

## **FINS4777**

### **Empirical Corporate Finance**

#### **Course Outline Semester 1, 2017**

**Part A: Course-Specific Information**  
**Part B: Key Policies, Student Responsibilities  
and Support**

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## **PART A: COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

### **1 STAFF CONTACT DETAILS**

Lecturer-in-charge: Renée Adams  
Room UNSW Business School 341  
Phone No: 9385 4280  
Email: [renee.adams@unsw.edu.au](mailto:renee.adams@unsw.edu.au)  
Consultation Times – Fridays 12-14 (or by appointment)

### **2 COURSE DETAILS**

#### **2.1 Teaching Times and Locations**

Lectures start in Week 1(to Week 9): The Time and Location are:  
Tuesday Lectures: 15:00-18:00 TETB LG03  
Friday Lectures: QUADG042  
Saturday Lectures: BUS2015

#### **2.2 Units of Credit**

The course is worth 6 units of credit.

#### **2.3 Summary of Course**

The aim of the course is to prepare Fourth Year Honours and research (MPhil and PhD) students to do research in Empirical Corporate Finance. The course is organised around published and working papers in the field with an emphasis on econometric methods. Rather than providing an exhaustive overview of the field, the course focuses in depth on selected topics to illustrate different empirical approaches to the same or related questions. Using papers on ownership concentration and corporate governance, the course will highlight the following empirical themes: endogeneity, difference in difference estimators and event studies.

#### **2.4 Course Aims and Relationship to Other Courses**

FINS5577 is a compulsory fourth year undergraduate and postgraduate course in corporate finance. This course is designed to stimulate students to think critically about research and policy. After taking this course, students should have a good overview of standard empirical approaches to research questions and a grasp of some of the underlying theory. They should also have an understanding of what the current state of the literature is in the topics we cover and where the holes are.

Material covered in other undergraduate corporate finance courses, e.g. Applied Corporate Finance (FINS3625) has direct relevance to this course. In particular, topics relating to mergers and acquisitions, investment, capital structure and agency theories provide a useful foundation for understanding the topics at a more advanced level. Standard valuation techniques (e.g., discounted cash flow) covered in Business Finance (FINS1613) will be useful if you wish to value merger targets, for example. The econometric techniques covered in Research Method in Finance 1 are essential.

As RMF1 is required for this course, knowledge of Stata is assumed.

## 2.5 Student Learning Outcomes

The Course Learning Outcomes are what you should be able to DO by the end of this course if you participate fully in learning activities and successfully complete the assessment items.

The Learning Outcomes in this course also help you to achieve some of the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes for all postgraduate coursework students in the Business School. Program Learning Goals are what we want you to BE or HAVE by the time you successfully complete your degree (e.g. 'be an effective team player'). You demonstrate this by achieving specific Program Learning Outcomes - what you are able to DO by the end of your degree (e.g. 'participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams').

For more information on the Postgraduate Coursework Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, see Part B of the course outline.

### Business Postgraduate Coursework Program Learning Goals and Outcomes

**1. Knowledge: Our graduates will have current disciplinary or interdisciplinary knowledge applicable in local and global contexts.**

You should be able to identify and apply current knowledge of disciplinary or interdisciplinary theory and professional practice to business in local and global environments.

**2. Critical thinking and problem solving: Our graduates will have critical thinking and problem solving skills applicable to business and management practice or issues.**

You should be able to identify, research and analyse complex issues and problems in business and/or management, and propose appropriate and well-justified solutions.

**3. Communication: Our graduates will be effective communicators in professional contexts.**

You should be able to:

- a. Produce written documents that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose, and
- b. Produce oral presentations that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose.

**4. Teamwork: Our graduates will be effective team participants.**

You should be able to participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams, and reflect on your own teamwork, and on the team's processes and ability to achieve outcomes.

