

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION – BA (Hons) Business Administration

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	NCC Education
3.	Programme accredited by	N/A
4.	Final award	BA (Hons) Business Administration
5.	Programme titles	Business Administration
6.	Pathways available	Single, Top-Up
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Online taught modules
8.	Mode of attendance	FT, PT
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	QAA subject benchmark statement: Business and Management (2015)
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	September 2014; October 2014 – amendment to University of Worcester regulations; and February 2017 – annual update; March 2017 correction to regs.

12. Educational aims of the programme

This programme aims to develop the learner's understanding of the areas of management, accounting, marketing and finance.

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will have knowledge and understanding of the global business environment, as well as the skills required to research, analyse and manage business relationships or to further develop skills and knowledge through postgraduate study.

The programme is a natural progression for graduates of the NCC Education Level 5 Diploma in Business (QCF).

In particular, the aims of the programme are to provide students with:

1. The opportunity to extend existing knowledge of, and skills relating to, the study of the global business environment and management, accounting, marketing and finance.
2. A focused, analytical study of organisations and specialised aspects of their strategy, behaviour, management and sustainability in the changing global environment in which they operate.
3. The opportunity to access the specific knowledge and skills that will enable them to:
 - a. Undertake employment in the area of Business Administration.
 - b. Progress to postgraduate study in the areas of management, accounting, marketing and finance.
4. A supportive and stimulating learning environment which is intellectually challenging and develops analytical and critical abilities.

5. Opportunities to develop transferable skills and competencies and an appreciation of working in a diverse and multi-cultural environment in preparation for a career in international business and management.
6. Enhancement of lifelong (including online) learning skills and personal development to support employability, career aspirations and an effective contribution to society.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:
<p>On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically evaluate key concepts and practices in business administration and marketing, with a focus on the different product/service mixes for domestic and overseas markets (BUSM3952) and the challenges of business-to-business marketing and business-to-consumer marketing (BUSM3956). 2. Accurately and fully examine working assumptions made regarding case problems, working hypotheses and data (BUSM3953) and a range of conceptual models related to financial management (BUSM3957). 3. Make informed judgements concerning the relationships between management and individuals within an organisation, with a particular emphasis on behaviour and development (BUSM3955). 4. Precisely distinguish the differences between quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research, and competing business research approaches and methods (BUSM3950). 5. Demonstrate an extensive understanding of the concept of strategy, how to think strategically, and within the context of a changing external environment (BUSM 3951); and how strategic operations management relates to corporate strategy (BUSM3954). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning makes use of both synchronous and asynchronous delivery. Students experience directed guided and fully independent learning across all modules, and teaching staff make use of the collective student body (global) experiences in contextualising the topics and learning outcomes of the programme. The course includes: • A programme of structured lectures, online tutorials, discussion forum and live chat participation. • The researching and writing of assignments and subsequent oral and written feedback. • In-depth, self-directed research, tutorial guidance and peer reviewed discussion. • Formative stop and check tutorial questions. • 'Real-world' settings and scenarios experienced via case studies, guest lecturer inputs. • A variety of assessment methods used including examinations, case studies, assignments, discussion forum. contributions, tutorial exercises • Complementarity across module activities and assessment

B. Cognitive and intellectual skills:	Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:
<p>On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply critical thinking, analysis and synthesis with reference to past, present and future organisational, environmental and management issues and personal experiences and development. 2. Solve problems and make decisions in a range of complex and unpredictable circumstances. 3. Manage information including the interpretation and abstraction of meaning from a variety of information, data and experiences. 4. Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in terms of people, cultures, business, management and ethical issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All modules encourage learners to engage in discussion of key issues and application of key concepts. • Higher order critical skills (e.g. the ability to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions to reach sound judgements) are developed and assessed in all Level 6 modules in accordance with University of Worcester's Curriculum Design Policy). • Case studies and weekly Tutorial Exercises offers students the opportunity to engage in problem solving and complex issues in a peer-supportive environment.
C. Practical skills relevant to employment:	Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:
<p>On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select and use effective communication media and technology to structure, present and disseminate information, requirements and decisions. 2. Utilise effective interpersonal and team working skills, including effective listening and presentation and the ability to operate effectively in an online environment. 3. Conduct research with an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of resultant knowledge and conclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All modules include opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous learning via communication technology. • Students are required to conduct research into a range of business administration and management issues. • Research-based knowledge, understanding and critical appreciation is assessed in all programme modules.
D. Transferable/key skills:	Examples of learning, teaching and assessment methods used:
<p>On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate effectively. 2. Utilise numeracy and quantitative skills 3. Effectively deploy research and performance analysis skills. 4. Utilise effective self-management (time, planning, motivation, initiative and enterprise). 5. Undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live chat sessions and discussion forums each week. • Self-management skills are experienced through meeting assignment submission deadlines, working with others. • Personal development supported through the academic tutor system and online resources for PDP. • Examinations are included partly to retain and develop examination techniques for students wishing to pursue professional qualifications post-degree. • Interpersonal and team-working skills are experienced via group activities and discussions.

