

BN3385 – EFFECTIVE PROJECT DELIVERY

Module Number: BN3385

Module Title: Effective Project Delivery

Number of Aston Credits: 20

Total Number of ECTS Credits: 10
(European Credit Transfer)

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

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Availability: Every Tuesday from 1:30pm – 3:30pm

Other Staff Contributing to the Module:

Dr. Prasanta Kumar Dey

Pre-Requisite(s) for the Module: None

Module Learning Outcomes:

The aim of this module is to develop informed future project management practitioners who can confidently call upon a wide range of skills and knowledge to assist them in effectively delivering projects.

Upon successful completion of this module, students will be able:

- To select and use appropriate project management tools and techniques to deliver projects through effective planning, management and control;
- To apply project selection techniques in accordance to an appropriate identification of corporate needs, socio-economic and environmental pressures;
- To be aware of the breadth of academic research that relates to project management and how this research can be translated into practice;
- To develop your project management soft skills like teamwork, presentation, and report-writing skills.

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Module Content:

1. The Nature of Projects

- a. the differentiators of projects from other organisational constructs
- b. the history of project management
- c. the impact of project management on society
- d. typical project stakeholder roles
- e. project knowing-doing gaps

2. Project Success and Project Failure

- a. defining project success
- b. understanding project failure
- c. success and failure ambiguities

3. Project Life-Cycles

- a. Project BoK's approaches
- b. The Systems Lifecycle approach

4. Stakeholder analysis

- a. Stakeholder identification
- b. Stakeholder communication plans

5. Planning Projects

- a. PBS and WBS creation
- b. Resource allocation and management
- c. Project Networking and Scheduling (network creation, critical path analysis)
- d. Using Microsoft Project TM

6. Controlling Projects

- a. KPI for projects
- b. Project Change Control
- c. Earned Value Management
- d. 'Milestone', 'stage gates' and 'goal-directed' controls

7. Managing change and uncertainty in Projects

- a. change management in the project environment
- b. stakeholder identification and analysis
- c. priority/acceptability matrices

8. Managing Risk in Projects

- a. risk in projects
- b. risk identification
- c. risk qualification
- d. risk response development

9. Sustainability in Projects

- a. Sustainability concepts: Greening project portfolio
- b. Environmental impact assessment
- c. Greening project processes

10. Multi Criteria analysis in Projects

- a. Structuring important decisions
- b. Evaluating project performance
- c. managing project portfolios
- d. resource allocation in programme and portfolio management

11. Critical Project Management

- a. The application of a critical project management perspective to current project management knowledge
- b. The actuality of the Project Manager's experience
- c. Project management skills: leadership, motivation, teamwork

12. Managing Global Projects

- a. The impact of National Environments on project management

13. Emerging Issues in Project Management

- a. New topics in the project management literature and practice

International Dimensions:

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The module addresses the international dimension specifically in its consideration of global projects. It also elicits the views of global project managers in its seminar programme.

Corporate Connections:

The whole content of this module is structured in a manner to make its practical applicability fundamental to students. Workshops employ 'mini' case-studies as exemplars throughout the module. Full use is made of current industrially related research and the direct input of practitioner viewpoints is elicited through a seminar programme of invited project stakeholders from an extensive variety of project contexts both in this country and globally.

Link to Research

This module is linked to research through three main themes: documentaries as video teaching cases, agile project management, and project sustainability.

Documents are being assessed to be used as teaching cases – their richness and relevance are the major quality criteria for selection.

As new techniques emerge in industry, we try to include them into the academic research and teaching. This is the case of agile project management. The topic will be developed first as a research conceptual paper and then introduced into the teaching of the module.

Project sustainability is also an emerging topic, which is already part of the module contents. Collaboration with Aston Environmental Department took place in 2009-2010 and will continue in order to make the topic more practice-oriented.

Learning and Teaching Rationale and Methods:

Existing research in project management teaching has shown the importance of active learning in achieving the type of learning outcomes espoused by this module. This module will pursue, wherever possible, both a student-centred and an active learning approach to its pedagogical practice. A variety of teaching and learning methods are employed throughout the module comprising:

workshops: These will employ small groups of students in an active learning scenario. Students will be presented with a series of exercises based on the project management tools and techniques that relate to the learning outcomes of the individual session. The learning from these exercises will be captured on proformae which, over the duration of the module, will accrete to create a module 'work-book' which encapsulates exemplars of transferable tools and techniques

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seminars: These will be given by a series of visiting practitioners and will employ a variety of formats (individual presentations, 'question time' panels etc.). These will enable students to triangulate their learning with the actuality of project management and provide opportunities for them to further develop their understanding of the skills and knowledge gained in this module.

lectures: These will comprise a whole group activity and will be used with learning outcomes associated with developing an awareness of existing project knowledge

surgeries: These will provide small groups to receive individual attention and direct learning to particular topics of the group's choice

directed learning: Students will be given an interactive learning programme based on Blackboard that they can use to individually guide their learning around specific areas of the syllabus. This will particularly be used to critically evaluate different philosophies and approaches within project management.

extension learning: Students will be expected to independently extend their learning, especially in terms of research relating to project management, through a virtual learning environment installed on Blackboard. A wide variety of extension material (book chapters, journal papers, trade publication article, web-sites) will be made available. This material will be specifically linked to particular topics.

Office hours: Office hours will be used for student who require individual and group feedback and assessment of their work and achievement of learning outcomes.

The target duration for different aspects of the students' learning experience is given below:

Workshops & Lectures	36 hours
Seminars	4 hours
Surgeries	8 hours
Directed learning	42 hours
Extension learning	30 hours
Assignment construction	37 hours
Examination case preparation	40 hours
Examination	3 hours
Total	200 hours

Method of Assessment Rationale and Methods:

Assessment is via a three-hour open book examination (60%) and coursework (40%).

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Examination

The open book examination is set at the end of the module and carries 60% of the total assessment. The examination comprises one compulsory question based on a case-study that is issued to the students prior to the examination. The case is based on a 'real-life' project management situation.

The examination tests the totality of the students' learning throughout the module. It assesses the students' ability to select and use the tools, techniques, knowledge, and skills that they have acquired to manage a specific project scenario effectively.

Coursework

The coursework comprises a substantive group work. This assesses the students' ability to delineate the strengths and weaknesses of a range of existing approaches to project management through the review of existing literature and by using other secondary data sources.

For coursework submission dates please refer to Blackboard. Failure to complete coursework on time will render a student liable to the late submission penalty applied in the Business School. Deadline: 28 February 2011.

Essential Reading:

The essential reading is provided in the Blackboard virtual learning environment.

Suggested books are below but not limited to:

Harvard Business School (2004) *Managing Projects Large and Small (Harvard Business Essentials): The Fundamental Skills for Delivering on Budget and on Time*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Mass.

Gray C.F., Larson E.W.(2008) *Project Management: The Managerial Process*, 4th ed, Mc-Graw-Hill International

Journals:

Project Management Journal
International Journal of Project Management

Useful Online Sources:

Emerald (Full Text and Abstracts), Proquest, BIDS, Web of Science, Science Direct

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The topic-related independent learning list and material will be provided at the beginning of the module. The Blackboard site for the module will contain this and all other relevant module materials.