

## Programme Specification Pro-forma (PSP)

### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Programme Title:	BA/BA (Hons) Accountancy BA/BA (Hons) Accountancy (GCU Pathways)
2. Final Award:	BA (Hons) Accountancy
3. Exit Awards:	Certificate of Higher Education Diploma of Higher Education BA Accountancy
4. Awarding Body:	Glasgow Caledonian University
5. Approval Date:	February 2014
6. School:	Glasgow School for Business & Society (GSBS)
7. Host Division/Dept:	Law, Economics, Accountancy & Risk
8. UCAS Code:	N400 / N410
9. PSB Involvement:	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants Association of International Accountants Chartered Institute of Management Accountants Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
10. Place of Delivery:	Glasgow FT
11. Subject Benchmark Statement:	QAA Accounting Benchmark Statement 2007
12. Dates of PSP preparation/revision:	December 2013

**Please Note:** The information provided in this document in respect of Levels One and Two of the programme, including exit awards, is not applicable for the GCU Pathways route as Levels One and Two i.e. the HNC/D are delivered at Glasgow Clyde College. Further information on the Pathways Levels One and Two can be accessed from [Glasgow Clyde College](#)

### 2. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

#### *Introduction*

An accountancy degree should give graduates a thorough grounding in accounting and related subjects. There thus needs to be a significant technical element to a programme of this nature

– particularly if, as is the case here, the programme is professionally accredited. However, being a good graduate (and a successful accountant) requires more than mastery of a number of accounting functions – especially in a world of rapid change. Graduates should be equipped with enduring knowledge and skills. For example, they should be equipped with critical thinking and analytical capacities that can be applied to any (accounting) situation. Equally, they should have developed personal transferable skills – for example, skills in self- management, communication,

teamwork, information retrieval, analysis, and information technology.

The programme seeks to marry vocational relevance and academic rigour. The QAA's Accounting Benchmark Statement 2007 (due for review 2014) recognises the need to view accountancy in more than merely technical terms. It states (p. 2):

- *Accountancy is concerned with the provision and analysis of information for a variety of decision-making, accountability, managerial, regulatory, and resource allocation purposes;*
- *Accounting as a degree subject requires students to study how the design, operation and validation of accounting systems affects, and is affected by, individuals, organisations, markets and society;*

*... such study is informed by perspectives from the social sciences including among other things the behavioural, the economic, the political and the sociological.*

Consequently, the BA/BA (Hons) Accountancy programme emphasises the gaining of technical competence while at the same time giving equal prominence to the development of generic knowledge and skills that will prepare graduates for the (accounting) world of the future.

### ***Aim of the Programme***

The overall aim of the programme is to provide a vocationally relevant programme which is academically challenging, developing in students a broad and comparative understanding of the practices of accounting and an ability to evaluate critically theories and empirical evidence concerning the effects of accounting on organisations and on society.

In pursuance of these aims, the programme seeks to:

- Provide students with knowledge and skills relevant to the practice of accounting within the economic, legal and social environment;
- Develop competence in applying the concepts, principles and regulations in the main areas of accountancy and related disciplines to practical problems;
- Promote students' ability to research and critically evaluate issues of contention and debate within the main areas of accountancy and related disciplines;
- Develop the capacity to analyse complex unstructured problems and present reasoned conclusions based on evidence, including the use of C&IT;
- Cultivate the ability to organise and plan work both autonomously and as part of a team;
- Cultivate the ability to communicate both quantitative and qualitative information effectively;
- Provide education that is recognised for accreditation by the principal professional accountancy bodies in the UK.

To help ensure that progressive development of knowledge, skills and competencies takes place, the following objectives have been identified for each level of the programme:

The focus at **Level 1** is mainly on ***knowledge and comprehension***. The objective is to provide students with:

- Outline knowledge of the scope and main areas of accounting and its links with related subjects;
- A more extensive knowledge of some of the key areas of accounting;
- An understanding of accounting's major theories, principles and concepts.

The focus at **Level 2** is mainly on ***application and analysis***. The objective is to provide students with:

- A knowledge and understanding of the scope and main areas of accounting and its interactions with related subjects;
- Detailed knowledge of some key areas which may include some knowledge of current issues in limited specialised areas;
- Familiarity and understanding of a range of the essential theories, principles and concepts and an awareness of major issues at the forefront of accounting.

