

**COURSE SPECIFICATION:  
Core Award Data**



**Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services**

**VALIDATION DATE**

06 June 2018

**AWARDING INSTITUTION**

The Robert Gordon University

**INSTITUTION OF DELIVERY**

The Robert Gordon University

**COURSE ACCREDITED /RECOGNISED/ APPROVED BY**

None.

**COURSE ACCREDITATION / RECOGNITION /APPROVAL**

None.

**AWARDS**

**Stage 1**

Higher Apprenticeship in Cert HE Business Management: Financial Services (120 credits at SCQF 7)

**Stage 2**

Higher Apprenticeship in Dip HE Business Management: Financial Services (120 credits at SCQF 8)

**Stage 3**

Graduate Apprenticeship in BA Business Management: Financial Services (120 credits at SCQF 9)

**Stage 4**

Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services (120 credits at SCQF 10)

**AWARD TYPE**

Undergraduate

**MODES OF STUDY**

Blended Learning (Full Time)

**DURATION OF COURSE**

Four years

**LANGUAGE OF STUDY**

English

**LANGUAGE OF ASSESSMENT**

English

**JACS CODE**

N100

**RELEVANT QAA SUBJECT GROUP**

Business and Management

**DATE OF PRODUCTION / REVISION**

10 May 2018 – Version 1

**INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

Graduate Apprenticeships provide work-based learning opportunities for employees and have been created by Skills Development Scotland in partnership with industry and the Further and Higher education sector. Graduate Apprenticeships combine academic knowledge with work-based learning to enable students to become more effective and productive in the workplace. They provide a new way into degree-level study for individuals who are currently employed, and afford the opportunity to undertake degree study whilst working and earning for those individuals who may otherwise have sacrificed Secondary or Further education to enter full-time work. They enable employers to develop their workforce and support staff to build their skills to industry and professional standards. Since Graduate Apprenticeships are designed around the needs of industry, employers can have confidence that what staff are learning will directly contribute to the success of the business. As they are in continuing employment, students can directly apply academic learning to workplace situations, thus truly bringing their studies to life.

The Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services provides:

- an understanding of key functions and processes of business/organisations (which may be private, public or not-for-profit and across a range of sizes and structures including small to medium enterprises)
- an understanding and consideration of the business environment, organisational strategy, economic markets and business and operational processes;

- knowledge and understanding of organisational strategy and models and how to apply them;
- understanding and application of approaches to project management and the ability to apply them;
- knowledge of financial models and how to use them to analyse performance;
- understanding of how technology can enhance business;
- understanding of how to communicate effectively using a range of media;
- knowledge and understanding of leadership styles and organisational culture;
- knowledge and understanding of how to manage people and teams effectively;
- understanding of how to build effective relationships internally and externally;
- understanding of how to manage self effectively, using emotional intelligence and core values;
- knowledge and understanding of how to plan effectively and undertake personal development;
- understanding of how to make effective decisions and solve problems based on research and evidence;
- the opportunity to develop a suite of academic and personal skills which will enable students to make an informed professional contribution to the workplace environment.

Specifically relevant to the financial service sector:

- knowledge and understanding of the regulatory environment in which the financial services sector operates;
- Knowledge and understanding of the financial services sector and its relevance;
- Knowledge and understanding of the impact and use of technology in the sector
- Understanding of how to manage client relationships effectively in the sector.

Depending on the nature of the organisation, typical examples of career opportunities across a broad range of sectors, might include:

Team Leader; Team Manager; Supervisor; Operations Manager; Departmental Manager; Investment Analyst.

However, in many organisations, there may be specific elements of the degree content involved in the role which are not reflected in the job title but which are a key component within it.

The Graduate Apprenticeship allows the student to balance academic and workplace learning effectively. With the University's supported online learning platform and tools, students have flexibility to engage in their academic studies around personal and organisational commitments. Attendance on campus is minimised to reduce workplace disruption and costs. Online learning can be accessed 24/7, is varied and relevant to the topics undertaken and includes the use of multi-media interactive activities, podcasts, quizzes, webinars and forum discussions, thus providing an engaging and motivating

learning experience. On-campus workshops will introduce and consolidate online learning, and support the student in preparation for academic assessment.

Students are supported through the course to achieve professional excellence through a suite of modules designed to develop academic, personal and interpersonal skills. They will be encouraged to develop an enquiring, analytical, open minded and creative approach to foster independent judgement, critical self-awareness, ability to reflect, and an appreciation of the wider context of the course of study. These skills will be developed and practiced both in the context of the academic environment and in their workplace organisation.

Ultimately, by generating a deep interest in, and enthusiasm for business, students and graduates will be motivated to continually update their knowledge and understanding within the context of a rapidly changing political, social and economic environment.

### **EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE COURSE**

The purpose of the Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services is to develop students' knowledge and understanding across all areas of business and management within the context of the Financial Services sector. The course provides the necessary underpinning in core business management and financial services' knowledge, skills and competencies, as well as developing an appreciation of future issues facing individuals and organisations in the financial sector worldwide, allowing students to critically analyse and determine potential solutions. Consideration around future career progression pathways, either to relevant post graduate study or professional recognition or qualifications required in specific roles, allows students to continue with life-long learning upon completion of this degree.

Specifically, graduates of the course will possess the following attributes.

- The ability to demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding of organisations, the business environment in which they operate and their management.
- The ability to demonstrate a range of cognitive and intellectual skills together with the competencies specific to business and management.
- Relevant personal and interpersonal skills.
- An appreciation of the wider societal, business and commercial influences on, and impact of, organisations across all sectors.
- The ability to select appropriate theories, techniques, models, procedures and practices to business and management scenarios at local, national and global levels.
- Skills and aptitude in the use of appropriate technologies and digital platforms used across organisations to encompass the fast pace of change.
- The ability to plan and manage workloads, including evaluating performance, managing and allocating tasks and resources;
- Skills in the collection and critical analysis of data, combined with appropriate critical-thinking and problem-solving ability;
- The ability to contribute to continuous improvement and organisational performance;

- The ability to follow professional standards and work in an ethical and safe manner with regard for all stakeholders;
- An understanding of the importance of, and the ability to, maintain awareness of legislation, innovation and best practice;
- The ability to reflect on own performance and identify areas for improvement to broaden and expand theoretical understanding and knowledge of current and emerging professional practice and standards.
- Intellectual insight relating to business and management from both a theoretical and practical perspective.
- A robust foundation from which to develop a career in Business Management.

The Graduate Apprenticeship student journey differentiates itself from the traditional course of study in that students will be employed for the entire four-year duration of their educational journey. Their employment environment affords them a unique opportunity to take full advantage of work-based learning opportunities, appreciate the relevance of theoretical learning, and open up future career opportunities with their employer. Activities within the employing organisation are coordinated to reflect the content of the modules in which students are enrolled, and are designed to provide the practical application of the theory received through academic learning. The work-based learning within the course aims to offer a new learning experience to meet the needs of both the individuals and employers. This will play a role in achieving the aspiration of the Scottish Government to see a culture of real partnership between employers and education and increasing skill levels in the workforce. This is entirely in keeping with the commitments of the University to 'provide stimulating programmes to anticipate and meet education and skills needs'; to 'strengthen partnerships further with employers and professions in design and delivery models to ensure relevant skills and capabilities' and 'to connect students and industry through enhanced work-related activities'.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

In order to assist understanding of the learner journey, the following information presents a breakdown of the principal skills and abilities which students are required to develop over the duration of the course.

