

## **MSc Accounting**

### **For students entering in 2007**

Awarding Institution	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution	The University of Reading
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences	Programme Length: 12 months
Date of specification: October 2006	
Programme Director:	Prof. Chris W. Nobes
Board of Studies	Management (Postgraduate)
Accreditation:	N/A

#### **1. Summary of programme aims**

The programme aims to provide a thorough postgraduate education in the generalist area of accounting for graduates who currently have little or no accounting knowledge or experience but who wish to understand how businesses use financial information for decision making purposes and how the results of those decisions are communicated and evaluated, particularly in an international context. Compulsory modules provide an analytical and integrated study of accounting and finance combining a conceptual and theoretical approach with an emphasis on application to relevant practical problem-solving scenarios. Optional modules develop these aims further. As a result students will enhance their employability in their related first degree discipline or in any general business management role. The programme will also add to students' employability in the more specialised accounting or finance function of a business, or in an accounting and finance institution. The programme will also serve as a basis for further academic study in the discipline.

#### **2. Transferable skills**

The programme requires a substantial amount of independent reading, research and study and students are expected to take personal responsibility and show initiative in developing their knowledge and understanding of the field of study. They will also need to enhance their skills in communications (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, and the use of information technology. Students will work under pressure of time throughout the programme and will learn to set priorities and manage their time in order to meet strict deadlines. Career planning will be an integral part of the programme, both in the choice of programme and in its elective components.

#### **3. Programme content**

<b>Module Code</b>	<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Level</b>
<b>Compulsory Modules</b>			
MMM039	Financial Statements and Analysis	20	M
MMM022	Anglo-American Accounting	20	M
MMM040	Management Decision-Making and Performance Evaluation	20	M
MMM041	Business Finance	20	M
MMM021	International Accounting	20	M

MMM025	Multinational Financial Reporting and Analysis	20	M
MMM049	Project	20	M
MMM026	Study skills (credits incorporated in MMM049)	-	M
<b>Optional Modules (2 modules to be chosen)*</b>			
ECM009	Financial Markets and Corporate Governance	20	M
ECM023	Financial Regulation	20	M
MMM018	Leadership and Advanced Business Policy	20	M
MMM034	Corporate Social Responsibility	20	M
MMM004	Strategy, Policy and Impact of the MNE	20	M
MMM012	International Human Resource Management	20	M
MMM015	Research and Development in the MNE	20	M
MMM002	Understanding the Global Firm	20	M
MMM033	Business in the European Union	20	M
MMM042	Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship	20	M

\* This list of optional modules may be subject to change. Further optional modules may be available at the discretion of the Programme Director.

#### **4. Part-time/Modular arrangements**

The programme may be studied part-time over two consecutive years by arrangement with the Director of Studies for MSc Programmes.

#### **5. Progression requirements**

Assessment of taught modules by May/June; re-sit failed modules in September; submit project by Friday of the second week of September, or by a month thereafter if there are re-sits.

Students wishing to proceed to a higher degree by research should normally have obtained an average of at least 60% in the modules and at least 60% in the project.

#### **6. Summary of teaching and assessment**

Teaching is organised in modules delivered by staff who publish in the accounting field, many of whom are also qualified accountants. The delivery of material varies among the modules but involves lectures, classes, workshops, presentations, seminars, case studies and team work. All modules involve summative coursework, which takes a variety of forms reflecting the aims of the module. Modules often include formative coursework to enable students to monitor their own progress. Final assessment of the modules typically involves a 2 hour examination and coursework (weight varies according to modules). A project supervisor is also appointed for each student.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70-100%	Distinction
60-69%	Merit
50-59%	Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40-49%

Work below threshold standard

0-39%

Unsatisfactory work

To pass the MSc students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall. In addition, the total credit value of all modules marked at 40-49% must not exceed 40 credits and no module mark must fall below 40%. A mark of 50% or more in the project is also required.

Students who gain an average mark of 70% or above, including a mark of 60% or more in the project and no mark below 50% will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60%, including a mark of 50% or more in the project may be eligible for a Merit pass.

A Postgraduate Diploma can be awarded to students who pass at least 120 credits of M level modules, of which at least 60 credits must be passed in compulsory modules.

