Programme Specification 2019–2020

Professional Accountancy

MSc
PGCert

Important document – please read

Contents

Important information regarding the Programme Specification

About this document

Last revised 23 September 2019

The Programme Specification gives a broad outline of the structure and content of the programme, the entry level qualifications, as well as the learning outcomes students will achieve as they progress. Some of the information referred to in this programme specification is included in more detail on the University of London website. Where this is the case, links to the relevant webpage are included.

Where links to external organisations are provided, the University of London is not responsible for their content and does not recommend nor necessarily agree with opinions expressed and services provided at those sites.

If you have a query about any of the programme information provided, whether here or on the website, registered students should use the '*ask a question*' tab in the student portal. Otherwise, the *Contact Us* link at the bottom of every webpage should be used.

Terminology

The following language is specific to the Professional Accountancy programme:

Module: Individual units of the programme are called modules. Each module is a self-contained, formally structured learning experience with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria

Pathway: The title of the different programme structures available. Which one to choose is determined by the student's ACCA status and papers passed.

Key revisions made

Programme specifications are revised annually. The quality committee of the member institution providing academic direction, as part of its annual review of standards, confirms the programme structure and the educational aims and learning outcomes, and advises on any development in student support. Where there are changes which may impact on continuing students, these are listed below. For all new students, the programme and general information provided in this document is correct and accurate and will be applicable for the current year.

Significant changes made to the Programme Specification 2019-20

- No significant changes

Programme title and awards

Postgraduate Degrees of the University of London may be classified. The award certificate will indicate the level of the academic performance achieved by classifying the award. The classification of the degree will be based on the ratified marks from the completed assessments.

The classification system for these programmes is as follows:

Distinction; Merit; Pass.

Specific rules for the classification of awards are given in the Programme Regulations, under Scheme of Award

Programme title

Professional Accountancy

Qualifications

Master of Science in Professional Accountancy

Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Accountancy

Intermediate qualifications

Students may not normally receive an intermediate qualification and continue to a higher qualification, with the exception of the Postgraduate Certificate, even if they are registered on the intermediate qualifications. The specific rules are given in the Programme Regulations under Scheme of award.

Exit qualification only

Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Accountancy

An exit qualification is an intermediate qualification, [as noted above] for which the student may not have registered at the outset but which may be awarded on completion of specific modules/courses (or credit accumulated) in a longer programme of study, if the student leaves the programme. Exit qualifications are awarded at the discretion of the Board of Examiners and once a student has accepted an exit qualification they will not normally be permitted to continue their study of the same award with the University of London.

Individual modules available for study on a stand-alone basis

There is no provision for individual modules of the programme to be studied on a stand-alone basis.

Award titles may be abbreviated as follows:

Master of Science – MSc

Postgraduate Diploma – PGDip

Postgraduate Certificate – PGCert

Level of the programmes

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) forms part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education of the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#) (QAA).

The awards are placed at the following Levels of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):

MSc   Level 7

PGDip (exit qualification)   Level 7

PGCert   Level 7

Relevant QAA subject benchmarks group

See the [QAA website](#) for information about quality assurance.

[Master's degrees in business and management (2015)](#)

Awarding body

University of London

Registering body

University of London

Academic direction

University College London

Accreditation by professional or statutory body

A Pathway 1 student who successfully passes the two option modules, *Strategic performance management* [PAM005] and *Strategic financial management* [PAM004], will be recognised as having attained equivalent passes for the equivalent two ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) Strategic Professional Options (AFM and APM).

Language of study and assessment

English

Mode of study

Web supported learning with an online tutor or centre supported learning from a University of London Recognised Teaching Centre, where this is available.

Recognised Teaching Centres which support this programme will be listed on the Recognised Teaching Centre [Directory.](#)

Programme structures

The programme has two registration points in the year corresponding with start dates for modules.

Students have an online induction session available through the virtual learning environment (VLE) prior to the start of their study session. This includes orientation of their learning environment and guidance on the structure and learning expectations for the module.

A student must follow one of two pathways when registering on the Professional Accountancy programme.

Pathway 1 – MSc in Professional Accountancy

The MSc under Pathway 1 consists of:

- Recognised prior learning on the basis of two ACCA Strategic Professional Essentials (SBL and SBR), or their equivalent,
- two University of London option modules: *Strategic financial management* (PAM004) and *Strategic performance management* (PAM005); and
- one University of London compulsory module: *Strategic financial project* (PAM006).