This programme is delivered online through the NCC Education Virtual Learning Environment, *Campus* (<http://campus.nccedu.com>). Students will be provided with a login and password to access *Campus*, when they have enrolled on the programme.

Through *Campus* students will have access to all of the learning materials for this programme, including:

- Asynchronous video lectures.
- Synchronous group 'live chat' sessions.
- Guided online tutorials.
- Asynchronous Discussion Forums.
- Electronic journals and books.

In addition to these video lectures, tutorial activities, discussion forums, live chat and resources features students will also find key policy and advice documentation on *Campus* to support them through their programme.

A wide **variety of learning and teaching methods** is used in the BA (Hons) Business Administration top-up degree in order to maximise achievement and progression opportunities for students with diverse skills and experiences, from different parts of the world.

The programme has been designed to ensure that modules provide an appropriate structure within which:

- To acquire and build knowledge and understanding.
- To develop and progress across the intended range of cognitive, academic, practical and transferable skills appropriate to both study on the programme and future employment and/or further study at postgraduate level.
- To develop a positive and proactive approach to change management, a sensitivity to business issues and enterprise.
- To develop and experience a variety approaches to learning and teaching and a good balance of activities, within the online learning environment.

The importance of **research-informed teaching** in enhancing students' learning experience is fully appreciated. The majority of tutors contributing to the programme are research-active and draw students' attention to a variety of relevant research papers to illustrate ideas, concepts and theories or to provide examples according to the course coverage.

There are opportunities across the programme for students to learn about and engage in research activity as they progress through each semester. Both the course structure and the assessment strategy support this through investigative, explorative and applied assessment tasks.

The global context is facilitated by virtue of the student cohort being drawn from many different parts of the world, as well as modules such as International Marketing Strategy, which have an explicit global focus. Students study in a culturally diverse environment with peers from a range of cultural backgrounds and tutors who have extensive business experience in a global context.

The themes of **social responsibility and ethical business** are addressed in the curriculum. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own courses of action in relation to organisational ethical dilemmas and to consider the implications of ecological changes for business and communities, now and in the future, and responses to these changes. The use of the VLE to

provide learning materials and student support promotes the paperless/low carbon learning processes.

Course design takes into account the students' prior learning experiences. In particular, it takes into account the structure of preparatory courses and their preferences. This is achieved by combining both synchronous and asynchronous learning, and utilising prior familiarity and competence navigating NCC Education's Virtual Learning Environment.

The needs of all learners are considered in delivering learning and teaching activities and learning materials are adapted where necessary and reasonably possible. NCC Education is committed to providing reasonable adjustments and special consideration, so as to ensure disabled candidates, or those facing exceptional circumstances, are not disadvantaged in demonstrating their knowledge, skills and understanding in order to obtain this degree award. Further details are provided in the Course Handbook (see *Section 4.3.3*).

14. Assessment Strategy

The Assessment strategy has been designed to provide a variety of challenges appropriate to students on an undergraduate business programme. There is an appropriate balance of testing theoretical knowledge and understanding and also practical application of that knowledge to real world business contexts. Course design and delivery, as well as assessment strategy, ensures that students continue to develop independent academic skills. This includes the wider reading and research practices which foster advanced scholarship.

Students are provided with opportunities for ongoing assessment (both formative and summative), assignments (including case study based questions and tasks) and end of module examinations. This mixture of assessment is designed to maximise opportunities for all students to perform and develop skills relevant to future academic and professional study.

Weekly discussion forum contributions are required from students, following topic guidance and instruction provided by tutors at the end of each online tutorial. This allows students to develop and test their independent learning, research and written presentation skills at regular points throughout the duration of their study. Assignment guidelines and tasks are issued at the beginning of each module and work is submitted around the mid-point in each semester, partly to enable students to receive feedback which will better prepare them for the end of semester examinations.

