

University of Strathclyde
Department of Accounting and Finance

Honours Year 2026/27

Notes for Guidance

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Note this handbook is designed to help students with a range of issues associated with the BA Honours Accounting Programme and should be read in conjunction with the rules and regulations published in the official University Calendar available on-line. If you require any further details or interpretations of these rules / guidance notes please contact the Honours Programme Director in BOTH of your principal subjects.

Overview

The honours level is an opportunity to activate and encourage a deeper approach to the learning process, offers a meaningful and critical interaction with the external environment, and allow the construction of a realistic context for the student to place their knowledge and understanding of accountancy. It is perhaps the most rewarding and enjoyable time at university. It is very different from previous years and can seem like very hard work, but if approached in a constructive, positive manner it offers the potential for personal as well as academic development.

Employment

- Recent accounting students have found jobs with:-
 - PricewaterhouseCoopers
 - KPMG
 - Ernst & Young
 - Deloitte
 - Santander
 - BAE Systems
 - Standard Life
 - Johnston Carmichael
 - Morgan Stanley
 - Scottish Government

Key Elements of the Honours Years

Dissertation	Seminars	Student Presentations
Case Studies	Essays	Time Management
Group Projects	Theories and Philosophy	Debates
Exams	Reading, Reading, Reading	Student Centred Discussions

Summary of Attributes to be developed in the Honours Year

Looking for meaning	General Information Gathering
Active Interest	Team-work
Critical Stance	Self-management
Relating and organising ideas	Dealing with people
Using Evidence and Logic	Problem solving
Effort in studying	Ethical Reasoning
Organised Study	Oral Presentations
Time Management	Written Communication
Academic Self Confidence	Time Management

Introduction

Accounting Honours Departmental Aims and objectives.

The aims of the Department in respect of its teaching are twofold:

- to provide an educational experience, encompassing depth of learning, through the medium of accountancy and finance
- to have regard for the long term career aspiration of students in private and public sector employment.

The department aims to

- flexibly respond to new demands and new developments arising from research and practice and
- cover relevant areas of accountancy and finance in the context of existing and emerging issues at national and international level such as:
 - Public domain accountability activities
 - Regulations, law, professional standards, codes of conduct and ethics
 - Corporate and organisational developments
 - Social, environmental issues
 - Theory and operation of capital markets
 - Accounting and its relationship with wider societal issues.

It is intended that students develop knowledge and comprehension, learn to apply that knowledge and comprehension in a manner that encompasses a deeper approach to learning. The deep approach is evidenced by students' powers of analysis, synthesis and evaluation as they progress through their degree programme.

Analysis, synthesis and evaluation are transferable skills of value to students in their future life far wider than the individual subject areas covered. Other transferable skills developed particularly in the honours programme include communication, quantification, interactional and interpersonal skills and the ability to clarify values. During the honours year students are encouraged to use their powers of reasoned argument to enable and empower them to identify with or challenge the material available on any subject.

The honours year provides the opportunity to expand students' knowledge of subject areas covered in the first three years of the courses and to explore new areas. The classes are designed to develop students' approach to learning accounting, by

- Understanding material for yourself rather than passively accepting the interpretation provided by others
- Interacting vigorously and critically with relevant subject material
- Relating your ideas to your previous knowledge and experience
- Using organising principles to integrate ideas
- Communicating these ideas to others
- Examining the logic and consistency of an argument
- Relating conclusions to evidence
- Assembling evidence to support conclusions.

Teaching methods will vary depending on the specific nature of each class. For example, some lecturers may wish to place emphasis on communication skills and teamwork through the medium of presentations and group work, while others may use more structured teaching methods and others may use a mixture of teaching methods. The honours year provides an opportunity for you to develop your own approach to learning, which may include the formation of informal study groups with other students.

Accounting Honours Level Programme

Students should consider taking a balanced approach to the academic year.

Due to class size regulations, not all the classes will run every year, so please bear this in mind when making your choices and consider an additional option, in case your preferred class does not run.

Single Honours Accounting students take 120 credits in total, and choose one of two routes:

Route A (dissertation): AG435 Accounting Dissertation (40 credits) plus 80 credits of optional taught classes (four classes); or

Route B (taught modules): 120 credits of optional taught classes (six classes), with no dissertation.

Joint Honours students take 120 credits across their two principal subjects, with a minimum of 40 credits from each subject.

Joint Honours students choosing the dissertation option can take either of the following three routes:

Option 1: 40 credit dissertation (Subject 1) plus a 20 credit taught module (Subject 1) plus 60 credits of taught modules (Subject 2) giving a 60/60 split.

