feedback to students regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the work, and make suggestions of how the work could be improved.

The Advanced Accounting and Finance Project is a self-managed activity organised by the individual student, and supported by a tutor, in the role of Supervisor, who provides regular feedback on progress.

The programme sets out to facilitate acquisition of knowledge and understanding and to develop skills. The learning, teaching and assessment activities are designed to help students internalise their learning and develop self-awareness to help prepare for employment or further study, and take on managerial more senior organisational roles after the completion of the degree.

### **How student time is divided between different teaching and learning methods**

Self-managed study time is comprised as follows:

- Preparation including reading, reflection and research to allow an interchange of ideas, examples and experiences
- Guided and supported reading to enhance learning and understanding
- Assignment preparation, individually and in groups
- Planning and co-ordination of a variety of tasks

Taught and directed learning hours are comprised as follows:

- Timetabled and supervised asynchronous workshop-based study where designated teaching facilities and resources for individual and group learning are provided, together with access to the tutor, via the Virtual Learning Environment.

The 10 credit Research Methods module will require active contribution in terms of self-managed study time, participation in student forums and an on-line meeting between the student and their supervisor. It will have four sets of directed reading linked to multiple choice questions; the production of a draft Advanced Accounting and Finance Project proposal; submission of a final proposal; and a viva voce. Draft proposals will be subject to online peer review. Students select their own research topic while undertaking the Research Methods module and present their proposal to tutors. The proposal requires demonstration that the project has a basis in an initial investigation of the relevant literature and includes a valid research focus within the overall project objectives. As part of the proposal, a research design plan will need to be developed outlining the data collection, analysis, access and ethical considerations together with the associated timescales. The module will require around 100 hours of study in total.

The 50 credit Advanced Accounting and Finance Project module provides students with the opportunity to explore an area of interest ranging between the wholly theoretical, and operational accountancy and finance, in greater depth and requires students to report on the outcomes of this significant research activity. The deliverable from the module will be an Advanced Accounting and Finance Project Report which applies one or several specific financial or management accounting topics to a particular organisational context or activity. It is not intended to be a management consultancy project. The module will draw on, integrate and allow students to practise many of the concepts studied at the highest level of their accountancy qualifications and in the Research Methods module. Students will be expected to report progress and seek guidance from their supervisor via a number of online meetings as they develop their project. The module will require around 500 hours of self-directed study in total.

## **5.2 Assessment regulations**

The programme conforms to the University's Academic Regulations; section B4 **Specific Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes**  
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/specific/b4/>

For confirmation of classification of awards, please refer to the Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes, section B4.7. <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/specific/b4/b4-7/>

The Programme also embeds the principles and practices within the Brookes Assessment Compact. Assessments are carefully designed to contribute to formative developmental feedback and can incorporate peer feedback as well. All module guides include specific assessment criteria which are clearly communicated and an assessment calendar is also produced. <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/ocslid/consultancy/consultancy-areas/>

## SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

### 6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

#### ACCA Students

Students are eligible to apply for entry to the programme if they have successfully completed any three of the ACCA Professional Level papers below.

ACCA Paper	Title	Level
ACCA	Strategic Business Leader	7
ACCA	Strategic Business Reporting	7
ACCA	Business Analysis	7
ACCA	Advanced Financial Management	7
ACCA	Advanced Performance Management	7
ACCA	Advanced Taxation	7
ACCA	Advanced Audit and Assurance	7

#### Other Accountancy Qualifications

Students are eligible to apply for entry to the programme if they have successfully completed all the professional papers required for membership of the following bodies:

- Institute Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (ICAS)
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)
- Chartered Accountants Ireland

#### English language requirements

English language entry requirements are fulfilled through the achievement of ACCA Professional Level Papers, or approved qualification listed above, which are undertaken in English.

### 6.2 DBS AND OTHER PRE-COURSE CHECKS REQUIRED

Not applicable.

## SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Completion of the programme will enable graduates to obtain rewarding jobs and look at the world with confidence, presenting great opportunities for those individuals equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills, talents, and enthusiasm. Our graduates tend to move into managerial positions typically in multinational enterprises or go on to establish their own business. An important focus of the MSc Applied Accounting programme is to develop the employability skills of our graduates so they are prepared and ready to take on higher level accounting and finance positions after graduation. In order to ensure this, the programme

development is informed by a departmental advisory group that consists of top managers from professional accountancy bodies and public sector organisations. This group meets regularly and informs decision making relating to the development of employability skills as well as the whole of the programme. Many graduates will be working towards their qualification whilst working either in an accountancy firm, in industry or the public sector, and this programme will enhance their career advancement opportunities. Graduates will have the technical and personal skills that can be applied across international boundaries.

In terms of other destinations, choices facilitated by this programme include:

- Setting up a business. A number of students use their skills, knowledge and understanding to develop their family business, often internationally
- Professional specialisation in an area that they have particularly enjoyed studying at postgraduate level, such as taxation, auditing or finance.

The content of the programme is by its nature linked to the practical world of accounting and finance. Participants can make use, in their assessments and studies, of practical problems faced by organisations they know and/or work for. The expectation is that theory is related to practice through workshop collaboration where our philosophy is to expect and encourage students to share and debate their experiences.