Developing your Graduate Attributes through pursuing MSc in Finance and Management and Finance & IT Programmes

The MSc Finance and Management and MSc Finance and IT programmes at Keele provide students with a diverse range of opportunities to acquire the intellectual, personal and professional capabilities that put our students in good standing to pursue further academic studies or professional career.

Finance, Management and IT disciplines are key to a successful performance of any organisation. The Finance discipline builds on a complex theoretical framework but also makes extensive use of quantitative tools and empirical techniques which find application in a wide range of organisational problems. Finance provides essential knowledge for the understanding of business behaviour, strategy and corporate performance and this makes the subject central to the study of business and management. The Management part of the Finance and Management programme contributes an important business practice dimension related to core aspects of management including strategy, entrepreneurship and information management and also functional areas of business such as accounting, marketing and operations. The IT part of the Finance and IT programme adds the information technology perspective of the business including information systems, database and knowledge management, and also systems design, development and their application.

A range of electives available in Finance and also in Management for students pursuing MSc Finance and Management and in IT for students pursuing MSc Finance and IT programmes convey several advantages, allowing individuals considerable scope to tailor their own learning whilst also which also promoting the students’ ability to secure either postgraduate-level employment or engage in further postgraduate opportunities in the subject.

This document outlines the graduate attributes that are developed as a result of engaging in the Keele MSc Finance and Management and MSc Finance and IT
programmes and explains how these attributed are embedded in the learning activities undertaken during postgraduate study. Participation in the compulsory elements of the programme will deliver the full range of skills and qualities that mark the Keele graduate as unique while engagement with our elective modules will develop or further deepen specific aspects of the attributions described.

**Graduate Attributes**

Through full engagement with one of our programmes you will develop:

1. an in-depth appreciation of the nature of the contexts in which finance, management and information technology functions operate, including knowledge of the market and business environments which are essential for systematic understanding of the market behaviour and financial and other business decisions by organisations together with the capacity to investigate and explain a diverse range of often interrelated real-world business phenomena;

2. the ability to apply main modern quantitative and technical methods of financial (and IT for MSc Finance & IT) research and use professional software tools for the systematic analysis of real financial and business data, including accounting information, information from financial markets and other relevant business data

3. the ability to investigate financial data and combine theoretical models and analysis with up-to-date factual knowledge about real business or financial market phenomena in order to explore and critically evaluate possible solutions to real world financial problems;

4. the information literacy, including the ability to gather, systematically evaluate and synthesise large amounts of frequently conflicting information, ideas and data from a range of various data sources relevant to the study of finance and business.

5. a capacity for the critical evaluation of arguments and evidence including the ability to think critically about the limits of your analysis in practical real-life market and business environment;

6. the capability to undertake and report various types of quantitative and qualitative information together with analysis, argument and commentary using relevant financial concepts and methods in a well-balanced and concise manner to a wide-range of audience, exercising appropriate levels of scholarship;

7. a capacity for independent and self-managed learning, including the knowledge, skills, self-confidence and self-awareness to actively pursue your future goals, whether they be finance-related or otherwise;
8. knowledge and skills that enable you to develop independence and self-confidence in your work and the ability to work productively with colleagues and other individuals as an active citizen in the communities in which you live and work;

9. a professional and reflective approach, including qualities of leadership, responsibility, personal integrity, empathy, care and respect for others, recognising the importance of accountability and self-regulation;

10. an effective approach to learning and study, including time management, creativity and intellectual integrity demonstrating the flexibility to thrive in a rapidly changing and uncertain external environment and willing to update skills and knowledge as circumstances require.

**How These Graduate Attributes are Realised**

The above attributes are developed progressively during an individual’s time at Keele and may be enhanced depending upon the elective modules that are studied within the Programme and the opportunities outside of the academic curriculum. What follows are some key examples of where graduate attributes are developed in the MSc Finance and Management programme. Naturally, the development of these attributes will often overlap in practice, with some learning contexts developing several graduate attributes at the same time.

**Attribute 1**

The ability to in-depth appreciate the complex nature of the contexts in which finance and management operate is developed through the engagement with all core programme modules starting with “Financial Markets” in Semester 1 which facilitate the understanding of the financial markets context and the principles of investor behaviour. Core management modules “Strategy and Information Management” and “Marketing and Operation Management” add broad context from other key areas of business allowing students in Finance and Management to obtain a complex view of the economic and business environment in which organisations operate. Core IT modules in the Finance & IT programme add a broader IT-related context to a similar effect. Students are encouraged to use their knowledge from the programme and combine it with their prior academic and business experience to further explore the links between the key areas of business and the broad environment and to recognise the implications of these inter-relations for real world business problems.
Attribute 2
The ability to apply modern quantitative methods for the systematic analysis of real financial and business data is developed throughout the programme alongside the capability to deploy industry-standard software for data analysis. In Semester 1, the ‘Quantitative Methods in Finance’ module equips students with a variety of mathematical and statistical methods and techniques which are widely applied in data analysis. “Applied Finance” module in Semester 2 builds on the previous module and introduces advanced techniques in financial time series analysis and modelling. The working knowledge of advanced professional statistical software is also developed at this stage. Students undertaking a Dissertation in Finance further apply these skills to analyse and model the financial market or company data and also interpret the results as part of their independent dissertation project.

