

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	BA/BSc Honours Commercial Studies The BA/BSc Commercial Studies is a BA/BSc degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA first cycle degree or diploma compatible.
Name and level of intermediate awards:	BA/BSc Commercial Studies Diploma of Higher Education in Commercial Studies Certificate of Higher Education in Commercial Studies
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Teaching Institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	London
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Mode, length of study and normal starting month:	Three years full time. Four years full time if including one year international or one year professional experience. Exit award; not recruited to; internal transfers only.
<u>QAA subject benchmarking group(s):</u>	QAA benchmarks in General Business Management (2015) qaa.ac.uk/honours-degree-subjects
Professional statutory or regulatory body:	
Date of course validation/review:	March 2015
Date of programme specification approval:	July 2015
Valid for cohorts :	From 2016/17
Course Leader	Anthony Boyt
UCAS code and URL:	Exit award; not recruited to; internal transfers only.

What are the minimum entry requirements for the course?

There are standard minimum [entry requirements](#) for all undergraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information.

westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-to-apply

For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements.

More information can be found here: westminster.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/how-to-apply

Aims of the course

This course is designed to provide an undergraduate business education, focusing on the knowledge, skills and competences required for graduates to function in business, or to acquire the skills appropriate to self-employment.

The Course aims to:

- provide students who have followed, for whatever reason, a non-standard but predominantly business related programme with an exit qualification which fully recognises the merit of their work.
- provide a coherent study of a sector of business (students will transfer to a non-standard route but one which closely resembles the course scheme of the degree they have left and which is agreed and approved as coherent by the Course Leader).
- develop the knowledge, skills and capabilities you require to respond proactively and creatively to contemporary business issues and the challenges of the global business environment;
- develop your intellectual, professional attributes and transferable skills such as communication, problem-solving abilities, ethical reasoning skills, and language abilities that will enable you to gain employment;
- help you to develop the resilience to perform under pressure, to continue to strive towards a solution in adverse circumstances and to use feedback to find a way through to a successful outcome;
- equip you with a critical understanding of global diversity in business practice, culture, social responsibility and ethics.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These are threshold statements of achievement; the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

- The overall **knowledge and understanding** of how businesses operate that you will gain from your course (KU).

- **Professional and personal practice learning outcomes** are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course(PPP)
- **Key transferable skills** that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)
- **Graduate attributes** are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA).

How will you learn?

To improve student experience the BA/BSc Commercial Studies emphasises *active* student learning through seminars, workshops, problem-based and blended learning designed to engage your interest and to promote your learning. You will be encouraged to work in groups with other students (we often call these 'learning sets') during seminars and for any non-assessed purpose, including revision and examination preparation. This gives you the opportunity to learn from one another and helps you to value the views of others and to learn to give and receive constructive feedback.

Course material will be provided electronically through the virtual learning environment platform (Blackboard) which means you can access learning material when and where you want. Blackboard also allows you to communicate with your group members and your module leader through wikis and blogs.

Many modules use problem based learning. Working in groups, you identify what you need to know, what you already know, and how and where to access new information that may lead to a solution of the problem. This helps you to develop flexibility, knowledge, effective problem solving skills, self-directed learning, collaboration skills and intrinsic motivation.

We use a blended learning approach which combines the best of traditional face to face teaching methods such as seminars with the use of on-line resources such as videos, tests and quizzes to improve your learning experience. Blended-learning is used by all leading universities world-wide as it enables you to:

- have a degree of flexibility regarding when you study
- become an independent learner
- clarify confusing topics by reviewing videos of topics (as many times as required)
- revise using multi-media resources and not just your own notes

Teaching will be informed by our research so giving you the benefit of the knowledge of current theories and, where appropriate, their practical application.

How will you be assessed?

Assessment is an integral part of your learning process. It is designed to promote initiative and creativity, critical thinking, structure of coherent arguments, evaluation, research and analysis, professional communication skills, effective group work, personal reflection, time-management, the ability to meet deadlines, and ability to work under pressure. It is not merely about giving and receiving a mark: rather to ensure that your competences and abilities in business are enhanced.

Every module incorporates 'formative assessment' which you are expected to complete as it provides you with useful feedback so you can reflect on your progress and act on the feedback to prepare for the assessments that count. Formative assessments are important

to you as they help you to identify ways in which you can improve and areas of strength to be developed further.

Summative assessment will measure your learning and achievement. You can expect to be assessed on the learning outcomes of modules on your course through coursework in the form of essays, reports, presentations, case studies as well as time-constrained in-class tests and exams. Weightings for each assessment element will vary to reflect the nature and level of the module.

Exams develop your ability to work under pressure and will be an advantage to you in preparing you for attempting subsequent professional body examinations so you must complete them. Exams will normally be unseen and involve analysis and not merely repeating factual information. Papers may include multiple choice, short answer, essay or data handling sections. Some may use a seen case study. This allows you to demonstrate your learning in a variety of ways.

Our employers tell us that the ability to work effectively as part of a team is an essential skill which they expect graduates to have. In relation to your degree, assessed group work is useful to you as it:

- helps you to become more self-aware, self-critical and self-analytical
- improves the quality of your work by benefiting from the integration of diverse perspectives
- allows you to tackle tasks of greater complexity or carry out tasks in greater depth or breadth than would be the case if you had tackled it on your own

Consequently, assessed group work has been incorporated where it reflects the working practice in that professional area. However, there will be group assessment at level 6 only in the business simulation of the module BCAR600 Global Strategic Management.

