APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2014/2015

MBA 2416 Business Simulation and Global Governance

Programme
Master of Business Administration - China

Responsible for the course
Jan Ketil Arnulf, Kim van Oorschot

Department
Department of Leadership and Organizational Behaviour

Term
According to study plan

ECTS Credits
4

Language of instruction
English

Introduction

The core of this module is a business simulation – a management game.
First, it allows students to be a “Global CEO for a day” and to make decisions accordingly, to evaluate the results of their decisions, and to make new decisions, etc. Students can practice what they have learned during their Master in the lifelike, but safe and fast environment of the game.

Second, the theoretical framework for the module rests on three traditions: Global management, corporate governance and complexity theory.

Third, it is a practical way to introduce large groups of Chinese students to the Norwegian business life. The case to be simulated is a company operating cross-nationally in China, Germany, and Norway.

Learning outcome

Acquired knowledge:
In this module, the students will learn how decisions in organizations have different short- and long-term consequences. They will learn why forecasting and systemic understanding is important for planning and the anticipation of future events and results. They will also learn to integrate concepts from corporate governance and global management, understanding how different organizational stakeholders and global perspectives on a company create complex and sometimes conflicting interests when making and carrying out decisions. Finally, they will learn about simulation as a way of training management in businesses so that they can later use these methods themselves.

Acquired skills:
The purpose of this module is to give the students a practical approach to how issues such as control, learning, copying, innovation and outcomes develop over time. They will learn how to combine knowledge from all the modules in the program to understand how they mutually interact and creating systemic effects across time (20 years of business operations) and space (different geographical locations). The students will acquire skills to analyze and discuss how a long-term perspective and a global environment affect the development of business plans and performance. They will also acquire deeper understanding of how what directors will look for and need to know when initiating business operations.

Reflection:
Complexity theory teaches students to think in terms of exploitation and exploration, and approaches to learning from variation and copying.

Global management in this setting means reflecting on how business strategies may work when embedded in different national and cultural contexts. What needs to be controlled, what can be localized, and what can be adapted?

Corporate governance is about asking questions such as:
How do we make sure that a corporation adds the maximum value to society? How do we minimize the corporation’s ability to externalize the costs on to others? When then performance data show that the corporation is not meeting our goals, what is the best way to make the necessary changes and who is responsible for making that happen?

The students will have the possibility to see long-term effects of decisions in a complex system, and discuss with the other group members how these decisions can be understood. The students will also meet with other management students from other countries, and will be able to learn how one company can be experienced very differently according to the localized viewpoint of the organizational members. The outcome of the course is increased ability to be accountable for organizational performance in a global, long-term scenario.

Prerequisites
Bachelor degree or equivalent, 4 years work experience, managerial experience and good written and oral knowledge of the English language. Please confirm our Student regulations.

Compulsory reading
Books:
Axelrod, R. M., & Cohen, M. D. 1999. Harnessing complexity : organizational implications of a scientific frontier. New York: Free Press.. Chapter 4
Moran, R., Harris, P. R., & Moran, S.. 2007. Managing cultural differences. Boston: Elsevier. Chapters 4, 7,8 and 9

Articles:
Van Oorschot, K., Solli-Sæther, H. & Karlsen, J.T. 2014. Sharing knowledge or not? Innovation and imitation in shipbuilding projects in China

Journals:
Bowen, D. E., & Inkpen, A. C. 2009. Exploring the Role of "Global Mindset" in Leading Change in International Contexts. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 45(2), 239-260. doi: 10.1177/0021886309334149
Hsu, C. W., Lien, Y. C., & Chen, H. M. 2013. International ambidexterity and firm performance in small emerging economies. Journal of World Business, 48(1), 58-67
March, J. G. 1991. Exploration and exploitation in organizational learning. Organization Science, 2(1), 71-87
Mesoudi, A., Chang, L., Murray, K., & Lu, H. J. 2015. Higher frequency of social learning in China than in the West shows cultural variation in the dynamics of cultural evolution. Proceedings of the Royal Society, 282(20142209), 1-7
Ng, K. Y., Van Dyne, L., & Ang, S. 2009. From Experience to Experiential Learning: Cultural Intelligence as a Learning Capability for Global Leader Development. Academy of Management Learning & Education, 8(4), 511-526
Porter, M. E., & Rivkin, J. W. (2012). 2012. Choosing the United States. Harvard Business Review, 90(3), 80

Recommended reading

Journals:
de Vries, M. K., & Korotov, K. 2005. The future of an illusion: In search of the new European business leader. Organizational Dynamics, 34(3), 218-+. doi: 10.1016/j.orgdyn.2005.06.003
Filipovic, J., Devjak, S., & Putnik, G. 2012. Knowledge Based Economy: The Role of Expert Diaspora. Panoeconomicus, 59(3), 369-386. doi: 10.2298/pan1203369f
Green, S., Hassan, F., Immelt, J., Marks, M., & Meiland, D. 2003. In Search of Global Leaders. Harvard Business Review, 81(8), 38-45

Course outline
1 days of computer simulations and discussions. 2 days of classroom lectures and group discussions with students from other classes and nations.

On the 1st day, the students will be introduced to central theoretical concepts and the simulation method. They will run the simulation in groups, take notes and discuss.

The 2nd day the students will use the simulation results and experiences to formulate a strategy for a company/firm in which address market objectives, internationalization, and resource utilization are described, using as much of the previous course modules insights and tools as possible. The result should be max 15 slides with a presentation to a faculty panel at the end of the day (last 2 hours: 15 min presentation, 30 min feedback).

On the 3rd day in the morning, students present on individual basis the 3 content topics and 3 skill topics that each of them has learned from both the business simulation and from the governance challenge of the preceding 2 days. The results are to be presented on a poster page-size on MS Word, subsequently printed on an A2 and hung into a classroom, the result will be about 40 posters.. These results are commented and discussed by the professors until lunch..

On the 3rd day in the afternoon, the students do the same thing again, but this time for their company - what did you learn from the business simulation and the governance challenge that you can apply to your company in the short-term, mid-term, and long-term? The rest of the day is for discussing the process, and letting the Chinese and Western students comment on each other’s observations. The professor sums up.

Computer-based tools
This is a computer-based simulation where all participants are divided into groups. The students will perform the simulations on their own computers in groups.

Learning process and workload
The students are first taught about simulations and this type of learning process. They will then go through a simulation representing the first 16 years of business. This period is characterized by challenges such as knowledge sharing,

management, and cultural issues. They then move on to the scenario for the next 10 or 20 years, where the ability to make all their previously knowledge applicable becomes important. When the simulation period is completed, they will have some time to discuss. Thereafter, there is a day of lectures on global management and governance. The students will thereafter work in mixed groups to finish a learning assignment.

Pre-course reading, participation in the simulation, group work.

Examination

The examination is a group task to be submitted as term paper after the module

Examination code(s)

MBA 24161 - Term paper; accounts for 100% to pass the program MBA 2416; 4 credits.
The course is part of a full MBA and all evaluations must be passed in order to obtain a certificate for the degree.

Examination support materials

Re-sit examination

At the next ordinary exam.

Additional information

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 me re-evaluated when a student wants to retake a exam. Retake examinations entail an extra examination fee.