APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2012/2013

GRA 8147 Management Control

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
2,5

Language of instruction
English

Introduction

Management control goes beyond budgeting and accounting performance indicators and involves all managerial devices used to ensure behavioral alignment of all organization members. Management control is a cross-disciplinary activity, applying tools and concepts from strategy (strategy implementation), organization behavior (motivation, collaborative behavior), human resource management (incentives) and knowledge management (control of networks, intellectual capital). The application context of management control is either at firm or unit level, with a specific course focus on knowledge-intensive firms and the steering and control of its Intellectual Capital.

Learning outcome

Acquired knowledge:
To understand the various management control concepts in their business application contexts..
To understand how management control is embedded within a context of multidisciplinary decision-making and is not a neutral, stand-alone toolbox.

Acquired skills:
To have the ability to use management control concepts and tools.
To interpret decision-making situations as to which management control tool and approach to use and how they can be combined with approaches and arguments originating from other disciplinary fields.

Reflection:
To be able to navigate and untangle complex situations, and filter out the typical control issues at stake. Once the typical issue is identified, participants are particularly asked and encouraged to build cross-disciplinary lines of arguments and analyses in which management control is only one part of the puzzle.

Prerequisites

Bachelor degree or equivalent, 4 years work experience, managerial experience and good written and oral knowledge of the English language.

Compulsory reading

Books:
Merchant, K.A. and W. Van der Stede. 2012. Management Control Systems: performance measurement, evaluation and incentives. 3th ed. Financial Times Press. Selected chapters will be made available electronically, either via the It's Learning e-learning platform or via a separate eBook. No hard copy of the book needs to be purchased.

Recommended reading

Course outline

Sessions are clustered into four topical areas:

- Conventional Management Control (budgeting, responsibility centers, Accounting Performance Measures, incentive systems)
- Performance Measurement other than Accounting-based (Balanced Scorecard, alignment with Strategy and Organizational Behavior)
- Interactive Control Systems (levers of control, internal communication & reporting, Communities

and Networks as control denominators)
- Collaborative Control Systems (Intellectual Capital, alignment with Innovation Management and Knowledge Management).

Computer-based tools

The course uses a series of computer-based tools; the e-learning platform It's Learning as "electronic bookshelf", social media such as Google+ for casework preparation and classroom online interaction, wikis as vehicle for the individual, online course paper, and other collaboration and communication tools for participant-to-participant interaction at case group and classroom levels. These communication tools are selected by the participants and will necessary change with the speedy evolution of portable ICT devices and applications.
All readings, slides (also of guest speakers), cases and other material will only be provided as downloadable PDF-files and not as hard copy.
Given the online communication, collaboration and information intensity of the course, participants will receive a series of instructions on the ICT aspects of the course well in advance, so as to hit the ground up and running at start.

Learning process and workload

Starting out from the instruments and metrics in conventional management control, the link with a firm's competitive strategy, organization behavior, and knowledge resources will be made and exemplified in case studies, illustrative videos and lectures.
The course is designed as a continuous flow of interaction and exchange that is not limited to the days of face-to-face classroom encounters. The course starts online several weeks in advance of the classroom sessions and will terminate online one week after the classroom sessions. Participants can expect an intensive exchange of information and frequent online communication for the full duration of the course, before, during and after the course. The teacher is an active participant in these learning dialogues and will not limit himself to classroom presence.

Every single teaching session will contain a series of relevant articles addressing the management control context and concepts from a broader managerial perspective. These articles are made available as PDFs on the It's Learning e-learning platform. The total reading load, excluding cases, will average around 150 pages for the full course. The course calendar will contain a specific list of readings, each of which will be updated and changed for every single time this course is run; this in order to make the course as contemporaneous and practically actual as possible. All literature and other course organisation information will be made available online well in advance of the formal start of the course.

The course consists of lectures, guest speakers, casework, and a course paper. Every case is assigned a set of questions that need to be answered by the case group. Case answers are not goals in themselves but act as a vehicle for starting the case discussion. The cases focus on the relationship between the typical control problem on the surface and its wider, managerial interpretations and consequences. Cases are purposely selected to reflect the context of managerial interpretation and meaning, and will not be merely instrumentally focused. Cases will change and be updated every single teaching period.

The guest speakers are class members or EMBA Alumni. The guest speakers' personal case stories are intended to stimulate the exchange of existing insights across participants and their respective industry and experience backgrounds, with the purpose to bring out the multidisciplinary nature of control, including the multifunctional interventions necessary for problem resolution. Class members acting as guest speakers will be explicitly incentivated by means of a maximum participation grade score for the relevant part of the day.

All participants are required to write a wiki-based, individual course paper on one of the themes of the Management Control course. Individual wikis must be based on existing work and/or business experience with the selected topic, and discuss the factual experience vis-a-vis the insights gained on that same topic during the Management Control course. The wiki needs to be structured in terms of descriptive "why" and "how" parts, followed by a concluding, personal opinion on what was learned in managerial terms. A wiki is used to allow participants to incrementally work on their paper in an a-synchronous manner over the full duration of the course, inserting insights and observations along the learning trajectory of the course, using inputs from readings, sessions, speakers, and own material. Participants are encouraged to use the full scale of media options within the wiki to get across their lessons learned.

The course involves active collaboration with the MBA Alumni Society of BI.

Examination

Participation 30%, individual assignment 30%, and group-based case work 40%. The casework refers to the hand-ins of the case; the presentation of the case in class enters into the participation grade.

Examination code(s)

GRA 81471 - Process evaluation; accounts for 100 % to pass the program GRA 8147 , 2,5 ECTS credits

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

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 process elements, the whole course must me re-evaluated when a student wants to retake a exam. Retake examinations entail an extra examination fee.

Additional information