Assessment styles are adjusted according to module with some differences; for example, in the use of case studies for assignment tasks or the use of tutorial exercises rather than discussion forum contributions in the Business Research Methods module. Overall, however, students are presented with a uniform approach to assessment across each of the programme modules and this is intentional in order to allow students to take a systematic approach to time management and inform their understanding of what will be required in order to complete assessments for each module.

Marking of student work is internally and externally verified via a sample of work for every element of assessment. All work is anonymously marked, except where this is impracticable (e.g. Discussion Forum contributions). Student work is graded according to the University's Generic [Undergraduate Grade Descriptors](#) (A-H). Criteria which reflect the Intended Learning Outcomes are published for each assessment and constructive and timely relevant feedback is an integral part of the assessment process, particularly following submission of assignments during the semester.

A grid showing the mapping of assessments against modules is included in the Course Handbook.

15. Programme structures and requirements

The **BA (Hons) Business Administration** is available as a Single Honours award only. It may be taken:

- Full-time – normally completed within one year, with a maximum 2-year eligibility period allowed for completion of the course
- Part-time – normally completed in two years, with a maximum 4-year eligibility period allowed for completion of the course

All modules are worth 15 credits. Semesters run from the beginning of September to the end of December and from the beginning of March until the end of June.

Students can be studying in either September or March. Full-time students complete the programme over two semesters. Part-time students complete the programme over four semesters.

Award Map

Course Title: BA (Hons) Business Administration (Top-up)					Year of entry: 2016-17 onwards		
Level 6							
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status (Mandatory (M) or Optional (O))	Pre-requisites	Semester in which module taken ¹		
					Full time students	Part time students	
						Mar start	Sep start
BUSM3950	Business Research Methods	15	M	None	1 (Sep start) 2 (Mar start)	1	1
BUSM3951	Business Strategy	15	M	None	2	1	2
BUSM3955	Management and Organisational Behaviour	15	M	None	2 (Sep start) 1 (Mar start)	2	2
BUSM3956	Business-to-Business Marketing	15	M	None	1	2	1
BUSM3952	International Marketing Strategy	15	M	None	2	3	4
BUSM3953	Business Analysis and Decision Making	15	M	None	2	3	4
BUSM3954	Strategic Operations and Quality Management	15	M	None	1	4	3

¹ 1 = UK Autumn semester, 2 = UK Spring semester

BUSM3957	Management Accounting and Finance	15	M	None	1	4	3
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Honours Requirements at Level 6

Honours students must take 120 credits in total from all modules above.

16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

This award is located at Level 6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

The QAA Honours Degree Subject Benchmark Statement: Business and Management (2015) articulates the knowledge, skills and categories of achievement to be expected of successful honours graduates in the field. Learning outcomes and content, in addition to learning, teaching and assessment strategies of all modules are appropriate to this QAA Benchmark statement. As well as forming a basis for curriculum content and the setting of intended learning outcomes, the Benchmark statement has been used to help to ensure a strong link between the development of skills and employability of graduates of the course.

Further details can be found in the mapping documents contained in the Course Handbook.

17. Support for students

The programme is delivered online through the NCC Education Virtual Learning Environment, *Campus* (<http://campus.nccedu.com>). Students will be provided with a login and password to access *Campus* once they have enrolled on the programme. Through *Campus*, students will have access to all of the documentation and learning materials for this programme. Students will also interact with the tutor for each module and participate in discussion forums and live chat sessions through this platform.

The course is underpinned by the tenets of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#). Systematic consultation with students (e.g. through weekly discussion and live chat forums) and staff (e.g. through course team meetings each semester, chaired by NCC Education's Course Leader) about the accessibility of technological facilities ensures that:

- The virtual learning environment can be accessed fully by every student, or that reasonable adjustments can be made so that every student has an equal learning opportunity. For example, students are made aware of the accessibility features of their browsers and NCC Education's Customer Services is available to advise on further accessibility features to ensure equal learning opportunities for all students.
- The virtual and social learning environments for this course are safe, accessible and reliable for every student, promoting dignity, courtesy and respect in their use. For example, programme teaching staff and NCC Education academic staff monitors students' (and tutors') online contributions to ensure the use of appropriate terminology and that every student is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Opportunities to continuously enhance standards of usability are identified and explored. For example, the recent introduction of downloadable video lectures to support any students who experience temporary Internet connection issues or problems with low bandwidth.

