

Securing Your University Offer for Business

Essay Competition Award Ceremony

11 April 2023



Agenda

- Welcome
- Studying Business at University: an Overview
- Submitting a Competitive Application
- NU London Insights
- Q&A

Studying Business at University: an Overview



What is the study of Business?



- Covers a wide variety of fascinating fields - the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches and the challenges businesses face to achieve the objectives of their stakeholders (shareholders, consumers, government, and wider society)
- Courses may cover diverse aspects of business, including management approaches, business structures, marketing and finance
- You may dive into courses in supply chain management, innovation, fintech, statistics, global responsibility, sustainability and entrepreneurship



Where and how can you study Business?

- Single Honours Business BSc or BA (BA indicates less maths)
- Many joint and combined study options, e.g.: Business and History, Business and Psychology, Business with Computer Science, Business with Economics (*note that the study balance is likely to be other than 50/50 if it's Business *with* rather than Business *and*)
- Different degree spans (standard English 3 years, standard Scottish 4 years, fast-track 2 years etc)
- Degree apprenticeships take a more practical approach (potentially useful to fast track toward particular careers)
- Full-time/part-time; online/in-person; study abroad (especially interesting for a global economic perspective, or for career-linked work placements)

How is Business taught?

- **Reading:** Reading is critical in understanding both current and historical business systems
- **Lectures:** Lectures will give an introduction to historical and current business climates, as well as an understanding of how to go about analysing the different business systems on both a local and global scale
- **Seminars:** Seminars are a good way to discuss the more qualitative side of business, where several different viewpoints can help come to a more accurate analysis
- **Essays:** Formative and summative, business essays are where you can show off your thinking skills, research, analysis and arguments
- **Presentations:** These are useful to show independent research and analytical development, and give you more hands on practice with the subject - these may be individual or group presentations



What skills do you develop?

- Logical thinking
- Critical and analytical thinking
- Strong communication skills (oral and written)
- Numerical and analytical skills
- Decision making
- Presentation and report writing skills
- Project and resource management
- Self-motivation, initiative and effective time management
- Problem solving

The skills you will acquire as a Business graduate will allow you to pivot flexibly into a variety of industries, when you enter the working world.

What can you do after your degree?

As a Business graduate your transferable skills can take you into ANY industry. Some of the top graduate destinations are:

- Business Development Manager
- Accountancy
- Corporate Treasurer
- Human Resources Officer
- Marketing Executive
- Bank Branch Manager
- Estate Agent
- Tax Inspector
- Project Manager

Submitting a Competitive Application for Business



What are the entry requirements?



Information provided by ucas.com

- **A levels:** Entry requirements range from CCC to AAB, with universities and colleges most commonly asking for BBB
- **International Baccalaureate Diploma:** From 30 points and above in IB Diploma, depending on individual course
- **Scottish Highers:** From BBBB to AAABB (most frequently required BBBB)
- If **Advanced Highers** are requested, typically ABB
- Other Level 3/Level 6 qualifications (e.g. **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Business, SVQ Business and Administration (SCQF Level 6)**) may be accepted as an alternative to A levels/Highers by some providers



What are admissions tutors looking for?

- Enthusiasm and motivation to study Business
- Credible evidence that supports your subject passion
- Proactive subject exploration and engagement - e.g.: wider reading beyond the set texts
- Relevant extracurricular/super-curricular activities
- Interests outside of school, relating to Business
- Relevant and transferable work experience
- Aims and goals; career plans if known
- Understanding of the demands of studying at university, and how this is different from school

What super-curricular activities would support my application?

Super-curricular activities take the subjects you study further, beyond what you have learnt at school or college. Some examples for Business may include:

- Wider reading beyond the set texts
- Reading specialist magazines and journals
- Attending university taster lectures or taster days
- Listening to podcasts, TED talks or online lectures
- Attending a Business Summer School
- Taking an online Business course
- Work experience, shadowing and volunteering
- Taking part in university essay competitions!



Why is the personal statement so important?

- Often your only chance to 'sell yourself' to the university and impress the admissions tutor
- Helps to differentiate between equally excellent candidates with similar or identical grade profiles, especially for competitive courses
- Helps if you are a borderline candidate
- Demonstrates your reasons for applying for a course
- May form basis of an interview - tutors may ask questions arising from the statement
- May help if on results day you don't quite make your grades

How can I write a compelling personal statement?

