


PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION	 Newcastle University
1. Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2. Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3. Final Award	MA
4. Programme Title	Master of Business Administration (MBA)
5. UCAS/Programme Code	5823 F
6. Programme Accreditation	The Association of MBAs (AMBA)
7. QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Masters Awards in Business and Management
8. FHEQ Level	Level 7
9. Last Update	Feb 2025

10. Programme Aims

The overall aims of the programme are:

- 1) *A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice.*
- 2) *A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship in business and management, including the ability to design, undertake, and apply research to meet organizational and strategic needs.*
- 3) *Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline. This is fostered through the programme's distinctive pedagogy of situated practical theory, which emphasizes the application of theoretical knowledge in real-world business contexts.*
- 4) *Conceptual understanding that enables them to:*
 - i) *Evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline. This is achieved through a range of activities, including critical analysis of academic literature, case studies, engagement with visiting speakers, and participation in consultancy-style projects with businesses.*
 - ii) *Evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses. This is particularly emphasized in modules focusing on research methods and in the capstone projects.*
- 5) *The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:*
 - *The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, as demonstrated through the programme's focus on self-awareness and the development of leadership capabilities.*
 - *Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations. This is fostered through exposure to complex business challenges in simulations, case studies, and consultancy projects.*
 - *The independent learning ability required for continuing professional development, which is emphasized throughout the programme and specifically assessed in the Personal Development*

Plan.

Specifically, this programme's educational aims are:

- 1) To provide a supportive and stimulating learning environment within the context of the Newcastle University Business School.
- 2) To offer students a broad, coherent, balanced and comprehensive career development programme based on portfolio of modules appropriate to a post experience Masters degree. Covering the main disciplines of leadership and management, these modules will be relevant to deep understanding of the roles, responsibilities and problems of business in a changing global context in order to equip graduates for a continuation of their successful managerial and leadership careers in business.
- 3) To expose students to a variety of teaching and learning experiences, which will augment and enhance their practical managerial workplace capability by introducing and developing theoretical knowledge and research ability which they can in turn apply on return to employment.
- 4) To develop students' transferable skills including numeracy at managerial level, academic literacy, advanced report writing skills, superior personal and interpersonal skills, critical evaluation ability, enhanced presentation skills, leadership behaviours, high level group working skills and an appreciation of working in multi-disciplinary multi-cultural environments.
- 5) To enable students effectively to gather, analyse and critically evaluate data, both qualitative and quantitative, from library, IT and other sources such as LLM's to utilise in both level 7 academic and senior business contexts.
- 6) To produce self-aware and self-reflexive graduates who are inspired and equipped to work with others to challenge preconceptions and change the world for the better by employing their analytical and critical abilities when dealing with business concepts and practices at senior levels.
- 7) To produce highly marketable graduates who are able to contribute immediately to regional, national or international organisations in managerial and leadership contexts or through new venture creation.
 - a) To provide a qualification that conforms with University policies and fully meets the requirements of: the Higher Education Qualifications Framework at Level 7; Association of MBAs (AMBA) MBA accreditation criteria (2022); QAA guidance on qualification characteristics (Feb 2020) and AACSB 2020 [Business Accreditation Standards](#) (Updated 2024).

These aims align with the purposes of a master's degree in Business and Management as outlined in the **QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Master's Degrees in Business and Management (2023)**. The programme is designed to develop graduates who can contribute to the success of organizations while demonstrating responsible leadership and a commitment to ethical and sustainable business practices.

11. Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

Knowledge and Understanding

On successfully completing the programme students will be able to:

A1	Identify and interpret, both as subjects of academic study and as practical activities, knowledge relevant to core business and management areas operating within in dynamic and complex global and technological contexts
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.</i>
A2	Evaluate and prioritise issues and problems appropriate to management and leadership in those contexts
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions</i>

	<i>clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences</i>
A3	Debate and appraise the ethical challenges of responsible leadership and of the changing role of organisations in society
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.</i>

These knowledge outcomes reflect the QAA benchmark's emphasis on developing graduates who possess a deep understanding of organizations, their external context, and the challenges of responsible leadership in a changing global environment (**Section 3.4-3.6**).

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary means of learning is through lectures and small group teaching. As a post- experience programme this regularly includes staff and/or student led discussion, case study analyses and simulations (A1).

A range of experiential activities, notably corporate visits and a variety of consultancy-style interactions (challenge visits, competitions, a boardroom challenge, and group and individual consultancy projects) with business managers both in NUBS and off-site enable students to consider and experience the challenges of integrating and applying theory in practice, as well as to evaluate their understanding of the relevant subject knowledge (A1, A2).

