UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Microcredential Specification

Key Information			
Module title	Advanced Financial Analysis		
Level	7	Credit value	15
Member Institution	UCL	Notional study hours and duration of module	150 hours
Module lead author/ Subject matter expert	Danusia Wysocki		
Module co-author (where applicable)			

Rationale for the module

This course focuses on the interrogation and analysis of a company's financial statements and wider contextual information. It enables you, as a manager, analyst or stakeholder, to question, scrutinise and evaluate the information presented in financial reports. You will learn to identify positive and negative indicators of performance, understand the effects of judgement and discretion in accounting, and distinguish between 'true and fair' reporting and creative or misleading practices.

To do this effectively, the course develops the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to ask the right questions, critique strengths and weaknesses in reported information, and form informed conclusions about a company's past performance, current position and potential future trajectory. You will also explore how creative accounting and deliberate manipulation can distort reported figures, and how analytical techniques can provide insight into a company's likelihood of survival, prosperity or failure. This foundation supports further study across the wider accounting and financial management arena.

Aims of the module

This course aims to provide you with a sound understanding of key issues and applied methodologies used to interrogate external financial reporting statements. You will learn how to evaluate a company's financial performance, health and position, while also understanding the role of discretion, judgement and creative accounting in shaping financial results. The course aims to develop your ability to critique the integrity of financial reports and to use analytical techniques to support credible assessments of performance and risk

Topics covered in this module:

Course overview and introduction

- Strengths, weakness and limitations of external financial reporting statements.
- Discretion in applying financial standards and accounting principles.
- Creative accounting.
- Instances of fraud.
- Horizontal and vertical, and other appropriate/relevant analyses.
- Using ratios to predict survivals, prosperity, and failure.

Learning outcomes for the module

A. Knowledge and understanding

By the end of this module students should be able to:

- Develop and apply a structured framework to analyse and assess a company's financial performance, health and position for a range of stakeholders.
- Explain how discretion and judgement in preparing financial statements can distort reported performance, and evaluate the impact of creative accounting and deliberate fraud on reported figures.
- Identify and apply appropriate adjustments to financial statements to improve comparability between companies and over time.
- Think critically about reported financial performance, undertake research to identify valid and credible measures, and use evidence to support your conclusions.
- Synthesise quantitative and qualitative information to form justified, forward-looking assessments of business performance, including the likelihood of corporate survival, prosperity or failure.
- Apply structured techniques to arrive at justified decisions in complex situations where there is no single correct solution.
- Prepare and communicate clear, evidence-based financial analyses and recommendations suitable for managers, analysts, shareholders and other stakeholders.
- Demonstrate problem-solving skills in the context of advanced financial analysis.

B. Cognitive skills

By the end of this module students should be able to:

- Think critically about the reporting of financial performance, health and position.
- Undertake research into ways of determining valid and credible financial performance.
- Synthesize and use information and knowledge effectively to improve understanding past, current and predicted future business performance.

C. Practical and professional skills

Further practical and professional skills that can be gained from this module include:

- Applying and analyze structured techniques to arrive at justified decisions within a complex environment, where clearly defined and unique solutions do not exist
- Prepare and communicate an appropriately detailed and convincing company assessment, relevant to managers, analysts, shareholders, and other stakeholders.
- Undertake and demonstrate problem solving skills.

Learning and Teaching Strategy and Methods

The learning and teaching strategy for this course reflects the flexible, self-paced model required for microcredentials, ensuring that all students can progress in a structured yet adaptable way, regardless of their location, background or prior experience of online learning.

The course is designed by subject specialists and supported by expert learning designers and online education teams to ensure that learning activities, digital media and assessment are aligned to the intended learning outcomes.

A structured sequence is embedded into every course, following a coherent approach to content acquisition, active learning, feedback and evaluation.

- Content introduces and explains core concepts through a blend of video and digital reading.
- Activity enables students to apply learning through practice-based, professional and reflective tasks.
- Feedback is provided through automated quizzes, model responses and guidance from the AI study assistant.
- Evaluation encourages learners to reflect on their progress and identify next steps in their learning journey.

This approach ensures continuity throughout the ten modules and supports students in building confidence, competence and independence progressively across the course.

Teaching methods

The following teaching methods are integrated into the course design:

- Video-based guidance delivering structured explanations of key ideas with visual aids
- Interactive learning activities enabling knowledge application to authentic workplace scenarios
- Self-directed independent learning through guided readings, online library exploration and personal research
- Frequent formative assessment including knowledge checks, worked examples and reflective questions to reinforce understanding and skills development
- AI-supported learning with 24/7 access to the AI study assistant for clarification, feedback and study support at the point of need
- Progress monitoring and reflection helping students assess achievement, review understanding and plan further study

Support for learning

Although this course does not include scheduled live teaching, students are never studying alone. The learning platform includes tools to track progress, submit assessments and access feedback, while the Online Library provides curated digital resources to enhance academic skills and knowledge

Clear guidance is provided to help students manage their study time, structure weekly goals and maintain consistency throughout the learning journey. Recommendations for integrating study into personal and professional schedules are included in the induction resources, promoting resilience, motivation and successful completion.