Pathway 1 – PGCert in Professional Accountancy

A student who has passed all nine of the ACCA Applied Knowledge and Applied Skills papers (or their equivalent) will be eligible to register for the Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Accountancy.

The PGCert consists of:

- two University of London option modules: *Strategic financial management* (PAM004) and *Strategic performance management* (PAM005).

PGDip (exit qualification only)

At the discretion of the Board of Examiners, the PGDip may be offered as an exit qualification under Pathway 1 provided that the student has successfully completed two University of London option modules, *Strategic financial management* (PAM004) and *Strategic performance management* (PAM005), and has passed the ACCA Strategic Professional Essential (SBL), or papers equivalent to SBL and SBR totalling at least 60 credits. For the purposes of this award, the successful completion of the ACCA Strategic Professional Essential (or equivalent) will be recognised and accredited as prior learning.

Pathway 2 - MSc in Professional Accountancy

The MSc under Pathway 2 consists of:

- Recognised prior learning on the basis of ACCA Strategic Professional Essentials (SBL and SBR) and two Options from AFM, APM, ATX, AAA, or their equivalent; and

- Two compulsory University of London modules: *Global issues for the finance professional* (PAM100); and *Strategic financial project* (PAM006).

Maximum and minimum periods of registration

The maximum and minimum period of registration, from a student's effective date of registration, are:

	Minimum	**Maximum**
MSc Pathway 1	One year	Five years
PGCert(Pathway 1)	Six months	Five years
MSc Pathway 2	Six months	Five years

In making a decision as to how many modules to register for in a given session, it is important to take account of on-going work and/or personal commitments. There are assessment deadlines for each module that may overlap and this should also be taken into consideration.

Credit value of modules

Further information about the credit systems used by universities in the UK and Europe is provided by the Quality Assurance Agency and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

Where credits are assigned to modules of a programme, credit indicates the amount of learning carried out in terms of the notional number of study hours needed, and the specified Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England (FHEQ) credit level indicates the depth, complexity and intellectual demand of learning involved. The details below indicate the UK credits and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) values.

The MSc in Professional Accountancy comprises a total of 180 UK credits (90 ECTS credits) at FHEQ level 7.

MSc in Professional Accountancy – Pathway 1

90 UK credits (45 ECTS credits) are granted by accreditation of prior learning in respect of the two ACCA Strategic Professional Essentials (SBL and SBR), or their equivalent; 30 UK credits (15 ECTS credits) are assigned to each University of London module (90 credits in total).

PGCert in Professional Accountancy – Pathway 1

The PGCert in Professional Accountancy comprises a total of 60 UK credits (30 ECTS credits) at FHEQ level 7. The two University of London option modules are each assigned 30 UK credits (15 ECTS credits).

PGDip in Professional Accountancy – Pathway 1 (exit qualification only)

The PGDip in Professional Accountancy comprises a total of 120 UK credits (60 ECTS credits) at FHEQ level 7 and may include a maximum of 60 UK credits (30 ECTS credits) as accreditation of prior learning.

MSc in Professional Accountancy – Pathway 2

120 UK credits (60 ECTS credits) are granted by accreditation of prior learning in respect of ACCA Strategic Professional Essentials (SBL and SBR) and two Options from AFM, APM, ATX, AAA, or their equivalent; 30 UK credits (15 ECTS credits) are assigned to each University of London module (60 credits in total).

Entrance requirements

Applicants must submit an application in line with the procedures and deadlines set out on the website. The ACCA Strategic Professional papers have been benchmarked at FHEQ level 7.

MSc – Pathway 1

To qualify to register for the MSc under Pathway 1, an applicant must be a current ACCA Student and must have:

- passed all nine ACCA Applied Knowledge and Applied Skills papers; and

- passed ACCA Strategic Professional Essentials (SBL and SBR), or their equivalent.

PGCert – Pathway 1

To qualify to register for the PGCert an applicant must be a current ACCA Student and must have:

- passed all nine ACCA Applied Knowledge and Applied Skills papers

Progression from the PGCert

On successful completion of the ACCA Strategic Professional Essentials (SBL and SBR), or their equivalent, the student will be eligible to transfer their registration to the MSc degree under Pathway 1. Accredited prior learning of 90 credits will be granted for SBL and SBR and the MSc will be awarded on satisfactory completion of two University of London option modules and the compulsory *Strategic financial project* module.

