Plymouth University

Faculty of Business
Plymouth Graduate School of Management

Programme Specification

MSc in Accounting and Finance
5339

Final Approved Version
August 2016
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1. MSc in Accounting and Finance

**Final award title**  
MSc in Accounting and Finance

**Level 7 Intermediate award title(s)**

Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting and Finance  
Postgraduate Certificate in Accounting and Finance

**UCAS code**  
JACS code N400

2. Awarding Institution: Plymouth University

**Teaching institution(s):**  
Plymouth University

3. Accrediting body(ies)

No accreditations are required for this programme.

4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

The MSc in Accounting and Finance will be supported by:

- **Practical Orientation**  
The programme will be underpinned by a firm practical orientation. Each module will reflect current practice, and apply the theories outlined to real world problems and scenarios. The teaching approach will engage students in opportunities to apply theory to practice through experiential learning methods such as case studies analysis, live projects, and business simulations.

- **Dedicated Seminar Series** (**International Trends in Accounting & Finance**)  
The programme will have its own dedicated seminar series delivered by invited executives from local, national and international companies and our alumni database

- **Research Informed Teaching and Learning**  
The programme modules will be delivered by staff with a keen interest, consultancy / professional practice experience, and research output in the field.
• **Employability**  
The benefits outlined above will add to the graduates’ employability, and this will be supplemented with timely input from the careers service at the beginning of semesters one and three.

• **International Perspective**  
The programme recognises that the world of management is in effect getting smaller and even small organisations are competing increasingly in international markets. An international perspective is therefore required, and this will be reflected in both the taught sessions and the speakers invited to participate in the dedicated seminar series.

• **Intercultural Awareness Training and Language Support**  
All students on the programme will be provided with additional support through intercultural awareness training at the outset of the programme in induction and on an ongoing basis. This will be built into the skills programme and be part of the skills development within the common core project. Where required additional English language support will be available to students through the English Language Centre.

5. **Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)**

QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Master’s Degrees in Business and Management (2007).

6. **Programme Structure**

Table 1 (see below) outlines the programme structure. The programme comprises nine 20-credit modules that will be studied over three semesters. Leadership and Management Essentials, International Business Environment, and Corporate Finance will be delivered intensively for four hours per week in semester one.

Knowledge Management and Decision Making, Fundamentals of Financial Management, Management Accounting and Financial Statement Analysis will be delivered using the same delivery pattern in semester two.

Electives (of which two will be selected be each student) will be delivered in an intensive block in semester three.
### Table 1: MSc in Accounting and Finance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester One</th>
<th>Semester Two</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HRL710A</td>
<td>STO701</td>
<td>Choice of any 2 electives from:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Management Essentials (20 credits)</td>
<td>Knowledge Management and Decision Making (20 credits)</td>
<td>ACF707SU – (suspended 16-17)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STO700A</td>
<td>Advanced Credit Management (20 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Business Environment (20 credits)</td>
<td>ACF704</td>
<td>ACF709SU</td>
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<td>ACF718</td>
<td>ACF714</td>
<td>ACF708SU–(suspended 16-17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Finance (20 credits)</td>
<td>Management Accounting (20 credits)</td>
<td>Real Estate and Alternative Investments (20 credits)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ACF705</td>
<td>HRL712</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Statement Analysis (20 credits)</td>
<td>Corporate Governance and Ethics (20 credits)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 7. Programme Aims

The programme aims to provide successful students with:

1. detailed knowledge and understanding of organisations, the dynamic external environments in which they operate, and their general and financial management, and leadership;

2. the ability to apply knowledge and understanding of business and management to complex situations to enhance financial decision making and management practice in general;

3. critical awareness of current trends and issues in business and management, accounting and fiancé which is informed by contemporary research and practice;
4. the ability to learn and work autonomously in the pursuit of creative strategies and business solutions;

5. a range of transferable skills relevant to a career in business and management including leadership, analytical, critical thinking, research and communications skills.

8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

8.1 Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion learners should have developed knowledge and understanding of:

- the diverse nature and purpose of organisations together with their internal aspects, functions, characteristics, culture, and processes

- the complexities of the external environments that affect organisations at different levels in terms of their strategies, behaviours, management and sustainability.