### Overall Learning Outcomes

The purpose of the Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services is to provide the student with graduate level expertise across the broad spectrum of business and management but within the context of the Financial Services Sector. The course provides a framework within which students are encouraged to develop an enthusiasm for discovery, understanding and application of knowledge to real life business problems and issues. It provides a stimulating intellectual insight to business management from both a theoretical and practical perspective, with a view to facilitating a broad vocational and immediately applicable management education for modern organisations across all sectors. Students will develop the ability to work confidently, as an individual undertaking independent study within specialist areas, or as part of a team in the workplace, applying their learning to appropriate technical and managerial solutions.

Throughout the course students will develop ethical standards, professional skills and personal attributes appropriate to a career in business and management regardless of the

industry or sector.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) produced a Framework which has formed the basis for the development of this course with each of the modules. The Mapping Document, situated at the end of this document, illustrates which module addresses each of the overarching outcomes from the Framework.

At all stages of the course students will be developed via the following course aims:

**Knowledge and Understanding of:**

- Organisations, the business environment in which they operate and their management, with an emphasis on responding and shaping the dynamic and changing nature of business and the consideration of the future of organisations within the global business environment as well as Financial Services Sector.
- Organisations; internal aspects, functions and processes including their diverse nature, purposes, structures, governance, operations and management, together with the individual and corporate behaviours and cultures which exist within and between different organisations and their influence upon the external environment.
- The fast pace of change within a wide range of factors, including economic, cultural, ethical, legal and regulatory, political, sociological, digital and technological, demonstrating an understanding of their impact at local, national and global levels upon strategy, behaviour, management and sustainability of organisations.
- Key aspects of management: various processes, procedures and practices for effective management of organisations including theories, models, frameworks, tasks and roles, including management of people and corporate social responsibility, together with rational analysis and other processes of decision making within different organisations.

**Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding to:**

- Apply knowledge and understanding in business management and financial services demonstrating a range of cognitive and intellectual skills together with key competencies within their own workplace.
- Manage the requirements of their own organisation to fulfil and balance study obligations in an effective manner.
- Apply and demonstrate wider personal and interpersonal skills such as written and oral communication skills, IT skills, problem solving, collaboration, critical analysis, team working skills and conflict resolution.
- Develop self-confidence and a can-do attitude which will allow the student to take responsibility for their business contribution and personal conduct.
- Develop an enquiring, analytical, open minded and creative approach and foster independent judgement, critical self-awareness, and an appreciation of the wider context of the course of study.

**Generic Cognitive Skills to:**

- Problem-solve and critically analyse, analysing facts and circumstances to determine the cause of a problem and identifying and selecting appropriate solutions.

- Research, analyse and evaluate a range of business data, sources of information and appropriate methodologies, which includes the need for strong digital literacy, and to use that research for evidence-based decision-making.
- Develop commercial acumen based on an awareness of the key drivers for business success, causes of failure and the importance of providing customer satisfaction and building customer loyalty.
- Innovate, create and be enterprising, including the ability to act entrepreneurially to generate, develop and communicate ideas, manage and exploit intellectual property, gain support, and deliver successful outcomes.
- Network, demonstrating an awareness of the interpersonal skills of effective listening, negotiating, persuasion and presentation and their use in generating business contacts.
- Foster reflective thinking and critical judgement to logically analyse issues, evaluate different options and implement decisions.

#### **Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills to:**

- Develop Numeracy skills, including the use of quantitative skills to manipulate data, evaluate, estimate and model business problems, functions and phenomena.
- Work collaboratively both internally and with external stakeholders to develop awareness of mutual interdependence, team building, leadership and motivation of others.
- Develop skills in information systems and business intelligence, including development, management, application and implementation of systems and their impact on organisations.
- Develop digital business, including development of strategic priorities to deliver business at speed in an environment where digital technology can shape traditional business models.

#### **Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others to:**

- Demonstrate the ability to take responsibility for own learning and to exhibit reflection on individual actions, or within group situations in a collaborative and professional manner.
- Work with people from a range of cultures and backgrounds.
- Build and maintain relationships during their career.
- Develop emotional intelligence and empathy.
- Develop self-analysis and an awareness to diversity in people and cultures.
- Be innovate, foster creativity and drive and manage the process of change.

The following Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) learning outcomes describe the characteristics of the students, i.e. what a student is expected to know and be able to do if they have taken full advantage of the opportunities for learning provided by the course.

As the Business and Management section of this course covers a broad content, where course modules do not necessarily build directly from each other stage to stage, as they would in a completely specialist technical degree, it is the assessment that differentiates and targets subject knowledge at each appropriate SCQF level. For example managing and leading people (core components of the SDS Framework) at SCQF 7 will allow for the

knowledge of core theory to be identified and described within an appropriate assessment response whereas at the higher SCQF level 9 students will be presenting a much more critical evaluation of the impact of this subject and producing assignments that require deeper application of the literature sourced. However, the modules relating to the Financial Services section of the course are specialist topics that develop from one stage to the next stage.

For example the study of personal taxation in Stage 1, within module BS1003 Fundamentals of Finance, is to allow the student to develop knowledge and academic skills to identify and understand the components associated with taxation as well as performing basic calculations, whereas progression to Stage 2 widens appreciation and analytical skills to determine a more applied depth of knowledge and ability to perform far more advanced calculations to offer advice within the dedicated module BS2003 Personal Taxation. Stage 3 increases abilities to critically analyse contemporary issues and practices within the sector allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge of the regulatory framework and then ultimately at Stage 4 students will demonstrate their advanced level skills in the field research and application around financial planning and client risk profiles, taxation being an element of this.

These characteristics can be identified within each stage of the course:

### **Stage 1: SCQF 7**

#### Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding

The student will be able to:

- Recognise and explain the impact that the external environment can have on organisations of all types.
- Understand the relevance of Governance models and the impact of business law in organisational settings.
- Understand the main principles of taxation with reference to individuals and trusts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the key principles of tax planning and investment advice.
- Explain the fundamental areas of finance for individuals and apply this knowledge to relevant decision-making contexts.
- Explain the key sources of finance for business.
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic financial concepts and how they apply to practical business situations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic management accounting concepts and how they are relevant in business.

#### Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

The student will be able to:

- Apply key management concepts, principles, theories and models in appropriate organisational settings and contexts to better understand impact on decision-making.
- Apply learning of governance and business law in commercial and contractual requirements.
- Develop and demonstrate key ethical and professional issues impacting



organisations, including codes of practice, morals, principles and behaviours.

- Interpret and apply key concepts and theories with regard to group and team behaviour to specific situations.
- Apply fundamental learning in finance to relevant decision-making contexts.
- Apply knowledge of personal and business taxation to basic scenarios.
- Apply knowledge of key principles of tax planning and investment advice.
- Apply understanding of basic accounting knowledge and understanding to practical business situations.
- Explain the objectives and contents of financial statements and undertake basic analysis and interpretation of those statements.
- Prepare and analyse basic management accounting information and demonstrate how key techniques are applied in different business scenarios.
- Identify potential solutions to basic business problems.