**5. Ethical, social and environmental responsibility: Our graduates will have a sound awareness of ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business issues and practice.**

You should be able to:

- a. Identify and assess ethical, environmental and/or sustainability considerations in business decision-making and practice, and
- b. Consider social and cultural implications of business and /or management practice.

The following table shows how your Course Learning Outcomes relate to the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, and indicates where these are assessed (they may also be developed in tutorials and other activities):

Program Learning Goals and Outcomes	Course Learning Outcomes	Course Assessment Item
<i>This course helps you to achieve the following learning goals for all</i>	<i>On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:</i>	<i>This learning outcome will be assessed in the following items:</i>

<i>Business postgraduate coursework students:</i>			
1	Knowledge	Analyze data and test hypotheses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empirical assignment</li> <li>• Group project</li> </ul>
2	Critical thinking and problem solving	Read and critically assess papers in the finance literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminar attendance and discussions</li> <li>• Writing analyses</li> <li>• Group project</li> <li>• Referee report</li> </ul>
3a	Written communication	Construct written work which is logically and professionally presented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referee Report</li> <li>• Group project</li> <li>• Writing analyses</li> </ul>
3b	Oral communication	Communicate ideas in a succinct and clear manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminar discussions</li> <li>• Early idea presentation</li> </ul>
4	Teamwork	Not specifically addressed in this course, except that group project involves working as a group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group project</li> </ul>
5a.	Ethical, social and environmental responsibility	Not specifically addressed in this course, except through some of the literature that touches on these issues.	
5b.	Social and cultural awareness	Not specifically addressed in this course, except through some of the literature that touches on these issues.	

### 3 LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

#### 3.1 Approach to Learning and Teaching in the Course

The course consists of weekly three-hour lectures and seminar attendance with a strong emphasis on class discussion and presentations.

#### 3.2 Learning Activities and Teaching Strategies

In order to obtain the full benefit from the course, students are required to follow the points below.

1. Read the assigned reading for each class and be prepared to ask critical questions and to answer specific questions about the readings.
2. Attend chosen seminar classes and arrive on time.
3. Actively participate in class: Answer questions posed by the instructor, and ask your own questions.
4. If issues are still not clear, first ask your classmates, then ask me, send me a mail, or come to my office during the consultation hours.

The rationale for the above suggestions and requirements is following these points is necessary to achieve the learning outcomes specified in Section 2.5. The design of the course presupposes that students are interested in the topics and will endeavour to learn the

material presented. Lectures and class discussions and presentations are all aimed at facilitating your learning. However, ultimately, the time and effort each student devotes to the course will determine how much he or she learns from it.

## 4 ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Formal Requirements

In order to pass this course, you must:

- achieve a composite mark of at least 50; and
- make a satisfactory attempt at all assessment tasks (see below).

### 4.2 Assessment Details

Assessment Task	Weighting	Due Date
Attendance at Thursday Finance seminars-at least 2 out of 6	5%	See schedule
Empirical exercise	25%	Week 4
Two class assignments related to seminar papers	10%	Weeks 2-9
Writing assignment	5%	Weeks 2-9
In class early ideas presentation (for group project)	10%	Week 6
Referee report	20%	Week 7
Group Project	25%	Week 12
Total	100%	

Grades are awarded in the following categories: HD (for marks of 85-100), DN (75-84), CR (65-74), PS (50-64), FL ((0-49). Further information is available at:

- Attendance at Thursday Finance seminars: students must attend 2 out of 6 corporate finance seminars Thursdays 10-11:30. Information on the seminar locations can be found on the finance department's website. The purpose of this exercise is to expose students to scientific discourse in the discipline. Further details will be available on Moodle.
- Empirical assignment: This assignment will involve the analysis of some financial data allowing students to evaluate their progress on the early sections of the course. All analysis must be conducted in Stata.
- Class assignments related to finance seminars: students must pick a seminar paper or papers related to seminar papers and discuss them either in writing or in class. The exact format will be determined once class sizes are finalized. The purpose of this exercise is to develop critical thinking. Further details will be available on Moodle.
- Referee report: a standard referee report on a paper that will be assigned should be submitted. The purpose of this report is to test students' ability to think critically.
- Group assignment: This consists of two parts: a presentation of an idea for a paper and the final paper. This assignment will require the collection and analysis of financial data in relation to a research paper. Discussion, interpretation and extension of the results will be required. All analysis must be conducted in Stata.
- Writing assignment: students must critically analyse a piece of writing and present their analysis in class.