Option 2: 40 credit dissertation (Subject 1) plus 40 credits of taught modules (Subject 1) plus 40 credits of taught modules (Subject 2) giving an 80/40 split.

Option 3: 40 credit dissertation only (Subject 1), 80 credits of taught modules (Subject 2) giving a 40/80 split.

*The dissertation may be taken in either principal subject. In the dissertation options above, Subject 1 means the subject in which the dissertation is taken and Subject 2 the student's other principal subject.

Joint Honours students choosing the taught modules option can take either:

Option 1: 60 credits of optional taught classes in each subject; or

Option 2: 80 credits of optional taught classes in one subject and 40 credits of optional taught classes in the other. The 80 credits may be taken in either subject.

The honours accounting module options are set out below:

Honours Accounting Modules	
Semester 1 (examined December)	Semester 2 (examined April/May)
AG420 Auditing Theory and Practice (Xiaoyu Xu)	AG409 Sustainability Accounting: Theory and Practice (Sheng Li)
AG424 Accounting Theories (Panagiotis Loukopoulos)	AG415 Contemporary Issues in International Financial Reporting (Mark Johnson & Lars Hass)
	AG434 International Financial Management (Sheng Li)
Both Semesters	
AG442 Sustainable Business: A Finance and Accounting Perspective (Dimitris Andriosopoulos)	
AG443 Data and Textual Analysis for Accounting and Finance (Panagiotis Loukopoulos and James Bowden)	
*AG435 Accounting Dissertation (40 credits)	
Dissertation Deadline Wednesday 17th March 2027	

* The 40 credit accounting dissertation class has a taught portion included in the 40 credits worth 10 credits which includes research methodology. There is a separate assignment for the 10 credit research methodology part of AG435. The dissertation is an optional route: students who do not take AG435 take a further two taught classes instead.

Joint honours students may take the dissertation in either principal subject.

A full list of class outlines is available on the departmental webpage.

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/business/accountingfinance/undergraduate/accreditation/>

Single Honours in Accounting

A single honours accounting student takes an equivalent of 120 credits, made up of either AG435 Accounting Dissertation (40 credits) and four optional taught classes, or six optional taught (20 credits) classes with no dissertation.

Option A – Dissertation Route

Code	Class Title	No. of Credits
AG435	Dissertation	40

Optional Subjects

Plus four units (80 credits) of accounting classes from the lists above. Note all taught classes are worth 20 credits.

Option B – Taught Modules Route

Six units (120 credits) of accounting classes from the list above. No dissertation is taken. Note all taught classes are worth 20 credits.

BA Joint Honours in Accounting

A joint honours accounting and finance/economics student takes an equivalent of 120 credits, with a minimum of 40 credits from each principal subject, following either the dissertation route or the taught modules route set out above.

Dissertation Route (optional)

Code	Class Title	No. of Credits
AG435	Dissertation (optional; may be taken in either principal subject)	40

Optional Subjects (as previously detailed above)

Plus up to a maximum of four units (80 credits) of accounting classes from the list above. The balance of the 120 credits from the second principal subject, subject to the minimum of 40 credits in each subject. Note all taught classes are worth 20 credits.

Option B – Taught Modules Route

Option 1: 60 credits of optional taught classes in each subject; or

Option 2: 80 credits of optional taught classes in one subject and 40 credits of optional taught classes in the other. The 80 credits may be taken in either subject.

BA in Accounting, Maths and Statistics

A BA joint honours accounting with Maths and Stats students have to take a total of 120 credits and should follow the instructions of joint honours students

BSc Maths, Stats and Accounting

Please see the regulations provided by your department / degree coordinator.
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Examination and Assessment Procedures.

In the honours years all your marks significantly affect the outcome, in that your degree will be classified as either First Class, Upper Second Class, Lower Second Class, Third Class or Ordinary. In years one to three, a mark of 40% constitutes a pass and allows you to proceed to the next level. With a few exceptions (or your own personal satisfaction), it does not matter if you get 41% or 99% for an exam, in the honours year it does. Your performance becomes visible to the outside world, the class of degree you are awarded is determined by a set of rules and criteria and interpreted by those outside university as a level of attainment.

Honours assessment is not about getting over a minimum hurdle, but about achieving your full potential, meeting your own targets or demonstrating to others your abilities. Student's attitude towards assessment change and some find it difficult to gauge the level of performance necessary to achieve the different classification of degree. Each lecturer will have different interpretations of performance, which they will indicate during the course of the classes. Assignments will be marked and fed back to you as appropriate to the objectives of each class.

