

Master of Business Administration

Developed and awarded by University of Birmingham, UK

CORE MODULE OUTLINES (COMPULSORY)

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE (10 credits)

All managers, whatever their specialisation have to interpret and apply financial information in their decision making. This requirement does not mean that all managers have to become accountants, but it does mean that managers have to understand the vernacular of accounting and financial management. Managers cannot discuss the cost and finance implications of activity without an appreciation of the processes, information sources, and methods of presentation of financial information. Managers cannot direct accountants unless they know what to ask for.

In essence, the module aims to give participants an appreciation of the perspective and tools available to accounting and finance professionals, and perhaps most importantly the limitations and caveats to the financial information that they can provide.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (10 credits)

The module will develop participant's knowledge of the global economic and business environment and use this knowledge to inform the development of strategy for managing in dynamic global markets and contexts. The module will also explore how global environmental changes affect the ways in which companies respond tactically, both within regions and countries, and across borders. The module will look at the theoretical prescription, but also will be firmly immersed in real practice of global business management. Specific areas discussed are: firm internationalisation (both in terms of imperatives and processual responses), emerging markets and overseas investment. Disciplines such as trade theory and international economics, international finance, organisational theory and business strategy are also addressed in the module.

MARKETING (10 credits)

The module provides an introduction to the nature of marketing and explains how the marketing function fits within the firm overall. The module also looks at how actors outside the core marketing function have a role in, and engage in marketing activity.

The module aims to provide a critical and systematic understanding of theory and practice in marketing. Insights into the relationship between marketing and strategy, marketing and the customer, marketing and operations and marketing and the brand will emerge from service, manufacturing, technological and consumer product perspectives. The module will trace the development and application of marketing theory embracing the experiences of FMCG approaches, through to business to business and marketing relationships and by critically identifying theoretical synergies which underpin marketing decision making.

The module will show participants the broad scope of marketing activity and will establish an understanding of the core concepts underlying the field.

OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT (10 credits)

The module provides a general introduction to operations and process management and explains how the operations function fits within the organisation overall. The module also explores how factors outside the core operations function have a role in, and engage in the management of processes.

The module will show participants the wide organisational scope of operations management activity and will establish an understanding of the core concepts underlying the discipline. The module is introductory in nature, and while focussed primarily on large organisations, also looks at small organisations and even the management of individual “human” processes. The module is intended as an introduction to operations management in both service and manufacturing organisations. Its intention is to provide the building blocks of those principles, which are broadly applicable to most organisations. The module will introduce the principles of the “lean” operation, and show how managers can adopt lean principles in practice.

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (10 credits)

The module has two components: the first, and shorter component will explore the way that people behave and interact in organisations. This section of the module aims to critically develop participant knowledge in the fundamental theoretical and practical issues to do with the management of organisations. The participant will understand how organisations are structured, how they function and how people behave in organisations.

This introductory material will provide the behavioural aspects underpinning HRM, which constitutes the second and larger section of the module. The aim of the HRM component is to provide an introduction to the main HR functions and to place them in the context of important new HR developments - academic and professional - that have occurred in the last decade. The coverage is mainly concerned with large national and multinational firms and will include the analysis of both the strategic and operational problems of delivering successful HRM policies in an international context.

STRATEGY (10 credits)

The module provides a general introduction of the basic concepts, principles, and major analytical approaches that are utilised in strategic management decision making.

Strategic management has evolved as a discipline, from the rigid planning into a much more flexible process, more accurately described as strategic thinking. The global world of commerce is becoming more dynamic and complex, requiring managers to formulate and implement strategies based on consistent congruence between the firm and its environment. The module will focus initially on systematic external and internal analysis, and then cover formulation and implementation of corporate and business level strategies.

The module includes the discussion and analysis of organisational purpose, emphasising the influence of values and stakeholder expectations on decision making. The majority of the module is devoted to formal strategic audit and the formulation and implementation of long run strategies by business organisations in the context of both their particular competitive environments and the ever-changing, uncertain general environment of business.

The module will anchor the field of strategy in its historical and academic roots. In so doing we will provide a foundation for critical assessment of theoretical and empirical approaches to strategy.

ELECTIVE OUTLINES (CHOOSE SIX)

ADVANCED LEADERSHIP (10 credits)

The learning content and process enables participants to develop the more advanced 'agile' leadership now required to create, implement and review change in their own and other's managerial-professional work, as necessary, in a complex, often unpredictable and interconnected world. Each of the 12 leadership agility practices' mini-lectures and real world illustrations are accompanied by a comprehensive set of academic readings, which build from the core text book written by the module tutor. Learners are expected to read and apply as much of this material as possible, to perform to the best of their ability in specified assignments.

