

Business Studies by Distance Learning

This programme is no longer recruiting. Please refer to the programme specifications for BA (Hons) Business Management by distance learning programmes for Business distance learning programmes.

Final award	BA (Hons)
Intermediate awards available	Undergraduate Associate Certificate (un-named / generic), Undergraduate Certificate, Cert HE, Dip HE, Ordinary degree
UCAS code	N/A
Details of professional body accreditation	N/A
Relevant QAA Benchmark statements	General business and management
Date specification last updated	July 2011

Profile

The summary - UCAS programme profile

BANNER BOX:

BA (Hons) Business Studies by distance learning provides a flexible honours degree programme leading to a broad range of career options in Business.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- 200 UCAS tariff points or equivalent

Note that you can apply to start your studies at any time of the year. There are no set term times.

Entry to level 1 or the full programme

1. Students under the age of 21

Students under the age of 21 will be expected to meet the following requirements:

- 200 UCAS tariff points or equivalent or
- pass in a relevant Access course or International Foundation Programme.

In addition to the above, we require GCSE Maths grade C and English grade C or equivalents, unless competency is part of the qualification gained.

2. Mature students

We also welcome mature student applicants and those with relevant professional and vocational qualifications; these will be dealt with on an individual basis and may require an interview.

Mature students may study individual modules without the qualification requirements. Upon successful completion of two or more modules, they may then register on the full programme.

3. English language requirements

All students for whom English is not their first language must have an IELTS score of at least 6.0 or equivalent, with a minimum of 6.0 in both reading & writing (and a minimum of 5.0 in listening & speaking).

Entry on a modular basis

As stated above, mature students may study individual modules without meeting the entry requirements, and upon successful completion of two or more modules they may register on the full programme.

Entry to levels 2 or 3 and 'top-up' of existing credit

Students that apply to enter Year 2 or 3 of the programme may be admitted through normal Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) processes, or through an approved articulation agreement. Therefore, such applicants must be able to demonstrate and evidence that they have the required learning outcomes as listed in the modules for which they are seeking exemption. However, we are unable to accredit prior experiential (non-certificated) learning.

Technical requirements

To participate in the programme you need:

1. Regular access to a PC or Mac, be capable of running standard MS Office software (or equivalent) for producing word-processed documents, spreadsheets and presentations.
2. Reliable Internet access; at least a 56K modem connection, but broadband is highly recommended. For each module that you take, you will be expected to spend approximately 3-6 hours online per week, participating in discussions and accessing additional resources. (You may find it beneficial to spend more time online to investigate more fully any areas that are of particular interest to you.)
3. An Internet browser capable of running UEL Plus (UELPlus Vista edition 4), the platform used by UEL in delivering this programme. For further information, see UELPlus's tune-up page at:
http://www.webct.com/tuneup/viewpage?name=tuneup_browser_tuneup_information
4. Access to reliable email. (Email facilities are provided by UEL Plus, but additional email is recommended in case of any technical problems with UEL Plus.)
5. Access to a printer is recommended.

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

What is Business Studies?

Business Studies is a generic programme which investigates and develops knowledge and understanding of the broader business environment. A Business Studies degree is primarily concerned with the management of firms and how organisations operate and adapt to their external market environments. A Business Studies student will learn to understand how organisations work with their customers and markets, and will develop a broad and deep understanding about key management areas such as finance, people, operations, information and marketing within the context of the business environment. Concepts and techniques covered in the programme are relevant to four areas vital to any business. They are:

- the ability to produce output, either as a product or service;
- the reasons why consumers buy the product or service;
- the management of business resources; and,
- the impact of the external environment on the business.

Business Studies is therefore multi-disciplinary in nature and can lead to many possible careers. It is an ideal preparation for a career in any area of business and also in many other careers in the public and voluntary sectors.

