

Module Number: BL3307

Module Title: Business Ethics

Number of Aston Credits: 15

**Total Number of ECTS Credits: 5** 

(European Credit Transfer)

# **Staff Member Responsible for the Module:**

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Pre-Requisite(s) for the Module: None

## **Module Learning Outcomes:**

As a society we increasingly expect business leaders to assume a socially responsible role on a public and global stage. Managers and business leaders increasingly find themselves confronted with a growing range of complex ethical issues.

This dynamic subject focuses on ethical reasoning and critical analysis. It integrates philosophy with more traditional and familiar business disciplines such as management, law, economics and public policy.

## **BL3307 – BUSINESS ETHICS**

The overall aim of this module is to provide participants with the critical knowledge and practical skills to identify and navigate, ethical issues across geographical and cultural boarders.

The lectures, assignments and activities are linked to five key questions. These questions are designed as vehicles for drawing on international business ethics resources and exploring the subject matter in relation to your own thinking and professional setting.

The five key questions are:

**Question 1**: What? What is business ethics?

Question 2: Why? Issues of values, law and ethics in business.

Question 3: Who? Ethical decision-making and management.

Question 4: Where? External contextual factors across boarders.

**Question 5**: How? Major challenges of business ethics, focusing on strategy, organizational improvement, evaluation and accountability.

# **Learning Outcomes**

The intended learning outcomes for BL3307 are that participants will develop and apply the following at postgraduate level:

Knowledge and understanding of business ethics issues.

Knowledge and understanding of the influence of changing contextual factors on business ethics and leadership and management.

Investigative understanding and skills.

Skills of critical analysis, reflection on, and evaluation of business ethics ideas and practice.

Skills in applying BL3307 ideas to a professional context.

Teamwork and communication skills.

#### **Module Content:**

- **Unit 1 Introduction**: What is business ethics? Ethics and business.
- Unit 2 Issues of Values, Law and Ethics in Business. The business system. Ethics in the marketplace; why simply obeying the law is insufficient.
- Unit 3 Evaluating Normative Ethical Theory and Descriptive Ethical Theory. Corporate social responsibility; stakeholder theory of the firm; corporate accountability the firm as a political actor; corporate citizenship: is there anything new here?
- Unit 4 Contextualizing International Business Ethics: External exchanges consumers and the environment, internal constituencies, employees and shareholders.

## **BL3307 – BUSINESS ETHICS**

Unit 5 Tools and techniques of Business Ethics Management:
Setting standards of ethical behaviour; designing and implementing codes of ethics; managing stakeholder relations; assessing ethical performance. Organizing for business ethics management and strategy.

### **International Dimensions:**

International business ethics embodies a complex web of human relationships; in a world where many business ventures extend across geographical and cultural barriers, this module considers whether there is an 'international common core' in business ethics. It also addresses issues in relations to cultural values and cultural relativism.

## **Corporate Connections:**

Odette Hutchinson is a senior lecturer in law at Aston Business School and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She is a member of BELMAS, The British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society.

Business Ethics is a diverse and interdisciplinary subject; it uses case illustrations to provide examples of behaviour and practice in context. A range of interactive learning tools such as the BT Better Business Game, allow participants to reflect and explore theory, themes and context.

## Links to Research:

The interdisciplinary nature of this dynamic subject allows for consideration of a broad range of cutting edge international research. Where feasible guest speakers and research staff will be invited to contribute to the module.

### **Learning and Teaching Rationale and Methods:**

A combination of interactive lectures, online lectures, individual and group work will be employed in the International Business Ethics module. Lectures will generally be used to set out the scope of a particular area. Online activities and discussion forums will invite students to reflect on and critically consider the materials, underlying values and their own thinking. The module makes use of a range of learning tools and rich media tools, which are designed to stimulate the affective domain and enhance cognitive understanding in this area.

## **BL3307 – BUSINESS ETHICS**

## Contact and directed learning

Recorded lectures 14 hours

Contact sessions 24 hours

Online activities 10 hours

Assessment preparation 20 hours

Private study 30 hours

Examination 2 hours

Total 100 hours

#### **Assessment and Feedback Rationale and Methods:**

Four equally weighted criteria apply across each element of assessment. How each criterion applies to a particular assessment varies according to the specific demands of the assignment. These criteria are listed here to help you understand what is expected of you. The criteria are:

- 1. Knowledge of relevant BL3307 material and wider reading.
- 2. Evidence of conceptualization.
- 3. Evidence of interpretation of relevant conceptual frameworks and perspectives in the context of one's own setting and experience.
- 4. Evidence of communication through writing by presenting work that is coherently structured and clearly expressed.

BL3307 has three web activities, two of which are assessed. These provide an opportunity to apply and evaluate critically core themes and theories whilst receiving peer and tutor feedback. International Business Ethics also has one marked coursework assignment, which integrates with web activities one and two. The final assessment is a reflective ethics leadership project. You must achieve an overall pass grade for the module.

The assessment arrangements for BL3307 are shown below.

Summary of the assessment structure:

Assessment	Weighting	Word Limit/Duration
Web based	10%	There is no word limit for the web
assessment		activities.
Coursework	40%	1,500 words
Examination	50%	2 hours closed book

# **BL3307 - BUSINESS ETHICS**

Your performance on these assessments will be graded according to the ABS Business Ethics, marking criteria. More detail on the assessment criteria can be found in the Business Ethics Assessment Guide.