Aston University

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

2013-14

Programme Title	Accounting & Finance
UCAS/JACS Code	N100
School/Subject Area	Aston Business School Mainly Finance and Accounting Group, plus contributions from others
Final Award	MSc
Interim Award(s)	Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma
Mode(s) of Study	Full-time and part-time on campus, flexible credit accumulation.
Normal Length of Programme	FT: 12 months PT: 24 months minimum, up to 3 years allowed by the University FCA: up to 3 years
Total Credits	Certificate 60, Diploma 120, MSc 180
Programme Accredited By	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Dates Programme Specification Written and Revised	16/02/04, 23/02/04, 29/04/04, 05/08/04, 22/06/05, 21/06/06, 14/08/07, 20/03/08, 06/08/08; 20/01/09, 08/06/09, 30/08/10, 22/06/11, 15/06/12, 21/06/13

Educational Aims of the Programme	The specific aims and objectives of the programme are to provide instructions in accounting and finance such that students understand the financial, economic and accounting settings within which firms, financial institutions and public sector organisations operate. The programme also aims to increase students' understanding of various theoretical and empirical works in the area and how to interpret and apply them to particular situations. The taught part of the programme should provide students with the knowledge and understanding to complete a project under the supervision of an academic staff. On completion of the programme, students should be able to: • Understand, interpret and prepare a set of financial accounts that is appropriate to various interest groups. • Understand the problems that firms face in a financial and economic setting and the limitations and usefulness of available financial tools to solve those problems. Other aims and objectives of the programme include: • To provide a programme of study that meets the needs of local, national and international candidates, enabling them to learn by the exchange of experience as well as formal academic study. • To meet the needs of recent graduates and those already in employment who wish to acquire specialist skills and knowledge in Accounting & Finance in order that they may embark or progress successfully on their chosen careers. • To provide students with an excellent learning experience that draws on the research and consultancy of Aston academic staff, utilising the University's links with business, professional and public sector organisations. • To provide students with opportunities to enhance their employability by developing lifelong learning and personal development skills. • To produce well qualified graduates who are equipped for and aspire to senior positions. • To allow students to reflect upon and develop their own positions in relation to corporate responsibility, sustainability and ethics.

Relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and other External and Internal Reference Points used to inform programme outcomes	• Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmarking Statement in Business and Management for Masters level programmes • UK Quality Code Part A.1 (2011) • Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Codes of Practice

TAUGHT STAGE

Programme Structures and Requirements: Levels, Modules and Credits

Module Title	Credits	Level	Module Code	Core/Option	Condoneable Y/N	Pre-requisite(s) Y/N
Corporate Governance, Regulation & Compliance	15	7	BLM113	Core	Y	N
Management Accounting	30	7	BFM204	Core	Y	N
Business Finance	15	7	BFM205	Core	Y	N
International Finance	15	7	BFM207	Core	Y	Y
Sustainability Accounting and Accountability	15	7	BFM223	Core	Y	N
Financial Accounting and Reporting	15	7	BFM236	Core	Y	N
Financial Analysis	15	7	BFM241	Core	Y	N
TOTAL	120					

DISSERTATION STAGE

Programme Structures and Requirements: Levels, Modules and Credits

Module Title	Credits	Level	Module Code	Core/Option	Condoneable Y/N	Pre-requisite(s) Y/N
MSc Dissertation	60	7	MSCDISS	Core	N	N
TOTAL	60					

Programme Outcomes, Learning and Teaching and Assessment Strategies			
A. Knowledge and Understanding			
	On successful completion of the programme, students are expected to have knowledge and understanding of:	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated	
		Learning and Teaching Methods	Assessment Methods
A1	The major theories, principles and empirical work that exist in the areas of accounting and finance and their relevance for particular organisations	Lectures (A1-A3): • to convey essential knowledge and illustrate the importance of theories and empirical works for understanding the nature of accounting and finance Tutorials (A1-A3): • to provide an avenue whereby examples, exercises and case-studies can be used to illustrate various themes and facilitate learning • to provide guidance to students on the effective use of learning materials Presentations (A1-A3): • to provide hands-on approaches to learning backed by discussions and group work Project (A4): • a 15 credit applied research module backed by hands-on experience of appropriate software for carrying-out empirical work	Examinations (A1-A3): • typically written unseen examination of two-hours duration depending on the module Assessed work (A1-A3): • individual and group work Written Project (A4): • to assess students' ability to gather appropriate data, and to analyse and interpret their research in the context of existing theories
A2	Role of accounting for the provision of information to both internal and external parties for the assessment of performance and decision making		
A3	Both internal and regulatory procedures for presenting accounting and financial information to appropriate parties		
A4	The appropriate finance and/or accounting theories that exist as well as the appropriate research methodologies that can be applied to investigate a particular research problem		

B. **Intellectual Skills**			
	On successful completion of their programme, students are expected to be able to:	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated	
		Learning and Teaching Methods	Assessment Methods
B1	Demonstrate competence in critical reasoning and decision-making in the area of accounting and finance	Examinations: • to assess students' understanding of the essential issues in accounting and finance Tutorials: • to provide support to student learning Group discussion, and individual and group work Project • to develop students' research and analytical skills	• Written examination • Assessed individual and group work • Written Project
B2	Demonstrate a high level of intellectual and analytical skills in their understanding of the accounting and financial problems facing organisations within their environments		
B3	Critically assess and engage with the available accounting and financial tools for solving business problems		
B4	Identify the appropriate methods for gathering data and develop an ability to analyse and interpret such data in the context of a research problem		