BA (Hons) Business Studies by distance learning at UEL

Key features of this programme include:

- A broad-based degree preparing you for many careers
- Study at your own pace to develop your knowledge of Business and improve your prospects
- No entry requirements for mature students (over 21) to start on a module.
- A flexible credit based programme leading towards an honours degree
- An opportunity to begin your studies at any point during the year
- No set term times and no need to attend classes
- The freedom to continue working while pursuing your studies
- Academic support from a subject specialist tutor
- Help and guidance from our Distance Learning Advice Team
- An opportunity for students from a wide range of countries and varied educational contexts to interact and exchange ideas
- The flexibility to take and pay for modules individually
- Three assessment points per year (January, May / June and September)

Programme structure

The Business Studies programme comprises eighteen 20 credit modules:

Level 1:

- HR1003 People, Organisations and Management
- SM1007 Studying for Business
- FE1010 Accounting and its Regulatory Framework
- FE1011 Managing the Enterprise
- FE1013 Business Environment
- FE1015 Governing Business Development

Level 2:

- IM2010 Technology and Knowledge Management
- HR2011 Fundamentals of Managing People
- HR2012 Career Management in Business
- SM2018 Operations Management
- SM2019 Fundamentals of Marketing
- FE2028 Fundamentals of Managerial Finance

Level 3:

- SM3001 Consumer Behaviour
- FE3002 Corporate Financial Management
- SM3003 Marketing Management
- SM3007 Project
- HR3009 Project Planning and Personal Development
- SM3018 Corporate Strategy

Note: that the letters at the beginning of each module code refer to the field of study; the modules for this programme are drawn from across all three fields in the Royal Docks Business School:

FE: Finance Economics and Accounting

HR: Human Resource Management

SM: Strategy, Operations Management and Marketing

IM2010 is drawn from Information Systems and Multimedia Technology, a field within the School of Computing, Information Technology and Engineering.

You may take a maximum of 180 credits per year. The programme is designed to be flexible and you can take a number of modules simultaneously according to your individual situation. You may study Business Studies in combination with other subjects:

- As a joint degree (half of your studies in Business Studies and half in another subject) leading to a degree of "Business Studies and [joint subject]".
- As a Major (two-thirds of your studies in Business Studies and one third in another subject) leading to a degree of "Business Studies with [Minor subject]".
- As a Minor (one third of your studies in Business Studies and two thirds in another subject) leading to a degree of "[Major subject] with Business Studies".

There may be restrictions on the subjects you can study in combination with Business Studies. See the section "What you will study when" for further information on combined degrees.

Learning environment

The programme is delivered exclusively through distance learning. Learning will be supported through study guides accompanying a core textbook, and through the use of our online student community UEL Plus.

The main purpose of the study guide is to help you to make the most effective use of the core textbook and other resources. It provides clear structuring, routeing and signposting, to establish a context for learning. It highlights key concepts, models and frameworks and it clearly indicates to you the sections of the textbook that you should study.

The study guide encourages deep learning through the use of activities, self-assessment questions and other formative assessments. Self-assessment questions enable you to check your progress – by comparing your answers with sample answers, you can assess for yourself how well you have met the learning outcomes for a particular section of the study guide. Coursework is also set for completion; feedback is provided by your academic tutors on an individual basis.

Each module is accompanied by a site in our online student community, UEL Plus, with discussion facilities that will enable students to discuss and resolve issues related to their studies. In addition, the module tutor will use this facility to address any common academic issues, and to contact students where necessary. It is essential therefore that you have easy and regular access to the Internet and reliable email.

Whilst much of your work will be individual, enabling you to set your own schedule, for somemodules you will be expected to participate in group discussions or chat sessions, or to work together with other distance learning students as a group on a project as part of your formative assessment.

Assessment

The BA (Hons) in Business Studies places a significant emphasis on coursework assignments as well as formal examinations. There will be 3 assessment points per academic year (in January, May / June and August / September). Students may take up to three years to study a particular module, but must take all components of the module's assessment for the same assessment point.

Project work

You will undertake a project at level three on a topic of your choosing. You will receive specific guidance on its preparation in the level 3 project planning module, so you will be well prepared. Your project may be based on primary data but projects based entirely upon secondary data or published sources will also be acceptable. All projects are expected to address a specific research question or else test a hypothesis. You will be allocated a personal tutor with expertise in the subject area, with regular email contact arranged in advance. You will also find that mini-projects or group work exercises feature in some of the modules taught in the degree, throughout each of the three levels.