Module documents explain the assessment criteria that are used to assess how well you have achieved the module learning outcomes. This means that you will know, in advance, what is required for success. The feedback you receive on your assessments relates to these criteria so that you are able to understand how the mark awarded was determined.

In each year of your Course, you will complete 'synoptic' assessments which will encourage you to appreciate and apply the full breadth and depth of your knowledge by drawing connections between what you have learnt on different modules. At Level 4, in BCAR400 Global Business Environment, you will draw together your knowledge to see the bigger picture of how businesses operate locally and globally. At Level 5, in BHRM500 HRM Essentials, you will draw together, and reflect on, your learning and skill development on the course and in your life experience. At Level 6, in BCAR600 Global Strategic Management, you will integrate and apply your accumulated knowledge from all areas of your degree through a business simulation.

Employment and further study opportunities

University of Westminster graduates will be able to demonstrate the following five Graduate Attributes:

- Critical and creative thinkers
- Literate and effective communicator
- Entrepreneurial and forward looking
- Global in outlook and engaged in diverse communities
- Social, ethically and environmentally aware

University of Westminster courses capitalise on the benefits that London as a global city and as a major cosmopolitan creative, intellectual and technology hub has to offer for the learning environment and experience of our students.

Businesses increasingly operate with teams of specialists, so require people who can communicate effectively and can interact effectively within a team recognising and supporting leadership, being proactive in leadership, negotiating, and managing conflict. Businesses also rely on people who can work independently and remotely, using technology to overcome the traditional constraints of location, time and national boundaries. As a graduate of the BA/BSc Commercial Studies degree you will be well equipped to meet these challenges.

Employers of our graduates expect you to have skills of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis; effective communication using varied technology and media; quantitative aptitude and effective problem solving; reflective, adaptive and collaborative learning; motivation and initiative. Employability and enterprise are strongly embedded in the core modules.

We provide the opportunity for all students to undertake an optional one-year work placement to add value to the student experience. You will be allocated a Personal & Professional Development Tutor (PPDT) in your first year who will not only provide tutorial guidance from the start of your degree but will work with you to identify, develop and articulate your employability skills in your Personal Development Plan which will be closely linked to activities in core modules. The aim is to help you to gain an internship or work placement and future graduate employment. There is also a designated team of advisors who have effective links with industry and will support you to find a relevant placement.

You will also have the opportunity to spend a year studying at one of our overseas partner Universities. This is not only an exciting experience for you; it helps you to develop a global outlook which is valued by most employers.

Past graduates have found successful employment in a variety of fields as: assistant accountant, business operations assistant, web developer, HR administrator, store manager. A number of graduates set up their own businesses.

Some students progress to further study on graduation: either taking professional qualifications; or proceed to a Masters degree in a relevant discipline.

Course structure

The BA/BSc (Hons) Commercial Studies does not have a specific course structure as students are drawn from any of the other named courses in the WBS undergraduate portfolio and at different entry levels. The programme of study is agreed prior to entry with the Course Leader; to ensure coherence students admitted to the BA/BSc (Hons) Commercial Studies are expected to effectively continue with the programme of study of their previous course. Adherence to the agreed programme of study (subject to pre-requisite issues) is a requirement for the award of the degree. A record of the agreed programme is kept in the student's file, with a copy held by the Commercial Studies Course Leader who is required to provide written permission for any deviations from this programme of study, for whatever reason.

Students transferring onto the award will bring with them a complete record of all modules attempted, together with the relevant outcomes. This complete record will be used in calculating the level of any award.

Professional Body Accreditation or other external references

The skills strategy for the WBS UG Portfolio from which the **BA/BSc Commercial Studies** course draws modules and learning outcomes has drawn upon the key national documents: QAA (2001) A Framework for HE Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; QAA (2015) Subject benchmarks in General Business Management; and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) standards for Business Accreditation (2013). When embedding good practice in modules, module teams have used the SEEC (2010) Credit Level Descriptors for Further and Higher Education as a reference point. The requirements of relevant professional bodies for recognition and exemptions have influenced the curriculum and assessment of the specialist modules.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations

How will you be supported in your studies?

Course Management

The **BA (Hons) Commercial Studies** degree has a designated Course Leader whom you will meet during your first week and who is available for consultation during weekly office hours throughout the year or by appointment. You take modules, normally in common with students from your course, which each have a Module Leader who is responsible for the smooth running of that module. Module Leaders are usually available during term-time during their office hours or by appointment. The degree is one of a number offered by Westminster Business School and you will be part of a vibrant academic community with access to a full programme of additional seminars and social events organised by our student societies. At all levels of your university study you will have a Personal and Professional Development Tutor who will help and guide you through the complexities of life at University.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Faculty Registry Office. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Your course has a designated course leader, who provides advice on course academic enquiries. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where you access your course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students.

Learning Support

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, you have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). You can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. You can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught in Westminster Business School. You can also securely connect your own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student Affairs department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support you during your time at the University.

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2015. The panel included internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university and a

representative from industry. This helps to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers.

The course is also monitored each year by the Faculty to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the outcomes from Course Committees, evidence of student progression and achievement and the reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. Each Faculty puts in to place an action plan. This may for example include making changes on the way the module is taught, assessed or even how the course is structured in order to improve the course, in such cases an approval process is in place.

A Course review takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with review panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years e.g. from Course Committees is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through Course Committees students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Student representatives are elected to Committee to expressly represent the views of their peer. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the student representatives.
- Each Faculty also has its own Faculty Student Forum with student representatives; this enables wider discussions across the Faculty. Student representatives are also represented on key Faculty and university committees.
- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.
- The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which seeks the opinions of students about their course and University experience. Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

Please note: This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks, which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.

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