- the various processes, procedures and practices that influence effective management and leadership of organisations.

- the key concepts in capital investment and corporate financing and apply appropriate techniques to complex financial evaluations.

- the theoretical and practical issues surrounding financial management decisions demanded by the increasingly complex global financial environment.

- the processes of decision making, planning, control and the value added by systems that guide management decisions, motivate behaviour and create cultural values that achieve strategic objectives.

- the process of identifying, measuring and communicating economic information and the interoperation and analysis of companies financial statements.

8.2 Cognitive and intellectual skills

On successful completion learners should have developed the ability to:

- analyse and synthesise acquired knowledge and understanding of business and management to enable effective decision making within different organisational settings

- think critically and be creative through a process of analysis and synthesis of evidence, ideas, theory and concepts to facilitate the solution of complex problems
• undertake research using appropriate methods and techniques to investigate business and management scenarios and propose recommendations in a various organisational contexts
• develop an awareness of key contemporary trends and issues and their impact on the future of organisations
• critically evaluate and apply business and management theory to specific situations leading to new and enhanced approaches to management practice
• assess critically the main issues in in capital investment and understand how firms are financed
• analyse the issues surrounding financial management decisions and develop awareness of the main latest development in finance
• apply different management accounting techniques to decision making, planning, control and critically evaluate behaviour aspect of value creation
• critically evaluate companies’ financial health and interpret different financial statements

8.3 Key and transferable skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:
• effective communication skills both written and oral, using a range of methods
• effective data collection, analysis and presentation skills
• effective management of their own time, and demonstrate the motivation and initiative needed to work independently in an ethical and responsible way
• familiarity with academic and practitioner literature sources as resources for effective management

8.4 Employment related skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:
• the ability to be adaptable and demonstrate originality, insight and critical and reflective skills so as to make informed decisions in complex and unpredictable situations
- recognition of the need to keep developing their knowledge and skills through continued professional development, leading to a high level of personal effectiveness, critical self-awareness, and the ability to learn through reflection on practice
- awareness of the need for change and the ability to manage it
- the ability to work effectively as a team member, and where appropriate to lead the team employing appropriate leadership styles and approaches; and recognise and take account of any intercultural factors that may influence this

8.5 Practical skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:
- competence in writing reports for both practitioner and academic audiences
- an ability to make effective use of communication and information technology
- effectiveness in the utilisation of listening, negotiation and persuasion skills, and professional interpersonal communication skills in general

9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements

All applicants must have GCSE (or equivalent) Maths and English at Grade C or above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Requirements for MSc in Accounting and Finance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BA / BSc Degree</strong></td>
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<td><strong>APEL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language Requirements</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards

As per University regulations

11. Exceptions to Regulations

Exemption from point 2.4 of the Regulatory Framework for Taught Postgraduate Awards requiring that:

“Masters programmes will include a major project or dissertation module worth at least 40 credits. Such a module will involve sustained, independent and individual study, normally having some research basis”.

12. Transitional Arrangements

Not applicable to programme.

13. Mapping and Appendices:

11.1 ILO’s against Modules Mapping

11.2 Assessment against Modules Mapping

11.3 Skills against Modules Mapping

11.4 Appendices
### 11.1 ILO’s against Modules Mapping

<table>
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<td><strong>8.1 Knowledge and Understanding</strong></td>
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<td>the diverse nature and purpose of organisations together with their internal aspects, functions, characteristics, culture, and processes</td>
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<td>the complexities of the external environments that affect organisations at different levels in terms of their strategies, behaviours, management and sustainability.</td>
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<td>the various processes, procedures and practices that influence effective management and leadership of organisations</td>
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<td>the theoretical and practical issues surrounding financial management decisions demanded by the increasingly complex global financial environment.</td>
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<td>the process of identifying, measuring and communicating economic information and the interoperation and analysis of companies financial statements.</td>
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<td>think critically and be creative through a process of analysis and synthesis of evidence, ideas, theory and concepts to</td>
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<td>facilitate the solution of complex problems</td>
<td>undertake research using appropriate methods and techniques to investigate business and management scenarios and propose recommendations in a various organisational contexts</td>
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<td>critically evaluate and apply business and management theory to specific situations leading to new and enhanced approaches to management practice</td>
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<td>analyse the issues surrounding financial management decisions and develop awareness of the main latest development in finance</td>
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<td>critically evaluate companies’ financial health and interpret different financial statements</td>
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### 8.3 Key and Transferrable Skills

