

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

for the award of

MSc in Accounting and Finance

Managed by Oxford Brookes Business School

Date approved:	February 2017 (programme first validated in February 2014)
Applies to students commencing study in:	September 2020

RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended*	Nature of amendment**	Reason for amendment**
28 February 2019	A number of changes were made to the modules on the programme.	To create a more coherent and streamlined offering.
February 2020	Addition of a new Professional and Digital Skills module Changes to a number of modules	Enhance employability of students Improve flexibility of the programme

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Oxford Brookes University, Oxford
Language of study:	English
Final award:	Master of Science (MSc)
Programme title:	Accounting and Finance
Interim exit awards and award titles available:	PGC-DG: Postgraduate Certificate in Accounting and Finance PGD-DG: Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance
Brookes course code:	BH73 / MSC-DG
UCAS code:	52208
JACS code:	N400
HECoS code:	See guidance note G2.2, section 1
Mode of delivery:	Full-time (face to face/on-campus) Part-time (face to face/on-campus)
Mode/s and duration of study:	Full-time (face to face/on-campus) – 12 months Part-time (face to face/on-campus) – 24 months
QAA subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:	Master's degrees in Business and Management (2015)
Professional accreditation attached to the programme:	ACCA http://www.accaglobal.org.uk/
University Regulations:	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/ Specific Regulations for http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/specific/

SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?

The allocation, management and reporting of financial resources is fundamental to the survival of a modern economy and this creates the need for highly skilled accounting and finance professionals. The need for educational programmes in this field is self-explanatory and is reinforced by issues that have been witnessed globally in recent years and continue to be seen.

This programme offers students from around the world the opportunity to understand the role of accounting and finance in society and gain practical skills and insights which will help them to make a contribution to the finance industry or to the financial management of any business. It offers the opportunity to learn about the theoretical and practical aspects of accounting and finance, while studying a broad range of topics. It also challenges them to take a critical view of the accounting profession and the finance industry, and equips them to contribute to current debates about the roles, structures and regulation in the world of accounting and finance.

Whilst having a primary focus on the skills of accounting and finance, the programme will also give students the chance to develop the skills required by finance and accounting professionals in organisations. It is no longer sufficient for practitioners to be technically expert they also need to be able to communicate with colleagues, work productively in teams and make linkages between their specialist field and the wider organisational context. Students will be taught by staff with both an academic and professional background. Staff profiles can be found on the university website <http://business.brookes.ac.uk/about/staff/>.

This is a conversion course for graduate from all disciplines. Students typically will have little or no work experience in this area and little academic background in accounting and finance. This course is designed to give them a broad understanding of the world of accounting and finance and the key disciplines in those fields. In introducing students to relevant tools and techniques the course will also show how they are applied in a range of situations and contexts. This involves both a grasp of quantitative techniques but also the ability to undertake analytical and critical evaluation of key issues in accounting and finance and to express the results in writing. Students will also develop the skills necessary to research particular issues and to apply the results of the research to specific problems.

This programme offers an opportunity to gain relevant knowledge, skills and competencies of value for a career in the accounting and finance industry or closely related fields, or further study. The syllabus has been designed to encompass the key disciplines that form the basis of education in this area, many of which are often part of training programmes for professional bodies. As such the programme will prepare students for possible membership of a professional body whilst also equipping students with the critical, analytical and research skills appropriate for reflective practitioners. This programme aims to offer exemptions for up to 7 ACCA papers.

Aims of the programme

- To prepare graduates from a range of backgrounds for careers in or closely related to the accounting and finance professions. This foundation will also prepare them for further study towards a full professional qualification.
- To give students a broad knowledge of accounting and finance principles and techniques across the three main themes of management accounting, financial accounting and corporate finance.
- The skills of critical enquiry so as to engage with current research and analyse issues from a variety of perspectives.
- To give students the opportunity to develop work related skills such as teamwork, verbal and written communication and research skills.

SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY

1. Demonstrate in depth knowledge and critical understanding of the role of accounting and finance in society and the modern economy; the functioning of financial markets; the functioning of regulatory bodies;
2. Apply theoretical understanding to complex problems of financial management in an environment of incomplete knowledge in order to develop possible solutions to a range of policy questions in the context of business;
3. Select and apply appropriate tools and numerical models to problems and to critically appraise their value;
4. Analyse and critically evaluate evidence and arguments to judge the validity of conclusions.

