

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

### Course record information

|   |  |
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| Name and level of final award:                      | MBA<br>The Master of Business Administration is a Masters degree that is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible.  |
| Name and level of intermediate awards:              | Postgraduate Diploma<br>Postgraduate Certificate   |
| Awarding body/institution:                          | University of Westminster  |
| Teaching Institution:                               | University of Westminster  |
| Status of awarding body/institution:                | Recognised Body  |
| Location of delivery:                               | Marylebone Campus  |
| Language of delivery and assessment:                | English  |
| Mode, length of study and normal starting month:    | One year full time, two years part time mixed, block mode, and blended learning. September start.  |
| <a href="#">QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</a> : | QAA Subject Benchmark Statement<br>Master's Degrees in Business and Management<br>June 2015<br><a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-Business-and%20Management-15.pdf">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-Business-and%20Management-15.pdf</a> |
| Professional statutory or regulatory body:          | Association of MBAs  |
| Date of course validation/review:                   | 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2017  |
| Date of programme specification approval:           | 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2017  |
| Valid for cohorts:                                  | From 2017/18   |
| Course Leader:                                      | Dr Kellie Vincent (MBA Director)<br>Mr Simon Healeas (MBA Deputy Director)   |
| Course URL:   | <a href="http://www.westminster.ac.uk/mba">http://www.westminster.ac.uk/mba</a>  |

Westminster Course Code:

JACS code: N100

UKPASS code:

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### **Admissions requirements**

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

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/postgraduate/how-to-apply](http://westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply)

### **Aims of the course**

MBA has been designed to prepare professionals aspiring to become directors to work with, for and on Boards.

MBA graduates need to be able to work within an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world. Those able to demonstrate they can perform professionally as a Director in a variety of roles and organisational contexts accelerate their career opportunities.

The MBA builds from participants' existing professional bases using self-directed and experiential learning models. We incorporate action learning and working with host organisations using our dedicated MBA Boardroom Lab. This combination enables MBA graduates to demonstrate their ability to perform as a professional board member.

Within the Westminster MBA our philosophy is to develop an appreciation of the professional director as; leader, strategist, steward, change-agent, collaborator, investor, technology advocate, entrepreneur, innovator and mentor.

### **Employment and further study opportunities**

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

- Through the interaction with host organisations and an embedded culture of looking at global business and trends, contemporary organisational issues are included by default into the curriculum.

### Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement and are linked to the knowledge, understanding and skills that a student will have gained on successfully completing a course.

On completion of the programme you will appreciate what is required to perform as a professional board director having worked in an advisory capacity within a range of organisations. As a result you will have gained an understanding of your own competencies and capabilities and appreciate that professional directors must operate effectively as:

1. **A Leader** demonstrating effective and inspirational leadership able to direct, motivate and establish high performing teams and organisations. This requires possessing comprehensive self-knowledge, being aware of personal performance and preferences, and using feedback to enhance capability.
2. **A Strategist** able to analyse complex multi-disciplinary business problems from different perspectives using appropriate knowledge, theory and ideas gained on the programme to critically evaluate options including the implications of trade-offs and need to manage risk.
3. **A Steward** taking responsibility for financial, human and natural capital. This requires an advanced understanding of the nature of global business organisations, the national and global contexts in which they operate including their relationships with internal and external stakeholders and how they can be successfully managed in a sustainable and socially aware manner.
4. **A Mentor** demonstrating the capacity to assist others to perform at their peak.
5. **A Collaborator** demonstrating the communication, networking, team working ability and confidence needed to interact effectively with individuals and groups in business, managerial and board level contexts.
6. **An Investor** demonstrating the capacity to make sound investment and business decisions within a variety of organisational contexts and to achieve a range of objectives utilising organisational resources to best effect.
7. **A Change Agent** who, through understanding of managerial processes demonstrates practical ways to achieve change within a range of contexts using experience and reflections on past performance to quickly assess how to 'get things done' in what are often complex and messy organisational situations.
8. **A Technology Advocate** demonstrating awareness of contemporary issues and debates with regard to the use of technology within organisations and be able to devise ways to develop organisational resilience and ability to capitalise on rapidly changing technological capabilities.
9. **An Innovator** demonstrating adaptability, originality, insight, and critical and reflective abilities which can all be brought to bear upon problem-situations.
10. **An Entrepreneur** or indeed intrapreneur in spirit, demonstrating willingness to take calculated risks in order to creatively find innovative solutions and generate and grow value propositions.