If you have problems in working out what is required of you **ask**. Ask your dissertation supervisor, lecturer or Honours Co-ordinator. They will explain their criteria and what they expect of you. Do not worry if different classes have slightly different criteria.

Different classes have different objectives, a class designed to develop creative problem solving skills, will have a different set of assessment criteria to one designed to teach formal research methods.

However the following may be used to help identify the characteristics of the different classes of degrees.

Essay	First class (70-100%)	Upper second (60-69%)	Lower second (50-59%)	Third (40-49%)	Fail (<40%)
Structure and Organisation	Balanced discussion Good relevant examples Clear (not necessarily original) synthesis	Balanced discussion Good relevant examples Generally clear synthesis, perhaps not fully extended in all situations	Discussion shows some balance but may be skewed Some relevant examples At least partial synthesis	Some evidence of discussion but lacking organisation Some examples, relevance may be implicit rather than explicit Limited evidence of synthesis	Little or no evidence of discussion. Examples if any show no evidence of selection for relevance. No synthesis
Knowledge	Firm grasp of key articles. Includes sources outside main readings. Linkages with other topics within the degree programme	Firm grasp of key articles within main reading, some reference to sources outside main reading Linkages with other topics within the subject area	Good knowledge of key articles within main reading, less frequent reference to sources outside the main reading. Some evidence of linkage to other topics within the subject area	Basic knowledge and understanding of key articles, some stronger than others; little reference to sources outside the main reading Limited evidence of some contexts relating to the subject area	Substantial gaps in knowledge of materials contained in core reading.
Source Material	Good use of key research articles Materials not directly covered in the class	Good use of key research articles Some evidence of reference to materials not directly covered in the class.	Competent coverage of key research articles Occasional reference to materials not directly covered in the class.	Awareness of key research articles, less skilful use in relation to the essay topic. No reference to materials not directly covered in class	Lack of awareness of key research articles.
Expression / Style	Impressive, eloquent Surprised by style, presentation and coverage	Clear standard of expression. High standard of styles, presentation and coverage	Expression is sufficient for the reader to understand what is written. Evidence of care taken in style, presentation and coverage	Expression is adequate to communicate the meaning. Quality of style, presentation and coverage is adequate but leaves the feeling that more care could have been taken	Limited clarity of expression reflecting limited understanding of the material covered
Analysis	High quality of conceptual understanding Logical formulation of an argument	Good standard of analysis, focusing on the nature of the question and the balance of evidence presented to support the argument	Shows analytical skill but with some gaps in critical evaluation and relying to some extent on accepted criticisms set out in literature or elsewhere	Analytical skill shown but more heavily derived from the work of others, with some reluctance to bring out the candidate's own reflections	No analytical skill shown.
Logical Conclusions related to the wording of questions	Candidate's own opinion logically argued Independent thought Use of a line of argument and support from research findings	Candidate's own opinion logically argued Clear link back to the wording of the question, with careful analysis of all aspects of the title/ topic	Candidate's opinion logically argued. Primarily relying on conventional wisdom derived from other sources Related generally to wording of question, but not all nuances	Some evidence of ability to present an opinion based on logical argument. Independent thought limited by choice of source material and relying on source opinion. Treats wording of question as general guide; insufficient focus on detail of wording	No evidence of ability to form an opinion. No evidence of independent thought. Little or no regard for the wording of the question
Other Features (as relevant)	Degree of difficulty of subject matter Adding something to the literature	Degree of difficulty of subject matter (taken into account) Good insight into the existing literature	Degree of difficulty of subject matter (taken into account). Competent knowledge of the main literature	Degree of difficulty of subject matter (taken into account)	Degree of difficulty of subject matter (taken into account)

Rules for awarding Degree Classification

This table provides a statement on how awards are normally classified across the University. This should be read in conjunction with the:

[Academic Regulations | University of Strathclyde](#)

[Course Regulations](#)

[Distinction](#)

[Marking Guide](#)

The summary marks should be rounded to the nearest integer.

UG Degree classification	Credit weighted average
First	≥90
	≥80
	≥70
Upper Second	≥60
Lower Second	≥50
Third	≥40

Students who do not meet the requirements for Honours may be eligible for a lower award.

The summary marks above will be awarded in conjunction with specific requirements of local areas.

