Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Top-up Business & Financial Management

2014/15

In the day to day context, whilst every endeavour will be made to provide the courses and services described in the Programme Specification, Blackpool and The Fylde College reserves the right to make such changes as may be appropriate for reasons of operational efficiency or due to circumstances including industrial action beyond its control.

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Programme Specification provides a summary of the main features of the <insert programme title> programme, and the learning outcomes that a 'typical' student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate on successful completion of the programme.

Further detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module is available in the following documents:

- Programme handbook
- B&FC Student handbook
- B&FC Admissions Policy
- Work Based Learning handbook (Foundation Degrees)
- Student guide to assessment and feedback
- www.blackpool.ac.uk

2. KEY PROGRAMME INFORMATION

Name of the final award	Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Business and Financial Management
Programme title	BA (Hons) Top-up Business and Financial Management
Teaching institution	Blackpool and The Fylde College
Name of awarding body/institution	Lancaster University
Details of Professional/Statutory body accreditation	N/A
Length of programme/mode of study	One Year Full Time or Two Years Part Time
Subject Benchmark statements	Accounting (2007) Finance (2007) General Business Management (2007)
Language of Study	English
Date of Validation	2013/2014
Date of most recent review	2013/2014
Date programme specification written/revised	April 2014

3. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Blackpool and the Fylde College remains committed to providing a highly responsive curriculum that is employment and future-focused and will enable students to develop the essential knowledge and skills that will prepare them for future success in work and life.

The top-up degree is designed to prepare you for entry-level employment and future Business and Finance managerial and/or leadership positions in a variety of commercial, industrial and service organisations. It is distinctive in that it focuses on offering a general business core supplemented with financial management units. The course will prepare you for the challenges of the business world and provide you with a solid understanding of key financial theories and concepts to help manage these situations effectively.

The BA (Hons) Top-up in Business and Financial Management builds on the knowledge and understanding gained at level 4 and 5 and provides strategic level understanding in the areas of management, finance decision making, performance and business and financial ethics.

Your studies will be organised around core business areas such as managing people, human resources and strategy, alongside financial and business management and systems. As you progress through your studies you will be asked to link these in integrated and systematic ways and to demonstrate the ability to deploy business and finance theory and concepts in a critical and professional manner.

There is an emphasis on learning and self-development and you will gain a sound grasp of the principles of both business and financial management. The course will provide you with a critical understanding of the financial environment in which you will be working. It will also provide you with a solid grounding in all aspects of business, leading to a critical awareness of business issues. Thus, the course provides fully rounded business graduates with a strong financial management specialism.

The programme is forward looking at all times and takes account of the changes and challenges facing graduates and as such will help you identify your existing competences, set targets for your own development and enable you to demonstrate new or enhanced abilities as a result of wide ranging studies during the course.

4. ADMISSION CRITERIA

Direct entry to Level 6 would normally be on the basis of either:

- Foundation Degree in Business and Financial Management (Commendation Level or above),
- Foundation Degree in Accounting (Commendation Level or above)

Appropriate work experience is fundamental to the Top Up year and is a key element in the delivery of module learning outcomes and skills. Current or potential work experience will be a matter for negotiation between yourself and your course leader as to the most appropriate to ensure that the work experience enables you to maximise your learning opportunities. As such each placement will be specifically agreed, with set objectives, which benefit yourself and the employer. Each placement will be monitored by a module tutor.

5. PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES

The aim of the programme is to produce independent, enquiring, knowledgeable graduates who enjoy learning, are enterprising, employable, self-aware, able to take career and other opportunities in life, and able to make a positive contribution to society.