Added value

Studying for a degree is not just about acquiring knowledge but is also about developing a range of skills and confidence which are valued by employers. The programme is designed to

help you develop knowledge, skills and experience. We will help you to reflect upon this and recognise how you have developed and what the evidence for this is; over the course of the programme you will develop a personal development plan / portfolio. This will help you to present yourself in the best possible light to employers.

BA (Hons) Business Studies has been designed to be flexible and customisable to suit the busy demands of individual students' lives. Students may study when they wish and decide on how many modules they wish to take at any given time. By successfully completing a distance learning degree programme, you not only display relevant knowledge, skills and understanding to an employer but also that you are able to manage your time effectively, that you are self-motivated and already have a good work ethic – all of which will give you the edge you need to find success.

IS THIS THE PROGRAMME FOR ME?

If you are interested in...

- organisations and their customers
- core business functions such as marketing, operations, finance and IT
- the reasons why consumers buy a product or service
- the management of business resources
- the impact of the external environment on the business
- how manufacturers make sure they get goods to customers on time
- the right way to manage people
- the costs and benefits of the globalisation of business
- gaining flexible employment-related skills

If you enjoy...

- the challenge of thinking about many different subject areas from Marketing to Corporate Strategy, from Accounting and Finance to Organisational Behaviour
- the challenge of understanding the links which may exist between many different subjects
- thinking about how globalisation affects you
- finding solutions to problems
- using a virtual learning environment
- working online with others from different cultures

If you want...

- a degree in general Business Studies
- knowledge and skills that can be used in a wide range of career settings
- to study in a flexible way, deciding when you want to study
- to take control of your career pathway
- to be able to apply for a broad range of jobs in business
- to prepare for higher academic qualifications (such as the MBA)

Your future career

There is a wide range of potential careers for example, in accountancy, banking, insurance, industrial and retail management, marketing and market research, recruitment and human resources, and in the leisure and cultural industries. As well as going on to run their own business our graduates have the potential of working in many different organisations – Business Studies graduates are likely to be found in all types of industrial, commercial, financial and public sector organisations.

Graduates may also progress to study at a higher level, for example the Master of Business Administration, or to take professional qualifications in their chosen fields.

How we support you

During your studies, you will be supported by our team of Distance Learning Student Advisors in the School of Distance and E-Learning. These advisors act as a first point of contact for you, addressing the majority of student queries and referring only those that relate to academic matters to the module tutor. The Student Advisors will also contact students who seem to be falling behind and will offer advice and encouragement to them.

The programme fully implements our Skills Curriculum, and one of the first modules that you will be expected to undertake is our level 1 'Studying for Business' module, which will provide you with additional support in your study habits and in being an effective distance learner.

For each module you will receive a comprehensive study guide and at least one core textbook or reading pack; you will also have access to a range of resources on our virtual learning environment UEL Plus. On enrolment, you will be provided with introductory materials on the use of UEL Plus.

We also provide useful advice and information in our Student Handbook and online at <http://www.uel.ac.uk/dl/index.htm>. Our Distance Learning Student Charter sets out our commitments to you and our expectations from you, and is available online at http://www.uel.ac.uk/dl/students/student_docs.htm

Outcomes

Programme aims and learning outcomes

What is this programme designed to achieve?

This programme is designed to give you the opportunity to:

- demonstrate progress towards achieving your goals as an employee, owner / manager or entrepreneur in business or the non-profit sector, or in further study within the academic community
- develop academically so that you have a detailed knowledge of business and management practices, can critically evaluate that knowledge and apply it in complex situations which may be characterised by contested and contradictory information
- develop relevant transferable and practical skills so that you can manage your own learning and are confident in applying these transferable and practical skills
- explore how organisations work with their customers and markets

- develop a broad and deep understanding about key management areas such as finance, people, operations, information and marketing within the context of the business environment

What will you learn?

Knowledge and understanding

- You will be able to explain and comment critically upon the concepts and techniques in multi-disciplinary business subjects.
- You will be able to explain why business concepts and techniques were developed by identifying relevant problem situations.
- You will be able to apply the relevant business concepts and techniques to resolve multi-faceted business problems or issues.

