

Executive MBA

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose:

Course management, monitoring and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose:

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer:

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification and believes it to be correct. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification but reserve the right to change the content, timetabling and administration of the course whilst maintaining equivalent academic standards and quality.

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Programme Specification

1. Named Awards

Master of Business Administration Executive

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

3. Awarding Body

The University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

The University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

AMBA

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Masters Awards in Business and Management – Programme Type 3, MBA type (career development)

7. Document Control Information

September 2017

8. Effective Session

2017-2018

9. Author

David Hall

10. Faculty

Faculty of Business and Law

11. Department

OS-HR Subject Group

12. Educational Aims

To provide a general management education that promotes a holistic view of management, organisations and their global environment. Advanced level knowledge, and critical awareness, of theoretical frameworks are combined with an active, problem-solving approach using both previous and newly acquired knowledge and skills. In groups and individually, the programme seeks to develop course members' abilities and skills in strategic thinking, and innovation, and in dealing with complexity and uncertainty.

As their careers progress, course graduates in middle and senior management roles will be able to provide effective leadership through strategic management, and make a valuable contribution to their organisation, thus also enhancing their own career prospects.

The first part of the programme aims to build a foundation of knowledge and skills in business and management. This includes the largely discipline-based subjects such as Strategy, Marketing and Finance, and the business environment in a strategic context. All teaching provides the opportunity to apply and integrate the knowledge gained in small group work. The second part of the programme focuses on strategic leadership and management in complex and uncertain environments, exploring the managerial competencies required to lead and implement strategic change based on an understanding of contemporary business and organizational challenges. The three themes of applied problem solving, continuous professional development and mastering the latest knowledge run through the programme. See the 'Unit Assessment Map' at the rear of this document for details of course structure.

13. Reference Points

The programme and outcomes have been developed taking into account

- University of Portsmouth Curricula Framework Document (September 2006)
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education - Subject Benchmark Statement – Master's Degrees in Business and Management, June 2015, Programme Type 3: MBA (post-experience)
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- National Qualifications Framework
- Requirements of AMBA Accreditation.

14. Learning Outcomes

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A1. types of organisations and their internal and external environments, including the complex inter-relationships between and within these environments (BS);
- A2. systematic knowledge of contemporary strategic management concepts, theories, models and analytical frameworks, including where appropriate, those at the forefront of academic knowledge (BS);
- A3. the critical evaluation of contemporary strategic management research and academic scholarship (BS);
- A4. appropriate qualitative and quantitative techniques for the analysis of information and the evaluation of research (BS);
- A5. the application of knowledge to different types of organisations and contexts (BS).

Note: BS identifies where a learning outcome is mapped against the QAA Benchmark standards (2015)

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Lectures provide the course member with fundamental knowledge and understanding and encourage critical engagement with the literature (A.1-A.4). The embedding of the knowledge and its applications (A.5), as well as further critical engagement with the literature, is via small group (or syndicate) work based on academic exercises, problem-solving exercises, case studies, business simulations and company visits. In the groups, course members will be encouraged to reflect on their learning and apply the knowledge to uncertain situations.

The excellent quality and extent of research activity in the Faculty of Business and Law (BAL), as evidenced by the results of the latest Research Excellence Framework (REF, 2014), saw PBS ranked as the top 'Alliance Group' University by the Association of Business Schools. The research capability of PBS in achieving this outcome enables research at PBS to inform teaching throughout the MBA programme and across the range of educational programmes provided.

Specific mechanisms by which results from research, consultancy and contact with the organisational corporate world are incorporated into MBA provision include:

- MBA Master Classes
- MBA Integrated Strategy Project
- Consultancy project
- Guest speakers and visits to organisations, during the weekly programme
- International residential.

Assessment

Seen and unseen written examinations and coursework assignments are used to assess knowledge and understanding (A.1-A.5). Coursework assignments, the consultancy project ('MBA Research methods, Consultancy and Professional Development' unit), and the consultancy project research project in Year 2 are directed to the integration of theory and practice in the application of knowledge to different types of organisations and contexts (A.5) based upon the course members' experience, case studies and company visits.

