



EDINBURGH
BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Developing and Executing Strategy

Course Syllabus



H11SD Developing and Executing Strategy Course Syllabus

Course Aim

Developing and Executing Strategy is the capstone course in the MBA programme. The course encourages students to think and operate at the strategic level in a range of dynamic settings through integration of ideas across core business disciplines.

Course Synopsis

This course covers the core areas of strategic management and uses the general management setting to integrate ideas across the core disciplines covered in other MBA core courses. The course begins by examining the evolution of management and academic thinking around strategy and strategic management over the past 50 years, reviews the diversity of contemporary strategy theory and practice and examines the role of strategy in the management of different types of organisations. The course then examines a variety of aspects of strategy, such as strategic intent, analysis, strategic options and implementation. At each stage the links with other management disciplines, such as leadership, organisational behaviour, economics, marketing and finance are considered. Finally an integrative framework for strategic decision-making is presented, which facilitates a holistic approach to complex business and management issues.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course you will be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to identify and critically evaluate complex business situations and make informed judgements using a multidisciplinary strategic framework.
- Identify and use a range of verbal, numerical and graphical sources to formulate strategic decisions.
- Show critical awareness of contemporary theory in the strategic management field and be able to relate to current organisational practice.

Course Structure

The course is broken down into 7 learning modules as follows:

Module 1: Introduction to Strategy and Strategists

The aim of this module is to provide students with an overview of strategic management as an academic discipline and a field of practice, provide an outline of the different aspects of strategy that will be covered during the course and demonstrate how the key management disciplines that make up the MBA core can be integrated into a strategic decision-making framework.

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- Explain the development of strategic management theory and practice over time
- Evaluate the role of different management disciplines such as economics, finance, marketing, people management and leadership in developing their strategic intelligence
- Understand the role of strategy in organisations and the difference between strategic and operational issues

Topics covered are as follows.

- Studying Strategic Management
- Strategy in relation to the other MBA core courses
- Defining Strategy
- The evolution of theory and practice in Strategic Management
- Strategy in different settings
- Course framework for Developing and Executing Strategy

Module 2: Strategic Intent

The aim of this module is to examine the development of strategic intent, identify the required components of strategy statements and examine contemporary issues such as ethics and corporate social responsibility.

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- Identify the key required components of a strategy statement
- Critically evaluate organisational strategies in terms of their stated intent, intended outcomes and logical consistency
- Understand the role of ethics and social responsibility in framing organisational purpose

Topics covered are as follows.

Identifying and articulating an organisation's purpose

- Mission, vision and values

- Articulating strategic intent
 - Corporate social responsibility
 - Sustainability and ethics
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Module 3: Strategic Issue Diagnosis

The aim of this module is to introduce strategic analysis by addressing common strategic issues in organisations and providing tools and frameworks for diagnosing them.

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- Identify a number of common strategic issues in organisations
- Use and select from a number of strategy tools and frameworks to diagnose strategic issues and predict likely outcomes
- Propose and justify short and medium term solutions to common strategic issues

Topics covered are as follows.

- Business Issues
 - Industry life cycles
 - Organisation life cycles
 - Cultural Issues
 - The cultural web
 - Culture classifications
 - Governance and Political Issues
 - Ownership vs Control
 - Shareholders vs Stakeholders
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Module 4: Interpreting and Analysing the Environment

The aim of this module is to demonstrate how the environment external to an organisation can be conceptualised, scanned and analysed in order to identify opportunities and threats, and inform both strategic and operational decision-making.

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- Understand a variety of approaches to identifying and conceptualising issues in the external environment
- Conduct analysis of external issues and evaluate opportunities and threats in the environment

Topics covered are as follows.

- The environment – objects vs attributes vs perception
- Scanning and sources of information

- Scenario development and planning
 - PEST analysis
 - Strategic groups
 - Segmentation
 - Structural analysis of industries
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Module 5: Interpreting and Analysing the Organisation

The aim of this module is provide tools and techniques that can be used to look inside organisations and identify strengths, weaknesses and sources of competitive advantage.

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- Analyse the internal environment of an organisation using a variety of multidisciplinary tools to identify sources of competitive advantage
- Propose solutions to internal structural, financial or cultural issues that take advantage of an organisation's resources and capabilities

Topics covered are as follows.

- The value chain
 - Value systems
 - Economies of scale and scope
 - Generating synergy
 - Financial analysis
 - Resources and capabilities analysis
 - Dynamic capabilities
 - SWOT analysis
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Module 6: Generating, Selecting and Evaluating Strategic Options

This module provides students with a taxonomy of strategy options that can be used to generate and sustain competitive advantage and a variety of methods for selection and evaluation of strategic choices.

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- Describe the hierarchy of strategic options in terms of corporate and business decisions, strategic directions and methods
- Analyse and evaluate existing company strategies, identify and rectify misalignment
- Propose structured and clearly justified strategic roadmaps for the future and evaluate their eventual outcomes

Topics covered are as follows.

- Aims and tactics
 - Strategic Directions
 - Strategy directions
 - Strategy methods
 - Strategy evaluation
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Module 7: Executing Strategy

The aim of this module is to examine how strategy is delivered in practice. Research shows that many strategies are well-formulated but poorly implemented. This module demonstrates the challenges of implementation and reviews issues that need to be considered when moving from developing the logic of strategy to making things happen.

At the end of this module students will be able to:

- Identify implementation challenges in organisations
- Analyse and evaluate strategies for their viability and propose methods of implementation appropriate for different organisational settings

Topics covered are as follows.

- Strategy execution in practice
- The strategy cycle
- Structures and systems
- Managing change
- Evaluating performance

Assessment

The course is assessed by a three-hour examination, which accounts for 100% of the overall course mark. The pass mark is 50% and there is no choice in the selection of questions to be answered. The exam is designed to test your achievement of the learning outcomes listed above.

The examination will be based on a pre-announced company case study, which will be released online two weeks prior to the examination date. You will be provided with a brief history of a company and some links to external resources with further information and will be expected to conduct your own independent research on the company and its activities prior to the examination itself.

You will be permitted to bring one piece of A4 paper into the examination with your own notes.

In the exam you will be asked three questions, each marked out of 100, covering different aspects of company strategy as follows:

1. **Strategy Past and Present:** you will be asked to analyse the company's existing strategy using appropriate tools and techniques.

2. **Strategy Futures:** you will be presented some kind of scenario facing the company and will be required to develop a coherent and justified strategy for the future.
3. **Strategy Theory and Practice:** you will be asked a question about some aspect of strategy theory and will be required to relate this to both your own experience and the situation facing the case study company.