The focus at **Level 3** is mainly on ***synthesis and evaluation***. The objective is to provide students with:

- A broad and comparative knowledge of the general scope of accounting, its different areas and applications, and its interactions with related subjects;
- A detailed knowledge of defined subjects, or a more limited coverage of a specialist area balanced by a wider range of study. In each case, specialised study will be informed by current developments in the subject;
- A critical understanding of the essential theories, principles and concepts of accounting and of the ways in which these are developed through the main methods of enquiry in the discipline;
- An awareness of the provisional nature of knowledge.

The focus at **Level 4** is mainly on ***synthesis and evaluation***. The objective is to provide students with:

- A systematic, extensive and comparative knowledge and understanding of accounting as a whole and its links to related subjects;
- A detailed knowledge of a few specialisms and developments, some of which are at, or informed by, the forefront of accounting;
- A critical understanding of the established theories, principles and concepts, and of a number of advanced and emerging issues at the forefront of accounting;
- A critical understanding of the uncertainty and limits of knowledge and how it is developed, and an ability to deploy established techniques of analysis and enquiry within accounting.

The above objectives are intended to help academic staff in the preparation and delivery of modules – most particularly where a subject is progressively developed over two or more level of the programme. They are also intended to help students monitor their own learning as they progress through the programme. The level objectives also helped shape the development of the programme intended learning outcomes, as defined in the Section 3.

## **Structure of the Programme**

The BA/BA (Hons) Accountancy programme is a long-established and successful programme, taught over four years. In line with GSBS undergraduate programmes, the programme is delivered via six 20 credit year-long modules. The BA/BA (Hons) Accountancy programme endeavours to provide a high quality, accessible, inclusive and flexible learning and teaching environment enhanced by research. It contributes to achievement of two University aims in particular. First, it seeks to achieve excellence and relevance in learning and teaching – various external assessors’ reports indicate that the programme is of a high standard, and professional accreditation evidences the relevance of the curriculum. Second, the programme aspires to produce graduates who are global citizens with the practical, professional, critical appraisal, problem-solving and communication skills to enhance their employment opportunities. The learning outcomes of both the programme and the modules indicate that the programme includes the development of life skills for the labour market and life-long learning skills.

### BA Accountancy Undergraduate Structure

A number of subjects are common to most accountancy programmes: auditing; finance; financial accounting; management accounting; taxation. These subjects form the largest part of the BA/BA (Hons) Accountancy programme. The remainder of the programme up to Level 3 comprises subjects which are necessary in order that the programme provides a general business background and gains professional accreditation: economics; law; business management and statistics.

Overall, the BA Accountancy is centred around six themes which run through levels 1 to 3 of the programme.

<b>THEMES</b>					
<b><i>Financial Accounting</i></b>	<b><i>Management Accounting</i></b>	<b><i>Finance</i></b>	<b><i>Professional Studies</i></b>	<b><i>Business</i></b>	<b><i>Professional Skills</i></b>
<b>Level 1</b>					
Financial Accounting	Cost & Management Accounting	Introduction to Economics & Data Analysis	Law in Business for Accountants	The Business of Social Science	Employability, Enterprise and the Professions
<b>Level 2</b>					
Financial Accounting & Corporate Reporting	Management Accounting Control	Fundamentals of Corporate Finance	Taxation	Ethics, Business & Society	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
<b>Level 3</b>					
Current Issues in Financial Reporting	Management Accounting for Decision Makers	Corporate Finance & Financial Strategies	Audit Concepts & Process	Accounting for the Public Sector	Business Research Methods
<b>Level 4</b>					
DISSERTATION	DISSERTATION	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4

Level 4 options to include: Critical Accounting

Public Finance – Policy & Issues  
Strategic Financial Analysis  
International Financial Services & Institutions  
Current Issues in Corporate Governance  
Current Issues in Audit  
Contemporary Issues in Management Accounting  
International Finance & Investment Analysis

***Financial Accounting***

The general aim of the financial accounting modules is to examine critically the principal areas of financial accounting theory and practice. Students attain technical knowledge which helps prepare them for careers in the accountancy profession. They develop their ability to think analytically, creatively and critically in dealing with complex problems and issues. They enhance their communication and interpersonal skills and their ability to work in teams. The various modules are informed by academic-, educational-, and practitioner-focused research.

The *Accounting Benchmark Statement* also argues that a programme without a substantive study of at least some of the theoretical considerations underlying accountancy cannot be considered to meet the minimum requirements of an undergraduate degree programme. The financial accounting modules aim to strike an appropriate balance of applied and conceptual elements of the subject area. Earlier modules incorporate a greater (although not exclusive) element of applied aspects while later modules tend more towards the theoretical aspects of accounting.