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

- B1. synthesise, analyse and interpret information from a variety of sources, including the integration of theory and practice (BS);
- B2. analyse and diagnose complex and uncertain situations (BS);
- B3. solve problems taking an holistic approach and demonstrating independence of thought in the development of creative solutions which reflect originality in the application of knowledge (BS);
- B4. distinguish between short-term resolution of problems and the longer-term strategic view (BS);
- B5. formulate and test hypotheses (BS).

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Lectures are the starting point for the development of cognitive skills via explanation and review. Small group work is the main vehicle for promoting these skills. Activities such as academic exercises, problem-solving exercises, case studies, business simulations, company visits, are designed so that course members enhance their skills (B.1-B.5) via the facilitating role of the lecturer and the interaction with peers and practitioners. Feedback, both informally and formally (including for coursework), encourages the development of all the cognitive skills listed, especially independence of thought and creativity (B.3). This group work is scheduled separately in order to emphasise the holistic, integrative approach being adopted (B.3).

Assessment

Coursework and examinations assess the cognitive skills B.1 to B.5. However, the emphasis of the assessment is on coursework assignments, the 'MBA Integrated Strategy Project' in Year 1 and the consultancy project in Year 2, which provide greater scope for course members to demonstrate their cognitive skills.

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

- C1. retrieve, sift and select appropriate information from diverse sources (BS);
- C2. apply appropriate qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyse information and evaluate research (BS);
- C3. undertake effective decision-making in complex and uncertain situations (BS);
- C4. implement decisions through the selection and use of appropriate interpersonal skills (BS);
- C5. plan, conduct and report a programme of original research (BS).

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

Induction includes initial guidance on the use of library and on-line sources of information (C.1). This, together with skill C.2, is promoted in the 'MBA Research Methods, Consultancy and Professional Development' unit. The 'role-play' nature of the small group work based on case studies, live cases, and business simulations provides the opportunity for the development of skills C.1 to C.4. Whilst lectures establish the frameworks and guidance, groups, and individuals are challenged to make decisions (C.3), demonstrate how these decisions are translated into a plan and how the plan is to be implemented (C.4). Specific attention is given to skill C.5 in the research

methods element of the 'MBA Research Methods, Consultancy and Professional Development' unit during the supervision of the 'MBA Integrated Strategy Project' unit in Year 1 and the group consultancy project in Year 2. Feedback, both informally and formally (including for coursework) encourages the development of all the skills listed.

Assessment

Skills C.1 and C.2 are partly assessed by seen and unseen written examinations. Skills C.1 to C.4 are assessed by coursework assignments. Skill C.5 is assessed by coursework assignments and the 'MBA Integrated Strategy Project' in Year 1 and the consultancy project in Year 2. All skills are assessed by the 'MBA Integrated Strategy Project' unit in Year 1 and the group consultancy project.

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:

- D1. structure and communicate complex ideas effectively;
- D2. use information technology to collect and analyse information;
- D3. apply appropriate numerical skills;
- D4. identify and provide innovative and credible solutions to complex problems;
- D5. monitor learning including managing time and working to deadlines;
- D6. work independently demonstrating self-direction;

Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

The programme as a whole is a general management degree, consequently, the programme is geared towards the generic skills needed to work in an organisation. Students are directed to ASK, the University's academic skill support unit and/or Portsmouth Business School Study Skills Support for development of critical reflection, academic writing, time management and other specialist learning support.

Assessment

Employability skills are not assessed separately as they are addressed through subject assessment.

15. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

The programme is offered in a part-time mode over 24 months. Four taught 15 CR L7 credit units of study are completed in the first year and a 30 CR L7 unit 'MBA Integrated Strategy Project' giving a total of 90 assessed CR L7 in Year 1.

A further four taught 15 CR L7 credit units completed in the second year and the 30 CR L7 credit unit 'MBA Research Methods, Consultancy and Professional Development' is assessed in Year 2 giving a total of 90 CR L7 credits assessed in Year 2. (60 CR L7 in total) in the same mode. A total of 180 CR L7 are assessed and required for the Executive MBA award.