'Thinking' skills

- You will develop an understanding of the theoretical basis of the concepts or techniques drawn from a wide range of business disciplines.
- You will be able to critically assess these concepts or techniques.
- You will be able to incorporate the full range of multi-disciplinary approaches, as appropriate to the problem or issue being discussed.

Subject-Based Practical skills

- You will be able to prepare and present solutions to business based problems or issues.
- You will be able to undertake a major self-managed activity, the project, which will address a topic of your choice relevant to your future career. (Note that combined honours students may undertake the project in their major or joint discipline.)
- You will have demonstrated competence in using a broad range of Information Technology resources to enhance both your learning and its application to problem resolution.

Skills for life and work

- You will be able to work effectively meeting deadlines and targets.
- You will have confidence in explaining, defending and summarising your views to your peers on complex issues and problems.
- You will develop high level skills in identifying problem parameters and selecting and implementing solutions.
- You will be able to place your Business Studies degree from UEL in the context of your life long learning.

Structure

The programme structure

Introduction

All programmes are credit-rated to help you to understand the amount and level of study that is needed.

One credit is equal to 10 hours of directed study time (this includes everything you do e.g. lecture, seminar and private study).

Credits are assigned to one of 5 levels:

- 0 - equivalent in standard to GCE 'A' level and is intended to prepare students for year one of an undergraduate degree programme
- 1 - equivalent in standard to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 2 - equivalent in standard to the second year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- 3 - equivalent in standard to the third year of a full-time undergraduate degree programme
- M - equivalent in standard to a Masters degree

Credit rating

The overall credit-rating of this programme is 360 credits.

Typical duration

We expect that you will take at least three years to complete this programme. This would require you to complete two modules for each assessment point over the three years. However, it is likely that many students will vary from this, either by taking fewer modules at a time or by taking breaks between periods of study to accommodate any external factors such as domestic commitments.

The maximum duration for this programme is 8 years, and the maximum time for any one module is 3 years. Our Distance Learning Student Advisors can help you to decide on and plan for an amount of study that suits you.

How the teaching year is divided

You can commence your studies at any time – enrolment on this programme is not tied to the academic year. We will work with you to determine a realistic plan, based on the amount of time you have available for study, the dates for exams and assessments, and your preferred completion rate.

There are three assessment points for most modules, in January, May / June and August / September. These are the points when you will be required to submit your coursework or take exams. When you make your decision on which module(s) you will study, our Distance Learning Student Advisors can help you to select the assessment point that you will aim for.

What you will study when

This programme is part of a modular degree scheme. To graduate as an honours degree student, you will need to complete six modules at level 1, six at level 2 and six at level 3. It is possible to bring together modules from one field with modules from another to produce a combined programme. We offer subjects in a variety of combinations:

- Single 120 credits at levels one, two and three
- Major 80 credits at levels one, two and three
- Joint 60 credits at levels one, two and three
- Minor 40 credits at levels one, two and three

The following are the core and optional requirements for the single, major, joint and minor routes for this programme.

The following are the core and optional requirements for the single and major routes for this programme

LEVEL / TITLE / CREDIT	STATUS			
	SINGLE	MAJOR	JOINT	MINOR
1 People, Organisations & Management	20 Core	Core	Option3	Option6
1 Studying for Business	20 Core	Core	Core3	-
1 Accounting & its Regulatory Framework	20 Core	Core	Core	Option6
1 Managing the Enterprise	20 Core	-	Option3	Option6
1 Business Environment	20 Core	Core	Core	Core
1 Governing Business Development	20 Core	-	Option3	Option6
2 Technology & Knowledge Management	20 Core	Core	Option4	Option7
2 Fundamentals of Managing People	20 Core	Option1	Option4	Option7
2 Career Management in Business	20 Core	Core	Core4	-
2 Operations Management	20 Core	Core	Option4	Option7
2 Fundamentals of Marketing	20 Core	Option1	Option4	Option7
2 Fundamentals of Managerial Finance	20 Core	Option1	Option4	Option7
3 Consumer Behaviour	20 Core	Option2	Option5	Option8
3 Corporate Financial Management	20 Core	Option2	Option5	Option8
3 Marketing Management	20 Core	Option2	Option5	Option8
3 Project Planning & Personal Development	20 Core	Core	Core5	-
3 Project	20 Core	Core	Core5	-
3 Corporate Strategy	20 Core	Option2	Option5	Option8