3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY

5. Critically evaluate the historical research that served to establish accounting and finance theory to understand the methods employed and the contribution to the discipline;
6. Critically evaluate current research and academic scholarship in a range of domains of accounting and finance, demonstrating independence of thought, and a comprehensive understanding of contemporary issues;
7. Critically evaluate, select and deploy strategies for successful research within a variety of accounting and finance settings, paying attention to the organisational and market implications;

3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY

8. Communicate complex ideas effectively through verbal, graphical and written means;
9. Work independently and self critically, managing one's own time in the completion of several tasks in the same time frame and; work in a team critically, and managing shared time in the completion of several tasks in the same time frame;
10. Solve multifaceted problems with original and systematic approaches;

3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY

11. Identify and extract relevant information, and filter and process large volumes of information into concise analysis;
12. Use a range of learning resources competently and appropriately;
13. Demonstrate skills in using software relevant to accounting and finance;

3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

14. Critically evaluate the implications of International Accounting Regulation for organisations nationally and internationally;
15. Assess the wider implications (national and international) of choices made by businesses in implementing financial strategies and accounting standards and policies.

Note: The Postgraduate Certificate in Accounting and Finance and the Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance are awarded on the basis of passing 60 or 120 CATS credits respectively, with no requirement to pass specific modules. The Learning Outcomes for these awards therefore vary, depending on the modules passed, but will be a subset of the Learning Outcomes for the MSc award.

SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module Title	Credits	Level	Status	Coursework: Exam ratio
ACFI-7005	Management Accounting	20	7	Compulsory	100% Written Exam
ACFI-7006	Financial Accounting	20	7	Compulsory	100% Written Exam
ACFI-7009	Corporate Finance Concepts	20	7	Compulsory	100% CW
ACFI-7015	Research Project	60	7	Compulsory	100% CW
ACFI-7007	Performance Management	20	7	Optional	30% CW and 70% Written Exam
ACFI-7008	Financial Reporting	20	7	Optional	30% CW and 70% Written Exam
ACFI-7010	Audit and Assurance	20	7	Optional	30% Coursework 70% Written Exam
ACFI-7011	Finance and Strategy	20	7	Optional	100% CW
ACFI-7012	Financial Markets and Institutions	20	7	Optional	100% CW
ACFI-7013	International Finance	20	7	Optional	100% Written Exam
ACFI-7016	Financial Modelling	10	7	Optional	100%CW
ACFI-7017	Corporate Governance	10	7	Optional	100% CW
ACFI-7018	Corporate Social Responsibility	10	7	Optional	100% CW
ACFI-7026	Professional and Digital Skills	10	7	Optional	100% CW
BMGT-7011	International Business in Practice: Study Trip	0	7	Optional	100% CW
BMGT-7036	Independent Study	20	7	Optional	100% CW
INSE-4001	Academic English for Postgraduate Studies	0	4	Optional	100% CW
INSE-4002	Academic English for Postgraduate Research	0	4	Optional	100% CW

4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

The Postgraduate Certificate in Accounting and Finance and the Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance are awarded on the basis of passing 60 or 120 CATS credits respectively, with no requirement to pass specific modules.

4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Up to 7 exemptions may be obtained from ACCA foundation level paper.

To obtain an exemptions from ACCA papers F1-4, students must pass the MSc Accounting and Finance overall. To obtain further exemptions, they need to pass Performance Management module for ACCA Performance Management, Financial Reporting module for ACCA Financial Reporting and Audit and Assurance module for ACCA Audit

SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching and learning approaches

The teaching and learning methods include:

- Lectures & seminars led by individual members of the Business School and visiting specialists;
- Workshops for teaching a range of research and quantitative skills including appropriate research methodologies and on-line research skills;
- The use of case study and practical exercises;
- Student-led seminar activities facilitated by members of the Business School.
- Support for independent research and study through one-to-one or small group tutorials

Prior knowledge of the subject of Accounting and Finance is not required, but students are expected to start the programme with graduate-level skills of research, analysis, critical evaluation and writing, which can then be applied to the subject area. The programme offers basic skills required in Accounting and Finance, including double entry book-keeping. The modules will build on this foundation to develop knowledge and understanding in the various subject areas. Critical evaluation of fundamental and current research will also be developed through research methods workshops which will culminate in the research project.

Brookes attributes

Academic literacy is at the heart of the MSc programme, as students quickly have to move beyond being an emerging professional to become an expert in selected areas of Accounting and Finance. This is encouraged by the high expectations of teaching staff, and the connections they make in their teaching to the world of research in Accounting and Finance, and the world of practice in the sector. The development of criticality is at the heart of the programme, particularly in the core taught modules Financial Accounting, Financial Reporting, Management Accounting, Performance Management, Corporate Finance Concepts and Financial Markets and Institutions.

