



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2012/2013

## **GRA 8050 Management Control (2013/2014)**

### **Programme**

Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) Program

### **Responsible for the course**

Hanno Roberts

### **Department**

Department of Accounting - Auditing and Law

### **Term**

According to study plan

### **ECTS Credits**

2

### **Language of instruction**

English

### **Introduction**

#### **Learning outcome**

The objective of this course is to introduce participants to approaches of both conventional management control and contemporary management control. The latter is conceived as the management control of the knowledge-based firm. Main proposition is that the object of control has moved over time from the financial denominator to the knowledge denominator, extending control and steering efforts towards knowledge-sharing and learning activities and incorporating concepts from Organisational Behaviour and Design, and Knowledge Management.

#### **Prerequisites**

Granted admission to the EMBA programme.

#### **Compulsory reading**

#### **Recommended reading**

#### **Other:**

A set of readings will be provided on IL. This includes selected chapters of textbooks and separate articles. The readings will change every single course in order to continuously accommodate changes in the present-day business environments. Readings follow the morning/afternoon split, and are closely tied to the theme of the session. The reading load per session is indicated in the Course Calendar. The mandatory readings provide the so-called "bare bones" of the content substance of the session theme; these are the MUST-READS. The optional readings provide further insights and deepen the topics. These articles will increase the quality of the learning and get you the full value out of the course. All readings are available as PDF-files only. NO HARD COPIES OF BOOKS NEED TO BE PURCHASED!

#### **Course outline**

Lectures are categorized into three topical areas:

- Conventional management control and performance measurement (profitability centers, accounting performance measurement, budgeting, results control, closed-loop financial logic)
- Non-financial performance measurement advances (Balanced Scorecard, Key Performance Indicators)
- The use of control systems to enhance learning within and by the knowledge-based firm (interactive control systems, the practices of knowledge work, and the performance measurement of processes).

#### **Computer-based tools**

The course is entirely taught within the It's Learning (IL) e-learning environment and uses only digital means for course delivery.

It is EXPLICITLY ALLOWED to use your laptop in the classroom!. All readings, cases and slides (also of guest speakers) and any other materials will be provided via It's Learning (IL) and as PDF-files only.

There will be no paper handouts of any material! All PDF files are enabled to make comments directly into the file, using Adobe Acrobat Reader (which is free downloadable software). Given the intensive and standardized use of the PDF format, you are strongly advised to update your Acrobat software and use its latest version.

### **Learning process and workload**

1 ECTS credit corresponds to a workload of 26-30 hours.

The course consists of (guest) lectures, casework and classroom discussion. Lectures introduce the indicated topics conceptually, and explore it in terms of managerial implications and the links to other areas of management.

Each session will follow the same format of a morning and an afternoon part, each of which has a guest speaker or case assigned to it. After a lecture-based introduction of the theme, the guest speaker and the case will be used to activate the exchange between class participants and mobilize learning in an active "doing" manner. The case is based both on several video clips and traditional written cases.

The written cases contain case questions that need to be answered and be fully argued and communicated, both on the slides and in class. The case questions are closely related to the reading materials of both sessions – so, you will need to have read these materials before starting on the case!

Cases should ONLY use "It's Learning" to hand in. Case hand-ins are in Powerpoint format and not Word documents. Excel material should be handed in separately and not as part of the PPT-file.

The Powerpoint hand-in needs to indicate all group participants and be limited to a maximum of 10 slides, including multimedia inserts, art work etc. Hand-ins have a deadline, also mentioned in the course calendar while the "It's Learning" site has been set for this specific deadline date.

*Given the other courses in this Module, earlier hand-in before the deadline is strongly suggested!*

Presentations should not take more than 15 minutes and may have any form the case group deems appropriate. Which group is going to present is announced on the evening of the preceding session. Criterion for selection is the potential to generate a good classroom discussion following the presentation; selection for presentation, thus, is NOT related to either good work or bad work (i.e., it's neither a reward nor a punishment).

To achieve a maximum learning effect among participants, all casework will be consolidated into a single PDF file and fed back to the class *before* the actual casework session, using "It's Learning". It is this consolidated file that forms the basis for casework grading. Case presentation and discussion feed into the class participation grading category.

To prepare the case, the case group can decide for itself to use any online/off-line tool or medium it deems appropriate (e.g., classic face-to-face, MSN, Skype, Google Docs, Dropbox, Google+ etc etc).

The guest speaker's presentations are in the morning session and serve the purpose of cross-learning and experience-sharing among participants. Guest speakers are participants from the present EMBA classes. A separate Call-for-Volunteers to act as guest speakers will be sent to all participants.

The guest speech can take any format the speaker deems suitable; an off-hand story told in front of class, a formal PPT-based presentation, an audiovisual illustration, the involvement of non-EMBA colleagues from the own organization, an advance on a subsection of the Consultancy Project etc. The guest speech is rewarded with a maximum participation grade for the specific part of the session (morning/afternoon) in which the speech is allocated. In case of doubts or questions on suitability, consult me.

With respect to participation, please note that the emphasis is on "contribution" and not on "grabbing air time". That means that raising your hand and speaking frequently or repeatedly about the same topic NOT automatically converts into a high participation score.

Contribution is defined as maximizing the learning by the entire class on a certain topic. Contributions are expected to move the classroom discussion forward in terms of substantive arguments and examples from own experience. Especially the latter is welcome.

The purpose of the individual course paper is to produce immediate learning returns at individual level. The method is to match course contents (defined broadly to include also case and class discussions) against each participant's specific managerial work environment, writing up a short idea *how* and *why* a specific Management Control course topic might be used in one's own work. It is an extended and individual version of the Debrief slides that are commonly produced at the end of each session.

The evaluation criteria are identical to the ones used for casework grading, while hand-in is online via IL within the 1-week time window immediately after the last session day of the course. Grades and feedback will be emailed to each participant individually, using the email address stated in the course paper.

The requirements for the individual course paper are as follows:

- Structure: (1) topic; (2) managerial context description; (3) arguments why this topic is considered relevant for your organization (e.g., problems or earlier experiences with topic, business event such as reorganizations or resource reductions etc.); (4) arguments how one envisions the use of this topic, including pros and cons, and expectations.
- Format: maximum 3 pages A4, Word-document ONLY, 12-point font, single spacing, page numbering, name and email of participant and paper title.
- Data: whenever possible, use both visual and quantitative data support of the arguments put forward.

Attendance to all sessions in the course is compulsory. If you have to miss part(s) of the course you must ask in advance for leave of absence. More than 20% absence in a course will require retaking the entire course. It's the student's own responsibility to obtain any information provided in class that is not included on the course homepage/ It's learning or other course materials

### **Examination**

Evaluation of learning performance is measured for 30% by individual classroom participation, 30% by group-based casework, and 40% by a short, individual course paper. There is no final examination.

This is a course with continuous assessment (several exam elements) and one final exam code. Each exam element will be graded using points on a scale (e.g. 0-100). The elements will be weighted together according to the information in the course description in order to calculate the final letter grade for the course.

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

### **Examination code(s)**

GRA 80501 - Continuous assessment; accounts for 100 % to pass the course GRA 8050, 2 ECTS credits

The course is a part of the Executive Master of Business Administration Program and all evaluations must be passed in order to obtain a certificate.

### **Examination support materials**

### **Re-sit examination**

Re-takes are only possible at the next time a course will be held. When course evaluation consists of class participation or continuous assessment, the whole course must be re-evaluated when a student wants to retake an exam. Retake examinations entail an extra examination fee.

### **Additional information**