Assessment strategy, assessment methods

This course uses a practical assessment approach that helps you show both your understanding of key ideas and your ability to apply them to real business situations. You will complete a coursework task that test how well you can use core theories and analytical techniques. This assessment focuses on developing real professional skills, such as interpreting business data, solving operational or financial problems, and explaining your decisions clearly using appropriate frameworks. This approach looks at your abilities as a whole—how you connect theory with practice—while also helping you build your analytical, critical-thinking, and communication skills over time. A mark of 50% is required to pass the assessment.

The assessment design is flexible and supports self-paced learning. For coursework tasks, students can choose from a range of assessment windows and submit their work at the point that best fits their personal schedule and study plans. This flexibility allows you to manage your learning in a way that suits your circumstances, while still meeting the module's academic requirements. It also encourages you to plan your time effectively and engage with the material at a pace that supports deeper understanding.

Assessment Elements

1. Coursework (100% weighting)

- Students are required to apply the concepts and techniques learned in the module to a realistic business scenario.
- The assessment is designed to develop your global employability skills.
- The coursework is directly aligned with the module's learning outcomes, ensuring you are assessed on the knowledge, skills, and competencies you are expected to achieve.

Learning resources

This course is structured into ten modules, designed to support flexible self-paced study and the practical application of knowledge to professional contexts.

The learning resources are curated to enable both directed learning and independent study, providing opportunities to acquire new knowledge, apply concepts in realistic scenarios, receive feedback and evaluate progress throughout the course

Each course follows a consistent learning sequence, incorporating a blend of the following resource types:

Video lessons
Concise explainer videos introduce key concepts and practical methods. Presenters utilise visual aids such as slides and screen demonstrations to enhance understanding and maintain clarity.

Interactive and practical activities
Learning activities provide opportunities to apply concepts to real-world and workplace scenarios. These include worked examples, reflective tasks and application-based exercises designed to build confidence and professional competence as you progress

Quizzes and knowledge checks
Automated quizzes provide rapid feedback to support mastery of key ideas. These may include multiple-choice questions, worked solution examples or feedback from the AI study assistant.

Quizzes are generally used formatively to reinforce learning, but some may contribute to assessment if completed under appropriate conditions.

AI-supported learning
A 24/7 AI study assistant is available throughout the course to provide guidance, help learners reflect on progress, clarify concepts and support completion of designated activities.

Self-evaluation tools
Regular opportunities are provided for learners to monitor progress, reflect on achievements and identify areas requiring further study, ensuring continuous learning and improvement

Project-based learning
Each learner develops a professional-quality project linked to a realistic scenario. This supports the development of globally relevant employability skills, including communication, digital capability, problem-solving and adaptability

E-resources and library access
All students receive full access to the University of London Online Library and VLE resources. Directed reading and recommended online sources are integrated into each course, supporting further research, information-literacy development and independent study

Materials are provided in accessible digital formats suitable for study across multiple devices. Learners are encouraged to extend their engagement with topics of interest through wider reading and exploration of online library holdings.

Study expectations
Courses include indicative timings to support planning and time management, with a total study commitment of approximately 150 hours for the full course. Learners may adjust weekly effort to suit their individual needs and availability whilst progressing through courses in the recommended learning sequence

Reading list

- Anderson, D.R., D.J Sweeney, T.A. Williams, J. Freeman and E. Shoesmith *Statistics for business and economics*. (South-Western: Cengage, 2017).
- Anderson, D.R., D.J. Sweeney, T.A. Williams, M. Wisniewski and X. Pierron *An introduction to management science*. (Andover: Cengage, 2017).
- Makridakis, S., S.C. Wheelwright and R.J. Hyndman *Forecasting methods and applications*. (New York: John Wiley, 1998).
- Moon, M.A., Mentzer, J.T. and D.E. Thomas Jr 'Customer demand planning at Lucent Technologies: a case study in continuous improvement through sales forecast auditing', *Industrial Marketing Management* 29(1) 2000, pp.19–26.
- Slack, N., A. Brandon-Jones and R. Johnston *Operations management*. Eighth edition. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2016).
- Wilson, J.H. and B. Keating *Business forecasting*. 5th international edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 2007).

Precise reading from this material will be specified as part of the course.
Additional recommended reading and other references will be available in the VLE.