There are a number of career and progression opportunities open to graduates of this degree:

- Post graduate studies
- Teacher Training in a relevant subject
- Management and Leadership roles

6. CONTEXTUALISED BENCHMARK STATEMENTS

A: Knowledge and Understanding. Students must demonstrate critical understanding, at the appropriate level, of:

A1.   The issues that affect the conduct of business across a wide range of types of organisation
A2.   Business as a phenomenon arising from, and operating within particular economic, environmental, ethical and legal contexts
A3.   The key tasks involved in aligning the human and material resources of an organisation to meet customer expectations
A4.   The multidisciplinary nature of the study of business and financial management
A5.   The nature, structure, functions and internal processes of business organisations and the financial implications.
A6.   The major theoretical tools and theories of finance and their relevance and application
A7.   Finance related quantitative methods
A8.   Financial decision making both personal and corporate in various circumstances
A9.   The financial environment both national and international

B: Critical-thinking/intellectual skills. Students must demonstrate skills, at the appropriate level, of:

B1.   Identifying, defining and exploring business problems (using logical and creative approaches)
B2.   Being able to discriminate between business and managerial alternatives and evaluating them
B3.   Using of a range of established business and financial management techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis and synthesis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis in a work context.
B4.   Effective problem solving and decision making including identifying, formulating and solving business problems.
B5.   Analysing financial statements and related data
B6.   Analysing, applying and evaluating financial theory and financial management techniques
B7.   Evaluating regulatory financial frameworks
B8.   Arguing cogently in oral and written form
B9.   Conducting research into business and management issues, either individually or as part of a team for projects/dissertations/presentations

C: Subject Specific Skills. Students must demonstrate skills, at the appropriate level, of:

C1.   Identifying and prioritising own learning and development needs
C2.   Effective self-management skills
C3.   Interpersonal skills such as effective listening, negotiating, persuading and presentation
C4.   Key enterprise skills
C5.   The use of communication and information technology (CIT) for business applications
C6.   Information search and data retrieval using traditional and electronic sources.

D: Key Transferable Skills. Students must demonstrate skills, at the appropriate level, of:

D1.   Communicating effectively, both orally and in writing
D2.   Working with and relating effectively to others
D3.   Working independently
D4.   Managing time and working to deadlines
D5.   Managing own resources effectively
D6.   Sharing ideas and appreciating the importance of alternative views
D7.   Undertaking developmental and networking activities
D8.   Showing confidence and self-awareness, reflecting on own learning, being self-reliant and constructively self-critical

7. PROGRAMME AIMS

- Provide the opportunity to develop a theoretical understanding of business, management and finance theories relating to the conduct and environment of business.
- Provide a conduit to experiential learning in the application of theory in conduct of business.
- Apply a context in which to explore the connections and integration of subject specialisms into the wider world of business.
- Undertake tasks and challenges that develop key transferable skills essential to a career in business.
- Develop knowledge of potential careers open to a graduating business and financial management student.

8. PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

1. Generate ideas within the field of business regionally and nationally through the analysis of information and concepts at a practical and abstract level.
2. Command wide ranging specialised academic, technical and creative skills with regard to the world of business and financial management in a variety of workplace context.
3. Analyse, synthesise and evaluate a range of business information.
4. Diagnose problems, design solutions in a range of business areas, including public private and third sector
5. Demonstrate independent academic research skills.
6. Analyse, synthesise and evaluate key elements of business and financial management.

9. PROGRAMME CONTENT

All Higher Education programmes delivered at Blackpool and The Fylde College consist of modules. A module is a coherent unit of subject material, which is complete with its own learning outcomes and assessments. More detailed information on module content is available in the programme handbook.

Level 6 – 120 Credits

Code	Module Title	Level	Credits
BFM601	Approaches to Managing Strategically	6	20
BFM602	Ethics, Business and Finance	6	20
BFM603	Strategic Financial Management Decision Making	6	20
BFM604	Developing Performance	6	20
BFM605	Dissertation	6	40
BFM606	Managerial Finance*	6	20
BFM607	Financial Analysis*	6	20

*Electives to accommodate current year one and year two FdA in Accounting students

10. TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

You will encounter a range of learning and teaching methods. Lectures are used to deliver core knowledge and theoretical concepts, whilst seminars and workshops are devoted to the opportunity to engage in discussion, evaluation and reflection. These are used to explore the interrelationships between theory and practice using methods such as case-study analysis, role-play, group activities and business simulation games. Cognitive skills are developed through lecture, seminars and group discussion, tutorials and group work. You will learn to apply these skills through case study analysis and reflection. Student-managed and experiential learning feature prominently, at both individual and group level, and you are encouraged to share your experiences of learning, to learn from the experiences of others, to enhance your reflective skills and to become more critically self-aware. Background reading is considered critical for your development, and you are encouraged to read widely, not only from key academic texts, but also from appropriate journals and reviews. The Learning and Teaching Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) is used to support you with a range of resources to facilitate your learning. These include the use, where appropriate, of blogs and discussion threads and multimedia resources.

You will engage at an expert level with issues to do with strategic concerns of business and management on all the main modules. In Developing Performance you will implement best practice approaches in the context of a range of organisational settings as well as identify causal gap that is often attributed within this approach. Within the Approaches to Managing Strategically module you will analyse the link from strategic intention to realisation through a variety of academic models and approaches. Building on skills and subject expertise developed in the level five work-based learning module, the Dissertation module will require significant skills in independent study and self-directed learning.

The programme is designed to have a good balance between practical and theoretical elements, providing you with the opportunity to gain knowledge, understanding, vocational and financial managerial skills to become effective in future Business and Finance managerial and/or leadership roles.

In the Developing Performance module (level six), a range of case studies, applied theoretical models and research in the area of performance management will be drawn on to develop and enable you to implement best practice approaches. The Managing Strategically module requires you to identify the linkage of theory to practice from both the macro and micro setting. Live case studies and pod casts will supplement the learning as well as students presenting seminar presentations on strategic models, the dynamics of competition and research. The Ethics, Business and Finance module will provide an appreciation and in-depth understanding of the implications of Business Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability within the national and international organisational context. Strategic Financial Management Decision Making will provide identification of financial strategies available to enable the maximization of an organisation's net value through the creation of value and the financial support of an organisation's business strategy.

A variety of teaching and delivery are used to explore the interrelationships between theory and practice. Methods such as case-study analysis, role-play, group activities and management/leadership simulation games are used. Cognitive skills are developed through lecture, seminars and group discussion, tutorials and group work. You will learn to apply these skills through case study analysis and reflection. Background reading is considered critical for your development, and you are encouraged to read widely.

The Learning and Teaching Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) is used to support students with a range of resources to facilitate your learning. This includes the use, where appropriate, of blogs, discussion threads, Illuminate and multimedia resources.

The team takes the view that assessment is used primarily to determine how well you are able to integrate knowledge and skills gained and apply them effectively and appropriately to management and leadership situations. Effective and appropriate assessment is essential to the operation of the qualification and is based on the learning outcomes. Skills in the cognitive domain revolve around knowledge, comprehension, application, and critical thinking around the subject.

Intellectual skills are assessed by a variety of assessment methods including formal reports, essays, professional discussions and examinations using formative and summative methods. The execution of the student negotiated work based project allows students to demonstrate their thinking skills to the highest level and demonstrate the ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry. The student negotiated work based project is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their ability to manage their own project, make use of scholarly and current research and frame appropriate questions to offer or achieve a solution to a managerial problem or dilemma.

Online learning is used both to support and to cultivate autonomy while recognising that many students may not feel fully prepared for this form of study. Independent study needs to be developed during the level four modules and embedded clearly in the practices that underpin teaching and learning. Gilly Salmon's (2004) five stage model of E-learning is adopted at level four and five modes of study. There are also areas where notices may be posted and students and tutors can send messages or discuss queries. The forum for social and intellectual interaction between students and tutors; uses a range of innovative pedagogical approaches, including peer learning and collaborative research, and thus facilitates the development of higher order learning. Forums can be viewed by all connected with the programme. These teaching and learning strategies may be used as part of delivery together with lectures and seminars. 'Virtual' seminar groups may, for example, work on an activity and conference as a discussion group on the task over a specified time period. Members may be appointed to start and to summarise the discussion. The tutor can observe the discussion and take part as appropriate. All students are inducted in the use of Moodle including a tutorial in both the technical aspects and the pedagogical approach to the learning.