Orientation

An orientation week has been designed to help familiarise students with the tools needed to successfully complete an online top-up degree programme, as well as the core documents which underpin this programme. The orientation, which includes introductory videos from each of the Module Leaders, also contains a Pre-Semester Checklist which all students must complete before beginning Week 1. The Pre-Semester Checklist includes instructions for using *Campus*, general programme delivery information and solutions to common accessibility issues.

Teaching and Learning Materials

The following materials are made available to students each teaching week:

- A video lecture, which can be viewed online or downloaded for offline viewing.
- A lecture handout which can be downloaded for note-taking.
- An online tutorial with suggested reading and research ideas, topic exercises, stop and check questions and the weekly discussion forum topic.
- An online discussion forum.
- An online live chat session.

Pastoral Support

Pastoral Support is available from a number of sources. As well as the Module Leaders and Course Leader, students can also contact Customer Services at NCC Education to discuss any issues that may be of concern. NCC Education's top-up degree programmes also have a dedicated Product Development Manager who can assist with referrals to support staff, academic/course queries and support with extenuating circumstances.

Assessment Surgery Weeks

One Assessment Surgery Week (Week 7) each semester provides students with the opportunity to consolidate their learning and also focus on finalising their assignment work, which must be submitted before the Week 8 deadline as published on *Campus*.

Inter-semester Study and Employability Skills Enhancement

During February, students will have the opportunity to engage with a range of activities designed to consolidate and enhance study and employability skills. Precise details will be published on *Campus* but resources will include workshops relating to CV writing, job interview techniques; additional personal development planning materials, making use of tutor feedback; online learning techniques and exam revision; networking with your learning community.

Supporting Documents and Resources

The following documents provide development and support for undergraduate students on this programme:

- A **Student Handbook** is provided for the course. This includes the structure of the course, student support, assessment strategies and course regulations.
- Access to Emerald Group's vast collection of **online journals**.
- Access to The University of Worcester's **online library**.
- **Turnitin** anti-plagiarism information.
- **Reassessment information** for students.
- A **common exam vocabulary** document to aid exam preparation.
- An **exam timetable** uploaded at the beginning of the semester, allowing students considerable time to plan for and successfully attend the examination.
- A **recommend reading** list, with materials for all modules.

- A **personal development plan** template and example.
- A **referencing and bibliographies** document to aid assignment submission.
- A **netiquette** guide
- A **document explaining academic misconduct**.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

This course aims to admit students who are seeking to build on recent preparatory study of Business at Level 5 in order to prepare for entry into a management career or postgraduate study. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate the ability to benefit from the course and show their potential to complete the course successfully. We consider applicants to our courses solely on the basis of their merit, ability and potential and will consider all information contained within the application form including personal statements and references. Admissions to the course are made in line with the University's [Admissions Policy](#). Our students come from diverse backgrounds and from a wide range of countries, and we welcome cultural diversity as well as the contribution of mature and disabled learners on this course.

Entry Requirements

- NCC Education Level 5 Diploma in Business (QCF), or equivalent.
- For applicants whose first language is not English, a minimum IELTS score of 5.5 (or equivalent), plus evidence of one year FT (or equivalent) study at FHEQ Level 5 in English.

Admissions procedures

All students must complete the course application form and submit to their local NCC Accredited Partner Centre/ directly to NCC Education Ltd. These will be passed to NCC Head Office, where admissions decisions will be made, (in consultation with Worcester Business School's Admissions Tutor, as appropriate), then recommended to the University of Worcester. On acceptance of the NCC recommendation, the University of Worcester will, allocate a unique student number, generate a student record, and make a firm offer directly to the student. Students will then need to send email confirmation to the University of Worcester of formal acceptance of this offer.

Admissions/selection criteria

Offers will be conditional against evidence of successful completion of NCC Education Level 5 Diploma in Business (QCF), or equivalent. Evidence from personal statements and/or references included with the application form will be considered in order to ascertain the ability to benefit from this Level 6 course and the potential to complete it successfully.

