BA Accounting and Business

Frequently asked questions about the degree

Why should I apply to this degree programme?
This is an extremely innovative degree, offering a traditional university experience but with the opportunity to secure a graduate job.

Key features include:
• the opportunity to achieve a BA honours degree from a global, research-intensive university
• paid, progressive work placements with PwC, the world’s leading professional services firm – following completion of the first year, placements are integrated into the degree programme throughout yet allow completion of the degree within the usual four-year timescale of a traditional placement degree programme
• credit for prior learning (CPL) in respect of all Certificate and Professional Level papers of the examinations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) Association of Chartered Accountants (ACA) qualification
• the prospect of a full-time position with PwC on graduation, at a higher starting salary than other graduate joiners, and of full completion of the ACA qualification within a year

How is this degree different from accounting degrees offered by most other universities?
• much broader CPL for professional qualifications
• integrated work placements
• an orientation towards business and management rather than economics and finance
• extensive case-study applications in the final year – that prepare you for Advanced Level ACA papers rather than a dissertation
• an emphasis on ethical behaviour and a broader understanding of ethics in business and society

Where business comes to life
Placements

Can you give me more details of the work placements?
The programme includes three paid progressive work placements in years 2, 3 and 4 of the degree programme. Placements in years 2 and 3 are three months long, covering the period from January to March. The placement in year 4 is slightly longer, running from mid-November to the end of March, and involves higher levels of responsibility.

What will I do on placement?
Joining PwC’s audit team, you will work on projects for organisations from PwC’s prestigious client list. Wherever you are based, the nature of an audit means that travel will be involved throughout your placement. This could mean spending some time in different cities across the UK.

Where will they be? Am I able to choose which PwC office I work in?
It is expected that you will be allocated to a placement office by the January of the first year of your degree programme. Your preferences and personal circumstances will be taken into account in determining your office location, although we cannot guarantee that all students will be allocated their first choice of location.

Can I work abroad?
While you are on placement throughout your degree programme you will be based in the UK. Once you have fully qualified there will be opportunities for you to apply for a secondment to a different country within the PwC global network, should this be appropriate for your personal development.

Where will I live when I am on placement?
For those students based at offices within easy commuting distance of Reading, it will be possible to remain in your University accommodation. You may be based at an office close to your family home and so may be able to reside there if appropriate. Should it be necessary for you to rent accommodation in addition to your university residence, PwC will meet the costs of this. While on placement you may well be required to work with clients based away from your office location. You will be provided with hotel accommodation for the duration of such client assignments.

What happens if I require a work permit?
During your placement you will not be required to apply for a further work permit. Your student work permit will sufficiently cover this requirement. Upon joining the firm as a graduate you would be required to gain a work permit and PwC will assist this application process on your behalf.

Will I be paid for the full year?
PwC will pay you for your work placement period only.

Am I guaranteed a job with PwC at the end of the degree programme?
Providing you successfully graduate from the degree with a 2.1 degree classification or higher, achieve CPL in all ICAEW Certificate and Professional Level papers, and perform well at University and on your placement, you will hopefully secure a graduate job offer from PwC.
Will I be a qualified accountant by the time I have completed the degree?

Successful completion of this degree programme will allow you to claim CPL for all 12 Certificate and Professional Level papers of the examinations of the ICAEW ACA qualification. This will leave you with only three further Advanced Level papers to complete.

Your placements will also contribute towards more than half of the technical work experience that the ICAEW requires as part of the ACA qualification. By the time you graduate, you will therefore be approximately one year away from achieving full ACA Chartered Accountant status.

What will I be studying on this degree programme?

- **Year 1** introduces you to a range of business and accounting modules, all of which contribute to the Certificate Level examinations of the ICAEW.

- **Years 2 and 3** focus on the technical and professional aspects of the Professional Level at a higher level of knowledge and application.

- **Year 4** provides a broader, critical academic perspective to your studies along with the opportunity to apply much of your previous study to a variety of case-study scenarios that both complete the Professional Level examinations of the ICAEW and are a preparation for the final stage of the ICAEW qualification that you will take after graduation.

How does this all fit into the academic year?

We have carefully planned for the demands of this degree programme. The first year follows our usual academic timetable of three teaching terms.

In years 2 and 3, you will attend University for the autumn term. You will then join PwC for your work placements from January to March. During this time academic staff will remain in contact with you to support your placements and to help you maintain an academic focus. You then return to the University for the summer term.

By the time you graduate, you will therefore be approximately one year away from achieving full ACA Chartered Accountant status.

You then return to the University for the summer term. There will be teaching for the first part of this term followed by examinations, some of which will be ICAEW accredited exams.

In year 4, you will start earlier than usual in September with your work placement running from November to March. You will return in the summer term for further teaching and examinations.

What happens if, at any stage, I find that this degree programme is not for me?

We have arranged our programmes so that at any stage you can transfer either to our directly recruited BA Accounting and Management degree programme (subject to meeting the programme’s progression requirements) or our BA Accounting Studies programme. You will still graduate within your original four-year period, and with a degree giving a range of CPL from the ICAEW Certificate and Professional Level qualification, depending on your module choices.

Tuition fees

What are the fees for this degree programme?

In year 1, the tuition fee will be the same as for all other undergraduate degree programmes at the University of Reading. In years 2, 3 and 4, you will pay 80% of the standard fee.

Will PwC contribute?

No. The money you will earn while on placement at PwC will help to mitigate your programme costs but PwC will not contribute directly towards your tuition fees.
Application and selection

What type of candidate is likely to be successful in gaining an offer of a place?

This is an academically demanding degree programme with progression requirements for each year of the programme higher than for our other degree programmes. This is so that you meet the requirements for ICAEW CPL.

We will need evidence of your ability to meet these demands – so would expect you to have met, or be on target to meet, our academic requirements, which are the equivalent of AAB at A level. However, equally important will be your career motivations and evidence of potential professional skills and competencies.

How do I apply?

Step 1
As for all other degree programmes, you would apply by completing the standard UCAS application form specifying BA Accounting and Business (NN41) at the University of Reading as one of your choices.

Step 2
We will review your UCAS application, ensuring that you are likely to meet our admissions requirements.

Step 3
Following the review of your UCAS application, we may also invite you to complete some online assessments, which will include an online interview. Selected applicants will then be invited to attend an Open Day and Assessment Centre.

If you are successful here, you will be formally notified of an offer through the UCAS system.

What happens at the Assessment Centres?

You will be assessed in a group-discussion scenario. You cannot prepare for this activity; you will be given a full briefing when you arrive. This activity usually lasts no more than one hour.

There will also be an opportunity for you to explore the campus, investigate our student accommodation and learning facilities, and talk to staff and current students.

What if I am not successful in gaining an offer of a place on this degree programme?

As your UCAS application would indicate that you will meet our academic requirements, you may still receive an offer on our BA Accounting and Management degree programme. This programme offers a range of CPL from several accountancy professional bodies, which comes close to matching those from the BA Accounting and Business degree programme.

I am an international student.
Can I also apply?

Yes. Applications are welcome from all those suitably qualified. We fully encourage all applicants to attend the Open Day and Assessment Centre in person, if they can, to benefit from the experience of visiting the University, meeting staff and peers alike, and having face-to-face group assessments. However, we appreciate this is not feasible for all. If you are unable to attend in person, you will be invited to go through an online exercise instead.