### 4.3 Assessment Format

Information on the format of each assessment, submission instructions and penalties for late submission and the penalties will be distributed and made available on Moodle with each assignment question. Students are reminded to keep a copy of all work submitted for assessment.

### 4.4 Assignment Submission Procedure

Assignments are due in class and via the turnit in application on Moodle.

### 4.5 Late Submission

See 4.3.

#### Quality Assurance

The Business School is actively monitoring student learning and quality of the student experience in all its programs. A random selection of completed assessment tasks may be used for quality assurance, such as to determine the extent to which program learning goals are being achieved. The information is required for accreditation purposes, and aggregated findings will be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of Business School programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential.

## 5 COURSE RESOURCES

The website for this course is on Moodle at:

<http://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au>

References lists and some journal articles and other readings will be made available via Moodle.

## 6 COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the School and continual improvements are made based on this feedback. UNSW's myExperience survey is one of the ways in which student evaluative feedback is gathered. In this course, we will seek your feedback through end of semester myExperience responses.

## 7 COURSE SCHEDULE

COURSE SCHEDULE			
Week	Topic	Seminars	Other activities / assessment
Week 1 27 February	Lecture 1 Tuesday, February 28: <i>Introduction</i>		
Week 2 6 March	No Lectures		

Week 3 13 March	Lecture 2 Tuesday, March 14: Ownership and Performance  Lecture 3 Friday March 17: Event studies	Thursday, March 16 2017: 10:00-12:30, UNSW Business School 220, Robert Miller, Carnegie Mellon	Seminar paper presentations: Miller/Heimer  Writing presentations
Week 4 20 March	Lecture 4 Friday March 24: Going back to basics	Thursday, March 23 2017: 10:00-12:30, UNSW Business School 220, Rawley Heimer, Cleveland Fed	Seminar paper presentations: Hochberg  Writing presentations  Empirical Assignment due
Week 5 27 March	Lecture 5 Tuesday, March 18: Endogeneity  Lecture 6 Friday March 31: IV	Thursday, March 30 2017: 10:00-12:30, UNSW Business School 220, Yael Hochberg, Rice	Seminar paper presentations: Hochberg  Writing presentations
Week 6 03 April	Lecture 7 Tuesday, April 4: Group Project Ideas  Lecture 8 Friday April 7: Group Project Ideas		Seminar paper presentations: Sulaeman  Writing presentations  Group Project Idea Presentations
Week 7 10 April	No Lectures  <i>(Friday 14 April is Good Friday public holiday)</i>		Referee Report Due
<b>Mid-semester break: Friday 14 – Saturday 22 April inclusive</b>			
Week 8 24 April	<i>(Tuesday 25 April is Anzac Day public holiday)</i>  Lecture 9 Friday, April 28: IV  Lecture 10 Saturday, April 29 10-12: Diff-in-Diff  Lecture 11 Saturday April 29 13-16: Diff-in-Diff	Thursday, April 27 2017: 10:00-12:30, UNSW Business School 220, John Sulaeman, NUS	Seminar paper presentations: Simintzi  Writing presentations



