

Plymouth University

Faculty of Business

Plymouth Graduate School of Management

Programme Specification

Master of Business Administration
3070

Final Approval Version
March 2015

1. Master of Business Administration

The programme offers one core award with the option of subject specialism pathways, resulting in the following awards being available:

Final Award titles	Master of Business Administration
	Pathway titles:
	Master of Business Administration (Global Supply Chain Management)
	Master of Business Administration (International Strategic Management)
	Master of Business Administration (Entrepreneurship)
	Master of Business Administration (Wine and Spirits Management)
	Master of Business Administration (Managerial Psychology)
	Master of Business Administration (Finance)
	Master of Business Administration (Accounting)
	Master of Business Administration (Marketing)
	Master of Business Administration (Human Resource Management)
	Master of Business Administration (Economics)
	Master of Business Administration (Operations Management)
Master of Business Administration (Information Management)	

Level 7 Intermediate award title(s) **NA**

UCAS code

JACS code N100

2. **Awarding Institution:** Plymouth University

Teaching institution(s): **Plymouth University**

3. **Accrediting body(ies)** **NA**

Summary of specific conditions/regulations

Date of re-accreditation

4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

The MBA top-up award has been offered by Plymouth University for several years. As a 'top-up' programme, it is designed specifically for students already holding 120 level 7 credits in business or management (e.g. holders of postgraduate diplomas), allowing them to fast-track their studies to gain a full MBA award. Key distinctive features are as follows:

- Assessment is project-based with students undertaking a dissertation under the supervision of an academic with expertise in the chosen subject area.
- The programme may be studied through distance learning and support is normally provided through regular online supervisory meetings. Learning support for the programme will be provided through the Plymouth University DLE, incorporating a variety of digital learning resources and activities (e.g. discussion groups).
- The programme can be studied from any location in the UK or worldwide, with no necessity to travel to Plymouth.
- Students studying at distance will have full access to Plymouth University's e-library.
- The programme is highly flexible, offering three start dates: September, January and March. Submission is scheduled a year later but the flexible delivery mode allows students to study at their own pace, meaning that it may be possible to submit within a shorter time-frame.
- Named pathways are available for students submitting dissertations in a range of subject areas.

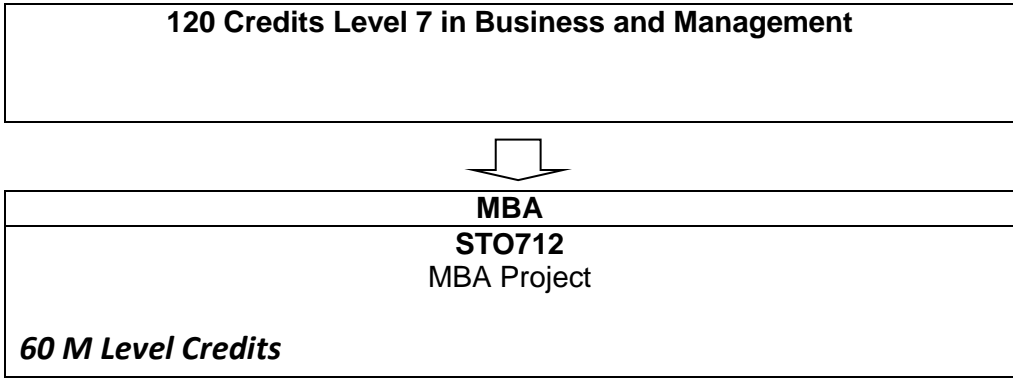
5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)

Masters Degrees in Business and Management (2007)