### Characteristic 3: General Cognitive Skills

The student will be able to:

- Undertake rote application of basic principles and procedures to standard, simple situations, with guidance.
- Systematically relate a limited number of facts/ideas/elements in an imitative manner, with guidance.
- Form own value judgements based on criteria provided.
- Identify potential solutions to basic business problems.
- Reflect upon personal development needs, learning and performance.

### Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

The student will be able to:

- Display the ability to actively listen, openly question and to produce clear and effective communications in a variety of forms appropriate to purpose and target audience.
- Develop appropriate academic writing skills in terms of citation and referencing as per requirements.
- Demonstrate an ability to manipulate and apply certain formulae pertinent to business accounting;
- Demonstrate an ability to manage time, set goals and prioritise activities to meet objectives.
- Access and use word processing and simple statistical packages.

### Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others

The student will be able to:

- Interact effectively with tutors and fellow students both online and in clearly defined group situations.
- Interpret the key concepts and theories with regard to group and team behaviour applying appropriately to specific situations.

- Understand the principles of collaborative working and the importance of effective team working.
- Demonstrate confidence in knowing own core values and drivers and how this impacts on professional and ethical activity.

## **Stage 2: SCQF 8**

### Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding

The student will be able to:

- Establish and assess the fundamental tasks and activities involved in business development, marketing and sales.
- Demonstrate a widening appreciation of the scope of management; functions and strategies.
- Understand the main principles of taxation with reference to individuals and trusts.
- Develop knowledge in the key principles of tax planning and investment advice.
- Recognise the project lifecycle, purposes, tools and techniques within the project environment.
- Evaluate driving and managing change in project management.
- Understand risk and compliance management in the context of project management.
- Identify and evaluate contemporary developments in digital business and data analysis.
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to develop an effective digital business strategy.
- Understand the principles of cybersecurity and the importance of managing secure IT systems.

### Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

The student will be able to:

- Develop understanding of the academic, technical and professional elements of the core business disciplines.
- Critically appraise methods and strategies to aid business development.
- Analyse global marketing concepts in a customer-orientated and digital environment.
- Analyse the characteristics and behaviours of target audiences, constituents of each element of the marketing mix to develop appropriate marketing strategies.
- Apply knowledge of personal taxation to basic scenarios.
- Apply knowledge of key principles of tax planning and investment advice.
- Analyse the taxation of investments with reference to individuals and trusts.
- Apply the commercial aspects involved in project management.
- Analyse the key variables of project management.
- Critically appraise how digital technologies can impact on and add value to a business.
- Evaluate the benefits of data analysis within businesses for decision making and competitive strategies.

Characteristic 3: General Cognitive Skills

The student will be able to:

- Apply standard principles and procedures to somewhat more demanding situations across management disciplines.
- Demonstrate increasing ability to apply classifications and analyse relatively simple situations.
- Apply given tools/methods accurately and carefully to more demanding problems.
- Undertake basic business maths calculations prevalent in finance decisions.

Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

The student will be able to:

- Exercise the interpersonal skills of effective listening, influencing techniques, negotiation and persuasion.
- Communicate in a clear, systematic and concise way, in more formal academic and professional styles, and in longer pieces of work.
- Apply more complex formulae appropriate to the management context.
- Create and implement a digital development plan which prioritises and strategically aligns personal and business activities and addresses any identified personal or professional development needs.
- Build digital and face to face networks and maintain relations with people from a range of cultures, backgrounds and levels.
- Exhibit an ability to undertake forward planning with a focus on identifying potential problems and defining outcomes.

Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others

The student will be able to:

- Evaluate academic and professional material and exercise rational and appropriate judgement on organisational issues.
- Exercise leadership in identifying business problems and building a case for change.
- Apply influencing and persuasion skills to the dynamics of personal interactions.
- Critically reflect upon any personal development, learning or performance needs.
- Take responsibility for the effective management of meetings and clearly present actions and outcomes.

**Stage 3: SCQF 9**Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding:

The student will be able to:

- Demonstrate confident familiarity with the broad areas of the knowledge bases of management.
- Discuss the role of the financial services sector within the UK economy.
- Understand economic theories, UK economic environment and the impact of monetary policy on the financial services industry.

- Develop an understanding of contemporary issues within the financial services sector to support appropriate professional judgements in the work place.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the structure of the UK financial services industry and its role in society.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the application of principles and outcomes based on regulation within the financial services industry.
- Identify contemporary developments in digital business and data analysis.
- Understand the principles of cybersecurity and the importance of managing secure IT systems.

#### Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

The student will be able to:

- Perform more complex and critical analysis of general management practices and theory and critically assess means by which the objectives of a business are achieved.
- Assess international factors impacting on developments in the financial services sector.
- Evaluate the implications of technological innovation and the changing consumer behaviour within financial services
- Critically assess the competitive environment for the financial services sector.
- Critically appraise the legal and regulatory framework for financial services sector and demonstrate how this is applied in practice.
- Apply the key principles of ethics and professional standards and evaluate the impact of these on business behaviour.
- Critically appraise how digital technologies can impact and add value to a business.
- Evaluate the benefits of data analysis within businesses for decision making and competitive advantage.
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to develop an effective digital business strategy.

#### Characteristic 3: General Cognitive Skills

The student will be able to:

- Demonstrate ability to select and use principles and procedures appropriate to the situation or problem in hand.
- Identify a range of valid alternative solutions; begin to discriminate and evaluate in a reasoned, systematic and increasingly independent way.
- Demonstrate an ability to identify business problems and build a case for change.

#### Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

The student will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to manage meetings effectively and clearly present actions and outcomes.
- Apply influencing and persuasion skills to the dynamics of personal interactions.
- Engage effectively in a variety of roles; debates; produces clear, well-structured reports and other extended pieces of work; gives clear, subject-specific

presentations in a variety of contexts.

- Learn and apply more complex statistical techniques.
- Develop and demonstrate higher level of competence in the use of the IT skills of statistical, spreadsheet and word processing packages.

#### Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others

The student will be able to:

- Exhibit an ability to undertake forward planning with a focus on identifying potential problems and defining outcomes.
- Create and implement a development plan which prioritises and strategically aligns personal and business activities.
- Build networks and maintain relations with people from a range of cultures, backgrounds and levels.
- Understand own impact on others in the business environment and adjust professional style accordingly

### **Stage 4: SCQF 10**

#### Characteristic 1: Knowledge and Understanding

The student will be able to:

- Extend study to more advanced specialist areas of management by undertaking a final year work-based project on an appropriate area of study.
- Identify, plan and design an independent work-based project based on an area appropriate to the degree discipline.
- Identify and critically evaluate the various strategic options available in various organisational settings.
- Understand the responsibilities to and relationship with a client.

#### Characteristic 2: Practice: Applied Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

The student will be able to:

- Analyse and critically discuss the impact of external environmental forces on contemporary strategic thinking.
- Critically evaluate the sources of competitive advantage available to organisations within a particular industry context.
- Evaluate the practical issues related to strategy implementation and strategic change.
- Critically reflect upon personal responses to the nature of strategic decision-making in specific organisational settings.
- Evaluate literature, research and knowledge to establish clear academic context for the work-based project.
- Evaluate a client's financial status and objectives.
- Apply knowledge of risk to develop a client risk profile.
- Appraise and assess options relevant to a given scenario and propose an appropriate financial plan.