Students will be permitted to retain their PGCert upon transfer to the MSc.

MSc – Pathway 2

To qualify to register for the MSc under Pathway 2 an applicant must be a current ACCA Member or Affiliate and must have:

- passed all nine ACCA Applied Knowledge and Applied Skills papers; and

- passed ACCA Strategic Professional Essentials (SBL and SBR); and

- two ACCA Strategic Professional Options from AFM, APM, ATX, AAA, or their equivalent.

If an applicant for Pathway 2 passed the last of the ACCA Strategic Professional papers, or equivalent, more than five years ago, they must be able to demonstrate that their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) record is compliant with the ACCA policy on CPD since they became a Member. This will include an up-to-date CPD declaration for the current year. Additionally they are required to successfully complete the assessment for the University of London Professional Accountancy Online Preparation Course which is available to enrol on demand.

English language requirements

A student will meet the English language requirement if they:

- have passed the English versions of the nine ACCA Applied Knowledge and Applied Skills papers (or gained exemption by completion of an English-medium undergraduate degree approved by ACCA); or

- have passed the English version of the Strategic Professional Essentials (SBL or SBR), or equivalent; or

- are a current ACCA Member or Affiliate.

Applicants who have not met any of the above must have passed, within the past three years, a test of proficiency in English language, from an organisation acceptable to the University. This standard must be reached before registering for the MSc or the Postgraduate Certificate.

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Computer specification and internet access

Students will require regular access to a computer with an internet connection to use the University of London's online resources and systems.

For students to get the most from their studies, their computers should have at least the following minimum specification:

- a web browser (the latest version of Firefox, Chrome or Internet Explorer). This must accept cookies and have JavaScript enabled
- screen resolution of 1024 x 768 or greater
- sufficient bandwidth to access and upload video content
- the ability to play videos including sound and speakers

and the following applications installed:

- a word processor that accepts Microsoft Word formats (.doc and .docx)
- a PDF reader

For *Strategic financial project* (PAM006), you will need **one** of the following supported platforms:

- Mobile platforms of iOS, Android and Windows 10 support:
  - iOS support OS version 8+
  - Android support API level 19+ Version 4.4 - 4.4.4
  - Windows 10 UWP version

And

  - Icarus (Professional Accountancy) version 9.5.7

* Full mobile access to VLE resources is not available for all programmes.

Students with specific access requirements

The University of London welcomes applications from disabled students and/or those who have access requirements. The University will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments to enable those with a disability, learning difficulty or access requirements to have the same opportunity as all other students to successfully complete their studies.

The University is committed to managing the application procedure and the programme itself to ensure that services are accessible for all students and that an inclusive environment is created. Students with a disability, or others who may need access arrangements to assist in taking examinations, should complete the relevant section of the application form, or contact the Inclusive Practice Manager. A separate room or other arrangements may be considered.

Requests are considered by a University panel, whose purpose is to ensure that students with disabilities and/or specific access requirements are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by such arrangements when compared with other students. These considerations remain separate from the academic selection processes.

For further information, see Inclusive Practice Policy

Sources of funding and scholarships

Information about potential sources of funding and scholarships is updated annually and where available is included in the prospectus web pages.

For further information see www.london.ac.uk/applications/funding-your-study.

Educational aims and learning outcomes of the programmes

Programme aims

The programme provides students with an opportunity to develop and apply master's level knowledge, understanding and skills within an accountancy and finance related context. The programme will require students to assimilate master's level knowledge and demonstrate critical appraisal of alternative solutions to financial decision making based on systematic analysis of complex business problems. Students will also be required to demonstrate independent research capability and present complex ideas through a range of different media appropriate to a finance professional.

Learning outcomes (MSc)

A student is expected to

A   Knowledge and understanding:

- Develop an advanced understanding of financial models and management techniques.
- Understand the strategic dimension when applying specific models and techniques to support decision making.
- Understand complex models and concepts underpinning financial decisions that underpin assumptions of value creation within organisations.
- Understand the complex internal and external relationships for organisations when management make decisions.
- Apply research skills to support financial decision making analysis.
- Assimilate, identify and critically appraise data used for financial decisions at a strategic level in organisations.