Attribute 3
The ability to investigate and combine theoretical models with empirical evidence appears across the programme. Alternative theoretical explanations for developments in asset price determination and optimal portfolio allocation, for example, are central to ‘Financial Markets’ in Semester 1 whilst in Semester 2 students evaluate key theoretical models and their properties using empirical data in “Applied Finance” (as part of Finance and Management) or by applying various modeling approaches and simulated data in Excel and VBA in “Financial Modelling” (as part of Finance & IT). All students have the opportunity to further develop these skills while undertaking a dissertation in Finance or Management or a project in IT in Semester 3. Students also learn to question whether empirical or simulated evidence is adequate for the financial, management or IT-related propositions which are investigated.

Attribute 4
Information literacy is developed throughout the programmes and from different angles. “Quantitative Methods for Finance” pull together and systemise basic skills for gathering, evaluation and synthesising quantitative financial information with “Applied Finance” further advancing these skills for applications in time series analysis for Finance and Management students. “Accounting and Finance” provides skills for processing accounting information and understanding its role for different stakeholders whereas Strategy and Information Management provides methods and procedures for business information management. Students with a specialisation in IT acquire advanced skills in a number of information technology areas. An additional aspect of the information processing skills is developed further at the dissertation (or summer project) stage involving the development of literature search skills essential for essay and report writing in both academic and business environments.
Attribute 5
A problem-solving approach underpins much of finance and is adopted extensively in tutorial and lab class work throughout the Programme allowing an understanding of general principles to be acquired through the solution of specific problems. The problem-solving approach is also specific to IT given the applied nature of this business function which is important for the Finance and IT students. The ability to think critically about the results of such analysis is equally important, challenging assumptions and reviewing methods of analysis allows you to infer the limits of the approach and your understanding of a problem.

Attribute 6
Students further develop both written and verbal communication skills during their study of all Finance, Management and IT disciplines and receive feedback on their progress. Every module involves some form of written work: this may involve interpretation, analysis, reviews, reports and case studies, and also traditional essays. Multiple types of written assessment encourage students to deploy a variety of alternative writing skills across the programme, in settings that mimic opportunities to write for different audiences using relevant writing style and appropriate levels of scholarship throughout. Verbal communication skills are enhanced during informal class discussions and also formal presentations. For example, in “Strategy and Information Management” students are expected to, first, discuss their answers to posed questions in groups and, at the next stage, clearly and articulately present and argue their answers.

Attribute 7
By enabling students from respective student cohorts to work with both real-life problems in Finance and Management and Finance and IT and those of an academic nature, the Programmes provide a variety of experiences and challenges to help individuals to develop the knowledge, skills, self-confidence and self-awareness to pursue future goals. Students are encouraged to pursue their personal interests and maximise their self-confidence and employability by pursuing a topic of interest which they can choose from a wide range of supported areas: in Finance or Management (MSc finance and Management) or in Finance and IT (MSc Finance and IT) in their dissertation or IT project (for MSc Finance and IT).

Attributes 8 and 9
The ability and motivation to participate responsibly and collaboratively as an active citizen in the communities in which you live and work is developed both through the team work activities within the programme and also in the various co-curricular opportunities. Qualities of leadership, responsibility, personal integrity, empathy, care and respect for others, accountability and self-regulation are fostered through
opportunities for tutorial participation and group work. The multinational and multicultural diversity of students in our programmes provide a rich environment for the development of these essential qualities.

The Programme seeks to empower individuals to develop a professional and reflective approach to their studies and future career. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed firmly upon the individual taking responsibility for their own learning, supported at all stages by professional staff. This encourages a reflective approach to learning that identifies and overcomes weaknesses, whilst recognising the importance of planning and target-setting.

**Attribute 10**

Studying, theorising and solving emerging and topical issues in finance and management or information technology areas enables students to gain a unique understanding and experience of the latest business developments in a variety of business, social and professional settings. This helps students develop the wide outlook and skills necessary to thrive in a diverse range of careers after completing the Programme. Both MSc Finance and Management and MSc Finance & IT Programmes focus on developing an understanding of the implications of an ever-changing economic, global and social environment for investors, businesses and government. The research-led ethos of the Economics-Finance, Management and Computer Science Groups mean that students will be introduced to the latest developments and thinking in the field, through diverse readings and empirical research, led by highly trained and experienced lecturers and tutors.