- Apply a review process to a financial plan.
- Evaluate literature, research and knowledge to establish clear academic context for the work-based project.

### Characteristic 3: General Cognitive Skills

The student will be able to:

- Review and reflect on the research process, displaying awareness both of the limitations of the project and any attendant ethical issues.
- Integrate theory with professional practice; autonomously evaluating theory, process, solutions and outcomes critically and effectively.
- Identify and classify principles and ideas in new texts or situations; analyse systematically, effectively and critically, working autonomously.
- Perform increasingly independently, confident and flexible in identifying and defining complex problems and in the application of knowledge and skills appropriate to their solution, at the threshold of professional competency.

### Characteristic 4: Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills

The student will be able to:

- Engage effectively with all stakeholders relevant to their independent research for the work-based project.
- Present and discuss the findings of their work-based project in relation to academic and practical considerations in an appropriate and professionally orientated manner.
- Use skills in numeracy developed at previous levels in more open ended situations, e.g. to evaluate the research findings of others, to present the findings of a piece of research undertaken by the student.
- Use a variety of computer based packages to retrieve, manipulate and present data.
- Develop and demonstrate an even higher level of competence in the use of the IT skills of statistical, spreadsheet and word processing packages than in earlier stages of study.

### Characteristic 5: Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others

The student will be able to:

- Interact effectively within learning or professional groups; demonstrate appropriate negotiating, role leadership and group-support skills to an advanced level.
- Take the initiative to further create and implement a career development plan.
- Build more networks and maintain relations with people from a range of cultures, backgrounds and levels.
- Prioritise self and strategically align activities even further.
- Reflect upon personal responses to the nature of strategic decision-making in specific organisational settings.

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF COURSE

At the outset of the course each student will undertake an audit of their existing skills and knowledge and this will be developed and updated at each stage of their learning journey allowing for reflection and personal career planning to be undertaken. During the first three years of the course students will undertake Developing Professional Excellence Modules alongside the subject specific academic modules. The purpose of these modules is to first introduce and then develop academic, personal and professional skills to support the students on their work-based learning journey. During their studies students will reflect on the applied activities undertaken to demonstrate theory studied into practical professional results and this continuous process should develop the students into reflective practitioners capable of considering their own performance. This will encourage the students to become independent learners from the early stage of their course.

The differentiation between Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management and this course is the inclusion of sector based modules including: Personal Taxation; Contemporary issues in Financial Services; Financial Services, Regulations and Ethics, and Financial Planning. These modules will form the basis for application for professional body exemptions within Chartered Institute of Banking (CBI) and Chartered Insurance Institute (CII)

Teaching materials have been developed to include online vodcasts, podcasts, interactive tools, workbooks, online reading and online discussions with the other students and staff, many of whom have substantial industry experience combined with enviable academic reputations. Delivery of the course is further enhanced by the opportunity to hear from guest speakers with illustrious industry and entrepreneurial backgrounds all using the latest technologies.

The mode of delivery is a flexible student-centred approach to studying allowing for business and personal life commitments to be considered and planned for in advance of key deadlines.

Robert Gordon University Graduate Apprenticeships will share institutional Graduate Apprenticeship characteristics; therefore course design will:

- optimise candidate time within the workplace;
- be flexible, enabling students to participate in the course and student experience whilst not bound to a physical campus;
- include meaningful and substantial employer engagement from the outset;
- use innovative teaching, learning and assessment methods;
- support the development of reflective practitioners, equipped to excel in their field and add value to their employers;
- ensure that the professional practice of learners is informed and enhanced by expert technical and theoretical knowledge;
- combine work-based learning, the latest thinking within the field, and work-related/centric assessments to produce graduates equipped with valuable skills and knowledge.

The Graduate Apprenticeship model of achieving a degree through work-based learning has

been designed such that:

- In contrast to the traditional student journey, Graduate Apprenticeship students will be employed for the entire duration of the course, and the course will be designed to integrate their course learning outcomes with suitable workplace projects in collaboration and partnership with their employer. The development of transferable skills will also be supported throughout the course via course content, assessment, and work-based learning.
- The course will utilise the technology investment that the University has made in lecture capture and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) delivery providing the student with a cutting edge experience.

Employers are closely involved with the specification and delivery of work-based learning activities to support the learning and development of students. Workplace Mentors appointed by the employer, and supported by the University, will work with students to create individual learning plans which outline the shadowing, observation, training, work activities and project opportunities which students will undertake in the workplace. These learning plans will be reviewed by the University to ensure that the required employer contextualisation is appropriate.

The course adopts a practical approach to developing students' professional skills; for example employing group discussion activities within course workshops to foster leadership, listening, and communication skills, and requiring students to deliver presentation and reports as a means of further refining their professional skillset. Within the work-based learning environment, students will continue their professional development as they enhance planning and negotiation skills via development of their learning plan in conjunction with their Workplace Mentor and engage in practical activities designed to further their professional skillset. The knowledge and insights gained across the University and work-based learning environment, coupled with the active role students are expected to take in planning and executing their own learning, will act to supports the students' overall professional enrichment.

The course is taught by a team of academic and professional staff who have extensive industrial and commercial experience in all relevant areas of business, management and financial services.

## **WHAT THE COURSE INVOLVES**

The four-year Graduate Apprenticeship, BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services is an industry focused degree route, where students work full-time for a partner employer while studying towards a fully accredited degree. The course combines workplace training with a programme of education designed to meet students' career ambitions. The core curriculum is focused on latest thinking in business and management coupled with a "flipped-classroom" approach to work-based learning developed through ongoing collaboration between University staff, Workplace Mentors, and line managers in the workplace.

Learning support materials are provided through the VLE which includes a range of equipment such as video and distance learning technologies as well as online interaction. Where appropriate, modules use technologies such as computer-mediated formative assessment to bring interactivity and immediacy to the teaching and learning process.



Additionally, there will be opportunities for the student to attend on-campus events to allow face-to-face interaction with staff and peers, participate in group activities with peers and this will contribute to the overall student experience. Arrangements for these on-campus events will be determined in liaison/partnership with employers and stakeholders will be advised well in advance to facilitate attendance.

Staff will support students engaged in problem solving from an academic and/or theoretical perspective, while Workplace Mentors will guide students in the application of theory to workplace scenarios. University staff will undertake visits to the student's place of work in order to observe the work-based learning environment and discuss the student's progress with the Workplace Mentor.

This combination of blended academic study will allow the student to contextualise learning immediately within their workplace thereby developing their understanding and enhancing and their contribution to organisational effectiveness.

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE / PLACEMENT**

Students enrolled on the course are employed by a collaborating partner organisation while studying for the degree. Employers may provide a series of internal placements within their organisations as part of the student's learning plan where it would be beneficial for the student to spend time within a department other than their own to gain specialist skills and knowledge and where this can be supported by their employer.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY**

An Honours degree achieved with at least an upper second classification (2.1) will normally provide access to postgraduate and doctoral programmes in UK higher education institutions.