Accounting Honours Class Outlines

SEMESTER 1

AG420 Auditing Theory and Practice (Xiaoyu Xu)

The class will discuss the nature and purpose of the external audit of financial statements. It will do so through an examination of the formal institutional framework (e.g. the work of the International Federation of Accountants), the informal framework (e.g. the Big Four audit firms) and the processes underlying the collection of audit evidence and reporting of results. The class will adopt the perspective of the institutions and participants in the audit process themselves. This will necessarily require an agency-based approach to the discipline. While the limitations of this approach will be addressed in the passing, it is intended that students will see this class as a counterpoint to the more rigorous and theoretically motivated classes that are presently offered in the honours programme. This class will build directly on the third year core classes AG308/9. Introducing the subject at that level necessarily requires that a significant amount of class time be devoted to coverage of the practical and procedural aspects of forming an audit opinion and reporting thereon.

AG424 Accounting Theories (Panagiotis Loukopoulos)

The purpose of the class is to help students to understand how accounting theories and their models are created and evaluated i.e. how the contribution of a theoretical model is assessed. The class will enable students to gain the skills required to critique accounting theories centred on capital markets and review market based empirical research. In this respect, this class also enables you to review the contribution of capital market facing theories to developments in financial accounting.

SEMESTER 2

AG409 Sustainability Accounting: Theory and Practice (Sheng Li)

Our Accounting Honours programme includes a commitment to respond to new developments arising from research and practice and to cover emerging issues, including social and environmental issues as responsible business practice. This class is dealing with the impact on accounting of the emerging topic of sustainability. Sustainable development has been accepted as the goal of society as demonstrated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to 2030. Sustainable development will require a major restructuring of almost all of our human activities including accounting. The accountancy profession will be faced with the challenge of accounting for sustainability. Professional accounting bodies, academics and practitioners alike are reviewing the implications of sustainability for business and accountancy. This class will deal with this emerging and highly relevant topic.

AG415 Contemporary Issues in International Financial Reporting (Mark Johnson & Lars Hass)

The class will discuss selected topics in the preparation of financial statements for external publication. The subjects selected will be issues that provide an opportunity to explore various facets of the regulation of financial reporting and the associated accounting choices implied by such regulations. The topics covered will be at an advanced level and will be subject to some change as the practice of financial accounting develops. The class will, however, include a significant coverage of contemporary issues which have been of interest both to the accountancy profession and to society in recent years.

AG434 International Financial Management (Sheng Li)

Businesses and capital markets have increasingly operated in a globalized world where markets, trade, and investments cross borders over the past few decades. A solid understanding of international finance helps you appreciate how the global market works and make professional or personal decisions that integrate factors from a broader perspective.

SEMESTERS 1 AND 2

AG435 Accounting Dissertation (40 credits) – Mark Johnson / Supervisors

The Honours degree is awarded for demonstration of advanced knowledge of accounting research, skill in knowledge construction as evidenced in the dissertation, advanced knowledge of a specific field of research, advanced knowledge of data-gathering methods, scholarship in use of sources relied on and a contribution to knowledge development in accounting. For students who choose the dissertation route, AG435 is the single most important element of the Honours year, contributing 40 of the 120 honours credits. Students are required to submit a 30 credit dissertation and a 10 credit methodology and methods coursework assignment.

AG442: Sustainable Business: A Finance and Accounting Perspective (Dimitris Andriosopoulos)

This module will be open to any student in the honours year of accounting and/or finance programmes.

In the past two decades the entire landscape of business and how it is financed is being reshaped relative to concerns of environmental, social and governance (ESG) engagements of the corporate firms and their investors. The traditional arguments of shareholder vs stakeholder business finance is now being challenged in the face of growing corporate misdeeds, climate and environmental degradation, rising wealth inequality, mounting social tensions such as quality of work-life balance, racial, gender and other discriminations etc. These environmental, social and governance externalities are changing the perception of the society which the businesses serve. Greater societal demands are now being imposed to reshape the way businesses are assessed and financed to render it more sustainable and more importantly more purposeful/responsible. Businesses and finance are now expected to generate innovative products and mechanisms to drive mitigation of externalities related to ESG issues. The incorporation of ESG factors in almost every dimension of investment and financing strategies is becoming pivotal for the survival and sustainability of business and investment communities. This course introduces students to the growing importance and varied dimensions of sustainable and purposeful/responsible finance. The second part of the course will focus on the application of sustainable finance in industry and the regulations that surround sustainable finance.

AG517 Data and Textual Analysis for Accounting and Finance (Panagiotis Loukopoulos and James Bowden)

This module will be open to any student in the honours year of accounting and/or finance programmes.