### Knowledge and understanding

The programme is designed to help you develop knowledge and understanding required to:

- Strategically lead organisations in volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous global business environments.
- Work in a holistic manner breaking down organisational functional silos to improve the overall organisational performance.
- Demonstrate intellectual rigour, and sound and sustainable professional ethical values in your approach to working with, for and on Boards.

### Specific skills

The programme is designed to develop the following skills: namely to

- Appreciate the nature of Boardroom behaviour
- Demonstrate you can perform in the capacity of a member of a Shadow Advisory Board for a host organisation.
- Frame problems and propose strategies that demonstrate research-informed strategic management and leadership in relation to volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous global business environments.
- Reflect on personal performance and plan for personal development in order to enhance your career.

### Key transferable skills

- Solve complex or unstructured problems in a systematic way, informed by a range of relevant knowledge, tools and techniques
- Act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks in a professional or board level setting
- Apply interpersonal, group-working, collaboration and leadership skills to enhance performance.
- Communicate effectively and professionally with others at all levels.
- Lead and follow others in an organisational context for mutual benefit
- Make sound judgements with incomplete data and communicate conclusions clearly to a range of audiences.
- Demonstrate high personal effectiveness: critical self-awareness, self-reflection and self-management; time management; conflict resolution, displaying commercial acumen, the ability to continue to learn through reflection on practice and experience.

### Learning, teaching and assessment methods

#### Learning

The aims and outcomes of the programme relate to development of professional directors able to demonstrate that they can perform in practice. Rather than using a classroom we use a Boardroom for any campus based programme delivery. The programme is divided into three components:

- **Preparing for the Board** which provides starter knowledge, content, skills and competencies
- **Route to the board** provides a transformational pillar of support throughout the MBA and includes comprehensive action learning and research in a reflexive manner
- **Experiencing the Board** provides a highly experiential opportunity to work within four different contexts with four different host organisations and in four different roles. It is here where you can demonstrate your ability to perform as a director.

Given this structure, learning is self-directed and experiential in nature in order to enhance application of practice. Any organisation brings forward complex, multidimensional problems for which there is unlikely to be a simple solution that can be implemented by one person. These sorts of problems are at the essence of Masters level learning, and so the three

elements of the MBA are designed to help you gain the base skills, knowledge and competencies to understand the scope of business and organisational problems, reflect on and develop your own journey as leader and potential board member while experiencing real organisational contexts. During the period when you are 'Experiencing the Board' you will adopt the role of a CEO/ Marketing and Operations Director, Human Resources and Organisational Development Director, Finance and Resources Director and Marketing and Operations Director. This will be working with peers to form a Shadow Advisory Board for host organisations. This provides the experiential impetus for learning, supported by action learning sets. You will partake in four Board Experiences, each in a different type of organisation. The spectrum of contexts includes entrepreneurial, corporate, international and not for profit contexts. You will be required to reflect on all four contexts within the wider curriculum from a number of perspectives so you gain insight about which context and which role you prefer and perform at your best in.

Action learning is a central element of learning as is self-directed learning and learner autonomy. This is all supported by critical reflection and integrated learning with peers and mentors. This learning strategy is introduced at the beginning of the course within the Preparing for the Board set of modules, where you will undertake a series of tasks and 'starter content' to identify your learning plan for the rest of the course.

Time on campus will be spent in block-taught colloquiums with workshops, action learning sets, client meetings, board meetings and peer networking. Much of your time on campus will be spent in our MBA Board Lab.

Periods of online learning will prepare you both before and after the colloquiums and you will be expected to interact and participate in both synchronous and asynchronous interactive online seminars. A curated collection of comprehensive online learning resources are available for you to draw upon as required in order to aid your learning.