External speakers throughout the modules contribute to knowledge and understanding applied to professional practice and, in addition to activities such as a mini-conference and other in-class discussions, enable students to recognise and reflect on the changing nature of work and the changing responsibilities of business in, and for, society (A2, A3).

Students are expected to enhance their face-to-face learning by independent reading and enquiry, for which they are given guidance on relevant materials.

EDI is promoted through inclusive pedagogical approaches such as the use of case studies and examples that reflect the diversity of the student cohort and the broader business world, facilitated discussions and group work that encourage respectful dialogue and the sharing of diverse perspectives, and the provision of learning resources and materials that are accessible to students with disabilities.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge is assessed formatively through a range of activities planned across the programme.

These include discussions, case study analyses, group exercises and presentations, and in networking and discussion with corporate managers and executives both during site visits to corporates and as guest speakers.

All these provide opportunities for students to receive feedback and reflect on their evolving ideas and understandings.

Summative assessments employ a wide range of activities. These include various reports in authentic formats for corporate purposes; presentations; case study analyses; critical reviews of literature; and essays.

Additionally, a trio of submissions across the **Management Consultancy**, **Business Analysis for Decision Making** and **MBA Individual Project** modules, provide a final summative assessment of learning from across the full programme and are intended to assess the development of the full range of Learning Outcomes across the programme including in formats and situations relevant to future employability.

Intellectual Skills

On successfully completing the programme students will be able to:

B1	Synthesise and critically evaluate concepts and information relevant to responsible management and leadership of organisations in complex and dynamic environments
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice.</i>
B2	Interpret problems and formulate solutions systematically and creatively within the context of business and management practice
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level</i>

These skills outcomes align with the QAA benchmark's expectations for graduates to be able to interpret problems and formulate solutions systematically and creatively within the context of business and management practice, demonstrating critical analysis and problem-solving abilities (**Section 3.15**).

Teaching and Learning Methods

Skills of critical analysis are emphasised from the start of the programme through an early set of classes and assessment tasks (B1).

Through lectures, case studies, in-class discussion sharing students' prior experience, and engagement with visiting speakers and site visits, subsequent modules develop a broad appreciation of the challenges of leading in complex and dynamic environments (B1).

In addition to the attention to practice in all modules, the focus of the integrative Business in Action module, involving a range of site visits, a case competition and visiting speakers, ensures that students experience the challenge of applying their learning to interpret real problems and formulate practical solutions (B2).

These theory- into-practice skills are then further developed through the tripartite capstone assessments in the Boardroom Challenge, the Management Consultancy group project and the Individual Project.

Assessment Strategy

Skills are assessed through a range of 'theory into practice' oriented assessments (B1, B2).

In addition, clear links are made for students between assessment grades and critical analysis skills so that students understand the importance of demonstrating critical analysis abilities across all module assessments (B1)

Practical Skills

On successfully completing the programme students will be able to:

C1	Design, undertake and apply research of relevance to meet organisational and strategic needs in business and management
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.</i>
C2	Identify, analyze and evaluate appropriate quantitative data and qualitative information for management, leadership and entrepreneurship in the global context
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>Demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.</i>
C3	Propose and advocate effective solutions applicable to business and management practice in complex and dynamic environments

QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences</i>
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These practical skills outcomes reflect the QAA benchmark's focus on developing graduates who can design and undertake research, analyse data, and propose effective solutions to complex business challenges, aligning with the benchmark's emphasis on research and analytical skills (**Section 3.15**).

Teaching and Learning Methods

In addition to teaching on individual modules on research tools and data sources relevant to the module, a range of research and analysis skills are taught specifically in Business in Action (consultancy research skills), Business Analysis for Decision Making (applied business research and analysis skills) and then developed further in the Management Consultancy and Individual Project (research project design and delivery) (C1, C2).

Presentations and in-class discussion develop the skills needed to advocate effective and practical proposals (C3).

Assessment Strategy

The ability to undertake appropriate research is developed across almost all modules by requiring students to explore and assess relevant literatures, market data and global trends appropriate to the relevant module content. In addition, the capstone trio of Boardroom Challenge exercise, Management Consultancy project and the Individual Project all require students to undertake relevant research, analyse and evaluate appropriate data, and present appropriate business recommendations in a variety of formats (C1, C2, C3).

