

## Programme Specification: Top-Up MSc Accountancy and Finance

**NOTE:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found (1) at <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/bcbs>, (2) in the Module Specifications and (3) in the Student Handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

1.	<b>Awarding Institution / Body</b>	<b>Birmingham City University</b>
2.	<b>Teaching Institution:</b>	<b>Birmingham City University</b>
3.	<b>Programme accredited by:</b>	<b>n/a</b>
4.	<b>Final Award:</b>	<b>MSc Accountancy and Finance</b>
5.	<b>Programme Title:</b>	<b>Master of Science</b>
6.	<b>UCAS Code:</b>	
7.	<b>QAA Benchmarking Group:</b>	<b>Business &amp; Management</b>

### 8. Aims of the programme

The programme aims to provide learners with:

Thorough grounding for career development in accounting or finance, by extending their knowledge in the core financial management theories and asset pricing models, as well as by providing them with the analytical skills to cope with an increasingly complex and international accounting and finance environment.

It also aims to provide a valuable foundation for those contemplating careers in areas such as financial analysis, investment banking or fund management, all of which are likely to involve extensive use of accounting and financial information.

Students who successfully complete the MSc in Accountancy and Finance should be able to:

Critically appraise modern financial theories and models which inform and influence corporate finance, investment analysis and fund management functions.

Carry out an independent piece of academic research by adopting the conceptual and methodological frameworks appropriate to the specific topic of investigation.

Demonstrate a range of intellectual skills and competencies necessary to operate effectively and efficiently in a constantly changing and highly competitive global business environment.

Progress to a doctoral study, should they wish to do so.

For those students whose first language is not English, the course also offers them the opportunity to develop high level of proficiency in the international business language of English.

**9. Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated: the programme provides learners with opportunities to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes as follows:**

<p><b>A. Knowledge and critical understanding of:</b></p> <p><b>1. Stage One (Bridging Study)</b></p> <p>1. A critical understanding of modern financial theories, models and methodology which inform and influence financial decisions of the firm at a strategic level. It provides a theoretical underpinning for the practical issues of Corporate Financial Strategy</p> <p><b>2. Stage Two (Masters)</b></p> <p>1. Research Skills in accounting and finance.</p> <p>2. The development of a research proposal, conduction of a critical literature review and the implementation of a research methodology in the investigation and analysis of research problem.</p> <p>3. The completion of masters level dissertation on a finance or accounting related topic relevant to the workplace or the academic discipline</p>	<p><b>Teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</b></p> <p>Modern Theory of Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding are acquired through an intensive combination of lectures, tutorials, workshops, presentations, self-directed study and on-line discussions and tutorial support.</li> <li>• The assessment methods employed here require students demonstrate in-depth level of understanding through critical review of empirical literature, mini-project involving stock market data and a closed-book examination.</li> </ul> <p>Research Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching and learning experience consists of a series of lecture sessions, workshop exercises and computer lab sessions. Lectures will introduce and explain theoretical concepts and the dissertation requirements. Workshops will allow students to discuss the application of these concepts to their own individual projects. All students will have an individual tutorial with their assigned supervisor to help formulate a suitable dissertation topic and associated research proposal.</li> <li>• The assessments methods employed here require students to undertake a critical review of the literature pertaining to their research topic and to demonstrate a suitable level of knowledge and understanding of research techniques via the production of a research proposal.</li> </ul> <p>Dissertation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching and learning experience will include an individual relationship with a dissertation supervisor. Students will forward draft materials on a chapter by chapter basis and will then obtain appropriate formative feedback. In between the production of the chapters, regular contact and interaction between student and supervisor may be face-to-face, via telephone or via e-mail.</li> <li>• The learning experience will become increasingly student driven as the dissertation process progresses especially in relation to the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results.</li> <li>• The assessment method for the dissertation require students to demonstrate a suitable level of subject knowledge and understanding via the production of a 15000 word dissertation</li> </ul>
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## Skills and other attributes

