

## The Dynamics of Strategy

This course will stimulate the imagination and inform the judgement of all those engaged in strategic decision-making, either currently or in the future. An understanding of the frameworks of strategy and an ability to use them imaginatively will help your organisation survive in the longer-term and perform its role more effectively. You will not be expected merely to 'learn' the frameworks, but to critically analyse and comment on them, sometimes in collaboration with fellow students. The course will also help you contribute to and better understand the dialogue of strategy at a variety of levels in your organisation.

A postgraduate course in Business and Management.

Code: **B835**  
Credits: **0**  
Level: **Postgraduate**  
SCQF level: 11  
FHEQ level: 7

Course work includes:  
• 3 Tutor-marked assignments (TMAs)  
• Includes residential school  
First presentation - November

Details on  
[www.codecs.ro](http://www.codecs.ro); phone  
021 252.51.82/3/4;  
fax 021 252.56.13

### Description

The course provides a general introduction to strategy, some definitions of strategy and a discussion of the role of strategy in organisations. You will look at a detailed historic background to the subject of strategic management and explore both where some of the best-known strategy frameworks came from and in what situations they can be applied effectively. It is as important to understand when a particular framework will not be useful, as to know when it will. You will use the strategy process framework as the conceptual backbone of this course and the four 'pressures' (globalisation, industry dynamics, risk, and ethics and corporate responsibility) that will provide the key external context variables throughout the course.

There are no recipes for managing a successful organisation. However, there are actions that you can take as a manager that are more likely to help your organisation to survive and prosper. Strategy is the process of developing and implementing such actions, and as such is critical to the relative success of an organisation in its business context over time. This applies to organisations in all industries and in all parts of the world, regardless of the way strategy is undertaken. Therefore, whether you work in commercial or not-for-profit (NFP) organisations, manufacturing, services, information industries, the armed forces, government or ebusiness all these organisations compete for resources such as finance or for people with relevant managerial experience. The frameworks and themes presented in this strategy course are designed to be relevant for managers everywhere. For example, although there are obvious basic structural and cultural differences between commercial and NFP organisations, we consider such differences to be less great than a decade ago. Both types of organisation now often operate globally; both are subject to financial and political risk; both now are judged by their ethical practices as well as their operational efficiency.

Strategies exist for different levels within the organisation: for individual business units; at the corporate level; at the multidivisional level; and at the international level. What kinds of organisation structure are most helpful for delivering particular types of strategies and for responding to continuous change? When do mergers make sense? Do you understand when cooperative rather than competitive strategy may be the strongest option? What internal capabilities would be needed to make a strategic alliance work with organisations that may be your competitors in other areas? How do any of these factors change when the strategy is for a multinational corporation operating in a number of countries? These questions show how deeply context affects strategic decisions, for example how key issues like globalisation and government policies affect the strategy process. Strategies are therefore each essentially unique in content and in practice for each organisation.

The course consists of seven units that form the core of your learning. The units complement other media including extensive web-based materials, a virtual learning environment (VLE), day schools, online conferencing, a residential school, case studies and marked assignments. The units provide much of the basic knowledge and understanding you need on this course. However, you will also apply that knowledge to real-life examples and case-study situations, and to continuously reflect on and challenge your understanding of strategy. An online learning guide will direct you through this process of learning and reflection. You will read and think about it all;

## What's included

Study text and online materials, including B835 website, study guide and online discussion forums. In addition, you have university library access, published articles, case-studies, podcasts and activities to help you develop your strategic thinking.

## You will need

There are activities that require internet access and a web browser that can play Flash and Shockwave.

# The Dynamics of Strategy

do some of your own research; discuss it with your tutor group; and then develop an informed perspective on what strategy is and what it has to offer to you as a manager and to your organisation.

## Vocational relevance

This course will help you develop the skills and techniques to be able to operate in a strategic environment and to contribute to the strategic dialogue and decision-making within your organisation.

## Residential school

During the latter part of the course, there is a five-day residential school that covers this module and elements of **Corporate finance (B831)** which puts both modules into a real-life context. Satisfactory participation in either the compulsory five-day residential school, or in the 21-day online equivalent is required. The school is an opportunity to meet other managers and tutors and to work in small groups on strategic management and corporate finance issues.

Both versions of the residential school (face-to-face and online) have been devised to deliver the same essential learning outcomes. Feedback from previous MBA students suggests that those who have attended the face-to-face school have particularly valued the face-to-face contact and the networking opportunities available. The cost of the residential school (excluding travel) is included in the module fee.

## Entry

This course is a compulsory module of stage 2 of the **MBA (F61)** and will be one of the first Stage 2 modules that you study. Please see MBA (F61) for full details of the entry requirements for this qualification.

The course requires 300 hours of study over 12 months. It is designed to be studied alongside Corporate finance (B831) which you study simultaneously for the first six months of B835. (You can study Corporate finance first if you wish to study at a slower pace i.e. 6-8 hours per week rather than 12-16 hours).

## Qualifications

B835 is a compulsory course in OUBS MBA (F61)

## Computing requirements

This course includes online computer activities – accessible using a web browser with Flash and Shockwave.

You will need internet access and a computer. If you have purchased a new Windows computer since 2002 it should meet your course computing requirements. Please note that you cannot use an Apple Mac or Linux computer unless it is running Windows using Boot Camp or similar dual-boot system.

You will need a headset, with a microphone and earphones, to talk to your tutor and other students online during some of the course activities.

## Teaching and assessment

### Support from your tutor

You will have a tutor who will help you with the study material and mark and comment on your assignments, and whom you can ask for advice and guidance. You can contact your tutor by telephone, email or via your tutor group forum on the B835 website.

The website provides access to forums including your tutor group forum where you will regularly meet with your tutor and fellow members of your tutor group forum to discuss elements of the course, including management implications at the end of each unit – an integral component of your studies – which lead to the assessed elements.

### Assessment

The assessment details for this course can be found in the facts box above. You must use the online eTMA system to submit your tutor-marked assignments (TMAs).

**After you have successfully completed both this module and Corporate finance (B831) you will have gained 450 study hours. You then complete this part of the MBA by taking a three-hour examination covering both these modules. On passing this examination you will gain 45 credits.**