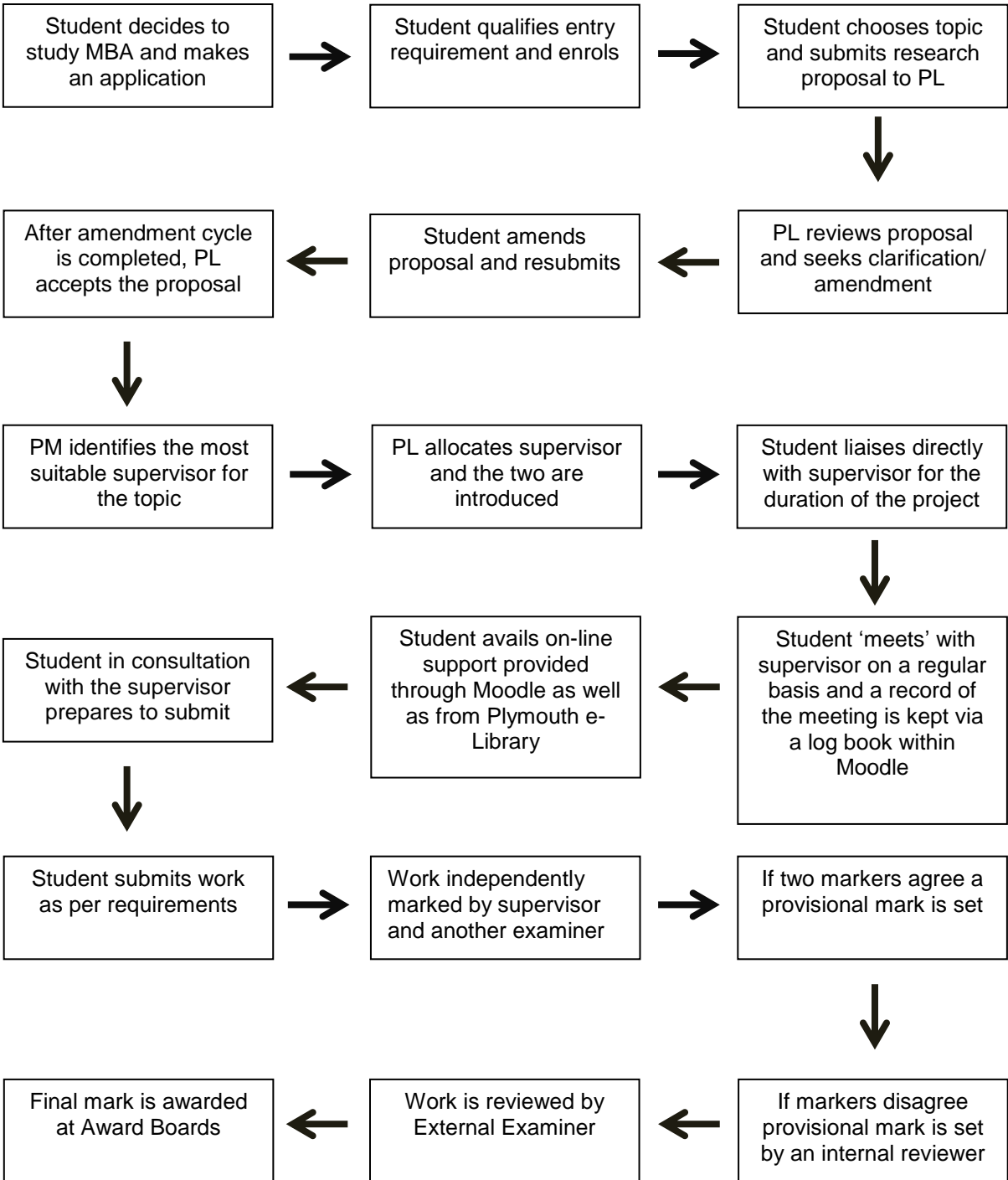
General Business and Management (2007)

6. Programme Structure

Students progress or articulate to the programme following successful completion of 120 level 7 credits in business and management (equivalent to a Postgraduate Diploma). They are then required to undertake a single 60 credit Level-7 dissertation under the supervision of a qualified academic with an appropriate level of expertise in the subject area of the dissertation. The programme consists of a single module: STO712.