## **7. Admission requirements**

- (a) Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained an upper second class honours degree or equivalent in any discipline from a UK university, or its equivalent. The additional requirements for the programme can be obtained from the pre-requisites of the core modules of the programme.
- (b) International students whose native language is not English should either have a university degree taken in English, an IELTS score of 6.50 or an equivalent qualification.
- (c) Admissions Tutor: Prof. Chris W. Nobes

## **8. Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers, and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Adviser, Study Advisers, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

The Programme Director acts as personal tutor to the student and also interviews every student before the beginning of term to offer advice on the operation of the degree programme and on the choice of options. Many of the students are from countries outside the UK and tutors are therefore careful to ensure that students settle down in their new surroundings and understand the requirements of the MSc programme. The initial interview is also useful in detecting whether students have some language problems (despite obtaining an IELTS score of 7.00), in which case they are strongly advised to register for language tuition. All Autumn term modules set a test at the end of the term with the primary purpose of familiarising students with

the UK examination system and the requirements of the programme. Students who fail overall on their modules are identified and invited to discuss their problems with their tutor. In addition to lecture and class times, each module lecturer has appointed office hours during which they may be consulted without prior appointment. The Department of Economics also provides a Handbook with details of each module and a Handbook covering the MSc programmes as a whole, including details of the method of assessment of programmes.

## **9. Career Prospects**

Graduates from this programme will enhance their employability in a range of careers related to their first degree discipline or in a general business management role. Graduates will also be equipped to move into the more specialised accounting or finance function of a business or into an accounting and finance institution. As the programme offers an international perspective, career prospects are likely to be international. The programme would also serve as a basis for further academic study in the discipline.

## **10. Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

None

## **11. Educational aims of the programme**

The programme provides a thorough postgraduate education in the generalist area of accounting with an emphasis on the application of theory to relevant practical problem-solving scenarios. It aims to produce graduates who have enhanced their employability and are therefore well placed to enter employment in a range of business institutions. The programme would also serve as a basis for further academic study in the discipline.

## 12. Programme Outcomes

### Knowledge and Understanding

#### A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. The main current technical language and practices of accounting, their theoretical underpinnings, practical use and limitations.
2. Causes, nature and implications of international differences in accounting.
3. Some of the theoretical tools and theories of finance and their relevance to practical problems particularly concerning financial management, risk and the operation of the capital markets
4. Interpretation and use of financial statements in an international context.

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#### Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Core knowledge and understanding is normally delineated in formal lectures, discussions, workshops, case studies, guided reading and guidance on key sources of reference material. A deeper and broader knowledge and understanding is obtained through independent study. Feedback and guidance are important elements complementing an emphasis on self-study.

#### Assessment

Unseen examinations and coursework.

### Skills and other attributes

#### B. Intellectual skills - able to

1. Think logically and analytically about ideas and scenarios presented.
2. Identify, analyse and solve or draw reasoned conclusions relating to structured and unstructured problems.
3. Locate and extract relevant data and evidence from multiple sources and identify and present its salient features.
4. Evaluate and critically assess arguments and evidence and marshal independently derived arguments towards a conclusion.
5. Integrate theory and practice

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#### Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Intellectual skills are embedded in the knowledge and understanding of the theories, principles and practices of accounting found within the programme. They are also fundamental to the successful display of the practical skills detailed below.

Intellectual skills are promoted throughout the teaching and learning programme. In lectures, workshops, seminars and independent study students are regularly challenged to construct logical arguments, locate data, analyse problems and alternative policies, justify statements and integrate theory with practice. Essays, cases, reports, exercises and the project provide the principle vehicles for developing and reflecting on intellectual skills.

#### Assessment

Unseen examination and coursework.

**C. Practical skills - able to**

1. Record and summarise transactions and other economic events and prepare a range of financial statements and other documents for internal and external publication and use.
2. Analyse and interpret financial data and documents relating to the operations of the business.
3. Prepare financial analyses and projections
4. Draw on knowledge and understanding to present arguments and solve problems in accounting
5. Independently plan, undertake and research a bibliography-based piece of work.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

→ Practical skills are embedded within the knowledge and understanding of accounting concepts, principles and techniques. These skills are promoted via formal lectures, workshops, seminars and independent study. Learning to apply these skills is obtained via numerical exercises and case studies, coursework essays and reports and the project. Students are required to understand a wide amount of reading, both of specific references and through researching their own sources of information.

**Assessment**

Unseen examinations and coursework.

**D. Transferable skills - able to**

1. Communicate ideas effectively and appropriately to different intended audiences.
2. Apply statistical and numerical skills to data.
3. Apply problem-solving skills to a variety of scenarios
4. Use IT, including word processing and Website searches.
5. Use library and Web based resources.
6. Work in teams.
7. Independently manage a variety of pieces of work.
8. Manage time, manage change, prioritise work to achieve goals.
9. Take responsibility for personal and professional learning and development.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

→ The communication of information is embedded throughout the programme in workshops, seminars and case sessions and in assessment. The vehicle for communication may be oral or written and may include the use of computer software. It may also be achieved independently or as part of a team. The presentation of well researched work is a fundamental element of the programme and requires the application of many of the skills listed. This is reinforced by the breadth and depth of the syllabuses for each module and the highly structured system of deadlines for assessed work, and examinations, which develop the students' skills of time management.

**Assessment**

Unseen examination and coursework.

**Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**