Knowledge will be gained in a variety of experiential and action learning approaches adopted rather than simply workshops and lectures. Learning spaces therefore include:

- **Block taught workshops** within Board Mindset, Board Roles and Decision-Making and Board Level Research and Consultancy 'modules'
- Individual **MBA mentor** supporting the ongoing action learning project and final reflection within Board Mindset and Action Learning for Professional Life
- **Blended learning** online and workshop based learning journeys to help cover required content and develop into the relevant 'Director' roles
- A **Master class series** is scheduled throughout the year in an accessible and flexible way both online synchronous and on campus. This is housed within the Board Mindset and Action Learning for Professional Life..
- **Shadow Advisory Board Experience** – working with an academic **coach** who helps you appreciate the context of the Board Experience. You will adopt a specific Board Director role and work with three peers to form a Shadow Board for a real host organisation. Your work here will be supported by subject expert **academic consultants**. Your work with the academic consultant includes a predetermined fixed amount of time plus 'bought in' **academic consultant** time. The 'bought in' time is designed to enable the Shadow Advisory Board to bid for additional consultancy support where it is needed via a specified process. This is more reflective of real word practice and also enables the development of client management skills and not just consultancy skills. In instances where a board member is not available and **academic consultant interim board member** will assist the remaining board. Both

online and a block delivered Board Colloquium 'week' will be used within these experiences.

Your total hours of effort, including class, group and private study should amount to no less than 1800 hours. As a participant on the MBA, each of you will come to the programme with different subject and work experience. The MBA is a broad based generic course and you will be studying a wide range of management and functional subjects. Some of these will relate to your previous studies or experience, others will be new to you and you will find the amount of time you need to study to achieve the required standard will vary.

## **Teaching**

We do not regard it as adequate to simply 'teach' business theory, rather you must experience it in practice. You must understand the practical implications and gain the ability to apply (and sometimes reject or modify) this theory in the workplace and get results, we therefore provide real host organisations and encourage you to complete action research within a live context. We also encourage you to fully utilise the comprehensive set of online resources we curate in order for you to select materials for use in your self-directed learning.

Development of leadership skills is critical, and we place a great emphasis on the need to learn from each other. We act as facilitators helping you develop these qualities and understanding. It is our role to stimulate and challenge.

Teaching strategies may include:

- Introductory workshops, practical sessions, critical review of knowledge related to chosen topics or themes, and core lectures
- Time spent within the MBA Boardroom, in host organisation and board meetings
- Online resource-based learning through directed and verifiable study
- Direct contact and teaching, by tutors/supervisors and managing work with academics acting as subject consultants
- Contact on a regular basis with your university-based tutor/mentor through face-to-face and/or e-mail and/or asynchronous discussion and/or other electronic means
- Action learning sets – or modifications there-of
- Use of diagnostic tools
- Short courses, conferences, other training and learning events relevant to your needs and negotiated as part of our programme
- Self-managed inquiry research and journal records

You will work with a range of academics on the programme who will be acting in the capacity of tutors, mentors, coaches and consultants, rarely as 'lecturers'.

## **Assessment**

A range of assessment formats is used to ensure you are assessed in your performance in relation to business and organisational issues in a variety of contexts. Assessments include both individual and group elements. Assessment strategies include:

- Reports, reflections, portfolio, action research proposals and reports, online time-limited tests, test banks, presentations and action plans.
- Negotiation of assessment artefacts according to the needs of the organisation and the professional development of the participant
- Evaluative accounts informed by Shadow Advisory Board documents and performance reports.
- As befits a programme at this level, considerable emphasis will be placed on independent research and study. We shall emphasise the development of

problem-solving and decision-making, and the ability to lead and also work as part of a team, and evidence of effective oral and written communication.

Participants are also expected to demonstrate numerical and quantitative capability.

## Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits in the academic year. Part time students normally complete the 180 credits in two academic years.

The programme consists of nine core modules, including one, Space for Risk, where you are encouraged to extend your boundaries by taking on things like a specialist learning experience, study with an international partner or work with a professional body. Any additional cost will be borne by the participant. This module is design to let you take risks and so does not carry a credit-value. Board Mindset, Board Roles and Decision Making and Board Level Research and Consultancy must be studied before proceeding onto other modules.

| Credit Level 7  |   |        |           |      |
|---|---|--------|-----------|------|
| Module code   | Module title                              | Status | UK credit | ECTS |
| Award of Postgraduate Certificate available   |   |        |           |      |
| 7LEAD016W   | Board Roles and Decision-Making           | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7LEAD017W   | Board Level Research and Consultancy      | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7LEAD018W   | Board Mindset                             | Core   | 30        | 15   |
| Award of Postgraduate Diploma available including all three of the above  |   |        |           |      |
| 7LEAD019W   | Board Experience: International Context   | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7LEAD020W   | Board Experience: Corporate Context       | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7LEAD021W   | Board Experience: Not for Profit Context  | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| 7LEAD022W   | Board Experience: Entrepreneurial Context | Core   | 20        | 10   |
| Award of Master of Business Administration available including all of the above   |   |        |           |      |
| 7LEAD023W   | Space for Risk                            | Core   | 0         | 0    |
| 7LEAD024W   | Action Learning for Professional Life     | Core   | 30        | 15   |
| Exceptional circumstances<br>Please note: <i>Only with the agreement of the Programme Director the following modules can be taken in order to replace a core module above in order to complete the full award and meet all programme learning outcomes.</i> |   |        |           |      |
| 7LEAD025W   | Independent Study                         | Option | 10        | 5    |
| 7LEAD026W   | Independent Investigation                 | Option | 20        | 10   |