Lastly, the financial accounting modules are required to study the design, operation and validation of accounting systems. Professional accreditation requires that students understand the issues relating to the acquisition and management of information systems, and the information and communication technology to support them. The modules are designed to enable students to contribute to the development of systems for accounting information and to recognise the place of such systems in the wider corporate environment. They reinforce the accounting knowledge gained in Level 1 by considering transaction processing from a systems viewpoint, including control and management information requirements, and provides a basis for future studies in auditing. The hands-on element of the module reinforces understanding of the theoretical concepts considered in the module and further develops transferable C&IT skills in analysing and presenting information.

***Management Accounting***

The management accounting modules aim to strike a balance between applied and conceptual elements of the subject area, with the subject matter becoming more challenging in the later years of the stream and also providing increased opportunities for critical evaluation.

Information technology skills are developed through the use of spreadsheets, financial modelling exercises and tailored packages for linear programming and forecasting. The modules make abundant use of C&IT based materials. There is a gradual development of IT skills – from a basic grounding in spreadsheet and database applications to an ability to construct business models and apply IT applications to support strategic and

operational decision scenarios. All modules incorporate numeracy skills, with an increasing focus on analysis and interpretation as students move through the subject stream. Students are exposed to theoretical and empirical research through study of the academic literature. Critical evaluation of arguments and evidence and the ability to locate, extract and analyse data from multiple sources is developed throughout the subject stream. An ability to solve structured and unstructured problems is developed. Students are provided with opportunities to develop oral communication and group-working skills.

### **Finance**

The *Accounting Benchmark Statement* states that a study of accounting should be informed by perspectives from the social sciences, including, among other things, the economic. The early economics module focuses on the major factors shaping the economic environment within which businesses function. The module enables students to develop skills in analysis, research, team working, communication and presentation.

Inclusion of finance in the programme broadens the career options for students. The additional concepts introduced through a study of finance are relevant to a career in many areas of accountancy, finance or financial management. Professional accountants work within the financial environment in its broadest sense and therefore require knowledge of finance. More generally, knowledge and understanding of finance is useful in encouraging an inter-disciplinary perspective and providing an appropriate underpinning for all business careers.

All the professional accountancy bodies require knowledge of finance and the key transferable skills provided by these modules. Students are exposed to finance theories and to empirical research through study of the academic literature. Critical evaluation is encouraged throughout. Numeracy skills, including the ability to interpret financial data, are developed, as are C&IT and self-management skills. Communication and inter-personal skills are enhanced.

### **Professional Studies**

The modules under this theme aim to develop both theoretical and practical aspects of the subject in line with the emphasis on the need to consider both the conceptual and applied aspects of accounting.

Law - Professional accreditation of the programme requires that students study law.

The module's primary focus is company law and is a law module tailored specifically for BA Accountancy students. It introduces students to the legal system in Scotland and to the legal concepts underpinning the regulation of business. The module enables students to develop skills in analysis, problem solving, team working, communication and presentation.

Taxation - The taxation modules aim to develop both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject in line with the emphasis in the *Accounting Benchmark Statement* on the need to consider both the conceptual and applied aspects of accounting. The module gives students an understanding of the way in which taxation operates in the context of the accounting profession. In so doing, it introduces them to the technical language of taxation. The technical knowledge they acquire prepares them for careers in professional accountancy, as taxation is a core discipline for most of the professional bodies.

Audit - These modules enable students to enhance their communication and interpersonal skills and their ability to work in teams. They develop students' ability to think analytically and creatively, in dealing with complex, in some cases unstructured, problems and issues. The technical knowledge gained prepares students for careers in professional accountancy, as auditing and corporate governance are core disciplines for most of the professional bodies. The subject area also provides strong links to practitioner-focused research.

### **Business**

The collection of modules around the 'business' theme aim to broaden students' knowledge of the socio-economic environment. They contribute to the development of a range of skills, most particularly problem solving, critical thinking and reflection on business and society, that encourage independent initiative and learning.

The Business of Social Science - this module will introduce GSBS students to the principles, ideas and value of the social sciences; and to demonstrate how social science perspectives are fundamental to understanding in business and professional studies. The ultimate outcome (of a GSBS degree, to which this module would contribute) is to produce graduates who can act as responsible citizens and managers with a broad and deep understanding of the complexity of contemporary societal challenges.

The module will start to develop attributes which all GSBS graduates should possess, including an international perspective and awareness of global issues; the ability to think holistically (e.g. to consider business and management issues from a range of perspectives); being digitally aware; the ability to work collaboratively; the ability to manage workload effectively (time management skills); and the capacity to think independently with a critical and questioning perspective.