Transferable/ Key Skills

On successfully completing the programme students will be able to:

D1	Communicate effectively in a professional context
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.</i>
D2	Work effectively both independently and as part of a team, and with sensitivity to diversity and interpersonal difference
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>Have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.</i>
D3	Function as an independent learner and skilled reflective practitioner to enable life-long learning and adaptability for the future of work and society
QAA L7 Descriptor	<i>Be able to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.</i>

These transferable skills outcomes are consistent with the QAA benchmark's emphasis on developing graduates who can communicate effectively, work collaboratively, and function as independent learners and reflective practitioners, highlighting the importance of these skills for success in a range of professional contexts (**Section 3.15-3.17**)

Teaching and Learning Methods – Intellectual, Practical and Transferable Skills

Specific training on communication and presentation skills is given (D1).

Engagement with visiting speakers, corporate executives on site visits and various presentations all give students practice in and formative feedback on their developing communication skills (D1).

Working independently is developed throughout the programme, not least through the intensive nature of an AMBA-accredited MBA which requires students to become efficient learners (D2, D3).

Team working skills are developed and practiced across a range of modules that involve group work (both formative on case studies and summative on assessed presentations) (D2).

Assessment Strategy

The wide range of authentic assessment formats across the programme (in-class presentations, ideas pitching, consultancy presentations and reports to corporates, reflective media recording etc) assess ability to communicate effectively in different contexts and formats (D1) both individually and, through groupwork, as part of a team (D2).

Ability to be a reflective and independent learner is inevitably assessed across all modules but is specifically assessed in a Personal Development Plan for the Personal and Professional Transformation module (D3).

12. Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

Duration of the course: The programme is studied over one year on a full-time basis. The programme comprises a total of 180 credits and is divided into three phases.

Phase 1 (Semester 1): This includes six compulsory modules. These are designed to provide the students with a broad understanding of the main theories of organisations and business management, including globalisation and global political economy, strategic management, accounting and finance, organisational theory and introductory human resource management, operations and project management, and marketing. Most of these modules are taught in parallel although some are accelerated at the start to enable early submission of assessments so that students can receive feedback on some summative assessments before completing others over the Christmas study weeks. **Phase 2 (Semester 2):** This theme of integration continues with the continuation of the **Business in Action** module involving challenge visits, briefings and a competition, typically undertaken at companies in the Northeast UK. This period enables students to integrate and consolidate their learning from across all the Phase 1 modules by applying them to the time-bound solution of various real business challenges.

Phase 2 (Semester 2):

This theme of integration continues at the start of Phase 2 with a week of block training on consultancy skills leading to a one-week Business Awareness Experience event involving challenge visits, briefings and a competition, typically undertaken at companies in the North East. This week enables students to integrate and consolidate their learning from across all the Phase 1 modules by applying them to the time-bound solution of various real business challenges. (This forms part of the Business in Action module which provides further real-time-learning opportunities through Phase 2 to consolidate learning and integrate the theory and practice across the programme.)

Phase 2 then builds on the core understanding acquired in Phase 1 by developing learning in areas that will become key in enabling students to make a significant contribution to the challenges of business in the future and, through a structured offering of electives, enabling students to develop leadership and business related specialisations of their choice. Phase 2 includes three compulsory modules, two elective modules and an intensive Personal Development Experience. The Entrepreneurship and Corporate Social Responsibility modules prepare students to contribute to the global challenges of the future by becoming entrepreneurial, responsible and self-aware leaders. The Business Analysis for Decision Making module trains students on how to research, develop, present and defend a robust and thorough business case appropriate for presentation to corporate executives.

The two electives enable students to develop both a managerial specialisation (for example, in change management or finance or human resource management) and a focus on major business opportunities for the future (for example, in managing innovation or emerging economies).

Integrative modules during Phases 1 and 2: In addition to the general business knowledge developed in Phases 1 and 2, the compulsory Personal and Professional Transformation module delivered across Phases 1 and 2 provides extensive training on a wide range of advanced personal and leadership skills. This module starts with training on critical analysis skills as part of the transition to university and includes an intensive Personal Development Experience, a bespoke event that develops high levels of self-awareness, and extensive careers support and training.

Together, all the above modules contribute 130 credits.

