

MODULE SPECIFICATION – UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

KEY FACTS

Module name	Functions of Organisations: Connections, Understanding & Strategy (FOCUS)
Module code	BS1205
School	Cass Business School
Department or equivalent	UG Programme
UK credits	15
ECTS	7.5
Level	4
Delivery location (partnership programmes only)	

MODULE SUMMARY

Module outline and aims

This module provides a holistic perspective on a business, introducing the main constituent functions of a business, their role and how they interact with each other, so that the sense of business as an interacting whole develops rather than isolated silos.

You will be introduced to the role of common functional departments, specifically marketing, sales, finance, HR, operations and IT/IS; what these functions aim to achieve, how they are commonly organised and tensions which can be expected to arise between them. The role of strategic thinking and of the board and senior officers (chair, chief executive, CFO, CMO, CIO, etc) in contributing to integrated organisational decision-making will be introduced, as will some of the strengths and weaknesses of systems thinking as a way of conceptualising the organisation as a whole. You will also become aware why limited, specialised perspectives are a perennial organisational problem, and why individuals motivated and equipped to overcome these limitations are valued by employers. The module is taught at an early stage in the degree so that throughout your studies you can already be aware of silo thinking and consider how the different modules you work on relate to each other.

Content outline

The module will begin with introductory lectures on the core business functions, as set out above, given by academic staff and guest speakers with practical experience, with integrating sessions and coursework delivered by the module leader. These introductory lectures will all make connections to a high profile company taken as an example (for 2011-12, Unilever).

From week 1 onwards, there will also be work in small groups to prepare a hands-on business simulation, which will run "live" in weeks 7-8. This will provide experience of taking decisions about an organisation which need to bring together different functions and perspectives, as well as a changing environment.

Weeks 9-10 will comprise integrative lectures and discussion, reflecting on the experience of groupwork and the simulation, as well as the functional perspectives in weeks 1-6. Week 11 will be for revision and exam preparation, but to underline the importance of working as a whole, the majority of the coursework credit will be assessed on a group basis. The groups remain the same throughout the module.

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

On successful completion of this module, you will be expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding:

- Describe the common functions of businesses/organisations
- Understand how the different business functions interact
- Know the responsibilities of commonly-found senior executive roles
- Have an introductory appreciation of the strengths and limitations of systems thinking as a way of thinking about organisations
- Understand why "silo" thinking is common in practice and takes sustained effort to overcome

Skills:

- Learn by reflecting on group interactions of which one is part
- Use models and theories to discipline thinking
- Show insight in understanding top-level organisational structures (content, appropriateness and limitations)
- Manage own group work in a way that reflects good management in a business

Values and attitudes:

- Appreciate that organisations are interacting wholes with legal and ethical privileges and responsibilities, and not independent functions
- Appreciate the need to continue reflecting on these issues in subsequent parts of the degree
- Appreciate that business strategy needs to be informed by all aspects
- Be proactive in seeking to understand different functional (and other) perspectives and prepared to lead towards co-operative outcomes

HOW WILL I LEARN?

The module will be taught via a mix of lectures from experts in their field and activities that relate this expertise to practice and review the interconnections. These activities will include intensive group work, a simulation and reflective coursework. The group work and the use of the business simulation have been structured to promote practical learning experiences which integrate with taught content, showing how the FOCUS module is applicable to businesses small and large. Additional perspectives will be brought in through video-recorded interviews created for this module.

Teaching pattern:

Teaching component	Teaching type	Contact hours	Self-directed study hours	Placement hours	Total student learning hours
Lecture	Lecture	18	100	0	118
Simulation	Seminar	4	28	0	32
Totals		22	128	0	150

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

Assessments

Coursework (overall 50%).

1. Individual Multiple Choice test (Moodle quiz) - weighted 20% - at the end of week 3 on the taught material and assigned reading of the first 3 weeks (including Introduction to Unilever). This compliments the strong focus on small group work and the business simulation.
2. Short individual test (Moodle quiz) on basic SimVen competence - weighted 0% - but must be taken in week 4, to ensure learning through group work using SimVen is possible.
3. Group assignment - weighted 80% - based on the simulation covering all aspects: SimVen Prep, SimVen Live and SimVen Reflect. The assignment will comprise a portfolio of group submissions with individual deadlines spread over weeks 5-10, requiring increasing reflective depth.

Exam (overall 50%) closed book, online.

Multiple choice section to test factual learning from lectures and assigned/core readings and basic understanding of the focal company, as well as key organisational functions and other concepts.

A short answer section giving the opportunity to provide evidence of leadership, as well as depth of learning about overcoming silo thinking in a practical business scenario and

integration of SimVen-based learning with the rest of the module.

A short essay section giving the opportunity to demonstrate breadth of independent reading and depth of understanding, for example, either of studying two business functions and their interactions, or ability to use systems and other concepts to reason about organisations, as interacting wholes.

Assessment pattern:

Assessment component	Assessment type	Weighting	Minimum qualifying mark	Pass/Fail?
Coursework	Portfolio	50	40	N/A
Exam – 2.25 hours	Written Exam	50	40	N/A

Assessment criteria

Assessment Criteria are descriptions of the skills, knowledge or attributes students need to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully and Grade-Related Criteria are descriptions of the skills, knowledge or attributes students need to demonstrate to achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment. Assessment Criteria and Grade-Related Criteria for module assessments will be made available to students prior to an assessment taking place. More information will be available from the module leader.

Feedback on assessment

Following an assessment, students will be given their marks and feedback in line with the Assessment Regulations and Policy.

Feedback for Courseworks 1 & 2 will be provided immediately, via Moodle.

The most in-depth parts of Coursework 3 will be submitted at the end of weeks 8 & 10, with some plenary discussion of issues in week 9. Marks with written feedback will be provided within 3 weeks.

Assessment Regulations

The Pass mark for the module is 40%. Any minimum qualifying marks for specific assessments are listed in the table above. The weighting of the different components can also be found above. The Programme Specification contains information on what happens if you fail an assessment component or the module.

INDICATIVE READING LIST

Two core, mandatory textbooks:

Boddy, D. (2014) Management: An Introduction. (6th ed.) Harlow, Pearson (selected

chapters).

Morgan, G. (2006) *Images of Organization*. (updated ed.) Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Additional, non-mandatory readings:

Galbraith, J. (2005) *Designing The Customer-Centric Organization: A Guide to Strategy, Structure and Process*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass (selected chapters).

Grey, C. (2013) A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about studying organizations. (3rd ed.) London, Sage.

Mintzberg, H., Ahlstrand, B., Lampel, J. (2005) *Strategy Safari: A Guided Tour Through the Wilds of Strategic Management*. New York, Free Press (selected chapters).

Stacey, R. (2007) *Strategic Management and Organisational Dynamics: The Challenge of Complexity*. (5th ed.) London, FT Prentice Hall (selected chapters).

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For use from: 2014-15

Appendix: see <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/content/view/1805/296/> for the full list of JACS codes and descriptions

CODES		
HESA Code	Description	Price Group
133	Business and Management Studies	D

JACS Code	Description	Percentage (%)
N100	The study of organisations and the environment in which they operate.	100