<p><b>B. Intellectual / cognitive skills:</b></p> <p><b>Bridging Study</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conceptual formulation of financial theories</li> <li>2. Critical analysis, evaluation and application of critical judgement to theories</li> <li>3. Relating theory to practice and vice versa.</li> <li>4. Advanced enquiry and research skills.</li> <li>5. Holistic thinking, integration and synthesis.</li> </ol> <p><b>Stage Three (Masters)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advanced enquiry and research of a finance or accounting related topic</li> <li>2. Integration of theory and practice</li> <li>3. In-depth critical understanding of relevant theories, concepts and models.</li> <li>4. Ability to think strategically and reframe problems.</li> <li>5. Critical awareness of the limitations of studies and conclusions.</li> <li>6. Personal reflection on the project process undertaken</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As holders of postgraduate level professional accounting qualifications, entrants to the course are assumed to have some basic intellectual and cognitive skills required to cope with and benefit from study at Masters level. They are therefore likely to have some ability to think conceptually, to challenge accepted theories and concepts, to compare and contrast different conceptual models and to apply to topical issues in accounting and finance. The modules in the course attempt to develop these attributes further as follows:</li> </ul> <p>In Modern Theory of Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to the methods outlined in the previous section, an important part of the teaching and learning methods will be the requirement for students to undertake critical review of a number of published referred journal papers pertaining to the theories and models covered in the lectures and workshops.</li> </ul> <p>In Research Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to the methods outlined above the teaching and learning approach includes the critical evaluation of existing dissertations. Students are particularly encouraged to review existing proposals and to consider overall manageability especially in relation to the availability and access to the data and materials required to complete the dissertation.</li> </ul> <p>Dissertation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the dissertation stage, further advanced intellectual development takes place through the preparation process, where students have to develop and implement their individual research methodology, search for relevant secondary data, undertake primary research, if appropriate, and analyse and synthesise the findings from these studies to present an individual written report which is logical, coherent and insightful.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>C. Practical, research and independent learning skills:</b></p> <p>Bridging Study and Masters Stages</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Locate publications and evaluate their usefulness</li> <li>2. Locate and collect published relevant secondary data</li> <li>3. Enquiry and research skills, leading to the development and implementation of a research methodology for a major individual project.</li> <li>4. Time management and prioritisation.</li> <li>5. Progressing from dependent to interdependent relationships with tutors and peers.</li> <li>6. Management of own learning; experiential learning.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Research Skills module acts as a firm basis for achieving an understanding of research methodology and information management, and conceptualises the study in relation to a relevant body of theory, national or international context, and organisational context.</li> <li>• Independent learning and student self-directed study is achieved throughout the programme via appropriately designed assignment briefs, the availability of web-based resources, library resources and assessments both within the specialist modules and in relation to the dissertation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>D. Transferable / key skills:</b></p> <p>Bridging Study and Masters Stages</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication skills – Prepare written and presentation material for academic and professional readers</li> <li>2. Ability to reference all sources of material and information consistently and accurately.</li> <li>3. Develop ICT and computational skills</li> <li>4. Team working; sensitivity to others' feelings, values and beliefs.</li> <li>5. Project management.</li> <li>6. Self-confidence and self-reliance.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</b></p> <p>Key transferable skills are introduced at the beginning of the programme. Students are given guidance on the standard of presentation required and all assignments require high quality submissions including correct referencing of all sources. ICT skills development includes computer lab sessions where students learn to interrogate the Birmingham City University library on line database.</p>

## 10. Evaluation and improvement of quality and standards

<b>Committees:</b> Board of Studies Examination Board Faculty Academic Planning and Development Committee Faculty Board Professional and Postgraduate Programmes Group	<b>Mechanisms for review and evaluation:</b> Periodic Review and Re-approval events Annual Monitoring Report Student feedback questionnaires External Examiners' Reports Course team meetings QAA Benchmark Guideline
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## 11. Regulation of Assessment

Details of the mechanisms and criteria for assessment in individual modules, and the means of differentiating awards, are published widely. Standard Postgraduate Assessment Regulations are available on the University's intranet at <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/jaws>, and individual and collective guidance is given by academic staff on their operation at appropriate times throughout the programme.

To qualify for a **Master's Degree** a student must successfully complete all required assessments and obtain a minimum of 60 credits at level 7. The pass-mark in all modules is 40%.

The award of a Master's degree with **Commendation** is made to students who achieve an average mark of 60-69% at the first sitting in the marks awarded for Stage 2 modules equivalent to at least 60 credits.

The award of Master's Degree with **Distinction** is made to students who achieve an average mark of 70% at the first sitting in the marks awarded for Stage 2 modules equivalent to 60 credits.

## 12. External Examiners are appointed. Their work includes:

- Approving coursework assignments and assessment criteria.
- Approving examination papers.
- Monitoring standards through moderation of completed assessments.
- Attending Examination Boards.