The full process of studying for the MBA top-up is outlined below:



Indicative schedules for students joining the programme at the three different start dates are provided below:

Indicative Schedule (*actual dates will vary, for illustration only*)

Batch	September 2014	January 2015	March 2015
Commencement date	22 Sept 2014	12 Jan 2015	16 Mar 2015
Deadline for submitting final revised proposal	31 Oct 2014	13 Feb 2015	24 April 2015
Supervisor allocated by	28 Nov 2014	13 Mar 2015	22 May 2015
Submission deadline	17 Sept 2015	7 Jan 2016	10 Mar 2016

The programme has no classroom teaching which is why there is no need for students to visit Plymouth. However the supervisor and student may wish to arrange face-to-face supervision meetings in Plymouth if appropriate. Students may also access University facilities / resources during visits to support their studies. Any visits to Plymouth, however, would be subject to immigration/ visa status. A log-book system is employed to monitor student progress and ensure that appropriate levels of contact between student and supervisor are maintained.

7. Programme Aims

The broad aim of the programme is to build on prior level 7 learning to develop in managers and potential managers an ability to:

- apply their knowledge and understanding of business and management in a complex and changing environment in order to
- develop a research-based study to investigate a live, complex business or management issue or conduct a critical theoretical study on a current business or management problem.

For Pathway Awards:

- to apply knowledge and understanding of the specific pathway subject area in a complex and changing environment in order to
- develop a research-based study to investigate a live, complex business or management issue or conduct a critical theoretical study on a current business or management problem relevant to the pathway subject area.

8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

8.1. Knowledge and understanding

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

- 1) a depth of knowledge and understanding of how contextual forces impact upon organisations and management;
- 2) knowledge and understanding of appropriate research methodological approach, data collection techniques and analysis methods;

8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

- 1) skills of critical thinking, reviewing and critically analysis of relevant literature supported through evidence
- 2) an ability to demonstrate a strategic focus in evaluating research evidence

8.3. Key and transferable skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed the ability to:

- 1) conduct research in accordance with the ethical requirements of best practice ;
- 2) communicate complex information clearly and develop coherent conclusions and recommendations;

8.4. Employment related skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

- 1) an ability to evaluate alternative solutions to problems and develop persuasive arguments, recommendations and solutions
- 2) an ability to reflect on business and management practice ;

8.5. Practical skills

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

- 1) an ability to work independently to design and manage a project and meet objectives in the given timeframes ;
- 2) an ability to apply research processes and findings in a practical context and develop original problem solving skills;

9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements

All applicants must have GCSE (or equivalent) Maths and English at Grade C or above.

Entry Requirements for Master of Business Administration (including pathways)	
Level 7 Credits	Achievement of a minimum 120 M Level 7 credits or equivalent in taught Management and Business subjects (for example, BTEC Level 7 Diploma; Postgraduate Diploma in Management) including adequate coverage of

	<p>research methods. Qualifications, module content and academic performance will be reviewed by the Programme Manager and where necessary, an interview may be conducted in order to establish whether entry to the programme is permitted. In such cases, the Programme Manager's decision will be final.</p> <p>In order to pursue a named pathway award, at least 20 credits (or equivalent) of the qualifying 120 level 7 credits must be in a subject area appropriate to the pathway award title. Further, the topic of the MBA Project must be in a subject area appropriate to the pathway award title.</p>
Language Requirements	<p>Candidates will be required to be competent in English. Candidates whose first language is not English require IELTS 6.5 (with a minimum of 5.5 in each element) or equivalent in a secure English language test. If the candidate's English language does not meet the above standard, they will be given the opportunity to complete one of the University's pre-sessional English language courses.</p>
Work experience	<p>Work experience of 2 years or more is preferred, but is not essential for applicants who are otherwise suitably qualified.</p>

10. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards

Not applicable

11. Exceptions to Regulations

Not applicable

12. Transitional Arrangements

Students already enrolled on the MBA programme may opt for a pathway award title if they meet the requirements outlined above.

