



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010

GRA 2231 Stress and Productivity in Organizations

Programme

Advanced Specialization Course (MSc), Master of Science in Business and Economics, Master of Science in Business and Economics (Organizational Psychology), Master of Science in Leadership and Organizational Psychology

Responsible for the course

Department

Department of Leadership and Organizational Behaviour

Term

According to study plan

ECTS Credits

6

Language of instruction

English

Introduction

Work stress imposes a high cost on individual health and well-being as well as on organizational productivity. As organizations and businesses today are facing challenges in their efforts to perform effectively, the high price of a poor fit between people and their work environments is increasingly recognized. In the area of human resource management, there is increasing agreement that in order to be successful, organizations need to focus on their human capital for unique competitive advantage. The shift toward positive psychology represents a framework to understand how to enhance work engagement, motivation and job performance, thus increasing employee health and well-being and ultimately building more effective organizations.

Learning outcome

This course will provide students with an overview of sources and consequences of job-related stress, knowledge about various methods used to assess levels of stress and strain, and strategies to prevent or minimize work-related stress and health problems. Students will acquire knowledge and skills on how to reduce work-related stress and increase individuals' ability to cope with work demands, and at the same time enhancing job resources to build work engagement and commitment so that workers continue to be productive and effective in their jobs. In this way students will be able to help organizations to identify, obtain, preserve and manage valued work resources in order to unleash the talents of their people. The course will prepare students to critically assess or advise on work organization and health-promotion programs that will protect the individual from stress and enhance organizational performance.

Prerequisites

GRA 2205 Organizational Behaviour or equivalent

Compulsory reading

Books:

Burke, R.J., & C. L. Cooper, eds. 2008. Building more effective organization : HR management and performance in practice. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. (Paperback)

Cooper, Cary L., Philip J. Dewe, Michael P. O'Driscoll. 2001. Organizational stress : a review and critique of theory, research, and applications. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage. (Paperback)

Collection of articles:

A collection of research articles will be made available by semester start

Other:

During the course there may be hand-outs and other material on additional topics relevant for the course and the examination.

Recommended reading

Course outline

The changing nature of work

Sources and consequences of job-related stress
Stress and productivity
Psychological burnout
Methodological issues in job stress research
Issues and interventions
Positive psychology
Work engagement, flow and optimal functioning
Organizational health and well-being
Case studies of organizational restructuring

Computer-based tools

Power-Point Presentations, Blackboard/homepage

Learning process and workload

36 hours. The course is structured as a combination of lectures, discussions, in-class activities, and compulsory student presentations. It requires a substantial amount of preparation by the students and active involvement during class.

Please note that while attendance is not compulsory in all courses, it is the student's own responsibility to obtain any information provided in class that is not included on the course homepage/Blackboard or text book.

Examination

20% - Class contribution (graded individually)
30% - Student presentations (one or two students) of cases or research articles
50% - Term paper written by up to 2 students

Specific information regarding student evaluation beyond the information given in the course description will be provided in class. This information may be relevant for requirements for term papers or other hand-ins, and/or where class participation can be one of several elements of the overall evaluation.

Exam code(s)

GRA 22316 (100%)

Examination support materials

Exam aids at written examinations are explained under exam information in our web-based Student handbook. Please note use of calculator and dictionary.
<http://www.bi.edu/studenthandbook/examaids>

Re-sit examination

Re-takes are only possible at the next time a course will be held. When the course evaluation has a separate exam code for each part of the evaluation it is possible to retake parts of the evaluation. Otherwise, the whole course must be re-evaluated when a student wants to retake an exam. Retake examinations entail an extra examination fee

Additional information

Honor Code

Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and represent values that are encouraged and promoted by the honor code system. This is a most significant university tradition. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the ideals of the honor code system, to which the faculty are also deeply committed.

Any violation of the honor code will be dealt with in accordance with BI's procedures for cheating. These issues are a serious matter to everyone associated with the programs at BI and are at the heart of the honor code and academic integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honor code, please ask.