Please note: Not all modules will necessarily be offered in any one semester.

An Independent Study and Independent investigation are included as options only in exceptional circumstances and with the full approval of the Programme Director. These are only to be used where specific extenuating circumstances which make it impossible a participant to complete the programme within their maximum registration period. Example situations may arise due to a module not being offered during a semester in order for a

participant to complete within their maximum registration period or to meet disability support requirements if physical attendance is not possible in a given situation.

## **Award**

To qualify for the award of MBA, a student must have:

- obtained a minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 including all the core modules in the programme, and satisfactorily completed the 0 credit Space for Risk module, in exceptional circumstances an Independent Study/Investigation may be used to meet the programme learning outcomes and replace a core module;
- attempted modules worth no more than 240 credits;

Note: A first attempt of any module will count as an attempt, and a re-attempt of any module that a student has failed will count as a further, separate attempt. Re-assessment following referral at the first sit will not count as a further separate attempt.

The University may award:

- a Masters Degree with Merit to a student whose marks average at least 60% across modules at Level 7.
- a Masters Degree with Distinction to a student whose marks average at least 70% across the modules at Level 7.

## **Course-specific regulation in relation to Accreditation of Prior Learning**

- The course does not offer accreditation of prior experiential learning
- The course only accepts prior certificated learning if the credits were awarded within an MBA accredited by AMBA, Equis, EPAS and/or AACSB. Any such credits may not exceed the equivalent of 20% of the total programme credits and the prior learning for which credit is granted must have been acquired no later than five years before enrolment on the MBA programme.

## **Professional Body Accreditation or other external references**

The MBA is accredited by the Association of MBAs. Details of AMBA accreditation and membership for students and alumni of AMBA programmes can be found at:

<http://www.mbaworld.com/>

The following University of Westminster documents have informed the structure and development of this course:

- *Essential Westminster* – an annually updated document of regulations, procedures, and policies as they apply to students
- *Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook* – definitive statement of the requirements for course validation, students' right in terms of consultation and annual monitoring



- *The Handbook of Academic Regulations* – definitive statement of regulations for the conduct of courses
- *Westminster 2020 Strategy*

The following external reference points have informed the development of the course:

- Quality Assurance Agency framework for Higher Education qualifications
- Quality Assurance Agency Code of Practice
- AMBA Accreditation Criteria
- Reports, white papers on HE Employer collaboration and workforce skills development needs including:
  - QAA (2010) Employer-responsive provision survey: reflective report
  - CBI (2009) Stronger Together: Business and universities in turbulent times. Report of the CBI HE taskforce
  - WEF (2016) The Future of Work
- Reports, white papers on the MBA Market including:
  - AMBA (2015) Application Trends Report
  - Carrington Crisp (2016) Tomorrows MBA Report

### **Academic regulations**

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at [westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations](http://westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations)

### **How will you be supported in your studies?**

#### **Course Management**

The MBA is managed by an MBA Director, Deputy Director and a team of Module Leaders and Academic Subject Consultants.

An MBA Advisory Board provides a fresh perspective on the development, relevancy and impact of curriculum for the Westminster MBA so that it reflects commercial and management needs. The role of the board does not extend to areas covered by academic decisions. Hence the terms of reference are to act in the capacity of advising on the strategic direction of the MBA. It has oversight on key aspects of MBA development such as accreditation, curriculum design, management practice, employability, student and alumni personal development and market positioning.

#### **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. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. 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 students access their 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, students 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<sup>1</sup> 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). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They 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 at their Faculty. Students can also securely connect their 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 students during their 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 1984. The current iteration was approved in 2017. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Students enrolled at Collaborative partners may have differing access due to licence agreements.

- 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 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey or PTES which helps us compare how we are doing with other institutions, to make changes that will improve what we do in future and to keep doing the things that you value.

**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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