B   Cognitive skills

- Think critically and creatively in selecting alternative solutions.
- Solve complex problems to support financial decisions.
- Identify and evaluate options to solving business problems.
- Undertake research into a financially related business problem and to apply skills in the assembling and analysis of data collected.

C   Practical and professional skills

- Develop numeracy and quantitative skills to apply to business management.
- Apply critical self-reflection to business practice and experience.
- Communicate complex solutions effectively to business related decisions.
- Use information technology effectively.
- Demonstrate effective self-direction and efficient time management.

Learning outcomes (PGDip)

A student is expected to:

A   Knowledge and understanding:

- Develop an advanced understanding of financial models and management techniques.
- Understand the strategic dimension when applying specific models and techniques to support decision making.
- Understand complex models and concepts underpinning financial decisions that underpin assumptions of value creation within organisations.
- Understand the complex internal and external relationships for organisations when management make decisions.

B   Cognitive skills

- Think critically and creatively in selecting alternative solutions.
- Solve complex problems to support financial decisions.
- Identify and evaluate options to solving business problems.

C   Practical and professional skills

- Develop numeracy and quantitative skills to apply to business management.
- Apply critical self-reflection to business practice and experience.
- Communicate complex solutions effectively to business related decisions.
- Use information technology effectively.
- Demonstrate self-direction and efficient time management.

Learning outcomes (PGCert)

A student is expected to:

A   Knowledge and understanding:

- Develop an advanced understanding of financial models and management techniques.
- Understand the strategic dimension when applying specific models and techniques to support decision making.
- Understand complex models and concepts underpinning financial decisions that underpin assumptions of value creation within organisations.
- Understand the complex internal and external relationships for organisations when management make decisions.

B   Cognitive skills

- Think critically and creatively in selecting alternative solutions.
- Solve complex problems to support financial decisions.

C   Practical and professional skills

- Apply numeracy and quantitative skills to business management.
- Apply critical self-reflection to business practice and experience.
- Communicate complex solutions effectively to business related decisions.
- Use information technology.
- Demonstrate self-direction and time-management.

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies

The core principles of the learning, teaching and assessment strategy for this programme are outlined below.

Principle 1: Ensuring students are prepared for study

Students will be provided with opportunities to sample the learning content of each programme. An online induction will ensure that they are prepared for study and are familiar with the learning environment and sources of support during their student journey.

Principle 2: An engaging and vibrant learning environment

All students will have access to an online learning environment with learning support and tools enabling them to monitor their progress, assessing fulfilment of learning outcomes and development of skills-based outcomes throughout the curriculum. The learning environment will provide a framework for the level of support selected by students, which involves local and online tuition services.

Principle 3: Learning content

The learning content will be designed to provide students with opportunities to engage, and encourage reflective and deep learning, with accessibility a key feature to enable students to study across a range of mobile and media channels.

Principle 4: Student support

All students will have access to the learning environment, learning content, tools and activities related to their chosen programme of study. Students will be able to select from two modes of study: web supported learning or institution supported learning.

Principle 5: Flexibility

To facilitate the requirements of a diverse global community of learners, a core feature of this programme is flexibility in the design of the curriculum, providing for pathways to sub-degree and full degree awards and facilitating student progress at a pace suitable to their circumstance.

Principle 6: Assessment

A core feature of this programme will be a varied range of learning activities embedded within the learning content for each module, designed to provide feedback to students on their progress towards learning outcomes. Summative assessment methods will be designed to promote retention of knowledge, providing encouragement through tutor feedback, with as wide a range of methods as possible to most effectively assess learning outcomes, within the context of the need for secure and reliable techniques appropriate to flexible learning.

Principle 7: Staff Development

The design, development and delivery of this programme will be supported with training for:

- Academic teams involved in the development of the materials and assessment;
- Module Leaders;
- Tutors and Administrators at teaching institutions.

Assessment methods

PAM004 *Strategic financial management* is assessed by a coursework element (30%) and an examination element (70%).

PAM005 *Strategic performance management* is assessed by a coursework element (30%) and an examination element (70%).

PAM100 *Global issues for the finance professional* is assessed by a coursework element (50%) and a project element (50%).

