Module Number: BN3370

Module Title: Effective Management Consultancy

Number of Aston Credits: 20

Total Number of ECTS Credits: 10

(European Credit Transfer)

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

Professor Duncan Shaw

Operations & Information Management Group

ABS Building, Room 277, Extension 3231

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Availability: Please see office hours on door or group administrator, John Morley, ABS 266, Extension 3236

Other Staff Contributing to the Module:

Dr Christopher Brewster Operations & Information Management Group

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Availability: Please see office hours on door or group administrator, John Morley, ABS 266, Extension 3236

Pre-Requisite(s) for the Module: None

Module Learning Outcomes:

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

- Understand what is good and what is bad consulting practice.
- Be better prepared to carry out successful consulting projects within organisations, either as an external investigator or as a line manager given a one-off problem-solving task.
- Understand different type of consulting including those concerned with providing advice on strategic and tactical options, those concerning the design and development of systems and procedures and those concerning the resolution of practical operational difficulties.

- Know more about how to make good use of their individual technical knowledge and skills while working within the constraints of organisational decision-making.

Module Content:

The module will seek to establish an understanding of the processes involved in providing bespoke advice and guidance in specific management contexts. Students will amass the skills necessary to use formal methodologies to refine an understanding of the problem in context and to put the ideas into practice whilst becoming a reflective practitioner. The module will also be concerned with identifying successful strategies for coping with difficult contexts, such as vague initial specifications or a rapidly changing environment.

The module puts students in very unusual situations where there is tremendous ambiguity – similar to those that they will experience in industry. We expect students to be able to work effectively despite the conditions e.g. despite a lack of clarity, intense uncertainty, unusual data. In this, the module is designed to enable students to develop abilities that will enable them to make the most of their individual knowledge and skills and transfer their learning to other situations. These abilities are particularly important for people expecting to work in an advisory or development environment. *Please note: This module contains ambiguity and requires independent thought in order to be successfully completed.*

Corporate Connections:

Practical examples are used throughout the module and embedded into all formats of teaching. Most of these examples are taken from the lecturer's own experience of using these techniques with corporations. We will aim to have quest speakers from industry in Term 2.

International Dimensions:

A key theme in the module is the applicability of methods which support management consulting and business thinking world-wide. The lecturer has used the methods in various countries to support senior policy making as well as working with numerous multi-national organisations in the UK. Examples of these applications will be discussed in the module.

Links to Research:

These methods are used as a research tool to collect data in organisations and support organisations as they make complex decisions.

Learning and Teaching Rationale and Methods:

The module will consist of an accelerated apprenticeship which will involve undertaking projects and learning from the experience of conducting each one. There will be supporting lectures and tutorials, initially focussing on the

methodologies but turning as soon as possible to issues concerned with refining and polishing the acquired skills. Students will be encouraged to experiment or to extend the approaches taught as well as draw on knowledge gained elsewhere in their degree. As in many real-world settings, the projects will be undertaken in groups to stimulate thought and discussion and to share the load of routine project work such as data collection and analysis.

In parallel with the project work each student will be expected to reflect extensively on their undertaking of the process.

This module relies heavily on work done to undertake a project and the following tutorial sessions concerned with evaluating the result and the guidance to be assimilated into the personal prescriptions. Lecture sessions will be used to provide the initial guidance required for the module but they will be replaced as soon as possible with tutorials.

Contact and directed learning

Distribution of Learning Hours

Lectures 10 hours Tutorials 10 hours

Indirect learning

Group Work 40 hours Individual Coursework 78 hours Private Study 60 hours Examination 2 hours

Total 200 hours

Ethical Approval:

Although no formal ethical approval is required from Aston University, students will be expected to complete an 'ethical awareness' section policed by the module leader.

Assessment and Feedback Rationale and Methods:

Assessment is via an examination (40%), and continuous assessment (60%), which is formed in two parts.

The first part of the continuous assessment involves the development and implementation of a plan similar to "The Apprentice" TV show (25% weighting). Students will have to use the methods taught during the course to negotiate a strategy for making as much money as possible in a single day. Implementation of the strategy is mandatory across a 24 hour period. Seed funding will be provided and students will have to deploy their strategy in any location of their choice i.e. spend a day making as much money as they can in their group. [Term 1]

The second part is an extended case study using your management

consulting skills in an ambiguous project, ranging from the use of theoretical concepts to production of a client report. Tasks will be carried out in groups throughout the module. The reason for group work is that real-life business design exercises are often carried out by groups or teams, to bring a variety of perspectives. Groups will be approximately six persons in size because the group will be the same as for coursework 1, but marks will be awarded for individual contributions to the group report by segmenting the report and asking each student to complete a part of it alone. (25% for individual component of the report plus 5% for the group component of the report). The process of your group conducting the project will be under scrutiny and will inform the assigned mark (5%). A final client report will be marked. [Term 2]

Groups are self-selected for those students who prefer this approach or random allocation for others. The ABS peer assessment form is used to evaluate contributions and weight marks appropriately. Group disputes can be addressed within the group and with the support of ABS staff.

GROUP CONTRIBUTION SHEET

PLEASE COMPLETE AND ATTACH TO THE GROUP REPORT

MODULE: BN3370 E.M.C. GROUP

(E.g. 100 means that the student will receive 100% of the Final Grade, 50 means the student will receive 50% of the Final Grade.)

Student Candidate No	Contribution (%)	
		All arrains
		All group members contributed equally (Please Tick)
DATE:		
MODULE:		GROUP
Group Members Signatures (Sho	ould correspond to candidate num	nbers given above):