The financial services industry is changing rapidly, driven by the growing volume and complexity of data and by increases in computational power. Employers increasingly seek graduates with data analysis skills, and Python in particular is widely used across the industry and strongly differentiates applicants at recruitment. The proposed module responds directly to this demand, developing foundational programming skills and the analytical tools needed to work with large, computationally challenging financial datasets, together with an awareness of the practical and ethical issues involved. Unstructured data, estimated at 80–90% of all available data, is a further source of competitive advantage, and textual analysis and natural language processing allow such data to be condensed into a usable form. Human-machine collaboration skills are also becoming important in finance. The module therefore covers financial data analytics in Semester One and textual analytics in Semester Two, and will appeal to accounting and finance students.

Accounting Honours Teaching Staff

Professor Lars Helge Hass

Professor Hass joined Strathclyde in the summer of 2020. He was previously Visiting Associate Professor of Accounting at the Henry B. Tippie College of Business, University of Iowa. His research interests include financial reporting, corporate finance, taxation, and innovation.

Dr Panagiotis Loukopoulos

Panagiotis Loukopoulos is a Lecturer in Accounting in the University of Strathclyde. Before joining the department of Accounting and Finance at Strathclyde Business School, he was teaching Accounting at the University of Limerick.

Panagiotis' research interests lie in the intersection of empirical corporate finance and accounting and include the performance of initial public offerings, executive compensation, political risk, earnings management, and audit risk. He has published in highly ranked International Journals in Finance including the Journal of Corporate Finance, Journal of Banking and Finance, and Corporate Governance: An International Review. His research work has also been presented at leading international conferences such as the European Accounting Association (EAA), European Financial Management Association, the Financial Engineering and Banking Society Annual Conference (FEBS) and the Sussex Young Scholar Conference, amongst others, as well as at professional organizations and practitioners' conferences and workshops.

Panagiotis has experience in teaching accounting (both financial and managerial accounting) and finance courses at MBA, MSc, and undergraduate level in Ireland and Greece. He has invariably received excellent feedback on his engaging and practice-oriented teaching.

Mr Craig McLaughlin

Senior Teaching Fellow. Craig joined Strathclyde from UWS and has worked in the Learning and Development department and Audit Department at KPMG. Craig has published in the areas of audit, ethics and carbon tax. His research areas cover these as well as accounting in sport and accounting education.

Mr Iain Peers

Teaching Fellow. Iain joined Strathclyde in 2018. He is a qualified Chartered Accountant with a tax background. Iain has supervised dissertations across a wide range of topics, including the development of accounting standards, ethics, gender in accounting, and taxation.

Mr Sheng Li

Sheng joined Strathclyde in Fall 2022. His research interests include bank accounting, taxation, and accounting regulation. He is keen to explore the real effects of accounting and tax rules using data driven analysis. He is also interested in investigating the inconsistency in ESG data over time and across dimensions, as well as how firms strategically shape their ESG disclosure and communicate with market participants about it.

Dr Mark Johnson

Teaching Fellow. Mark joined Strathclyde from Glasgow Caledonian University in 2023, where he was a lecturer in accounting and finance teaching on undergraduate and postgraduate Management Accounting and Financial Management modules. He studied for his PhD at Strathclyde Business School and prior to moving into academia, he worked in both operations and wealth management. Mark has supervised dissertations across a wide range of management accounting topics, including financial management in small businesses, financial literacy development of entrepreneurs in early-stage ventures and financial information systems development.

Mrs Rachael Nicholls

Teaching Fellow. Rachael is a Chartered Accountant with big 4 and investment banking accounting experience. Rachael joined Strathclyde in 2024, having previously taught college, degree and professional accounting exams up to final level with a focus on risk, ethics, corporate governance and audit, alongside the full breadth of core accounting skills. Rachael has a particular interest in CSR and sustainability and helping students develop the skillset needed to work in the emerging sustainability reporting industry.

Dr Yinuo Pan

Yinuo joined Strathclyde Business School as a Lecturer in Accounting in 2024, after recently completing her PhD at the University of Edinburgh. Her research is qualitative and interdisciplinary, situated at the intersection of accounting, sociology, and the history of professions. Her doctoral research focused on the emerging professionalization processes within the fields of CSR and sustainability. Recently, she has been studying state-profession dynamics and accounting professions in China, as well as public value(s) and non-financial reporting. She welcomes students interested in qualitative and/or critical accounting research.