



MODULE SPECIFICATION

Code: UMSCTW-15-M **Title:** Corporate Strategy **Version:** 1

Level: M **UWE credit rating:** 15 **ECTS credit rating:** 7.5

Module type: Standard

Owning Faculty: FBL **Field:** Strategy & International Business

Valid from: 1 September 2008 **Discontinued from:**

Contributes towards: MSc Financial Management; MSc Accounting and Financial Management

Pre-requisites: None

Co-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Aim of module

The module provides a wide-ranging introduction to the broad social and economic environment in which business enterprises plan and implement their objectives. Accordingly it provides an appropriate organisational context for the material in the more financially-specific modules elsewhere on MSc Financial Management programme. More specifically, this module introduces non-specialist students to the concepts and terminology of strategic management, it develops their understanding and skills of strategic analysis and its linkages with implementation of strategy, and it enables them to evaluate corporate strategic options and make recommendations.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- Explain the development within organisations of appropriate policies and strategies within a changing environment to meet stakeholder interests
- Develop alternative perspectives of strategy relating to different industry contexts and the globalisation of competition.
- Understand and apply theoretical concepts and techniques to complex strategic problems.
- Analyse and interpret data and information, evaluate their relevance and validity, and generate a synthesis to aid the interpretation of situations
- Think critically about alternative strategic options and propose feasible and sustainable lines of managerial action

All the above learning outcomes are formally assessed through both Components A and B of the assessment.

In addition the educational experience may explore, develop, and practise but not formally discretely assess the following:

- Working and learning as a team member

Syllabus outline

1. Strategy Concepts - Alternative definitions and models and their relationships
2. Organisational Concepts - Organisational aims and objectives; Vision and mission; Strategic intent; Ethical issues; Regulation and corporate governance; Stakeholder analysis

3. Understanding the Competitive Environment - Tools of strategic analysis; Industry and competitor analysis; Assessing competitive position
4. Market Segmentation - Critical success factors; The customer portfolio, customer analysis and behaviour
5. Identifying Competitive Advantage - Resource audit; Capability and core competence; Resource linkage / Value chain analysis; Organisational culture; Knowledge management; Comparative analysis and benchmarking
6. Building a Strategy - Basis of strategic choice; Sources of competitive advantage; Generic strategy; Growth strategy; Alternative routes to development; Strategic options generation
7. Innovation - Management of the product portfolio; Evaluating and choosing strategy
8. Corporate Strategy - Acquisition and divestment strategies and their place in the strategic plan
9. Strategic Implementation - Organisational structure and design; Resource allocation and control
10. Role and Responsibilities of Finance Directors in Making Strategic Decisions - Assessing strategic performance (the use and development of appropriate measures that are sensitive to industry characteristics and environmental factors); Links to performance indicators and corporate strategy, and their use as a basis for defining an organisation's information needs

Teaching and learning strategy

The module is delivered by means of lectures, seminar discussions, group work and case study work. Whilst the lectures introduce students to the theoretical underpinning of the topic, the seminar exercises, group discussions and case studies will aid in the application of the theory to real world organisations. Students will need to complete the necessary preparatory reading and exercises prior to class, along with studying any set case material (essential reading). At the start of the module guidance will be given to students on how to best use the case method as a means of learning.

Central to teaching and learning at M level is critical discourse in contact sessions and assessed work. A participative ethos allows the contribution of both staff and students to be valued in the exploration and evaluation of theory and its application to problem solving in case and real organisational contexts. This approach requires the ability to define, obtain, rigorously analyse and evaluate information quickly and communicate relevant conclusions and recommendations to colleagues and professional and academic audiences in a range of formats.

It is stressed that this is an intensive 15 credit module which carries an expectation of 150 hours of student input – only 36 of which are scheduled. Hence students are expected to commit significant time and effort outside formal sessions to textbook and journal reading as well as to tackling and reviewing problems.

Students will be actively encouraged to make themselves familiar with the study skills web pages, and in particular to read widely around the subject matter. Active use will be made of the Blackboard facilities.

