

BS2225 – FOUNDATIONS OF MANAGEMENT II PART 2 BUSINESS GAME

Module Number: BS2225

Module Title: Foundations of Management II
Business Game

Number of Aston Credits: 10 (NOTE: although this module extends over the whole year, it is a SINGLE module).

Total Number of ECTS Credits: 5
(European Credit Transfer)

Staff Member Responsible for the Module

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Other Staff Contributing to the Module

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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

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

1. Work comfortably in diverse groups composed of students of different cultures, races and genders.
2. Practise important practical and co-ordinating skills needed by managers, including working in groups, managing time, organising and conducting meetings, presentations and other forms of business communication, and co-ordinating management functions and tasks.
3. Facilitate the integration of their studies by providing students with the opportunity to

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“apply” (in a simulated environment) theories and techniques covered in other first and second year modules, and to “experience” the need for different individuals and functional specialisms to co-operate in order to attain the group objectives.

4. Understand the issues involved in determining organisational strategy and in solving complex problems facing organisations, and to make students aware of some of the techniques which may be useful in doing so.
5. Participate in the competitive process in a real world situation and assess their company's performance in that competitive environment.
6. Provide useful experience for students in a simulated real world environment before they embark on their placement year.

Module Content

The module consists of a series of tasks set in a simulated environment based on real life. These tasks involve group work, hands-on use of computers, a presentation, an individual essay and the production of group reports. The initial tasks form a preparatory phase leading up to a management simulation (or “business game”) in which a group of students must perform the management functions of a company, including strategy formulation and implementation. Later reports are based on what happens during this simulation.

International Dimensions

The Business Game is operated in a European Arena. Students are required to analyse the European car market and to operate their company within global market constraints.

Corporate Connections

The management simulation/business game we use is Eurocar, which we purchase from Orange, a management training specialist. It is a Europe-wide car manufacturing game.

A specialist from the motor industry consultancy LMC, the UK arm of JD Power Inc, gives a lecture on important issues facing the motor industry. At least one representative of an outside company participates in the marking of each student company's presentation of its plans. Regular participants include Enterprise Rent-A-Car, General Motors and Thomson TUI. Ernst Young provides prizes for both the best presentation and the overall winner of the game.

Links with Research

The Work and Organisational Psychology Group is very active within the fields of both teamwork and leadership. Doctoral students within that group form a significant part

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of the tutor cohort within the module and research by them into the operation of student companies forms the basis of much excellent academic output.

Within their individual essays student regular refer to research output generated within Aston Business School in their analysis of the performance of their group.

Learning and Teaching Rationale and Methods

Lectures, of which there are seven, are largely scene-setters, beginning with an extended introduction to the module learning outcomes. Also included are detailed instructions on playing the game and a lecture on major issues facing the European motor industry.

The main role of tutors is to facilitate successful company activity both in terms of internal operation and performance within the game. Students are expected to be self reliant. This will aid both in the search for placement jobs and in performance while on placement.

Within the tutorials students receive guidance related to the assessed work and, later in the module, feedback and guidance related to performance in the simulation. Students are also given the opportunity to practise presentation skills. Never the less learning by experience is key to success within the module.

How are the 100 Learning Hours per Module Achieved?

Lectures	7 hours
Tutorials	12 hours
Hands on practicals (including practice session)	7 hours
Own time meetings	17 hours
Reading	7 hours
Group report and presentation: preparation and delivery	30 hours
Individual essay	20 hours
Total	100 hours

Ethical Approval

This module does not require any primary research and no ethical approval will be necessary.

Assessment and Feedback Rationale and Methods

The assessment is via continuous assessment of which there are three elements:

1. A group report (40%) comprising:

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(a) a presentation of company objectives and strategy; and

(b) a business plan.

The presentation takes the place of the tutorial in weeks 7 and 8 and is made formally to a panel which includes managers and representatives of outside companies.

15 marks are available for the presentation and 25 for the plan.

2. A group report (25%) on the performance of the company in the simulation, and an analysis of the extent to which the group's objectives for the company were achieved and the plans implemented.

10 marks are available for the actual performance and 15 for the report.

3. An individual essay (35%) which is a reflection by the student on group operation and relationships, personal performance and contribution, and how well the module learning outcomes have been met. Further guidelines are posted on Blackboard.

While content is left largely to the student's discretion, points made must be supported in an academic context. This essay is unlike any previous piece of work students may have completed in the first two years at Aston; it represents a unique challenge.

Group Work

Group work is essential for this integrating module, as it is intended to simulate the running of a real life company. This allows students working in groups to achieve corporate objectives.

Group size is either four or five, with each student taking on a role corresponding to one of the directors of the simulated company whether as Managing Director or one of the other key disciplines. Students are assigned to groups, but the allocation to the various roles within the groups is done by the students themselves, and is part of the exercise. Students may find that they are working with team members whom they do not know or like.

The assessment reflects the importance of team working. Group effort accounts for 65% of the total marks available. It is the responsibility of all the members of the group to ensure cohesion and successful working relationships. Addressing the tasks and resolving the problems is more important than company success. For this reason the peer assessment which is practised in other modules is not appropriate for this module. All students are responsible for the successful operation of the company. The presumption is then that all students receive all the marks awarded for each piece of assessed work. However, if it is felt that, for whatever reason, some students are contributing a disproportionately large or small amount it is incumbent on students to bring the matter to the attention of the tutor. In addition, while it is the norm in the

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Business School for all assessed work to be submitted anonymously, names of companies should be included on the pink submission sheet for group work and of students for the individual essay.

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.