

Business Feasibility Study

MCEL 40042

Credit rating 15

Unit coordinator: Jonathan Styles

Alliance Manchester Business School

Undergraduate

Level 4

Course unit overview

This unit has been specifically designed to allow students of a computer science background apply their specialist knowledge and understanding into a business context. Students undertaking this Unit will work in teams to make a feasibility assessment for the commercialisation of some computer technology which has been developed by a live company.

Aims

The unit aims to:

- Provide students an opportunity to either engage with a company, 'on a live project', or explore a 'known company idea' for a possible business opportunity. Students will be expected to utilise their subject specialism to explore how they, may in conjunction with a range of business and management tools and techniques, identify ways in which **value** could be created through the identification of a viable businesses idea. The potential identified '**value**' could take the form of a new product, service, process, business model, marketing strategy or a combination of these. Students should strive to maintain a professional attitude in their dealings with the client, their team and any other third parties.
- Create a learning environment in which students can become comfortable in coping with the uncertainties presented to them by the many conflicting requirements of a typical company project.
- To gain experience of working in a team environment learning to accept responsibility for their own actions, to provide a means by which to improve their oral and written presentation and communication skills, and to encourage an enquiring and creative mind that is able to challenge the status quo and to identify and evaluate opportunities for innovation.
- Develop the student's ability to deploy appropriate management and business tools and techniques so that they and their team may achieve given objectives within a commercial and economic context, taking into consideration associated risks and resource constraints including time, people and finance and the uncertainties of the commercial environment of business.
- Encourage students to develop the habit and the ability for effective independent learning and to reflect on the process undertaken by both themselves and their team in the completion of the brief in order to identify opportunities for personal development.

Employability skills

Other

Students should be able to use experiences gain from this module to demonstrate that they have a basic understanding of how consultancy type work is undertaken. This unit should provide students with a range of skills which would help them in their pursuit of either a career within an organisation or as an entrepreneur.

Syllabus

Over a period of 6 weeks students will work in teams on a project supplied by a real-life client which may be a charity, SME, social enterprise, university spinout or large corporate or from within the student group. Within their groups, students will work with the client in order to first explore and clearly articulate the clients requirements, to then generate and evaluate one or more options for their client and to present back to their client a fully worked up business case including an implementation plan outlining the value that will be created for the client, the nature of any associated risks, how they will be addressed and the proposed opportunity will be realised.

There are no formal lectures, tutorials or seminars; students are expected and encouraged to establish their own action plan through which they will meet a set of objectives which to some extent will be self-determined. However there will be weekly meetings with the lecturer to discuss the ongoing research and to discuss any issues related to the project and the client.

Students will need to be clear as to the expected deliverables from the unit and how these will be assessed. Beyond these suggested guidelines, it is very much for them to determine a realistic set of objectives, decide what to work on and decide how to work together. Students will be assessed on both group and individual performance. This won't be limited to assessing the product, i.e. the tangible outputs of this unit such as the business report but also on the process undertaken as they work to establish the business feasibility of their idea. This latter requirement will be evidenced through reflective feedback on the how individuals team perform within the team throughout the project

Teaching and learning methods

The learning strategy underpinning this module is that of enquiry based learning (EBL) which involves students directing their own lines of enquiry, identifying critical information gaps, developing strategies to address those gaps, taking responsibility for analysing and presenting it appropriately. There will be no formal lectures, tutorials or seminars.

Assessment methods

Formative assessment weekly meetings with the lecturer to discuss the progress of the project.

Summative assessments

Business Report, 8,000 words (plus appendices) - 50%

A short Project Proposal briefing document, maximum of two pages - 20%

Individual Reflective Report up to 1,500 words - 30%

Feedback methods

- Attending meetings and doing short work tasks set within the context of the course..
- Your lecturer will reply to brief individual questions during the group meetings.
- Your lecturer will provide brief replies to your emailed enquiry.
- Your lecturer may feedback messages to the whole class via Blackboard if the point that you have raised could be of benefit to the whole class.

Requisites

Core for M.Eng Computer Science. Also an Open Option Unit - available as a free choice option to students who have received prior agreement from their registering school and who have also discussed their suitability with the unit leader, due to the specialist knowledge needed to undertake the project work.

Recommended reading

There are no formal recommendations aside from the guidance notes and other material which will be available on the Blackboard site for this unit. Students will be expected to use

on-line resources, the library facilities (general and business sections) as well identifying and utilising their own primary sources.

Eddie Davis Library -

<http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/academicsupport/subjects/business/marketsandsectors/>

<http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/academicsupport/subjects/business/helpingyou/delicious/>

A-Z guide to Business and Management databases.

<http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/academicsupport/subjects/business/helpingyou/howtoreserchguides/>

Scheduled activity hours

Lectures

(6 lectures) 18 hour

Independent study hours

132 hours

Additional notes

This unit is only open to students undertaking computational based degrees and is core for M.Eng Computer Science.

Timetable<https://ughandbook.portals.mbs.ac.uk/Non-AllianceMBSstudents/Timetables.aspx>

For Academic Year

Updated:

Approved by: