

A photograph of the Earth from space, showing the curvature of the planet and city lights at night, with a bright sun or star in the upper left corner.

# Subject Benchmark Statement: Master's Degrees in Business and Management

## The Basics

This document is a summary of the Subject Benchmark Statement for master's degrees in Business and Management. It is specifically designed to provide a short and accessible overview of the main statement for students, employers and academics. It is not intended to replace or alter the Subject Benchmark Statement, which should be referred to in the design and approval of courses and when any further detail is required.

Subject Benchmark Statements are an established part of the quality assurance arrangements in UK higher education as non-regulatory, sector-owned reference points, developed and written by academic communities on behalf of their subject. Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the benchmark academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their course or programme.

Subject Benchmark Statements are presented in four sections. The first section outlines the contextual information - providing the operational landscape, and boundaries, of subject discipline. This includes consideration of the ways in which the discipline addresses wider social goals specifically in relation to: equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); the requirements of disabled students; education for sustainable development (ESD); and, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Section 2 covers distinctive features of the course, including curriculum design, partnership arrangements, flexibility of delivery, progression and ongoing monitoring processes. The third section explains any features relevant to teaching, learning and assessment activities for the subject. The final section describes the benchmark standards of achievement reached by all graduates with a master's degree in the subject.



## Why study a degree in Business and Management?

This Subject Benchmark Statement covers all types of master's degrees in Business and Management, including both specialist and generalist degrees for a range of participants, from new graduates to those with considerable work experience (see the Typology on page 3 of the full Subject Benchmark Statement for Master's Degrees in Business and Management).

A master's course in Business and Management enables students either to focus on a particular aspect of business and management in which they have prior knowledge or experience through previous study or employment, or to focus on a particular subject area or field of business and management in greater depth than they have encountered in previous study or employment. It has a range of purposes that might include one or more of the following: to allow students to develop an advanced and critical understanding of organisations and their management, cultures and structures, as well as wider economic, environmental and social contexts; to instil a deep understanding of responsible leadership; to provide preparation for, and/or further development in, a career in business and management, and assist students in taking effective roles within organisations; to develop relevant skills and attributes which enable individuals to become more specialised, to enhance their employability and equip them to become impactful leaders, global and inclusive citizens, as well as reflective lifelong learners; to enable students to undertake a research project, conduct research and undertake training in research methods linked to a field of business and management; to add value to first (or bachelor's) degrees by educating individuals as managers, leaders and business specialists, and thus to improve the quality of management as a profession; to develop an ability to apply knowledge and understanding of business and management to complex or difficult issues - both systematically and creatively - to improve business and management practice, including within an international context.

Business and Management degree courses are characterised by their diversity in terms of content, interdisciplinarity and range of perspectives. They are broad in scope and give an insight into a wide range of business areas and types of organisations. Business and Management courses are designed with the interdisciplinary nature of the subject in mind and reflect the dynamic and constantly evolving subject. Positive impact on the widest variety of stakeholders is built into courses by developing an all-encompassing approach to responsible management practice with reference to the cross-cutting themes of equality, diversity and inclusion (page 8 of the full Statement) and Education for Sustainable Development (page 11 of the full Statement).



## What are the main teaching and learning approaches in Business and Management?

Teaching, learning and assessment in postgraduate Business and Management courses integrate theory and practice by a variety of means according to the mode of learning and the intended learning outcomes. Learning and teaching methods and situations are appropriate and supportive, inclusive in design and engage students. They may include a range of learning modes (including but not limited to in-person, digital, blended, block release, hybrid, hyflex, experiential, full-time, part-time, synchronous and asynchronous) and make good use of supporting technology to aid student learning. They can provide inputs to student learning from practising managers, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders through curriculum co-creation and development, guest lectures and in supporting assessment.

Learning activities in business and management typically include some combination of: lectures, seminars, workshops, field work, authentic or experiential learning opportunities, work-based learning, employer or organisation-based case studies, business-relevant or 'real world' projects, guided learning, study trips, simulations, practical activities, virtual forums, business mentoring, and business start-up. The inclusion of a capstone project is a characteristic of master's courses in Business and Management.



## How are students assessed?

The assessment of Business and Management courses includes a mix of methods that are inclusive and accessible to disabled students and students from varying educational and cultural backgrounds within different learning situations. The procedures used for assessment cover the subject knowledge (breadth and depth), abilities and skills developed through the degree course, and will depend on the intended learning outcomes of each course.

Assessments include, but are not limited to: coursework reports, reviews and essays, examinations (closed and open book), presentations, dissertations and projects, posters, discussion boards, creation of new media content (such as infographics, videos, dashboards), learning journals, reflections, simulations, practical activities and portfolios. Authentic assessments typically feature highly in Business and Management courses. Consideration of student workload is factored into the design of assessments.



## Benchmark Standards

The full Subject Benchmark Statement sets out the minimum threshold standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded a master's degree in Business and Management. Demonstrating these standards over time will show that a student has achieved the range of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of postgraduates on Business and Management courses.

Many students will perform better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to QAA's [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). This Standard sets out the descriptor for a qualification at Level 7 on the FHEQ and SCQF Level 11 on the FQHEIS: Master's degree. It can be used as a reference point for other qualifications at FHEQ Level 7/ SCQF Level 11 on the FQHEIS, including postgraduate certifications and postgraduate diplomas.

The full statement was developed by subject experts drawn from across the sector. Details of the Advisory Group can be found on **page 28** of the full Statement.

### Read the full Subject Benchmark Statement

The [full Subject Benchmark Statement](#) is available on the QAA website.



Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as an expert quality body on behalf of the higher education sector.

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