The 'MBA Research Methods, Consultancy and Professional Development' unit (30 CR L7 credits) has taught elements that are delivered in Year 1 and Year 2, as the research methods and professional development' elements are relevant to student learning and development throughout the 24 month programme.

The 'Master Classes' component of the 'MBA Research Methods, Consultancy and Professional Development' unit offers participants the opportunity to select and study several topical issues in research and practice with experts in the specific areas. See the 'Unit Assessment Map' at the rear of this document that summarizes the course structure.

An exception to University Award regulations is that the Exit Awards are titled to meet market understanding. The Master of Business Administration requires the accumulation of 180 CR L7 points; 120 CR L7 are required for the exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (Pg Dip) and 60 CR L7 for the exit award of Postgraduate Certificate in Business Administration (Pg Cert).

16. Employability Statement

By definition MBA Executive students are mid-career, employability skills are therefore less key to the programme. However, the purpose of the Executive MBA is to develop the critical and practical skill that will enable the individual to enhance their performance and career development. The Executive MBA is designed to enhance scholastic capital, social capital, cultural capital (prestige), Inner value capital (personal efficacy) and market value capital. This is developed through casework, group work, business simulations, business consultancy project, guest speakers and subjects that focus on organisational leadership and strategic management.

17. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader.
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course.
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- University support services include - careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.
- A dedicated Student Services Centre.
- Excellent library facilities.
- The University of Portsmouth has consistently been awarded an excellent rating for student support and guidance in a number of Quality Assurance Agency inspections.
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations etc.
- Key Skills opportunities are incorporated into all units.
- Written feedback is provided for all assessments.
- Personal tutor and Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards.
- Links with local organisations for practitioner and company visits.

18. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

A good honours degree (or equivalent, including professional qualifications), not necessarily in a business related subject, plus a minimum of three years appropriate and relevant postgraduate managerial/professional experience.

Applicants with no formal qualifications but with appropriate management experience will be considered for our Non-Graduate Entry Programme.

Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of English language ability (equivalent to a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 or TOEFL at 590, or 240 computer-based). This evidence may include a recent degree from a UK university, University of Portsmouth pre-session English course, interview, examples of written work, and employer references. Where IELTS is used a minimum score of 6.0 (6.5 in the written element) in any one element is normally expected in addition to the 6.5 overall.

In the interest of cohort integrity, admission with credit, advanced standing and exemptions will not be allowed of the MBA Executive.

B. Disability

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

19. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Head of Postgraduate Taught Programmes' Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review to Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Faculty Executive.
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies.
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme.
- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports.
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees.
- Annual Staff Appraisal.
- Peer Teaching Observation.
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.
- Periodic (3-5 years) Departmental Standards and Quality Review and report to Quality Assurance Committee
- FAC Advisory Board
- AMBA Accreditation process.

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery.
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course.
- MBA Programmes Director for overall course evaluation and development.
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course.
- Student Representatives and Staff Student Consultative Committee.
- Head of Department.
- Associate Dean (Academic).
- Associate Dean (Students).
- Quality Assurance Committee.
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners.

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies.
- Student Staff Consultative Committees.
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires.
- Student meeting with External Examiner(s).
- Personal contact with tutors and course leader.
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and International Student Barometer (ISB).

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance.
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs.
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes.
- New academic staff required to undertake PgCert Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership.
- Academic staff new to teaching required to undertake Initial Professional Development Programme (iPROF)
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages.

20. Assessment Strategy

The programme assessment strategy reflects both the vocational nature of the subject area and the developmental needs of the students. The assessment strategy is in general terms pluralistic with a balance between individual and group assessments, case-based or work-based, written and

oral/visual presentational assessment with students working on structured and independently developed assignments. The variation in the assessment reflects the types of projects and reporting media that manager encounter in their workplace. The purpose of this approach is to use assessment as an integral and supportive axis of the student's development.

