



WHTC University application subject guides

Accounting and Finance

This guide has been written to help support you in your application to university. It contains the following information relevant to your subject to help you decide where to apply and put together the best application that you possibly can:

1. Links to the top courses for this subject in the UK
2. Entrance requirements
3. Recommended A-levels
4. Admissions tests
5. Recommended reading
6. Interesting MOOCs
7. Useful additional resources
8. Related courses
9. Oxbridge example interview questions

What is Accounting?

<https://careers.icaew.com/why-a-career-in-chartered-accountancy>

This guide from the ICAEW gives a detailed explanation of accountancy job roles. You should read this guide before applying to any Accounting and Finance course to gain some insight into the career and see if it really is the right choice for you. **It is really important to know that you do not need to study accounting at university in order to be an accountant or to pursue a career in finance.** The main thing that will set you up in either career is simply getting a good degree from a good university, in any subject.

1. Course links

Below are links to the top courses for this subject in the UK (according to [The Complete University Guide](#)). Click on the links to find information about what the course is like, what you'll learn, and loads of information about things such as fees and accommodation. However, remember that there are loads of other great universities out there, so check out The Complete University Guide or just google studying your subject at university.

1. [University of Glasgow](#) – four year course
2. [University of Strathclyde](#) – four year course
3. [University of Leeds](#)
4. [University of Aberdeen](#): note – a four year MA course
5. [University of Bath](#)

You should note that Cambridge University and Oxford University do not offer this course but a number of other prestigious Universities such as Queen's Belfast, LSE (London School of Economics), Warwick, Durham etc offer this course (although outside the top 5 of The Complete University Guide listing). Although they are not at the top of these rankings for this particular course, in general a degree from these universities would still be considered more 'prestigious' than those from some of the other unis in the top 5 here.

2. Entrance requirements

Here are the grades that the university suggests you need to get in to that course, and the likely offer that they will give you.

1. Glasgow: AAA – ABB
2. Strathclyde: AAA
3. Leeds: AAA
4. Aberdeen: BBB
5. Bath: AAA or A*AB

3. Recommended A-levels

Different universities may differ as to what A-levels they ask you for. Some might list one subject as ‘essential’, while another might list the same subject as just ‘helpful’, so make sure to check out the course page (under Section 1 of this document, or on the university website) to be sure what your chosen university expects!

1. Glasgow: A-level Mathematics and GCSE English Grade B
2. Strathclyde: A-level Mathematics and GCSE English (or an essay based course) Grade B
3. Leeds: A-level Mathematics and GCSE English Grade B
4. Aberdeen: A-level Mathematics
5. Bath: A-level Mathematics

However, please note that you do not actually need Maths A-level to be an accountant, if you train after having done a different degree. Nevertheless, accountancy is a very numbers-heavy job, and you probably wouldn’t enjoy it if you don’t also like maths! You definitely do need to be good with numbers!

4. Admissions Tests

There are no admissions tests for accounting and finance courses.

5. Recommended reading

Reading some relevant books or articles is a really great way to demonstrate your passion for your chosen subject in your personal statement, and show how you've gone beyond the curriculum. Plus, if you really want to spend three years or more studying this subject at university, it should be enjoyable! Try taking notes and jotting down your thoughts as you're reading so that you can share some of this in your personal statement

The LSE (London School of Economics) has a list on its site:

P Atrill and E McLaney Financial Accounting for Decision Makers (5th edition, FT Prentice Hall, 2008)

Z Bodie, R Merton and D Cleeton Financial Economics (2nd edition, Prentice Hall, 2009)

W Clarke How the City of London Works (Thomson, 2004)

A Bhimani, C T Horngren, S M Datar and G Foster Management and Cost Accounting (4th edition, Prentice Hall, 2008)

P Howell and K Bain Financial Markets and Institutions (5th Edition, FT Prentice Hall, 2007)

The LSE also recommend these broader readings:

Bakan, J. (2005) The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power.

CIMA (2017) Data – Deluge and Decisions (all 12 episodes), especially [Episode 1](#), [Episode 2](#).

House of Commons (2019) [The Future of Audit](#).

ICAEW (2018) [Blockchain and the future of accountancy](#).

Klein, N. (2015) This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate.

KPMG and Tax Havens for the Rich: The Untouchables – [the fifth estate](#).

Ryland, P. (2020) “Fair, but for whom?”, *Investors Chronicle*, January 2.

6. Interesting MOOCs

Another great way of learning more about your chosen subject and demonstrating your interest is to take a MOOC, or Massive Open Online Course. These are free courses delivered by universities that you can take online. If the ones below don't take your fancy, try looking at [Class Central](#) - they have a huge list of different courses for every subject imaginable, and they're all free!