### **EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL INDICATORS OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

In October 2016 the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) issued an Interim Statement on Degree Apprenticeships confirming the final UK-wide statement will be in keeping with the existing suite of characteristics statements within Part A of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The QAA further state the Quality Code is a key reference point for setting the academic standards and assuring the quality of apprenticeships involving a higher education qualification. Subsequently, in May 2017 the QAA published its paper 'Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships: Current Approaches'. This document highlights considerations for higher education providers in relation to standards and quality and extrapolates relevant guidance from the UK Quality Code. Whilst the document does not constitute formal QAA guidance, its contents have informed the University's approach to the design and delivery of all Graduate Apprenticeships.

QAA published a Business and Management Subject Benchmark Statement (February 2015) and a Finance Subject Benchmark Statement (February 2016) outlining the standards expected for the award of Honours Degrees in Business Management and Finance. These QAA benchmarking statement represent the national threshold standards for achievement in these areas and articulate the attributes and capabilities which those possessing qualifications from these areas should demonstrate. As such, QAA benchmarks underpin course articulation, delivery and development through providing guidance for

learning outcomes across the breadth of the course and within specific cognate areas.

Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) statements are also used during the design of modules, courses and programmes and the relevant SCQF level is included within each Module Descriptor.

The University appoints External Examiners to assure standards of assessment. Examiners are appointed from both academic and practice backgrounds to cover key subject areas within Business and Management.

The School has strong links with other academic institutions, both within the UK and Europe, which supports the maintenance of standards at national and international levels.

In February 2018 Aberdeen Business School was accredited by AACSB International - the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the longest-serving global accrediting body for business schools, and the largest business education network connecting students, educators and businesses worldwide. AACSB Accreditation inspires new ways of thinking within business education globally and as a result, has only been earned by less than 5% of the world's business schools. AACSB accreditation provides a framework of 15 international standards against which business schools around the world assess the quality of their educational services. These standards ensure continuous improvement and provide focus for schools to deliver on their mission, innovate and drive impact. Only four institutions in Scotland currently hold AACSB accreditation.

## ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

This course is governed by the provisions of the University's Academic Regulations, which are available at [www.rgu.ac.uk/academicregulations](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/academicregulations). In particular:

*Regulation A1: Courses*

*Regulation A2: Admission*

*Regulation A3: Section 1: Student Appeals (Awards and Progression) Procedure*

*Regulation A3: Section 2: Student Misconduct Procedure*

*Regulation A4: Assessment and Recommendations of Assessment Boards*

Applicants must satisfy the University's general admission requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate courses as contained in *Academic Regulation A2: Admission*, including proficiency to a minimum standard in the English language. Specific entry requirements for this course are detailed below.

## Entry Requirements and Qualifications

**Employment:** All applicants must be employed in a full-time position, relevant to their course of study and have the right to live and work in Scotland. An applicant's employer must be committed to and involved in the provision of a suitable workplace environment, coupled with supportive workplace learning guidance and mentoring to create a suitable workplace environment in which the student will be able to obtain the necessary experience and learning outcomes. Employers must be willing to formally partner with the University via a Collaboration Agreement which sets forth the obligations of each party.

**Subject specific qualifications:** SQA Higher: BBBC

**Experiential equivalencies:** The following are broad standards provided to guide applicants who do not meet our Standard Course Entry Requirements, however in all cases

admission decisions rest with the University and the relevance, breadth and depth of employment experience will be taken into consideration.

First year entry: For those applicants who do not meet our Standard Course Entry Requirements, applications may be considered from those who possess one years' relevant work experience and where the applicant has demonstrated the development of key skills evidenced through a detailed CV.

Advanced entry: Advanced entry may be considered for those who have minimum three years relevant work experience and where the applicant has demonstrated the development of key skills evidenced through a detailed CV.

**Alternative qualifications:** Applications are welcomed from those with equivalent qualifications to those stated, including Foundation Apprenticeships (SCQF 6), SVQs/NVQs, access programmes and overseas qualifications. Applications from students with non-standard qualifications or work experience will be considered on an individual basis.

**Advanced entry:** Applicants who are interested in applying for advanced entry will be considered on an individual basis. Applications may be based upon prior education and relevant work experience. A relevant HNC or HND will be considered for entry into Year 2 or Year 3 with a minimum of 1 to 2 years relevant work experience. Applicants with a relevant Bachelor's degree will be considered for entry to the Honours Stage (Stage 4 of this course) with a minimum of 3 years relevant work experience. Attention is drawn to the University's process for Recognition of Prior Learning.

**English language requirements:** All applicants whose first language is not English are required to have an Academic IELTS (International English Language Testing System) minimum score of 6.0. Appropriate equivalents will be considered.

### Course Specific Academic Regulations

Honours classification is based solely on performance in Stage 4 of the course.

Due to the sequential delivery of the modules and the scheduling of the Assessment Board, students will be allowed one re-assessment opportunity for modules 1-3 prior to the Assessment Board each year.

### SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

- Further information about Degree Apprenticeships in Scotland can be found at the Skills Development Scotland Apprenticeships website:

<https://www.Apprenticeships.scot/>

- The Robert Gordon University Graduate Apprenticeship information made available to employers and prospective students can be found at:

<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/business-services/graduate-Apprenticeships>

- Further information about the undergraduate programme in Aberdeen Business School can be found at the school website:

<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/schools-and-departments/aberdeen-business-school/aberdeen-business-school>

- Library resources can be accessed via the Library web portal:

<https://www.rgu.ac.uk/staff-and-current-students/library>

- Advice for students about study and welfare issues is found at the Student Advice and Support portal:

<https://www.rgu.ac.uk/student-life/student-advice-and-support/student-advice-and-support>

- Links to the Academic Regulations governing the course can be accessed at:

<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/academicregulations>

A number of external sources were consulted in the process of curriculum development for the Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services degree:

- Skills Development Scotland Graduate Apprenticeship subject frameworks are available at:

[https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publicationsstatistics/publications/?page=1&area\[\]=14&order=date-desc](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publicationsstatistics/publications/?page=1&area[]=14&order=date-desc)

- For reference, the Modern Apprenticeship Program is available at:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/35912.html>

Professional Bodies relevant to this degree include:

- Chartered Banker Institute - <https://www.charteredbanker.com/>
- Chartered Insurance Institute - <http://www.cii.co.uk/>

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

A specific ambition of government and Skills Development Scotland is that Foundation, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships will help to achieve social mobility and inclusivity. The approach taken by the University in respect of flexible admissions requirements, a commitment to helping partner employers ensure equal opportunity, study skills support for learners from the point of induction, innovative curriculum design and delivery and work-related/centric assessment is supportive of these ambitions.

The University has a strong commitment to the active promotion of equality across its functions, including its course provision. To this end the University has developed an inclusivity statement which articulates the University's desire to strive towards creating a working, learning and social atmosphere which is inclusive, harmonious and respectful of diversity. The University has also developed an equality and diversity policy and every two years publishes a mainstreaming report, including equality outcomes, which explains how the University is developing and implementing its inclusivity statement. At a course level, course leaders monitor and comment on equalities data through the annual appraisal process. Through this process any significant trends in equalities data are highlighted. Further information can be found at:

[www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/about/equality-and-diversity)

All Schools have a nominated School Contact who can advise on the requirements of the course and the range of course-specific reasonable adjustments that may be made. The current School Contacts are available from:

[www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/disability/page.cfm?pge=7853](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/student-services/disability/page.cfm?pge=7853)

The University's Disability and Dyslexia Service provides support for students, details of which may be found at: [www.rgu.ac.uk/disability](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/disability)

## NOTE

This document constitutes one of two course documents that should be read together:

**Course Specification: Core Award Data**

**Course Specification: Student Learning Experience**

## CONTACT DETAILS

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A Scottish Charity, Registration No. SC013781

Telephone: +44 (0)1224 262000

Web: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk>

In compiling this information the University has taken every care to be as accurate as possible, though it must be read as subject to change at any time and without notice. The University reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of courses, to discontinue, merge or combine courses, and to introduce new courses.