Week 9 1 May	Lecture 12 Tuesday, May 2: Wrap-up	Thursday, May 4 2017: 10:00-12:30, UNSW Business School 220, Elena Simintzi, UBC	Seminar paper presentations: Dessaint  Writing presentations
Week 10 8 May	No lectures	Thursday, May 11 2017: 10:00-12:30, UNSW Business School 220, Olivier Dessaint, UBC	
Week 11 15 May	No lectures		
Week 12 22 May	No Lectures		
Week 13 29 May	No Lectures		NO LECTURES

## PART B: KEY POLICIES, STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPPORT

### 8 PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The Business School Program Learning Goals reflect what we want all students to BE or HAVE by the time they successfully complete their degree, regardless of their individual majors or specialisations. For example, we want all our graduates to HAVE a high level of business knowledge, and a sound awareness of ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business. As well, we want all our graduates to BE effective problem-solvers, communicators and team participants. These are our overall learning goals for you and are sought by employers.

You can demonstrate your achievement of these goals by the specific outcomes you achieve by the end of your degree (e.g. be able to analyse and research business problems and propose well-justified solutions). Each course contributes to your development of two or more program learning goals/outcomes by providing opportunities for you to practise these skills and to be assessed and receive feedback.

Program Learning Goals for undergraduate and postgraduate students cover the same key areas (application of business knowledge, critical thinking, communication and teamwork, ethical, social and environmental responsibility), which are key goals for all Business students and essential for success in a globalised world. However, the specific outcomes reflect different expectations for these levels of study.

We strongly advise you to choose a range of courses which assist your development of these skills, e.g., courses assessing written and oral communication skills, and to keep a record of your achievements against the Program Learning Goals as part of your portfolio.

#### Business Undergraduate Program Learning Goals and Outcomes

**1. Knowledge: Our graduates will have in-depth disciplinary knowledge applicable in local and global contexts.**

You should be able to select and apply disciplinary knowledge to business situations in a local and global environment.

**2. Critical thinking and problem solving: Our graduates will be critical thinkers and effective problem solvers.**

You should be able to identify and research issues in business situations, analyse the issues, and propose appropriate and well-justified solutions.

**3. Communication: Our graduates will be effective professional communicators.**

You should be able to:

- a. Prepare written documents that are clear and concise, using appropriate style and presentation for the intended audience, purpose and context, and
- b. Prepare and deliver oral presentations that are clear, focused, well-structured, and delivered in a professional manner.

**4. Teamwork: Our graduates will be effective team participants.**

You should be able to participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams, and reflect on your own teamwork, and on the team's processes and ability to achieve outcomes.

**5. Ethical, social and environmental responsibility: Our graduates will have a sound awareness of the ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business practice.**

You will be able to:

- a. Identify and assess ethical, environmental and/or sustainability considerations in business decision-making and practice, and
- b. Identify social and cultural implications of business situations.

### **Business Postgraduate Coursework Program Learning Goals and Outcomes**

**1. Knowledge: Our graduates will have current disciplinary or interdisciplinary knowledge applicable in local and global contexts.**

You should be able to identify and apply current knowledge of disciplinary or interdisciplinary theory and professional practice to business in local and global environments.

**2. Critical thinking and problem solving: Our graduates will have critical thinking and problem solving skills applicable to business and management practice or issues.**

You should be able to identify, research and analyse complex issues and problems in business and/or management, and propose appropriate and well-justified solutions.

**3. Communication: Our graduates will be effective communicators in professional contexts.**

You should be able to:

- a. Produce written documents that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose, and
- b. Produce oral presentations that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose.

**4. Teamwork: Our graduates will be effective team participants.**

You should be able to participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams, and reflect on your own teamwork, and on the team's processes and ability to achieve outcomes.

**5. Ethical, social and environmental responsibility: Our graduates will have a sound awareness of ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business issues and practice.**

You should be able to:

- a. Identify and assess ethical, environmental and/or sustainability considerations in business decision-making and practice, and
- b. Consider social and cultural implications of business and /or management practice.