19. **Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards include:

- Module feedback and evaluation from tutors.
- Module feedback and evaluation from students - Each semester NCC Education uses a student questionnaire and an online chat session hosted by the Programme Manager (NCC Education Product Development Manager) to obtain up to date feedback on the programme and students' experiences. All students are invited to complete the questionnaire anonymously and take part in the chat session and both positive and negative feedback is welcome.
- Annual Course Evaluation.
- Course Leader led staff meetings each semester.
- Worcester Business School review and tutor monitoring.
- Ongoing academic oversight and scrutiny by NCC Education's Product Development Manager (top up degree Programme Manager) and/or Product Manager, part of NCC Education's Qualifications and Academic Delivery Division.
- External Examiners' Reports.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience:

- Informal module feedback and formal evaluation via questionnaires and online chat sessions.
- Meeting with module tutors.
- Induction, exit and other ad hoc correspondence.

20. **Regulation of assessment**

The course operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade, unless the failure was due to non-attendance.
- Reassessment items that are passed are graded at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.

Requirements for Progression

- A student who fails 90 credits or more due to non-submission will be required to withdraw from the University.
- Students who pass less than 90 credits but have submitted all items of assessment will be required to retake modules.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
Degree (non-honours)	Passed a minimum of 60 credits from the BA Business Administration programme
Degree with honours	Passed 120 credits from the BA (Hons) Business Administration programme

Classification

Classification is determined on the profile of the best grades from 120 credits attained at Level 6 only.

For further information on honours degree classification, see the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

21. Indicators of quality and standards

- The University underwent a QAA Institutional Audit in March 2011. The audit confirmed that confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. The audit team highlighted several aspects of good practice, including the proactive approach which supports the student experience for disabled students, the comprehensiveness of the student online environment (SOLE), the institution's commitment to enhancement, and the inclusive approach to working with its collaborative partners.
- Originally part of the National Computing Centre, NCC Education started offering IT qualifications in 1976 and from 1997 developed its Higher Education portfolio to include Business programmes, IT qualifications for school children and a range of foundation programmes. With more than 350 Accredited Partner Centres in over 50 countries, four international offices and academic support managers worldwide, NCC Education employs effective technologies for learning, assessment and support. NCC Education is also partnered with the British Council Education UK programme and quality assured by the Office of the Qualifications and Examiners' Regulator (Ofqual).
- Annual External Examiners' reports have been extremely supportive and complimentary particularly with respect to the organisation of the programme, quality of assessment tasks, marking and moderation practices
- Many members of staff engaged in developing the programme are engaged in relevant research, consultancy and professional practice

- NCC Education holds the *Investors in People* kite mark which was renewed in 2014.
- In recent student surveys NCC Education students have provided extremely positive feedback about their experiences of NCC Education's online degree programme. For example students have commented that module leaders are proactive and thorough in the way they communicate with students. The availability of chat session transcripts has helped a number of students to review key messages from module leaders and other students during these sessions and assignments have been recognised for providing good scope for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

22. Graduate destinations and employability

Graduate destinations

NCC Education students who have successfully completed the BA (Hons) Business Administration top-up degree have progressed into a wide range of career roles around the world and many have continued their studies at postgraduate level. NCC Education Alumni have secured jobs with a range of highly successful organisations including Citibank, Fujitsu, IBM and the UK National Health Service

Additionally, students who have successfully completed the BA (Hons) Business Administration top-up degree will be eligible to apply for the NCC Education Level 7 Diploma in Business Management (QCF) or to other postgraduate qualifications.

Graduate employability

The experience of learning and communicating through a virtual environment develops and enhances a range of skills relevant to future employability. In particular these include competence and confidence in navigating and working with technology, self-reliance, self-motivation, independence, online collaboration and initiative.

Links with employers

Worcester Business School at the University of Worcester fosters links with employers through its Employers' Advisory Board, work for business clients, links with professional organisations (such as the Institute of Directors) and knowledge transfer activities. Advisers with extensive practitioner experience of business and consultancy have been involved in the approval of this course.

The course teaching team have significant industry experience, including providing training and consultancy for large multinational organisations and NCC Education is an active member of the UK Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB), whose members work with a wide range of employers and, through FAB, different regulators, government departments and funding agencies. The course builds on the NCC Education Level 5 Diploma in Business (QCF) which is supported in the UK by [Skills CFA](#) and covers many of the key National Occupational Standards for Business Management which are valued by employers.

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 s/he 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 specifications and the course handbook provided to all students at the start of the course.