## DETAILED COURSE STRUCTURE

The modules studied within each Stage run consecutively in 10 week learning blocks with the exception of the Developing Professional Excellence modules (which are designed to capture the experiential learning across the breadth of each stage to allow for reflective development) and the Capstone Project.

Blended Learning			
Stage 1		CREDITS	LEVEL
BS1001	Business Environment	30	7
BS1003	Fundamentals of Finance	30	7
BS1004	Accounting for Business	30	7
BS1010	Developing Professional Excellence I	30	7
<b>Total for Stage:</b>		<b>120</b>	

Blended Learning			
Stage 2		CREDITS	LEVEL
BS2001	Business Development, Marketing and Sales	30	8
BS2003	Personal Taxation	30	8
BS3001	Project Management	30	9
BS2010	Developing Professional Excellence II	30	8
<b>Total for Stage:</b>		<b>120</b>	

Blended Learning			
Stage 3		CREDITS	LEVEL
BS3002	Contemporary Issues in Financial Services	30	9
BS3004	Financial Services, Regulations and Ethics	30	9
BS3005	Digital Business	30	9
BS3010	Developing Professional Excellence III	30	9
<b>Total for Stage:</b>		<b>120</b>	

Blended Learning			
Stage 4		CREDITS	LEVEL
BS4001	Organisational Strategy	30	10
BS4003	Financial Planning	30	10
BS4010	Capstone Project	60	10
<b>Total for Stage:</b>		<b>120</b>	

## COURSE STRUCTURE DIAGRAM

### SCQF Framework

The course structure is based on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The Framework comprises 12 Levels of which Levels 7-10 are directly relevant to the course, as shown below. Students generally enter University education from secondary school at Level 7 although this may not be the case for this course. Honours Degree awards are at Level 10. The table also shows:

- The credit standards required at each stage of the course;
- The number of years of study in the workplace supported by

Aberdeen Business School to complete the award.

<b>Structure of BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services</b>	<b>Award / Exit Award</b>	<b>Scottish Credit + Qualifications Framework</b>	<b>Minimum level + Credit Requirements</b>	<b>Number of years study to complete the course in the workplace</b>
<b>Stage 1</b>	Higher Apprenticeship in Cert HE	SCQF level 7	120 credits (Minimum of 90 credits at SCQF 7)	1 (Full-time)
<b>Stage 2</b>	Higher Apprenticeship in Dip HE	SCQF level 8	240 credits (Minimum of 90 credits at SCQF 8)	2 (Full-time)
<b>Stage 3</b>	Graduate Apprenticeship in BA	SCQF level 9	360 credits (Minimum of 90 credits at SCQF 9)	3 (Full-time)
<b>Stage 4</b>	Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons)	SCQF level 10	480 credits (Minimum of 90 credits at SCQF 10)	4 (Full-time)

<b>STAGE 1</b>		<b>Stage 1 Exit Award</b>
BS1001	Business Environment	Higher Apprenticeship in Cert HE Business Management: Financial Services
BS1003	Fundamentals of Finance	
BS1004	Accounting for Business	
BS1010	Developing Professional Excellence I	
<b>STAGE 2</b>		<b>Stage 2 Exit Award</b>
BS2001	Business Development, Marketing and Sales	Higher Apprenticeship in Dip HE Business Management: Financial Services
BS2003	Personal Taxation	
BS3001	Project Management	

BS2010	Developing Professional Excellence II	
<b>STAGE 3</b>		<b>Stage 3 Exit Award</b>
BS3002	Contemporary Issues in Financial Services	Graduate Apprenticeship in BA Business Management: Financial Services
BS3004	Financial Services, Regulations and Ethics	
BS3005	Digital Business	
BS3010	Developing Professional Excellence III	
<b>STAGE 4</b>		
BS4001	Organisational Strategy	Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services
BS4003	Financial Planning	
BS4010	Capstone Project	



**COURSE SPECIFICATION:  
Student Learning Experience**



**Graduate Apprenticeship in BA (Hons) Business Management: Financial Services**

**STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

The University's vision is to be a disruptive educational innovator, developing a distinctive university model. To achieve this ambition, the University has committed to:

- Achieve high graduate employability;
- Cultivate student success;
- Enrich the student experience;
- Drive research excellence to support stakeholders;
- Offer innovation-driven solutions;
- Prioritise societal and economic impact

The University believes a professional education starts with excellent teaching and research within a supporting environment, and is about a lifelong and sustainable approach to working and living. The University's portfolio is informed by its commercial and public sector partners, who are instrumental in helping to develop courses to ensure their relevance for the evolving economy and society. Many courses include practical experience and placements, and are professionally accredited. These contribute to the University's position as one of the UK's top universities for graduate employment, and industry connections and engagement.

By combining the best of both academic and professional worlds, the University aims to give its students the best possible start to their careers. A degree from Robert Gordon University is confirmation to a future employer that a graduate from Robert Gordon University will possess an effective blend of learning, skills and experience.

The introduction of the Graduate Apprenticeship model is a natural development of the University's philosophy to combine theory, practice and experience in developing the skills, knowledge, confidence and professional practice of its students.

The principles of work-based learning are core to the philosophy of each Graduate Apprenticeship course at Robert Gordon University. It is fundamental to the Graduate Apprenticeship courses that students have access to relevant and up-to-date theory as they approach practical workplace situations and problems. Encountering theory and practice simultaneously will enable the student to critically analyse each in conjunction with the other. This will embed a rounded knowledge base and develop the ability to question situations while seeking a range of opinions in forming solutions to challenges.

Working in conjunction with learning will also enable students to develop the soft skills necessary in an ever-changing work-place. This means that the student will develop not only the knowledge and skills required for the technical aspects of their career but also the

ability to operate in the work-place and communicate effectively with internal and external parties.

Most of the practical aspects of the course take place in the student's workplace and will therefore vary according to the nature and resources of the student's employing organisation.

In addition, the resources of Aberdeen Business School are available to the student and support the teaching staff attached to the course.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

The institutional teaching and learning strategy for Graduate Apprenticeships is characterised by a commitment to ensuring a genuine interaction between theoretical and work-based learning. This is supported by a pedagogical approach which embraces and makes use of experiential learning where experiences framed by reflection lead to learning (Schon, 1983) and andragogy where adult learners understand the need to learn something and self-direct their learning process via a negotiated learning plan. Specifically students are encouraged to identify learning opportunities, consider the learning objectives associated with these and reflect upon these experiences to consolidate and apply learning. With regard to work-based learning activities, employers are guided in the identification of suitable activities and projects, and Workplace Mentors are supported in aiding students to reflect on and capture learning from the workplace and encourage the unification of knowledge and experience from the work and university spheres.

