Aston Business School
Birmingham

Business, Ethics, Responsibility and Human Rights

Academic Year 2011/12

Number of ECTS Credits: 7.5

Elective Module

Module Summary

The foundation of ethics goes beyond national borders. The interconnectedness between global events and the impact they have on peoples' lives has given further impetus to calls for a re-examination of the role of business in society. Many of the dilemmas facing managers occur because of developing world issues, such as the globalisation of trade and climate change. International issues become central when comparing Eastern and Western cultures and the module will use case studies and speakers that highlight international issues. The module will also draw upon the experiences of students to explore comparative issues from different cultures.

- To distinguish between ethics, morals, codes of conduct and the law.
- To explore ethical theory and related concepts
- To understand ethical dilemmas facing individuals and organisations
- To explore models that support ethical decision-making and their limitations.
- Be aware of different philosophies, perspectives and their implications.
- To explore the nature of individual and organisational values
- To understand Human Rights principles and approaches
- To be aware of Millennium Development Goals and role of Business & Poverty
- To understand corporate social responsibility and philanthropy
- To study a series of cases focusing on contemporary issues
- To apply Ethics, Responsibility and Human Rights approaches to business and organisational contexts

Module content:

- The nature of ethics and values. Giving voice to values. Why are they important and why now?
- Normative and descriptive ethical theory. Exploring issues through case studies and current events.
- Business and Human Rights. The Global Compact, MDGs, Business & Poverty. What is the role of Business?
- Corporate Social Responsibility and philanthropy - why bother?
- Individual influences on ethical decision making
- Pluralism and values, Social Entrepreneurship
- Ethics & CSR within the organisation. Ethical codes, policies and Practices
- Workshop: Reflections and 'real life' exploration of issues.