PAM006 *Strategic financial project* is assessed by a coursework element (30%) and a project element (70%).

The grade awarded for each module will be based on both elements of assessment.

Students will be required to pass each element of the assessment subject to the application of the rules for marginal compensation, where permitted.

Examinations may be taken in June and December resits once the module results have been confirmed by the Board of Examiners.

Examinations are held at authorised examination centres throughout the world.

Student support and guidance

Key features of the support for students include:

- Student induction resources.

- Student Guide: This provides information which is common to all students and gives guidance on a range of issues from the start of a student's relationship with the University of London through to their graduation.

- VLE containing: self-assessment and student planner tools; comprehensive learning materials; e-resources/e-library; student forums and progress monitoring tools

- Online student advisor and online tutor (for web supported learners)

- Local teaching centre tutor (for teaching centre supported learners).

- The Online Library: This provides a range of full-text, multidisciplinary databases where journal articles, book reviews and reports can be found.

- A University of London email account and web area for personal information management.

Quality evaluation and enhancement

The University of London delivers the majority of its flexible and distance learning programmes through a collaboration between the University of London Worldwide and member institutions of the University of London. However some of the flexible and distance learning programmes draw solely on academic input from the University of London, and are delivered without academic lead by a member institutions. The policies, partnerships (where applicable) and quality assurance mechanisms applicable for the programmes are defined in the following key documents: The Quality Framework, the Quality Assurance Schedules,

Guidelines for Examinations, General Regulations and programme specific regulations for each programme.

Award standards

All University of London qualifications have to align with the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies to assure appropriate standards for each qualification. In addition, every programme that is developed by a member institution of the University of London (or a consortium with representation by more than one member institution) will be developed to the same standard as would be applied within the institution concerned. Proportionate and robust approval procedures, including external scrutiny and student engagement are in place for all programmes. Learning materials are written and all assessments are set and marked by academic staff who are required to apply the University's academic standards.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

Some of the key mechanisms in place to assure the standards of all University of London qualifications and the quality of the student experience, include:

Annual programme reports are produced for all programmes in order to review and enhance the provision and to plan ahead;

- Independent external examiners: submit reports every year to confirm that a programme has been assessed properly and meets the appropriate academic standards;
- Annual student information statistics are produced and are referenced in all systematic reporting within the University of London;
- Periodic programme reviews are carried out every 4-6 years to review how a programme has developed over time and to make sure that it remains current and up-to-date.

Improvements are made as necessary to ensure that systems remain effective and rigorous. Student feedback mechanisms

The Student Experience Survey, carried out every two years, collects feedback from the student body on a range of topics relating to the student lifecycle. The results are considered in a number of different ways, including by the Pro-Vice Chancellor, the Programme team, principal committees and departments at the University of London responsible for the different aspects of the student experience. Once the findings have been considered in detail, responses are published from both the University of London and from the individual Programme Directors.

Additional survey activity may also be conducted from time to time through the student portal, by email or from the programme team.

VLEs also provide the opportunity for informal feedback and discussion.

An undergraduate and postgraduate student member is appointed by the University to the majority of committees through an annual appointment round. Some programmes also recruit student members at the programme level. Students are frequently invited to take part in quality review processes such as Periodic Programme Reviews, Programme approval, Thematic Reviews, MOOC review panels and ad hoc focus groups. Opportunities such as these are advertised through social media and on the website. More information can be found on the website

After graduation

Further study

Successful completion of the programme may serve as preparation for students who wish to go on to take further study in the subject area. Enquiries about further study opportunities should be directed to the University of London Student Advice Centre using the link 'Ask a question'.

Graduate employment routes

This programme is targeted at career minded finance professionals who wish to complement their professional skills with master's level understanding and skills applied to accountancy and finance subject areas.

The Alumni Network

Upon graduation, students automatically become members of the University of London Alumni Network, a diverse community of over 100,000 alumni in more than 180 countries. The Alumni Network can provide individuals with lifelong links to the University of London and each other. Benefits include social and networking events, access to local groups, a bi-annual magazine, social networking groups, and the opportunity to become an Alumni Ambassador for the University of London.

> For further information, please see www.london.ac.uk/alumni, www.facebook.com/londonualumni, www.instagram.com/_londonu and http://linkd.in/alumniassociation

After graduation