### The Learning Process: Teaching Strategy and Methods

The course curriculum is designed to deliver the skills and knowledge identified by Skills Development Scotland's framework for Business and Management: Financial Services. It has been developed as a coherent whole with an emphasis on the integration of theory, practical skills and applications. It enables the student to acquire and develop the subject knowledge and understanding necessary for successful professional employment in a variety of roles within the Financial Services Sector. Close consultation with the student's employer will ensure that practical situations and projects encountered within the workplace correlate with the theoretical knowledge developed throughout the course. Opportunities for critical reflection and analysis of apparent or real disparities or conflicts between theory and practice will inform the student of the practicalities of real-world situations and form a rich basis for developing their professional practice.

These skills are developed at levels corresponding to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework levels and form a progression through levels 7, 8, 9 and 10.

As the student progresses through the course they are encouraged to expand their understanding and critical appreciation of all aspects relating to the study of business and management.

A central feature of all Robert Gordon University Graduate Apprenticeship courses is that they promote a unified, integrated view of the subject area. Courses are designed to:

- Present a coherent underpinning of the theory and practice appropriate to the aims of the course which is further developed and applied within the work-based learning environment. This enables graduates of the course to adapt to future developments

in the field.

- Reflect changes within the field and ensure that coverage is given to a selection of emerging topics so that students are aware of likely future developments in the subject together with their potential impact.
- Integrate the delivery of teaching across thematic boundaries to highlight fundamental aspects of interconnectivity and interdisciplinarity within different areas of the syllabus.
- Integrate modes of assessment which complement the methodology of work-based learning and support the development of workplace communication skills.
- Facilitate students to exhibit competence and achievement across a number of different themes (integrated assessment).
- Encourage students to combine elements of their learning from different parts of the course and to show their accumulated and integrated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area (synoptic assessment).

The professionally-orientated nature of the course requires students to obtain general and specific skills, this being addressed by a combination of teaching and learning methods. These methods are built around mentored workplace learning directed, supported and extended by University guided, student-centred learning including virtual lectures, tutorials, discussion forums, workshops and private study.

### **Teaching and Learning Approaches**

The main goal of the teaching and learning strategy for the University's Graduate Apprenticeships is to enable students to become critical, reflective, independent learners who are active participants in the learning process and who develop the motivation and autonomy needed to take control and regulate their own educational experiences and develop the discipline of continuous professional development and life-long learning. This means that, throughout their course of study, students will begin to take more responsibility for their own acquisition of necessary skills and knowledge so that, by the end of their degree, they will be in a position to evaluate and assess their own effectiveness.

This process is driven by various objectives such as the need for constructive alignment of syllabus and learning approaches and makes use of a wide-range of appropriate delivery styles. In addition to mentored workplace learning these include conventional instructional teaching methodologies, social learning activities such as group discussion, as well as constructivist, investigative approaches such as problem-based learning and enquiry-based learning.

## **MODES OF DELIVERY**

### **Work-Based Learning**

The workplace forms the central learning environment for the student. It is important, however, to appreciate that whilst much learning takes place naturally in a workplace that this typically happens in an unplanned and unstructured way, with limited opportunity for reflection or consolidation of learning. For the purposes of this course there needs to be a structure in place to guide the student and ensure that learning outcomes are met. This structure is governed by a subject framework established by Skills Development Scotland and developed into a curriculum by the University who will work closely with the student's employer to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved through correlated theory and

practice. This will be expressed for the student in the form of a learning plan which will guide them through the course and help to ensure that workplace learning is supported, resourced, and planned with space and time for critical reflection and consolidation of learning.

### **Workplace Mentoring**

Key to the delivery and support of work-based learning is the Workplace Mentor. Partner employers are required to assign a Workplace Mentor whose role will be to oversee the work-based learning undertaken by the student. The University provides employers with guidance as to how appropriate Workplace Mentors should be selected, and provide Workplace Mentors with training and support via induction and ongoing liaison designed to help mentors understand the remit of their role and the activities associated with this. Workplace Mentors will have an overview of the course and its aims, will develop the student's learning plan, assign projects and in-house placements and provide feedback on work-based activities. Workplace Mentors are granted 'Affiliate Student' status enabling them to access all course learning materials via the University's VLE and they may join an online mentor forum. In addition to mentoring support for students, supplementary support may be provided by the employer, for example when subject matter experts are brought in to provide specific business or technical expertise or through access to other departments within the organisation. This enables work-based learning to reflect the range of the curriculum as the student progresses in their studies, therefore providing adequate support for the student's workplace learning on a project, placement or task basis.

### **Employers' Responsibilities**

Partner employers commit to supporting students via the signing of a Collaboration Agreement which sets forth the obligations of the employer and the University. In supporting students, employers are obliged to provide a work-based learning environment which adequately represents and reflects the students' course to ensure appropriate functional expertise, supporting infrastructure and professional and technical knowledge within the organisation. Central to this is the provision of a supportive and educative work-based learning environment which affords opportunities to learn, gain new experiences, acquire and build competencies, and reflect on and apply learning. Additionally, employers are obliged to provide protected time to allow students to attend on-campus study days and to undertake study-related activities such as participation in online discussion forums, and access to the requisite IT hardware and software to facilitate this.

### **Student Role in Learning**

Students are expected to be active participants in the learning process. This means that there is a requirement for students to extend their learning from formally delivered materials through wider reading, research and self-directed enquiry. As students develop over the duration of the course, they are expected to become increasingly self-directed and self-motivated, taking greater control of the study process, and defining their own personal objectives for learning. Students are encouraged to reflect regularly upon their learning and to establish a view of their own progress and development, which they triangulate with feedback from their Workplace Mentor and course delivery team. Students are expected to utilise the full range of facilities and resources available to them, for example the services and resources provided by the library.

## Lecture

Lectures are for the purpose of dissemination of information and the demonstration of techniques. These will usually be available via the VLE but may also be delivered face to face at the University as part of an on-campus event.

## Tutorials

Tutorials may be arranged remotely (e.g. online via the VLE) or in person. Tutorials are an opportunity to raise questions, discuss ideas and consequences and exchange experiences and lessons learned. This format is used for a wide range of activities, each suited to the particular subject. It may consist of the staff supporting students engaged in problem-solving or may consist of a series of group exercises where each group is encouraged to allocate responsibilities, allocate tasks, etc. Generally this type of teaching is used to support the lecture, clarify the material and experiment with the techniques and skills required.

## On-Campus Events

It is anticipated that from time to time it will be beneficial for Graduate Apprenticeship students to meet on-campus for a variety of events. These may be group sessions where students can discuss the relationship between theory and practice through critical analysis and reflection. On-campus events will also give students the opportunity to develop their professional practice through ideas exchange with peers and academic staff and through other networking. On-campus events will be organised in consultation with employers when there is benefit to be gained for students in attending such events.

## Individual Project

The student will agree a specification for this extended piece of work with their University tutor and their Workplace Mentor to fulfil the requirements of the Capstone Project modules. The academic work will be completed under the guidance and supervision of the student's assigned University tutor.

## ASSESSMENT

A variety of assessment methods are used in this course, as deemed appropriate to the learning outcomes and subject material being assessed and the context in which the material is delivered. Assessment will be in line with the University Assessment Policy and quality assurance and will remain the responsibility of the University.