Notes:

1. For level 2 Major, choose 1 from 3 options (plus 2 modules from your Minor discipline).
2. For level 3 Major, choose 2 from 4 options (plus 2 modules from your Minor discipline).
3. For Joint honours, a level 1 skills module must be taken either from Business Studies or from the other discipline (but not from both).
If level 1 Studying for Business is not taken, then choose 1 from 3 options; otherwise these options are not available.
Your remaining 3 modules are taken from the other joint discipline.
4. For Joint honours, a level 2 skills module must be taken either from Business Studies or from the other discipline (but not from both).
If level 2 Career Management in Business is not taken, then choose 3 from 5 options;

otherwise choose 2 from 5 options.

Your remaining 3 modules are taken from the other joint discipline.

5. For Joint honours, a level 3 skills module and project must be taken either from Business Studies or from the other discipline (but not from both).

If level 3 Project Planning and Personal Development is not taken, then the Project cannot be taken.

If the Project and the Skills module are both taken, choose 1 from 4 options; otherwise, choose 3 from 4 options.

Your remaining 3 modules are taken from the other joint discipline.

6. For level 1 Minor, choose 1 from 4 options (plus 4 modules from your Major discipline).
7. For level 2 Minor, choose 2 from 5 options (plus 4 modules from your Major discipline).
8. For level 3 Minor, choose 2 from 4 options (plus 4 modules from your Major discipline).

Your options at each level may be limited by previous choices (e.g. level 3 Marketing Management requires that you have taken Fundamentals of Marketing at level 2). Refer to individual module specifications for details of pre-requisite modules.

Requirements for gaining an award

In order to gain an honours degree you will need to obtain 360 credits including:

- A minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level two or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level three or higher

In order to gain an ordinary degree you will need to obtain a minimum of 300 credits including:

- A minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher
- A minimum of 120 credits at level two or higher
- A minimum of 60 credits at level three or higher

In order to gain a Diploma of Higher Education you will need to obtain at least 240 credits including a minimum of 120 credits at level one or higher and 120 credits at level two or higher

In order to gain a Certificate of Higher Education you will need to obtain 120 credits at level one or higher.

In order to gain an Undergraduate Certificate you will need to obtain 40 credits at level one or higher.

In order to gain an Associate Undergraduate Certificate (un-named / generic) you will need to obtain 20 credits at level one or higher.

Only one final award may be obtained.

Degree Classification

Where a student is eligible for an Honours degree, and has gained a minimum of 240 UEL credits at level 2 or level 3 on the programme, including a minimum of 120 UEL credits at level 3, the award classification is determined by calculating:

$$\frac{\text{The arithmetic mean of the best 100 credits at level 3}}{\times 2/3} + \frac{\text{The arithmetic mean of the next best 100 credits at levels 2 and/or 3}}{\times 1/3}$$

and applying the mark obtained as a percentage, with all decimal points rounded up to the nearest whole number, to the following classification

70% - 100%	First Class Honours
60% - 69%	Second Class Honours, First Division
50% - 59%	Second Class Honours, Second Division
40% - 49%	Third Class Honours
0% - 39%	Not passed

Assessment

Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning

Knowledge and understanding is developed through

- A study guide that helps learners to make the most effective use of the core textbook and other resources.
- The study guide provides clear structuring, routeing and signposting, to establish a context for learning.
- The study guide highlights key concepts, models and frameworks and clearly indicates to the student the sections of the textbook that they must study.
- In some areas, the study guide adds extra content, or integrates additional resources (such as journal articles) to support those topics not covered by the core textbook.
- Self-assessment questions enable students to check their progress – by comparing their answers with sample answers, they can assess for themselves how well they have met the learning outcomes for a particular section of the study guide.
- Students have access to online journal articles via the Athens access management system.
- UEL Plus enables electronic contact with the tutor and other students using email, chat and discussion boards.