BUSINESS AND SOCIETY (10 credits)

This module examines the relationship between business and society through a variety of conceptual lenses and frameworks in order to inform the development of policies, strategies and practices that help managers in contemporary organisations manage their relationships with society and the natural environment. These multiple analytical lenses will give participants a toolkit to critically appraise organisational challenges in respect of ethics, responsibility, justice and values. Through the use of case studies, videos and role-plays the participant will better understand contemporary ethical dilemmas faced by organisations as well as the processes that enlightened organisations have developed to manage such dilemmas.

CORPORATE FINANCE (10 credits)

The module aims to provide participants with an understanding of, and ability to apply the tools and methodologies of contemporary finance theory. The module takes a practical perspective; it is theoretically robust, but rooted in application. The module will build on the introductory Accounting and Finance module to explore the financial decision-making processes of organisations. In doing so the module will look at the role of financial managers and the scope / remit of their decision-making. Financial decision-making takes place against the constraints of the external environment, and so the module will look at these external factors and the impact that they have. Financial decisions are complex, and so the module will explore methods for evaluating and presenting choices in an accessible manner.

DIRECTING STRATEGY (10 credits)

The purpose of this module is to build on the knowledge participants gain from the Strategy module by refining the analytical techniques, introducing some advanced topics and considering how strategy is managed in practice. There is a focus throughout on strategic decision making.

The module is concerned with the formulation and evaluation of long-run strategies by business organisations in the context of their particular competitive environments and an ever-changing, uncertain general environment for business. It involves the application of appropriate analytical techniques to case studies.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION (10 credits)

The module is about entrepreneurs, innovators, and the things (products, services and processes) they create.

Entrepreneurship is not confined to the context of new ventures or start-ups. For example, entrepreneurship can occur within large and mature organisations, and as often as not occurs

within the non-profit sector. Similarly, innovation is not just about ideas, inventions and technology. The module takes a very broad view of innovation, and for example will look at process innovations, and organisational innovations as well as new technology, products and services.

IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES AND MANAGING CHANGE (10 credits)

This module will consider the issues associated with the implementation of new strategies and, in particular, the management of change. Through an investigation of relevant concepts and the use of appropriate analytical tools and techniques, it will help participants understand the entire change management process.

MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE (10 credits)

The module will introduce participants to organisational change and its significance for organisations. Participants will be exposed to the multiple perspectives, models and analytical frameworks for analysing organisational change, and how change can be managed. Success in the management of change is perhaps best achieved by understanding how NOT to change an organisation. Therefore the module will spend some time exploring and critically evaluating examples of failures to manage change effectively. The module will discuss and analyse the role of senior managers and “change agents”. The module will also introduce participants to the conflicts, and dilemmas encountered by middle managers in implementing change.

MARKETING STRATEGY (10 credits)

The module seeks to extend the depth of knowledge about the development of marketing strategies, and their implementation. On completion of the module participants will understand the processes adopted by marketing professionals: analysis, development of marketing strategies, and critically, the ways in which these strategies are implemented, and refined in response to tactical / short term imperatives.

The module will help participants develop their ability to: choose the most effective analytic strategies, assess implementation and managerial implications; and critically evaluate strategic marketing analysis methods with respect to their validity and relevance in a range of marketplaces. The module will also explore the impact of marketing decisions upon the long-term evolution of markets; and market structures in terms of customers, competitors and market channels.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT (10 credits)

The module identifies the key features of effective project management in the context of methodologies consistent with Professional requirements and business and marketing strategies. Operationally, it enables managers to understand and implement planning, scheduling, control and evaluation and the organisational, team and leadership aspects of managing projects.

SERVICE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT (10 credits)

The module is about improving organisations to make them better for customers and service providers. The module will develop participants’ understanding of the concepts, tools and techniques relating to process design and delivery, including the analysis of process design from the customer’s perspective.

The module is integrative in approach and uses analytical lenses from marketing, organisational behaviour, strategy and behavioural psychology.

MBA DISSERTATION (60 credits)

Participants will be required to complete a 10,000 – 12,000 word dissertation often in the form of an in-company project. The topic of the dissertation can be related to your work environment or can be an area of interest to your employer.

A supervisor will be assigned to guide you with your dissertation.