The programme is designed with employability at its core and aims, through the combination of learning through workshops, the workplace, self-study and self-reflection, to develop autonomous students with an awareness of the significance of lifelong learning. Fundamental to this will be the focus on reflective practice.

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is integrated throughout the programme and as such addresses and encourages the development of a range of transferable skills, such as critical thinking, reflective practice, problem solving and decision making in the workplace. Employer engagement is actively encouraged throughout all modules and in particular during the work placement/Learning and Professional Skills module by the application of principles to practice.

At the outset of the programme you will initiate your personal development planning with a statement of learning needs and action plan. The PDP process is supported through the use of E-portfolio which students will be introduced to and will create in the Academic and Digital Literacy module. The e-portfolio provides a vehicle for a rich and complex process of planning, synthesising, sharing, discussing, reflecting, giving, receiving and responding to feedback (JISC & Higher Education Academy 2008). In addition the e-portfolio enables you to draw from both informal and formal learning activities to create your e-portfolios. You will personally manage and own your e-portfolio and enables you to share items (or whole e-portfolio presentations) with other parties such as peers, tutors, and/or employers.

Essentially, there will five parts to the student's e-portfolio:

- Personal and professional development plan (PDP)
- Meetings with personal and module tutors
- Workplace-based assessments
- Reflective reports and other evidence
- Sign-off documents

Opportunities for PDP are included in the programme in the following ways:

At induction

At the start of your studies, students are introduced to the concept of PDP. You will be more receptive to the concept, and less geared towards getting marks which contribute to your final degree, at this stage in your programme. In this way the notion of personal development planning is embedded early on.

Tutorials

Tutorial sessions, and in particular study skills sessions, provide a good opportunity for you to reflect on what skills you may need to acquire in order to progress, not only in your studies, but also in order to find employment at the end of your degree. You are made aware that the generic skills required to complete your programme will help you to organise your life and plan for your future career. The process of PDP will be managed / monitored by the personal tutor via a series of meetings that will take place during the first year. Sufficient resources will be made available to allow the personal tutor to carry out this role effectively.

11. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT ACADEMIC GUIDELINES

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
- QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- B&FC Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy
- B&FC Undergraduate Regulatory Framework
- Validating Partner's Undergraduate Regulatory Framework
- B&FC Undergraduate Assessment Regulations

(QAA Review May 2013)

QAA's judgements about Blackpool and The Fylde College

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Blackpool and The Fylde College.

- The academic standards that the College offers on behalf of its awarding bodies **meet UK expectations** for threshold standards.
- The quality of student learning opportunities at the College **meets UK expectations**.
- The quality of information produced by the College about its learning opportunities **is commended**.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities at the College **is commended**.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following **features of good practice** at Blackpool and The Fylde College:
- the clear link between the College's commitment to inclusivity and employability, and the resulting innovative assessment tasks
- the variety of assessment tasks and their relevance to the world of work, which was valued by students and employers
- the College's anticipatory approach to the consideration of and investment in learning resources
- the extensive and valuable contribution of students to the quality assurance and enhancement activities of the College
- the integrated approach to the provision of learning opportunities to enable the entitlements of disabled students to be met in the wider context of a College ethos of inclusivity
- the integrated and innovative approach to the provision of blended learning opportunities and e-resources using the virtual learning environment, which is both comprehensive and reliable
- the high-quality website, which provides a user-friendly point of contact for the College's intended audiences
- the positive contribution made by the role of the Higher Education Development Manager to the development and production of high-quality and accessible course data and management information
- the comprehensive and continuing development of the virtual learning environment that facilitates effective dissemination of information, providing a 'one-stop shop' for students and staff
- the positive contribution of the College's equality and diversity agenda to the enhancement of learning opportunities across its higher education provision
- the embedded culture of enhancement, as exemplified by the strategic leadership provided by the Higher Education Directorate and the complementary high levels of awareness among, and involvement of, staff and students across the College