Research literacy is explicitly addressed in the Research Project module. However in the taught modules also, students are required to engage with current research including critically evaluating the methods used and the validity of the arguments presented.

Critical self-awareness and personal literacy is developed through the experience of being part of a coherent yet diverse cohort of students, engaging in a variety of individual and group tasks week-by-week in preparation for classes. As part of the learning process, students are required to present to fellow students, and defend their arguments and positions.

Digital and information literacy is particularly developed in two domains. All students have to become proficient in sourcing relevant research articles, usually on-line, using the University's library resources or otherwise. They also have to access and process financial data for their research project, and in modules such as Professional and Digital Skills, Management Accounting, Performance Management, International Finance and Financial Modelling.

Active citizenship issues arise through working both in and outside class in a diverse student cohort, with representatives from around the world. The world-wide nature of accounting and finance as an industry, profession and a commodity and its consequence is a theme running through the programme,

particularly in Financial Markets and Institutions, Corporate Finance Concepts, Financial Accounting and Financial Reporting.

Assessment

Assessment is initially designed at programme level, to ensure an appropriate mix of methods, such as coursework and examinations. Overall, there is balance of exam and coursework within modules. Assessment at module level has to measure the achievement of all of the 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 have been achieved. The relationship between modules and programme learning outcomes is recorded in a mapping document.

The assessment strategy is informed by the Brookes Assessment Compact, with an emphasis on assessment for learning, and hence the importance of learning from feedback – both formal and informal. Within induction, students receive a schedule showing when coursework is due, and when formal feedback can be expected. They also take part in a marking exercise, wherein they have to mark real exam answers from previous students, using the examiner's criteria. Thus they gain insight into the meaning of terms such as 'critically evaluate' and see how it can be done well, or not so well.

It is important to ensure that students obtain a broad knowledge of the subject area covered by modules as the various topics are interlocked in complex ways, so that a coursework task covering just one aspect of the whole can only provide a partial view. Examinations use a variety of different kinds of question; including short answer questions and calculation based questions; in order to achieve different learning outcomes. Learning outcomes can be grouped into three main areas; those covering knowledge (assessed through short answer and brief essay questions), those covering application of formal methods to accounting and financial theory and data (assessed through calculation questions) and those covering critical appraisal of accounting and financial theories and empirical studies (assessed through coursework).

The programme conforms to the University Regulations: section B4 **Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programme** <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/specific/b4/>

The programme also embeds the principles and practices within the **Brookes Assessment Compact**. <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/ocslcd/consultancy/consultancy-areas/>

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.

SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Entry requirements

A minimum of a second class honours degree (2:2) in any academic discipline, or equivalent overseas degree from a recognised institution or equivalent professional or other qualification.

Applicants who possess a diploma rather than a good degree may be eligible for entry provided they have compensatory work experience and can demonstrate career development.

This course attracts students from a wide range of backgrounds and nationalities. Applications are welcome from those in work and seeking continuing professional development.

Entry will also be subject to two satisfactory references (one of these must be an academic reference).

Please also see the university's [general entry requirements](#).

English language requirements

If English is not your first language you will need to satisfy the university's English language requirements:

Template updated in 2016

- IELTS minimum level 6.0 (with a minimum of 6.0 in reading and writing and 5.5 in listening and speaking) or equivalent
- If you have completed your undergraduate degree in the UK (at least one full year of study) you will automatically meet our English language requirements

Please also see the university's [standard English language requirements](#) .

6.2 DBS AND OTHER PRE-COURSE CHECKS REQUIRED

Not applicable

SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

This programme offers an opportunity to gain relevant knowledge, skills and competencies of value for a career in the accounting profession or closely related fields. This programme is especially suited to those who have decided on a change of career. Graduates can potentially work in many accounting related roles. For those who choose to work in part-qualified roles, the MSc Accounting and Finance programme will prove to be an excellent foundation in preparing them both for further study towards a full accounting qualification and for positions in organisations.

The design of the programme content is driven by the needs and views of employers, informed by the consultation between ACCA and the business world. Most of the staff team who worked in industry and who previously practised accounting professionally are able to bring to the programme authentic work experience and insights. The link with businesses is further strengthened by guest lectures conducted by visiting speakers from relevant industries and the accounting profession. Some students are eligible to take part in individual meetings with local prospective employers from the accounting profession.

The University Careers Service offers guidance on career planning as well as practical advice on CV writing, mock interviews and assessment centres, tutorials and careers counselling. Its online vacancies database Talent Bank details internship and graduate job opportunities plus volunteering and project work.