- Invest plenty of time in the brainstorming/thinking stage, before starting to write your statement
- Structure your personal statement
- Use positive and enthusiastic language
- Make every sentence count - word count is tight!
- Ensure it reflects your 'voice', and your 'journey'
- Use evidence to support claims/statements
- Be prepared to draft and redraft
- Be honest - don't exaggerate and don't plagiarise
- Double check grammar and spelling for errors
- Ask for support, especially with proofreading and checking - it's easy for mistakes to slip through!





What does an admissions interview look like?

- Unique opportunity to discuss a subject you are passionate about with an academic tutor
- Opportunity for tutor to get to know you and your motivation for applying - you can also ask questions!
- May take the form of a 'taster' tutorial
- Unlikely to be a test of knowledge - tutor will be more interested in how you think, rather than what you know
- Discussion-based; questions will probe your subject interest, enthusiasm and aptitude
- Questions may build on your personal statement
- Questions will be challenging - don't panic if you don't immediately have an answer; take your time to think
- Some interviews may include a task, or pre-reading

How can I prepare for my admissions interview?



- Carefully reread your personal statement, and be prepared to expand upon any of the points you have included
- Re-read or re-familiarise yourself with any texts you referenced, so these are fresh in your mind
- Undertake any reading or pre-interview tasks in good time
- Practice talking about the points in your statement
- Research who will be interviewing you
- Make sure you are clear regarding interview logistics
- If you will be undertaking a virtual interview, make sure you have somewhere suitable for this task, with good wifi
- Prepare questions you would like to ask in the interview

NU London Insights



Faculty insights

- Business is a subject that will shape so much of our lives, whether it be as an everyday person trying to choose which toothpaste to buy, a pensions investor looking to make a client recommendation, or managing the advertising account of a major brand.
- Curiosity and the drive to seek out knowledge, as this is the best way to generate insights.
- As I teach marketing, one of the best things I'd recommend is going to shops! Take your time, look around, maybe sit in the cafe and people-watch. You can learn a lot from how people use a space, who it's meant for, what design features it has. For example, Flying Tiger has a unique layout that's not very common in the UK.
- Make sure you have a passion/interest outside your main field of study; it makes you a well-rounded person. I listen to a lot of history podcasts on the train to work.

Student tips and hints

- Business graduates can be found everywhere - in consultancy, think tanks, governmental and non-governmental organisations (like the UN), media, marketing, Civil Service, construction, transport and logistics, retail, HR and education
- Tutors look for curious, analytical students who are interested in understanding the connections between things, who think outside of the box, and are interested in social processes
- If you mention a book you've read, make sure you've read it. Don't use buzzwords; make sure you understand the concepts you mention. Your statement should be natural and convincing



Suggestions for wider reading

- Aaker & Bagdonas (2021), *Humor, Seriously: Why Humor Is a Secret Weapon in Business and Life*, Currency Publishing. ISBN13: 9780593135280
- Coyle (2019), *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*, Random House Business Publishing. ISBN10: 1847941273
- Zhuo (2019), *The Making of a Manager: What to Do When Everyone Looks to You*, Portolio Publishing. ISBN 0525540423 (comes with many illustrations)
- Meyer (2016), *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business*, Public Affairs Publishing. ISBN13: 978-1610392501
- Knight (2016), *Shoe Dog: A Memoir by the Creator of Nike*, Scribner Publishing. ISBN13: 978-1501135910
- Markovic, Gyrd-Jones, von Wallpach, Lindgreen, (2022), *Research Handbook on Brand Co-Creation: Theory, Practice and Ethical Implications*, Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN: 9781839105418
- Kravets, Maclaran, Stevens (2022), *The Routledge Companion to Marketing and Feminism*, Routledge. ISBN: 9780367477578
- Crawford, Brennan (2022), *Decoding Coca-Cola: A Biography of a Global Brand*, Routledge. ISBN: 9780367642204
- Hill & McDonagh (2020), *The Dark Side of Marketing Communications: Critical Marketing Perspectives*, Routledge. ISBN: 9781138587137

Q&A

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