## Coursework

Coursework may be used as a form of summative assessment, and within the context of Graduate Apprenticeship courses this may be work-related, for example based around a project being undertaken in the workplace, or work-centric, such as a report in response to a case study scenario where the case study is built to reflect current issues within a specific sector. Coursework may take many forms, for example reports, essays, posters to showcase student proposals, reflective statements. Coursework may also include portfolios of evidence demonstrating the application of specific skills and knowledge allowing a view to be formed of the extent to which a student has satisfied learning outcomes. The University provides students with access to ePortfolio software in order to assist students in their creation of portfolios. Where a deadline applies to a particular

piece of work the student will be informed at the commencement of the relevant module. Appropriate review measures will be implemented in order to ensure that the students' coursework is individual in nature and not the result of a group effort involving co-workers and colleagues.

### **Work-Based Learning**

Amongst the assessment tools suitable for the context of work-based learning are diary logs, student blogs, vlogs, other social media engagement, logs developed through critical analysis and reflection which can be worked up as case studies, written critical analysis of theory and practice, reports and presentations. As discussed above, portfolio work also provides an invaluable self-compiled reference resource and starting point for additional learning for the student as they progress into professional practice. Whilst the output of work-based learning may form the basis for assessment, Workplace Mentors will not be expected to play a role in the evaluation of work submitted to Robert Gordon University for summative assessment purposes.

### **Computer Aided Assessment**

Computer-assisted assessment packages integrated into the VLE may be used for formative and/or summative assessment, to enhance student engagement and increase the speed of feedback.

### **Unseen Exams**

Unseen exams may be used to assess students' base of knowledge and understanding.

### **Individual Project**

Projects are used in later stages as a learning vehicle and assessment process which allows students to tackle more complex problems that often require the integration of knowledge and understanding, and intellectual skills from a variety of subject areas. As part of achieving an honours classification students will undertake a Capstone Project which is an independent piece of research relating to a workplace topic relevant to the subject of Business and Management. The findings from the project should shape change in the student's place of employment enhancing the business operation.

### **Assessment Types**

Many modules use a combination of assessment types that integrate modes of assessment in order to balance the types of activity and purposes of assessment, such as formative and summative.

Where there are a number of modules that cover allied subject material, integrated assessment may be used to facilitate students to exhibit competence and achievement across a number of different themes.

At all Stages, synoptic assessments embedded into projects and other practical assignments are used to encourage students to combine elements of their learning from different parts of the course and to show their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a set of topics or a subject area.

A student's Honours Classification is based solely on performance in Stage 4 of the course.

## The Assessment of Student Work

The University has developed a Grading Scheme for assessment purposes, details of which may be accessed at:

<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/academicregulations>

It is important to note that all grades indicated to students during the course of the academic session are provisional until confirmed by an Assessment Board. The Board consists of academic staff involved in course delivery as well as External Examiners, and a final decision is confirmed on the performance of every student for each module undertaken by them and any eligibility for an award. This is subsequently confirmed to each student in a published transcript, and may be accessed electronically on the Student Portal.

Any potential barriers to students with disabilities or specific needs are assessed by the School's Disability Coordinator who liaises with the Dyslexia and Disability Service and appropriate teaching staff to ensure that such students are not disadvantaged during an assessment. In the case of examinations, students must register by a specified deadline date to have specific examination requirements considered.

## SUPPORT FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The University provides a number of means of supporting teaching and learning:

- Student and mentor induction sessions
- An ongoing scheme of personal/pastoral support for students
- Ongoing liaison with mentors
- An extensive programme of student study skills delivered through the *Library* and the *Study Skills and Access Unit*
- An extensive library of learning resources
- Close collaboration with the student's employer and with industry and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- A dedicated VLE - *CampusMoodle*, <http://campusmoodle.rgu.ac.uk/>
- A commitment to knowledge exchange and technology transfer through focused research activity, which contributes to the critical underpinning for all taught courses
- On-campus activities in the state-of-the-art, purpose-built facilities and buildings

In addition to this, students can access study support material from the Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access (DELTA). This is the central department that supports the Schools in implementing the University's strategic goals in teaching and learning, extending access and the student experience. Further information can be found at: <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/delta>.

Frequent informal feedback is provided to students through regular contact with academic staff and Workplace Mentors. Feedback is provided on all assessed work normally within 20 working days of submission of the work.

Provisional grades are made available electronically with final grades available electronically via the Student Portal following ratification by the Assessment Board.

## MONITORING OF QUALITY AND STANDARDS

The University employs several mechanisms for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching, learning and assessment, including:

- *Annual Course/Programme Appraisals* are prepared for each course and reviewed and approved by Course/Programme Management
- Course Management Teams and School Academic Boards which consider, amongst other things, feedback generated from student questionnaires
- *Institution-Led Subject Review*, involving external panel members, on a six-yearly basis to formally review its major subject provision, followed by a three year interim review to monitor progress against actions/issues raised through the review process;
- *External Examiner Annual Reports*
- Ongoing liaison with industrial/professional liaison groups

Formal Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards:

- Staff/Student Liaison Committees, or equivalent
- Course/Programme Management Teams
- School Academic Boards
- Assessment Boards
- Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and associated Sub-Committees

Annual Course Appraisals are reviewed and approved by the Course Management Team and the School Academic Board which meet at least once per semester. The Course Management Team considers teaching and learning issues arising from feedback generated by External Examiner Annual Reports, staff/student engagement/partnership liaison, and Student Experience Questionnaires.

## FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

The University and RGU:Union work in partnership to create an environment which stimulates:

- the participation of students, by empowering them to proactively provide views and opinions
- a supportive learning community where students and staff engage in meaningful dialogue
- the engagement of students in the design of solutions and enhancements

This approach is underpinned by the Student Partnership Agreement which promotes the ethos of partnership at all levels of the University. Further information can be found at the Student Representation and Partnership CampusMoodle Area:

[www.rgu.ac.uk/studentpartnership](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/studentpartnership).

There are a variety of opportunities for students to provide feedback to the University, and to become actively involved in shaping their learning experience. These opportunities are integral to the University's approach to the quality assurance and enhancement of teaching and learning, and the holistic student experience. Mechanisms through which students are engaged and supported are:

- participation in Student Experience Questionnaires (SEQ) and the National Student Survey (NSS)



- staff/student liaison arrangements at course/programme level
- support for Student Representatives
- student representation on Institution-Led Subject Review Panels and Validations
- student representation on key University committees
- Annual meetings of the Principal with Student Representatives.

In addition, there is regular collaboration and engagement with officers of the Student Union. More detailed information on student engagement may be found at the *Student Involvement* website at: [www.rgu.ac.uk/studentinvolve](http://www.rgu.ac.uk/studentinvolve).

The course cohort will be offered the opportunity to nominate a student representative. Student School Officers take part in the School Academic Board where they can contribute to discussions. Students can raise issues with the Course Leader who will discuss concerns and recommend or action solutions as appropriate.

### NOTE

This document constitutes one of two course documents that should be read together:

**Course Specification: Core Award Data**

**Course Specification: Student Learning Experience**

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In compiling this information the University has taken every care to be as accurate as possible, though it must be read as subject to change at any time and without notice. The University reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of courses, to discontinue, merge or combine courses, and to introduce new courses.

