

Module Synopsis – Master of Business Administration (University of the West of Scotland)

Integration of Business Functions (10 credits)

Managers operate within increasingly complex and changing organisational and contextual circumstances, whether in the market, public or 'third' sectors and irrespective of the size of their organisations or the types of goods or services these enterprises produce for their customers or clients. This introductory module provides learners with an understanding of the principal internal and external environmental contexts of contemporary organisations, including the managerial and business context, within which businesses operate. These areas will be explored in more depth in other modules. The primary purpose of this module is to introduce learners to these concepts.

This module also introduces learners to a number of business structures, cultures and the political, social, economic, technological, legal and ethical considerations affecting business.

The module explores the question 'What is a business?' It investigates business functions including human resource management, accounting and finance, operations and marketing and considers the linkages between them and the challenges experienced in managing across functional boundaries.

This module seeks to provide an integrated and critical understanding of businesses and their core business functions including internal and external factors which impact on them. It enables learners to analyse how these functions operate in a real life context by utilising business case studies and online activities accessed through the UWS 'MBA online interactive learning world' website which bring together all the various functional elements to emulate 'real world' issues that need to be addressed. Specific scenarios will be created to simulate issues that impact on the overall success of the business.

Analytical Thinking and Decision Making (20 credits)

This module introduces students to decision making theory and the tools that might be used to aid decision making and problem solving. It will equip the student to develop an understanding of different approaches to analytical decision making. Students will develop the ability to gather relevant information and identify key issues from a base of information; relating and comparing data from different sources. They will develop the knowledge and skills to identify cause - effect relationships; determine and evaluate risk and draw conclusions use different analytical decision making techniques to support analytical thinking and problem solving required in complex decision making.

The module will enable students to focus on the definition of opportunities and develop and implement sound solutions. They will identify critical issues and implement recommendations; understanding the different roles and responsibilities of the individuals in decisive decision making.

Managing Organisational Health (20 credits)

This module considers organisational performance. Students are introduced to evaluating organisational performance and the external and internal measures that might be used. Students will analyse and evaluate organisations (at different levels) so that they can become more competitive. The module will consider the link between performance and organisational direction, goals and objectives. Students will reflect on how organisational objectives are met, the role of systems for managing performance, and the tools for managing performance.

A holistic view of managing performance (economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equity and efficacy) is taken. It is important for all organisations to perform well and make the best use of their resources and as a result managers are not only judged on the profit they make but how that profit has been made. More organisations are now more open to criticism and may face legal challenges for their activities. There are many internal/external influences on organisational health. Structure, culture, appropriate systems/processes, internal performance measures, managing stakeholders' needs and internal politics are typical influences.

Influencing Organisational Strategy (20 credits)

This module will consider the role of managers in shaping and crafting strategy. Students will develop knowledge of strategy and strategic management. Students will explore the strategy development process and how organisations might respond to factors that influence their intended strategies.

Content – strategy, strategic management, factors influencing strategy development and implementation. The topics covered range across a number of areas - the role and tasks of top management, the nature of strategic management, strategic change and decisions. Business policy, organisational analysis, competitive position, SWOT analysis, value chain analysis, comparative analysis, resource led strategy examining the role of people, technology and information management on strategy. Social and political influence, organisational objectives, power. Strategic choice, generic strategies, strategy development, techniques and approaches to strategy evaluation. Strategy implementation, planning and resource allocation. Role of organisation structure, systems and culture. Managing strategic change.

Creativity and Business Wealth (20 credits)

This module considers how creativity and innovation lead to sustainable business. Students will develop an appreciation of the culture, behaviour structures, systems, procedures and policies that develop and sustain innovation.

The module will also explore the application of creative problem solving and the process of creativity and innovation with an emphasis on the role of team leadership and management and their influence on corporate culture.

Students will become familiar with the tools and processes that will enable them to become more creative, innovative and entrepreneurial/intrapreneurial in their business attitudes and practices.

Strategic Business Project (60 credits)

This module is designed to develop the research skills, knowledge and confidence in designing, developing, compiling and delivering strategic business projects. Working with an identified host organisation, the student will investigate and produce recommendations in a practical business environment.

In the first trimester, students will participate in a series of workshops which will equip them with knowledge and understanding of a range of business research methods and techniques. The workshops are supported by learning sets of students. Each set will be facilitated by an academic advisor and will be the focus for students developing their project proposals which will form the strategic business project.

In the second trimester students will submit their research proposals and undertake the data collection for the project. The learning sets will continue to provide support and encouragement as well as providing a forum for sharing information and skills.

Thereafter, each student is allocated a suitable supervisor with whom they communicate directly throughout the Masters stage in trimester three. The submitted project should be approximately 9,000 - 13,500 words.

Leading Change (10 credits)

Leaders create a vision of the future and position the organisation to move towards this. On this journey the leader uses a range of tools to guide the process. This module addresses how leadership influences organisational success, creating and inspiring the future vision of the sustainable organisation. It reflects on the development of leadership theory and evaluates the tools employed by leaders in problem solving and organisational transformation.

Taking a specifically skills based perspective and using case studies of leaders in action, students will analyse the effectiveness of leaders in different contexts, reflect on their own leadership skills and consider how these might be enhanced.

Business Creativity (10 credits)

This module is designed to enable the student to explore the role of creativity, both as an individual skill and within the organisational context. As well as developing knowledge and understanding of the importance of creativity in the organisational process, the module introduces students to a number of creativity tools and practical techniques to enhance individual and group creativity which can be applied in a number of business settings.

Using examples from the business environment, the module will introduce the students to approaches adopted and develop their ability to think creatively in problem solving and innovation relevant to product and business development

The class is highly practical, offering a range of opportunities for students to apply the skills and techniques learned in a range of business situations. Using 'real' examples, the student will undertake a variety of practical exercises which enable them to develop and practice the skills developed within class and present their solutions to the relevant organisations.

New Venture Creation (10 credits)

This module will provide students with the opportunity to identify and evaluate new business ideas/business models. Students will reflect on what it takes to generate and develop up a new business. Students will consider the skills and networks required to gain support for new business ideas.

Designed to encourage a high level of experiential learning, this module engages students in the practical and creative process of new venture formation. It requires students to take a holistic view of their current studies and past business experience to identify a scalable business idea.

A strong theoretical underpinning of the practical issues facing entrepreneurs will form the foundation of the module and students are expected to make important connections between key disciplines such as: marketing, finance, financial planning, human resources, the host country's legal environment and basic research methods.