Ethics, Business and Society - The module seeks to explore the ethical dilemmas arising in business both in the public, private and professional sectors and of the particular ethical responsibilities of individuals working in industry or the profession. In addition, students will gain insight into the internal and external accountability structures of an organisation aimed at producing an ethical organisation. The aim of this module is to equip students with a set of analytical tools and concepts to drive ethical decision-making and which encompass the outcomes that may result in behaving ethically whilst highlighting the difference between compliance and ethically driven behaviours

Public sector accounting - These modules aim to give students an understanding of the way in which accountancy operates in the context of the public services. Students are encouraged to apply to the public services the theoretical and conceptual knowledge of accountancy gained in the first two levels of the programme, and to reflect on the relationship between theory and practice. Students enhance their communication and interpersonal skills and their ability to work in teams. They develop their ability to think analytically and creatively. The technical knowledge they acquire prepares them for careers as financial managers within the public services. The Level 4 module helps meet the principles of the *Accounting Benchmark Statement* by studying topics from a variety of perspectives, including accounting, legal, economic, political, social, historical and international. The analytical, evaluative and critical skills developed equip students for exercising judgemental skills in work and provide a basis for lifelong learning. Both modules link to practitioner-focused research.

### **Professional Skills**

#### **Employability, Enterprise and the Professions and Critical Thinking and Problem Solving -**

The fundamental emphasis of these modules is quantitative methods and statistical analysis, while the objective of the modules is to enhance students' numeracy and problem solving skills for organisational and academic application, particularly considering the uncertainty that pervades all decisions. The modules also develop students' intellect via a programmed sequence of logical 'puzzles' with the aim of considering and proposing solutions to a variety of relevant problem scenarios

The Business Research module and the Dissertation module aim to provide a valuable opportunity to a student for researching and developing more in-depth knowledge in an area of particular interest to him/her.

The dissertation aims to enhance the intellectual ability of the student and to allow him/her to demonstrate a rigorous standard of analytical, research and writing skills. The module provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the cumulative development of a range of independent learning skills. The student-centred learning approach, supported by one-to-one supervision, allows academically able and self-motivated students to improve their capacity for independent working, critical thinking, and flexibility in taking initiative – skills which are an essential component of the University's 'Strategy for Learning' and which improve students' employability.

## **4. PROGRAMME STRUCTURES AND REQUIREMENTS, LEVELS, MODULES, CREDITS AND AWARDS**

### **SHE1 Level**

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
M1N422837	Financial Accounting	20
M1N422792	Cost and Management Accounting	20
M1L122828	Introduction to Economics & Data Analysis	20
M1M222807	Law in Business for Accountants	20
M1L322566	The Business of Social Science	20
M1L122839	Employability, Enterprise and the Professions	20

### ***Exit Award – University Certificate of Higher Education***

**120**

### **SHE2 Level**

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
M2N422760	Financial Accounting and Corporate Reporting	20
M2N422794	Management Accounting Control	20
M2N322735	Fundamentals of Corporate Finance	20
M2N422842	Taxation	20
M2N422797	Ethics, Business and Society	20
M2L122838	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	20

**Exit Award – University Diploma of Higher Education** **240**

<b>SHE3 Level</b>			
Module Code	Module Title		<b>Credit</b>
M3N422789	Current Issues in Financial Reporting		20
M3N322846	Management Accounting for Decision Makers		20
M3N322732	Corporate Finance and Financial Strategies		20
M3N422788	Audit Concepts and Process		20
M3N422806	Accounting for the Public Sector		20
M3N222544	Research Methods and Skills		20

**Exit Award - BA Accountancy** **360**

<b>SHE4 Level</b>	<b>Module Title</b>		<b>Credit</b>
<b>Module Code</b>			
MHN222557	Dissertation		40
	Choice of <u>four</u> from;		20
MHN422790	Critical Accounting		20
MHN422835	Strategic Financial Analysis		20
MHN322841	Contemporary Issues in Management Accounting		20
MHN322736	International Finance and Investment Analysis		20
MHN422787	Current Issues in Corporate Governance		20
MHN422786	Current Issues in Audit		20

**Exit Award– BA (Hons) Accountancy** **480**

## **8. ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS**

The Glasgow Caledonian University Assessment Regulations

<http://www.gcu.ac.uk/registry/secretariat/AssessmentRegulations.html> apply to this programme.

DATE: **December 2013**