1. Accounting (Indiana University)

An introduction to the key elements of financial reporting.

<https://www.edx.org/micromasters/iux-accounting>

2. Introduction to Management Accounting (ACCA)

The ACCA is the global body for certified accountants. This course provides an introduction into the nature and purpose of cost management and management accounting and how business record costs.

<https://www.edx.org/course/introduction-to-management-accounting>

3. Finance for everyone: Smart tools for decision making (University of Michigan)

Learn about the different decision-making tools available to make the best financial decisions.

<https://www.edx.org/course/finance-for-everyone-smart-tools-for-decision-ma-2>

4. Option Pricing and Applications in Capital Budgeting and Corporate Finance (New York Institute of Finance)

Understand what option pricing and option contracts are and the key determinants of options value.

<https://www.edx.org/course/option-pricing-and-applications-in-capital-budgeting-and-corporate-finance>

7. Useful additional resources

There are loads of other great things out there that you might want to look at to develop your interest and strengthen your application, from videos to podcasts, to websites. Here are a few suggestions:

[Gresham College](#) has some interesting lectures on Finance

[LSE Player](#) has a lot of excellent podcasts discussing the financial implications of government policy, regulation and economic shocks.

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/lse-player>

[The Open University](#) has an abundance of free lectures on finance

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/free-courses>

Work Experience

While studying for your A Levels you should try to gain work experience in a local accounting firm. It is really easy to do, you can send an email or just walk into the branch office and ask if they allow job shadowing or work experience.

You might also want to apply to some of the work experience programmes available at well-known firms in the UK. These larger firms have excellent work experience programmes which will introduce you to a wide range of accounting and finance roles.

Ernst & Young

https://www.ey.com/en_uk/careers/students/programmes/schools

JP Morgan

<https://careers.jpmorgan.com/global/en/students/programs/uk-work-experience>

Morgan Stanley

<https://www.morganstanley.com/people-opportunities/students-graduates/programs.html?region=emea&educationLevel=preuniversity>

PWC insights week. To apply you must be on track to achieve at least BCC at A Level.

<https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/school-jobs/jobs/work-experience.html>

KPMG – To apply you must send your CV and a cover letter.

<https://home.kpmg/qm/en/home/careers/work-experience.html>

Work experience will help you to decide if you actually want a career in finance and accounting going forward. Remember, even if you do decide that it is the career for you, **you can study any degree at university** and still successfully start a career in finance.

8. Related courses

At university, there are loads of different combinations of subjects that you can do so make sure to have a good look around!

Degree Apprenticeships

You might also consider applying for a degree apprenticeship.

Degree apprenticeships are a new type of programme offered by some universities. Students can achieve a full bachelor's or master's degree as part of their apprenticeship.

These programmes are being developed by employers, universities, and professional bodies working in partnership.

Degree apprenticeships combine working with studying part-time at a university. Apprentices are employed throughout the programme, and spend part of their time at university and the rest with their employer. This can be on a day-to-day basis or in blocks of time, depending on the programme and requirements of the employer.

They can take between three to six years to complete, depending on the course level.

Follow the link below for more information:

<https://www.ucas.com/alternatives/apprenticeships/apprenticeships-england/what-apprenticeships-are-available/degree-apprenticeships>

The “Big 4” (the 4 largest professional services companies globally) all offer degree apprenticeships which are extremely competitive to secure. Use the links below to research the different types of degree apprenticeships available.

Ernst & Young

https://www.ey.com/en_uk/careers/students/programmes/schools

PWC

<https://www.pwc.co.uk/careers/school-jobs/jobs/flying-start-degrees.html>

Deloitte

<https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/careers/articles/brightstart-business-apprenticeship-scheme.html>

KPMG

<https://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/apprentice>

Joint Honour Degrees

You may want to combine your study of finance with another course. There are two ways to do this:

“And” degrees

It is possible to combine two subjects at Honours level, typically 50% in each subject, such as English and Economics.

“With” degrees

You can take some Honours degrees with a major, for example: Biology with Arabic. “With” degrees allow the majority of modules to be taken in one specialist subject (major) alongside another minor subject in the final two years.

Some universities which offer finance combination degrees are:

The University of Leeds has a variety of combination degrees

<https://courses.leeds.ac.uk/course-search?query=accounting&type=UG>

St Andrews University offers an economics and finance combination degree

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/subjects/economics/>

The University of Sheffield has a variety of combination degrees

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/dual-combined-honours-degrees>

9. Oxbridge Example Interview Questions

As Cambridge and Oxford do not offer accounting and finance courses there are no example interview questions.

Good luck with your university application, and remember you can always ask you teachers for additional help and support