Reading Strategy

- **Access and Skills** – All students will be encouraged to make full use of the print and electronic resources available to them through membership of the University. These include a large range of journals (both print and electronic) and a wide variety of resources available through web sites and information gateways. The University Library's web pages provide access to subject relevant resources and services, and to the library catalogue.

Students will be presented with opportunities within this module to develop their information retrieval and evaluation skills, in order to identify appropriate resources effectively. Students will also be given specific guidance on journal article searching, retrieval, and evaluation in the area of strategic management.

- **Blackboard** – This module is supported by Blackboard, where students will be able to find all necessary module documentation, to include guidance on Further Reading within the module handbook/outline. Direct links to information resources will also be provided from within Blackboard.

- **Essential Reading** – This module will have a single set textbook which students are expected to purchase. Other required reading will be provided either in a module resource pack or will be electronically retrievable via Blackboard or from the library directly. The set text is

Johnson, G., Scholes, K., and Whittington, R. (2007). *Exploring Corporate Strategy: Text and Cases*. 8th edition. Prentice Hall [ISBN - 140588732X]; It is likely that the textbook will change from year to year so students should check with the module leader or current year module handbook before buying.

- **Further Reading** – Further Reading will be required to supplement the set textbook. The purpose of this Further Reading is to ensure students are familiar with current research, classic works, and material specific to their interests from the academic – often journal – literature. Suggested Further Reading by topic will be indicated in the module handbook/outline provided at the start of the module. However students are also expected to employ their own initiative and discretion in selecting appropriate Further Reading that will support their study. It is expected that students will engage with the academic journal literature on this subject, and as such are likely to use articles from some of the following indicative academic journals in their further reading: *Academy of Management Review*, and *Academy of Management Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *MIT Sloan Management Review*, *Long Range Planning*, and the *Journal of Management Studies*. Access to all these publications is available through the library, and most are available electronically.
- **Indicative Reading List** – To supplement the guidance on reading given above, the following list is offered to provide students, potential students, validation panels and accrediting bodies with an indication of the type and level of information that those enrolled on the module may consult. As such, its currency will wane during the life span of the module specification. However, as indicated above, current advice on readings will be available via other more frequently updated mechanisms. All the following books can be found in the UWE library, and the classification number in square brackets follows each reference.

De Wit B. and R. Meyer (2004) *Strategy: Process, Content, Context* 3rd edn. Thompson Learning [658.4012 DEW]

Grant, R. (2005) *Contemporary Strategy Analysis* 5th edn. Blackwell [658.4012 GRA]

Kim, W. Chan and Renée Mauborgne (2005) *Blue Ocean Strategy*. Harvard Business School Press [658.802 KIM]

McGee, J., Thomas, H., and Wilson, D. (2005) *Strategy: Analysis & Practice*. McGraw-Hill [658.4012 MAC]

Mintzberg, Henry. (2003) *The Strategy Process: concepts, contexts, cases*. Pearson [658.4012 MIN]

Roberts, John (2004) *The Modern Firm: Organizational Design for Performance and Growth* (Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies), Oxford University Press [658.4012 ROB]

Stonehouse, George. (2004) *Global and Transnational Business: strategy and management*. Wiley [658.4012 STO]

Assessment

Formative assessment is provided from the start of the module through the class exercises, discussion and through the in-class case based analysis. Students will be expected to contribute to discussions and will benefit from class-wide debate and commentary and feedback from the tutor. Summative assessment takes place at the end of the module through an essay and a two hour exam.

Specific assessment criteria for both components will be published in the module outline each year. These will be constructed with reference to the generic *BBS Master's Level Assessment Criteria*.

Percentage Split

Weighting between components

A: 60% B: 40%

ATTEMPT 1

First Assessment Opportunity

Component A

Description of each element

1. 2 hour exam

Element weighting

100%

Component B

Description of each element

1. Individual written assignment (2,500 words)

Element weighting

100%

Second Assessment Opportunity (further attendance at taught classes is not required)

Component A

Description of each element

1. 2 hour exam

Element weighting

100%

Component B

Description of each element

1. Individual written assignment (2,500 words)

Element weighting

100%

ATTEMPT 2 (OR SUBSEQUENT): Attendance at taught classes is required