13. Mapping and Appendices:

13.1 ILO's against Modules Mapping

Programme Intended Learning Outcomes Map		MBA Project STO712
8.1 Knowledge and Understanding		
8.1.1	a depth of knowledge and understanding of how contextual forces impact upon organisations and management;	X
8.1.2	knowledge and understanding of appropriate research methodological approach, data collection techniques and analysis methods;	X
8.2 Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
8.2.1	skills of critical thinking, reviewing and critically analysis of relevant literature supported through evidence	X
8.2.2	an ability to demonstrate a strategic focus in critically evaluating research evidence;	X
8.3 Key and Transferrable Skills		
8.3.1	conduct research in accordance with the ethical requirements of best practice ;	X
8.3.2	communicate complex information clearly and develop coherent conclusions and recommendations;	X
8.4 Employment Related Skills and continuing professional development		
8.4.1	an ability to evaluate alternative solutions to problems and develop persuasive arguments, recommendations and solutions	X
8.4.2	an ability to reflect on business and management practice ;	X
8.5 Practical Skills		
8.5.1	an ability to work independently to design and manage a research project and meet objectives in the given timeframes ;	X
8.5.2	an ability to apply research processes and findings in a practical context and develop original problem solving skills;	X

13.2. Assessment against Modules Mapping

Assessment Method	MBA Project: STO712
Individual Project	X

13.3. Skills against Modules Mapping

Skills	MBA Project STO712
Report Writing	X
Project Plan/ Management	X
Research Skills	X
IT/Digital Literacy	X
Time management	X
Evaluation Techniques	X
Data Analysis	X
Data Interpretation	X
Data/ Information collection	X
Networking	X
Effective communication and persuasion	X

13.4. Appendices

Appendix One – Programme Relevant QAA and FHEQ Descriptors

The QAA and FHEQ level descriptors that are relevant for a specialist master's degree in business management are outlined below.

QAA Benchmark Standards demonstrated during the programme:

- a systematic understanding of relevant knowledge about organisations, their external context and how they are managed
- application of relevant knowledge to a range of complex situations taking account of its relationship and interaction with other areas of the business or organisation
- a critical awareness of current issues in business and management which is informed by leading edge research and practice in the field
- an understanding of appropriate techniques sufficient to allow detailed investigation into relevant business and management issues
- creativity in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to develop and interpret knowledge in business and management
- ability to acquire and analyse data and information, to evaluate their relevance and validity, and to synthesise a range of information in the context of new situations
- conceptual understanding that enables the student to:
 - evaluate the rigour and validity of published research and assess its relevance to new situations
 - extrapolate from existing research and scholarship to identify new or revised approaches to practice

- ability to conduct research into business and management issues that requires familiarity with a range of business data, research sources and appropriate methodologies, and for such to inform the overall learning process
- ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, using a range of media
- operate effectively in a variety of team roles and take leadership roles, where appropriate.

QAA Benchmark Standards graduates should be able to demonstrate once in professional practice

- consistently apply their knowledge and subject-specific and wider intellectual skills
- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to a range of audiences
- be proactive in recognising the need for change and have the ability to manage change
- be adaptable, and show originality, insight, and critical and reflective abilities which can all be brought to bear upon problem situations
- make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations
- evaluate and integrate theory and practice in a wide range of situations
- be self-directed and able to act autonomously in planning and implementing projects at professional levels
- take responsibility for continuing to develop their own knowledge and skills.

FHEQ descriptors for a higher education qualification at

The descriptor provided for this level of the framework is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 7 qualifications, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas. Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgments in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Appendix Two – University Regulations

Available at: <https://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/acregsc/acadregs/intranet.htm>