All assessment of student work is in cognisance of postgraduate assessment criteria and corrective developmental feedback is on an individual or group basis as appropriate to enhance the learning experience and allow individuals and groups to gauge their development.

21. Assessment Regulations

Standard university rules apply (see [Assessment and Regulations](#)).

22. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards;
- review unit assessment strategy
- sample assessment artefacts;
- present report to Unit Assessment Boards.

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards;
- scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment;
- ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

23. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

Association of MBAs (AMBA) Accreditation

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

This is the final academic session (2017-2018) that the Executive MBA is accredited by AMBA.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Institutional Audit, December 2008, 'broad confidence' (for full report see [QAA Institutional Audit: University of Portsmouth 2008](#)).

QAA Institutional Audit, March 2015, 'Meets UK Expectations for all elements of standards and quality' (for full report see [QAA Institutional Audit: University of Portsmouth 2015](#)).
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10007155#.VZO3oitcWj0>

D. Others

24. Other Sources of Information

Other sources of information may be found in

- Course Approval Document
- Student Handbook

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- MBA Brochure
- Assessment Regulations
- [University of Portsmouth](#) web page
- [The Portsmouth MBA](#) web page

Unit Assessment Map

UNITS						COURSEWORK				EXAMINATION			
Level	Name	Code	Credit (CR L7)	Delivery	Core/ Option	Total %	Type of Artefact	Duration/ Length	Weighting %	Total %	Open/ Closed	Duration (hrs)	Weighting %
7	Accountancy and Financial Management		15	Sep-Dec	C	40	Business simulation report	2,000 words	40				
										60	Closed-book	2	60
7	Marketing and Sales Management		15	Sep-Dec	C	50	Group Presentation & report	20 minutes / 1500 words	50				
						50	Literature review	2,000 words	50				
7	Managing in the Global Economic and Financial Environment		15	Jan-Mar	C	50	Report (micro-economic environment)	1,500 words	50				
						50	Report (macro-economic environment)	1,500 words	50				
7	Strategic Management		15	Jan-Mar	C	30	Oral presentation	25 minutes	30				
						20	Report based on presentation	800 words	20				
						50	Essay	1,700 words	50				
7	MBA Integrated Strategy Project		15	Sep-Dec	C	50	Individual essay	2,000 words	50				
						50	Group Assignment	5,000 words	50				
7	Strategic Leadership and Change		15	Sep-Dec	C	100	Individual essay	2,000 words	50				
							Group Assignment	5,000 words	50				
7	Strategic Project Management		15	Sep-Dec	C	50	Individual essay	2,000 words	50				
						50	Group assignment	2,000 words	50				
7	Managing Operations and Systems		15	Jan-Mar	C	70	Report	3,000 words	70				
						30	Presentation	20 minutes	30				
7	Innovation and Enterprise		15	Jan-Mar	C	50	Individual case-based assignment	2,000 words	50				
										50	Closed-book	1.5	50
7	MBA Research Methods, Consultancy and Professional Development		30	Sep-May	C	100	Individual reflective learning account	2,000 words	30				

							Consultancy presentation and report	4,000 words	70				
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Unit Learning Outcomes Map¹

UNITS						LEARNING OUTCOMES																				
Level	Name	Code	Credit (CR L7)	Delivery	Core/Option	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6
7	Accounting and Financial Management		15	Block	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	X		X	X
7	Marketing and Sales Management		15	Block	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	X		X	X
7	Managing in the Global Economic and Financial Environment		15	Block	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	X		X	X
7	Strategic Management		15	Block	C	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	X		X	X
7	MBA Integrated Strategy Project		15	Block	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	X		X	X
7	Strategic Leadership and Change		15	Block	C	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X			X	X
7	Strategic Project Management		15	Block	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	X		X	X
7	Managing Operations and Systems		15	Block	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	X		X	X
7	Innovation and Enterprise		15	Block	C	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X		X	X	X
7	MBA Research Methods, Consultancy and Professional Development		30	Block	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

¹ A = Knowledge and Understanding; B = Cognitive (Intellectual) Skills; C = Practical (Subject Specific) Skills; D = Transferable Skills