



UCL Academic Manual 2021-22

Chapter 2: Qualifications and Credit Framework

Annex 2.3

## MBA Qualification Descriptor

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The Master of Business Administration (MBA) qualification at UCL is awarded to students demonstrating the knowledge, skills, attributes and values required to successfully fulfil senior leadership roles in complex and changing environments.

Programmes of study leading to the award of UCL's MBA qualification must demonstrate the following characteristics in their design and delivery:

1. The MBA qualification forms part of UCL's professional education portfolio aimed at enabling the professional development of students with management and leadership experience. Programmes must be designed, delivered and marketed accordingly, and should utilise the professional experience already within each cohort throughout and beyond the programme.
2. The MBA qualification at UCL is aimed at students with previous work experience and particularly suits those who have demonstrated their potential to take on more senior leadership responsibilities. The amount and nature of the previous work experience required will be carefully considered and explained in the programme's entry requirements and will actively inform the design of the programme. This must be at least two years' experience and will typically be higher.
3. UCL offers both generalist and sectoral MBAs. All MBA programmes have a broad curriculum in business and management. Students may pursue areas of interests in greater depth, but all students must follow a broad curriculum that enables them to understand and lead effectively in their wider organisational environment.
4. A sectoral MBA still maintains a broad curriculum in business and management but will consistently contextualise and apply this within a particular sector throughout the programme. The knowledge developed by students studying on a sectoral MBA programme may be focused on the relevant sector, but the skills, attributes and values developed should be transferable to different sectoral contexts. Programmes focused on developing a high level of technical or academic competence in a specific profession or discipline are likely to be better suited to an alternative qualification, such as the Master of Science or Master of Arts.
5. Programmes must enable students to demonstrate the outcomes expected of a master's degree, as specified by the qualification descriptor in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and to meet the requirements of a taught postgraduate degree outlined in UCL's Academic Manual. Any focus on the practical application of learning must complement, not replace, the academic rigour and depth of a master's degree. For example, students must still demonstrate a

systematic understanding of knowledge, a critical awareness of current problems at the forefront of the academic discipline, a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research, originality in the application of knowledge and an ability to evaluate critically. Methods of teaching and assessment may differ to more traditional methods used by other types of master's degree so long as each student is able to demonstrate that they meet the module- and programme-level learning outcomes.

6. The knowledge, skills, attributes and values developed through the programme and specific to MBAs should be aligned with relevant external reference points. These include the [Subject Benchmark Statement for Master's Degrees in Business and Management](#) and the [Characteristics Statement for a Master's Degree](#) as they relate to post-experience degrees. While not a baseline requirement, the accreditation criteria and advice of relevant accrediting bodies (such as the Association of MBAs) also provide helpful external reference points to inform programme design.
7. There should be a coherent assessment strategy that blends the academic rigour typical of a taught postgraduate degree from UCL with opportunities for practical application and authentic assessment.