Phase 3 (Semester 3): The purpose of Phase 3 is to provide students with a variety of practical research-based experiences that collectively: enhance students' employability; deepen their experience of applying their learning in Phases 1 and 2 to produce outputs that are relevant and appropriate to business practice; and allow assessment of achievement across the very broad spectrum of knowledge, intellectual, practical and transferable skills that an MBA, as a post-experience business programme, must achieve (as set out, for example, in AMBA accreditation criteria). This is achieved through a capstone portfolio of three elements in Phase 3. This starts with the Boardroom Challenge business case report and presentation to a 'Board' incorporating experienced corporate managers (group, the final assessment of the BAfDM module). This is followed by the Management Project where student groups undertake a live consultancy project leading to a report and presentation to company managers (an international consultancy project is offered in addition to UK-based projects). The third, final and major part of the capstone portfolio is the Individual Project, which can take the form of a Corporate Consultancy Project, a comprehensive Entrepreneurial Business Plan, or an Individual Research Project. Together these elements contribute 50 credits (not including the BAfDM Boardroom Experience which was counted in Phase 2 credits above as much of the teaching for that takes place in Phase 2).

Key Features of the Programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

- Triple-accredited MBA and business school (AMBA, EQUIS and AACSB)
- Small group intake and research-led teaching and learning experiences
- Applying business theories in real management and leadership situations. This is reflected particularly in the integrative modules and the three capstone modules.
- Gaining advanced personal and professional development training and enhanced employability in addition to acquiring higher level business knowledge and application
- Scope to personalise the MBA in a structured manner through the electives
- International opportunities including an optional International Study Tour

Programme Regulations (link to on-line version)

[Programme Regulations 2025-26](#)

13. Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Diversity and Inclusion

The programme is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment, in line with **AMBA criteria 1.7, 2.7, 2.8, and 2.9**. This commitment is reflected in:

Student Recruitment: The programme actively seeks to recruit a diverse student cohort, representing a range of ethnicities, genders, nationalities, academic backgrounds, and professional experiences.

Faculty Composition: The programme strives to maintain a diverse faculty body that reflects the diversity of the student population and the broader business world.

Curriculum Design: The curriculum is designed to address diversity and inclusion as integral aspects of responsible leadership and management. This is achieved through case studies, discussions, guest speakers, and experiential activities that expose students to a range of perspectives and challenges related to managing diversity in organizations.

Induction

During the first two weeks of the first semester students attend an intensive induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. They will also be given detailed programme information and details of how to access the timetable.

In line with the rigorous and intensive nature of the MBA programme, students are given a series of personal development activities, including team-building, discussion skills, presentation skills, multi-cultural workshop, managerial exercises and introductory lectures from faculty and visiting speakers to prepare them for the activities undertaken in the modules.

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of advanced Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Much of this material is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme or in the module on Personal and Professional Transformation. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Library (Academic Skills Kit)

Career Support

In addition to the general MBA career support in terms of job seeking, the career support is built into the core elements of the MBA programme and integrated into the timetable. Career support is integrated into the Personal and Professional Transformation Module, and the MBA Integration and Consolidation Module which include advances personal development, professional communication skills and career management skills.

This integrated approach to career support aligns with **AMBA criterion 3.13**, which highlights the development of transferable management skills as an essential component of the MBA. By embedding career development within the curriculum, the programme ensures that students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the evolving world of work.

14. Methods for Evaluating and Improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Accreditation reports

The School holds a number of accreditations at programme level, where quality standards are reviewed and assessed by professional bodies to ensure they remain relevant to their requirements. Specifically, the MBA has held AMBA accreditation continuously since 1988 and was reaccredited in 2023 for the maximum award of 5 years. EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) from European Foundation Management Development reviewed the School's programmes, aims and strategy against their international standards and re-accredited the School in 2019 for a further 5 years. These accreditations help ensure the School takes a critical view of its offering on an international scale and guide the School in areas for development or enhancement.

Impact and Continuous Improvement

The programme is committed to demonstrating impact and continuous improvement in alignment with **AMBA criteria 3.3, 3.20, and 4.1**. This commitment is evident in:

Regular Programme Review: The programme undergoes a comprehensive review process every five years, informed by feedback from students, alumni, faculty, employers, and the AMBA accreditation body. This ensures that the programme remains current, relevant, and aligned with the evolving needs of the business world and with AMBA standards.

Impact Measurement: The programme employs various mechanisms to measure its impact on graduates, organizations, and society. These include alumni surveys, employer feedback, and tracking of graduates' career progression and contributions to their organizations and communities.

Continuous Improvement: The programme is committed to continuous improvement, using data from impact measurement and programme review to identify areas for enhancement. This ensures that the programme is constantly evolving to provide the highest quality management education.

Additional mechanisms
N/A

15. Regulation of Assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus, Degree Programme and University Regulations, and The Degree Programme Handbook (all available online at www.ncl.ac.uk)

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.