C. **Professional Skills**			
	On successful completion of their programme, students are expected to be able to:	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated	
		Learning and Teaching Methods	Assessment Methods
C1	Apply principles, financial models and theories in the area of accounting and finance.	• visiting speakers to give students a practical understanding of the working environments of firms • case studies and illustrations to give students a practical understanding of the type of problems that firms face and how they can be resolved	• This is assessed as part of group and individual work • Written Project
C2	Use key accounting and financial tools to aid decision making within firms		

	D. Transferable Skills		
	On successful completion of their programme, students are expected to show:	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated	
		Learning and Teaching Methods	Assessment Methods
		• group working skills via case studies and syndicate groups • computer and IT skills	• presentation skills and report writing skills • IT and quantitative skills • Written Project
D1	IT and computing skills		
D2	Presentation and report writing skills		
D3	Communication and team working skills		
D4	Competency in understanding relevant accounting and financial information		
D5	Enhanced personal skills and self-confidence in order to optimise career prospects		
D6	Ability to apply and integrate their key skills and competencies by undertaking a major Project		

Entry Requirements	**Direct Entry:** • A UK honours degree or an overseas degree recognised by Aston or • A degree-equivalent professional qualification • Evidence of quantitative aptitude in mathematics to a level of a good GCSE pass or equivalent. **English Language Requirements (for candidates whose first language is not English):** • A TOEFL score of 100 (internet-based with minimum 23 in writing and speaking and 22 in reading and listening). • An IELTS score of 6.5 overall with no less than 6.5 in writing and speaking and 6.0 in listening and reading. • A Pearson Academic score of 61 overall with 61 minimum in writing, speaking, reading and listening • Candidates with TOEFL 85 or above (internet-based) with 21 minimum in writing and reading, 20 in listening and 22 in speaking, or IELTS 6.0 overall with 6.0 or above in all sections, or Pearson Academic 59 overall with a minimum score of 59 in each section are offered the opportunity of attending an 8-week pre-sessional course. • Candidates with TOEFL 75 overall (internet-based) with minimum 18 in reading and writing, 17 in listening and 20 in speaking, or IELTS 5.5 overall with 5.5 or above in all sections, or Pearson Academic Pearson Academic 51 overall with a minimum score of 51 in each section are offered the opportunity of attending a 12 week pre-sessional course. • Candidates with TOEFL 70 overall (internet-based) with a minimum score of 17 in reading and writing, 16 in listening and 19 in speaking, or IELTS 5.0 overall with 5.0 or above in all sections, or Pearson Academic 47 overall with a minimum score of 47 in each section are offered the opportunity of attending a 16 week pre-sessional course. • Candidates with TOEFL 65 overall (internet- based) with a minimum score of 16 in reading, 17 in writing, 15 in listening and 18 in speaking , or IELTS 5.0 overall with a minimum of 5.0 in writing and 4.5 or above in speaking, listening and reading, or Pearson Academic 42 overall with a minimum score of 42 in each section are offered the opportunity of attending a 20 week pre-sessional course. • A GMAT of 550 minimum may be required

Programme Regulations	**Attendance requirements:** Students are required to attend all sessions as specified for the course. **Flexible Credit Accumulation – Receiving an award:** The Programme Examination Board will consider students on this mode of attendance at least annually. The Board will agree the options open to students e.g. accept a Postgraduate Certificate and withdraw from the programme or continue with the programme. Students will receive a 'statement of progress' letter at least once per year usually after a Programme Examination Board indicating: which credits have been passed, whether th credit passed entitles the student to an award and the period of study remaining until the time-limit for FCA programmes is reached (5 years from the start of the programme). If a student wishes to accept an award and leave before the end of the programme they must respond to the statement as soon as possible indicating they wish to receive an award. **Exemptions from (Professional Qualification) examinations:** Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
	Specific assessment requirements for modules / module pass marks: The Board of Examiners may apply condonement to allow one or more assessments marked at 49% or below (but not normally below 40%) as passes. The Board of Examiners will normally condone a maximum of 30 credits of taught modules.
	Project Requirements: It is a requirement of the MSc Accounting & Finance that students undertake a major written Financial Analysis Project of between 10-15,000 words, for which they will conduct an in-depth financial analysis case study on a single company. The case study exercise aims to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate, in the development of a detailed report, the skills and knowledge acquired in the area of financial performance.
General Regulations (http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/general-regulations/) and the Regulations for the programme (above) take precedence over other information sources such as student handbooks if there is a conflict. If there is a conflict between General Regulations and Programme Regulations then General Regulations take precedence unless an exemption has been approved.	

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the threshold learning outcomes that a student might normally be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. **The individual modules included in the programme may differ from those included in this programme specification as our programmes are subject to continuous review.** Information on admissions requirements and career opportunities is available in the relevant prospectus. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the appropriate module guides and programme handbook(s) which are available to students on enrolment.