## **9 ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**

The University regards plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct, and has very strict rules regarding plagiarism. For UNSW policies, penalties, and information to help you avoid plagiarism see: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism> as well as the guidelines in the online ELISE tutorials for all new UNSW students: <http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise>.

To see if you understand plagiarism, do this short quiz:

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism-quiz>

For information on how to acknowledge your sources and reference correctly, see: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/referencing>

For the *Business School Harvard Referencing Guide*, see the [Business Referencing and Plagiarism](#) webpage (Students>Learning support>Resources>Referencing and plagiarism).

## **10 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT**

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to university policies in relation to class attendance and general conduct and behaviour, including maintaining a safe, respectful environment; and to understand their obligations in relation to workload, assessment and keeping informed.

Information and policies on these topics can be found in UNSW Current Students 'Managing your Program' webpages: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/program>.

## 10.1 Workload

It is expected that you will spend at least **nine to ten hours** per week studying this course. This time should be made up of reading, research, working on exercises and problems, online activities and attending classes. In periods where you need to complete assignments or prepare for examinations, the workload may be greater. Over-commitment has been a cause of failure for many students. You should take the required workload into account when planning how to balance study with employment and other activities.

We strongly encourage you to connect with your **Moodle course websites** in the **first week of semester**. Local and international research indicates that students who engage early and often with their course website are more likely to pass their course.

Information on expected workload: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/uoc>

## 10.2 Attendance

Your regular and punctual attendance at lectures and seminars or in online learning activities is expected in this course. University regulations indicate that if students attend less than 80% of scheduled classes they may be refused final assessment. For more information, see: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/attendance>

## 10.3 General Conduct and Behaviour

You are expected to conduct yourself with consideration and respect for the needs of your fellow students and teaching staff. Conduct which unduly disrupts or interferes with a class, such as ringing or talking on mobile phones, is not acceptable and students may be asked to leave the class. More information on student conduct is available at: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct>

## 10.4 Health and Safety

UNSW Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For more information, see <http://safety.unsw.edu.au/>.

## 10.5 Keeping Informed

You should take note of all announcements made in lectures, tutorials or on the course web site. From time to time, the University will send important announcements to your university e-mail address without providing you with a paper copy. You will be deemed to have received this information. It is also your responsibility to keep the University informed of all changes to your contact details.

# 11 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

You must submit all assignments and attend all examinations scheduled for your course. You should seek assistance early if you suffer illness or misadventure which affects your course progress.

**General Information on Special Consideration for undergraduate and postgraduate courses:**

1. All applications for special consideration must be **lodged online through myUNSW within 3 working days of the assessment** (Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services > Online Services > Special Consideration). You will then need to submit the originals or certified copies of your completed Professional Authority form (pdf - download here) and other supporting documentation to Student Central. **For more information, please study carefully in advance the instructions and conditions at:**  
**<https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>**
2. Please note that documentation may be checked for authenticity and the submission of false documentation will be treated as academic misconduct. The School may ask to see the original or certified copy.
3. Applications will **not** be accepted by teaching staff. The lecturer-in-charge will be automatically notified when you lodge an online application for special consideration.
4. Decisions are made by lecturers-in-charge for all other assessment items aside from the final exam, **not** by tutors.
5. Applying for special consideration **does not** automatically mean that you will be granted a supplementary exam or other concession.
6. Special consideration requests **do not allow** lecturers-in-charge to award students additional marks.

#### **Business School Protocol on requests for Special Consideration for Final Exams:**

The Business School Faculty panel will need to be satisfied on each of the following before supporting a request for special consideration:

1. Does the medical certificate contain all relevant information? For a medical certificate to be accepted, the degree of illness, and impact on the student, must be stated by the medical practitioner (severe, moderate, mild). A certificate without this will not be valid.
2. Has the student performed satisfactorily in the other assessment items? Satisfactory performance and attempted all other assessment items and meeting the obligation to have **attended 80% of tutorials**.
3. Does the student have a history of previous applications for special consideration? A history of previous applications may preclude a student from being granted special consideration.