'Thinking' skills are developed through

- The study guide, which uses a variety of activities, self assessment questions and other formative assessments.
- The activities help learners to understand or master a new topic or skill. They generally require students to engage with the topic in some way. Some examples of types of activities are those which require students to:
 - apply concepts or frameworks to their own situations

- apply concepts in solving problems or evaluating scenarios
- reflect on or analyse topics
- carry out further research related to topics of study
- Feedback will be provided for all activities. This may take the form of:
 - identifying a right or wrong answer
 - giving examples, alerting students to key points

Practical skills are developed through

- Activities relevant to business and management – examples, activities and self-assessment questions that will help to build students' practical skills.
- The use of Information Technology
- Completion of individual / group assignments

General skills are developed through

- The skills curriculum, which is embedded in core modules at levels 1, 2 and 3.
- The use of an online community, which will help develop skills in communication and in cooperative tasks. Dedicated student advisors are available.
- Presenting ideas or arguments in a clearly structured manner
- Being able to produce clearly argued solutions when problem solving

Assessment

Knowledge and understanding is assessed by

- Coursework
- Examinations

'Thinking' skills are assessed by

- Coursework
- Examinations
- Project work

Practical skills are assessed by

- Practical reports
- Case study exercises
- Project work

General skills are assessed by

- Project work
- IT exercises
- Personal development planning

Quality

How we assure the quality of this programme

Before this programme started

Before this programme starts, we check that:

- there would be enough qualified staff to teach the programme;
- adequate resources would be in place;
- the overall aims and objectives were appropriate;
- the content of the programme met national benchmark requirements;
- the programme met any professional/statutory body requirements;
- the proposal met other internal quality criteria covering a range of issues such as admissions policy, teaching, learning and assessment strategy and student support mechanisms.

This is done through a process of programme approval which involves convening a panel of academic experts including some subject specialists from other institutions. Each panel member scrutinises key documents and talks to the staff who will deliver the programme before deciding whether it should be approved.

How we monitor the quality of this programme

The quality of this programme is monitored each year through evaluating:

- external examiner reports (considering quality and standards)
- statistical information (considering issues such as the pass rate)
- student feedback

Drawing on this and other information, programme teams undertake the annual Review and Enhancement Process which is co-ordinated at School level and includes student participation. The process is monitored by our University's Quality and Standards Committee.

Once every six years we undertake an in-depth review of the whole field. This is undertaken by a panel that includes at least two external subject specialists. The panel considers documents, looks at student work, speaks to current and former students and speaks to staff before drawing its conclusions. The result is a report highlighting good practice and identifying areas where action is needed.

The role of the programme committee

This programme has a programme committee comprising all relevant teaching staff, student representatives and others who make a contribution towards the effective operation of the programme. The committee has responsibilities for the quality of the programme. It provides input into the operation of the Review and Enhancement Process and proposes changes to improve quality. The programme committee plays a critical role in the quality assurance procedures.

The role of external examiners

The standard of this programme is monitored by at least one external examiner. External examiners have two primary responsibilities:

- To ensure the standard of the programme;
- To ensure that justice is done to individual students.

External examiners fulfil these responsibilities in a variety of ways including:

- Approving exam papers/assignments;
- Attending assessment boards;
- Reviewing samples of student work and moderating marks;
- Ensuring that regulations are followed;
- Providing feedback through an annual report that enables us to make improvements for the future.

Listening to the views of students

The following methods for gaining student feedback are used on this programme:

- Module evaluations
- Programme evaluations
- Polls and surveys online
- Student representation on programme committees

Students are notified of the action taken through:

- Individual responses to students as required
- Announcements and discussion board postings on UEL Plus

Listening to the views of others

The following methods are used for gaining the views of other interested parties:

- Questionnaires to and interviews with former students
- Meetings with office administrative staff.

Further Information

Where you can find further information

Further information about this programme is available from:

- The Student Handbook
- UEL Manual of General Regulations and Quality Manual <http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa>
- Regulations for the Academic Framework <http://www.uel.ac.uk/academicframework/>
- The Royal Docks Business School web pages <http://www.uel.ac.uk/business/>
- The School of Distance and E-Learning web pages <http://www.uel.ac.uk/sdel/>