- **Effective communication skills both written and oral, using a range of methods**
  - x x x x x x x x
- **Effective data collection, analysis and presentation skills**
  - x x x x x x
- **Effective management of their own time, and demonstrate the motivation and initiative needed to work independently in an ethical and responsible way**
  - x x x x x x x
- **Familiarity with academic and practitioner literature sources as resources for effective management**
  - x x x x x x x x

### 8.4 Employment Related Skills

- **The ability to be adaptable and demonstrate originality, insight and critical and reflective skills so as to make informed decisions in complex and unpredictable situations**
  - x x
- **Recognition of the need to keep developing their knowledge and skills through continued professional development, leading to a high level of personal effectiveness, critical self-awareness, and the ability to learn through reflection on practice**
  - x
- **Awareness of the need for change and the ability to manage it**
  - x
- **The ability to work effectively as a team member, and where appropriate to lead the team employing appropriate**
  - x x x
leadership styles and approaches; and recognise and take account of any intercultural factors that may influence this

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.5 Practical Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>competence in writing reports for both practitioner and academic audiences</td>
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<td>an ability to make effective use of communication and information technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>effectiveness in the utilisation of listening, negotiation and persuasion skills, and professional interpersonal communication skills in general</td>
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</table>

### 11.2 Modules Assessment Mapping

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<tr>
<td>Time Constrained Test</td>
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### 11.3 Skills against Modules Mapping

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<td>Evaluation Techniques</td>
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<td>Essay / Report writing</td>
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<td>IT/Digital Literacy</td>
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<td>Project Planning &amp; Management</td>
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Appendix One – Programme Relevant QAA and FHEQ Descriptors

The QAA and FHEQ level descriptors that are relevant for a specialist master’s degree in business management are outlined below.

**QAA Benchmark Standards demonstrated during the programme:**

- a systematic understanding of relevant knowledge about organisations, their external context and how they are managed
- application of relevant knowledge to a range of complex situations taking account of its relationship and interaction with other areas of the business or organisation
- a critical awareness of current issues in business and management which is informed by leading edge research and practice in the field
- an understanding of appropriate techniques sufficient to allow detailed investigation into relevant business and management issues
- creativity in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to develop and interpret knowledge in business and management
• ability to acquire and analyse data and information, to evaluate their relevance and validity, and to synthesise a range of information in the context of new situations

• conceptual understanding that enables the student to:
  o evaluate the rigour and validity of published research and assess its relevance to new situations
  o extrapolate from existing research and scholarship to identify new or revised approaches to practice

• ability to conduct research into business and management issues that requires familiarity with a range of business data, research sources and appropriate methodologies, and for such to inform the overall learning process

• ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, using a range of media

• operate effectively in a variety of team roles and take leadership roles, where appropriate.

QAA Benchmark Standards graduates should be able to demonstrate once in professional practice

• consistently apply their knowledge and subject-specific and wider intellectual skills

• deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to a range of audiences

• be proactive in recognising the need for change and have the ability to manage change

• be adaptable, and show originality, insight, and critical and reflective abilities which can all be brought to bear upon problem situations
• make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations
• evaluate and integrate theory and practice in a wide range of situations
• be self-directed and able to act autonomously in planning and implementing projects at professional levels

• take responsibility for continuing to develop their own knowledge and skills.

**FHEQ descriptors for a higher education qualification at**

The descriptor provided for this level of the framework is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 7 qualifications, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas. Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

• a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice

• a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship

• originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline

• conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
- to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgments in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences

- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level

- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
  - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.
Appendix Two – University Regulations

Available at: https://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/acregsc/acadregs/intranet.htm