#### **Special Consideration and the Final Exam in undergraduate and postgraduate courses:**

Applications for special consideration in relation to the final exam are considered by a Business School Faculty panel to which lecturers-in-charge provide their recommendations for each request. If the Faculty panel grants a special consideration request, this will entitle the student to sit a supplementary examination. No other form of consideration will be granted. The following procedures will apply:

1. Supplementary exams will be scheduled centrally and will be held approximately two weeks after the formal examination period. The dates for Business School supplementary exams for Semester 1, 2017 are:

**Wednesday 12 July 2017** School of Banking and Finance, Management, Risk and Actuarial Studies

If a student lodges a special consideration for the final exam, they are stating they will be available on the above dates. **Supplementary exams will not be held at any other time.**

2. Where a student is granted a supplementary examination as a result of a request for special consideration, the student's original exam (if completed) will be ignored and only the mark achieved in the supplementary examination will count towards the final grade. Absence from a supplementary exam without prior notification does not entitle the student to have the original exam paper marked, and may result in a zero mark for the final exam.

The Supplementary Exam Protocol for Business School students is available at:  
<http://www.business.unsw.edu.au/suppexamprotocol>

### **Special Consideration and assessments other than the Final Exam in undergraduate and postgraduate courses:**

Special considerations in assessments other than for final exams, e.g. mid-semester exams, projects, **lodged online through myUNSW within 3 working days of the assessment** (Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services > Online Services > Special Consideration) The LIC will review and decide the outcome deciding how to grant extensions and special consideration and update your application with the arrangements of the Supplementary assessment. For mid-session exams and quiz's they will be scheduled approximately 7 working days after the original assessment, which will be required to make yourself available.

## **12 STUDENT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

The University and the Business School provide a wide range of support services for students, including:

- **Business School Education Development Unit (EDU)**  
<https://www.business.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/learning-support>  
The EDU offers academic writing, study skills and maths support specifically for Business students. Services include workshops, online resources, and individual consultations. EDU Office: Level 1, Room 1033, Quadrangle Building. Phone: 9385 7577 or 9385 4508; Email: [edu@unsw.edu.au](mailto:edu@unsw.edu.au).
- **Business Student Centre**  
<https://www.business.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/student-centre>  
Provides advice and direction on all aspects of admission, enrolment and graduation. Office: Level 1, Room 1028 in the Quadrangle Building; Phone: 9385 3189.
- **Moodle eLearning Support**  
For online help using Moodle, go to: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/moodle-support>. For technical support, email: [itservicecentre@unsw.edu.au](mailto:itservicecentre@unsw.edu.au); Phone: 9385 1333.
- **UNSW Learning Centre**  
[www.lc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au)

Provides academic skills support services, including workshops and resources, for all UNSW students. See website for details.

- **Library services and facilities for students**

<https://www.library.unsw.edu.au/study/services-for-students>

- **IT Service Centre:**

<https://www.it.unsw.edu.au/students/index.html>

Provides technical support to troubleshoot problems with logging into websites, downloading documents, etc. Office: UNSW Library Annexe (Ground floor). Phone: 9385 1333.

- **UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services**

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/wellbeing>

Provides support and services if you need help with your personal life, getting your academic life back on track or just want to know how to stay safe, including free, confidential counselling. Office: Level 2, East Wing, Quadrangle Building; Phone: 9385 5418; Email: [counselling@unsw.edu.au](mailto:counselling@unsw.edu.au)

- **Disability Support Services**

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/disability>

Provides assistance to students who are trying to manage the demands of university as well as a health condition, learning disability or have personal circumstances that are having an impact on their studies. Office: Ground Floor, John Goodsell Building; Phone: 9385 4734; Email: [disabilities@unsw.edu.au](mailto:disabilities@unsw.edu.au)