6.4   Module 4: International Strategy

6.4.1   Headline information about the module

Module title	International Strategy
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)	9
Module number/reference	MIBL-IS
Parent programme(s) the plural arises if there are embedded programmes to be validated.	MSc in International Business Management
Stage of parent programme	1
Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable)	1 (core)
Module credit units (FET/HET/ECTS)	ECTS
Module credit number of units	5
List the teaching and learning modes	Full-time, part-time
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)	Learners should normally hold an approved honours degree in business, law or related discipline or equivalent qualification from an approved tertiary/or professional institution
Pre-requisite module titles	None
Co-requisite module titles	None
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff (staff includes workplace personnel who are responsible for learners such as apprentices, trainees and learners in clinical placements)	Qualified to at least masters level in strategy or business equivalent preferably with a third level teaching qualification (e.g. Certificate in Training and Education).
Maximum number of learners per centre (or instance of the module)	60
Duration of the module	12 weeks
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week (see * below)	3
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)	Normal lecture room with internet access and good-quality audio-visual equipment.

Analysis of required learning effort		
Effort while in contact with staff	**Minimum ratio teacher / learner**	**Hours**
Classroom and demonstrations	1:60	36
Monitoring and small-group teaching		
Other		
Independent Learning		
Directed e-learning (hours)		
Independent Learning (hours)		44
Other hours (group project)		45
Work-based learning hours of learning effort		
Total Effort (hours)		125

Allocation of marks (within the module)					
	Continuous assessment	**Supervised project**	**Proctored practical examination**	**Proctored written examination**	**Total**
Percentage contribution	100				100%

6.4.2 Module aims and objectives

This module introduces and develops the concepts, perspectives and tools associated with the discipline of strategy formulation and development. It provides conceptual understanding and places the concepts and tools within the complexities of undertaking business in different industrial and market contexts, countries and cultures. As well as providing the learner with a core body of knowledge of strategy, the module aims to go beyond the prescriptive "toolbox" approach to strategy making, and develop and instil in the learner an appreciation of the complexities, subtleties and behavioural factors that fundamentally shape what businesses do and why.

The central aim of the module is to ensure learners possess the knowledge and critical skills needed to appreciate the influences on strategy formulation and development. Learners will critically assess the variety of forces at work both within and outside a business from markets and institutions to competition and consumers, from the nature of value and advantage to the importance of resources. Identify and critically evaluate the choices faced by a firm doing business on an international level; from considerations of control and risk to appropriate modes of market entry, from the extent to which businesses need to respond to local conditions to the complexities of constraints and developments for particular industries.

6.4.3 Minimum intended module learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module learners are able to:

(i) critically appraise the issues and factors that influence the variety of strategic decision taken by management within an international business context
(ii) engage with and critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of the various theoretical frameworks and key debates within the field of international strategy
(iii) employ a range of models and frameworks to assess external and competitive forces and influences and their implications for strategic choices and firm performance, particularly within an international business context
(iv) distinguish strategic management from operational management and articulate the role of an international business strategy in the modern organisation
(v) critique an organisation's competitive strategy and evaluate the ability to provide a sustainable advantage through strategy development.

6.4.4 Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall MIPLOs

International organisations exist in dynamic, often complex and challenging contexts that pose many difficulties for management trying to do the best they can to ensure organisational survival and achieve good performance in the future. Many organisations face various challenges and difficult choices that can even undermine their business models work.

This module attempts to equip learners with the kind of insights based on recognising the various tensions that exist in international strategy that challenge the idea of the long term planning and prescriptive approach that has been traditional in the discipline. It emphases the importance of dealing with complex and uncertain circumstances, the role of happenstance and the "wilful others" that challenge the traditional assumption of certainty and control over situations that managers often assume they have when approaching strategic decisions.

It attempts to encourage a more reflective and multi-perspective approach to identifying, analysing and resolving multi-layered strategic situations in an attempt to influence the future of a business's performance by thinking through moves open to the organisation.

It examines ways to create power in order to get more out of a situation than might otherwise be expected and to result in a "triumph over uncertainty and chaos" through the allocation of resources to achieve the best outcome in a set of given circumstances. It seeks to equip learners to identify and diagnose relevant information and global trends that might be useful in ensuring the future performance of the business. It seeks to enable learners to think about the kind of decisions and methods that are required to guide the activities in a coherent way that result in the future performance of the business while ensuring that the firm remains sufficiently adaptable to deal with adverse developments and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

6.4.5 Information provided to learners about the module

This module aims to introduce learners to the discipline of strategy in a business environment with an emphasis on international issues and themes. Some of the traditional, more prescriptive approaches to identifying and resolving international business problems will be challenged as people who have to think and act strategically often face uncertain, complex and challenging situations that pose many difficulties for them as they try to ensure organisational survival and achieve good performance in the future.

The delivery and content of the module will attempt to encourage learners to become more reflective and appreciate different perspectives and approach to international business problems related to performance and encourage learners to think through alternative moves open to them. This will be done in both individual and group settings where both internal reflection and group discussion will hopefully lead learners to examine ways to both appreciate and resolve complex challenges when dealing with uncertainty and complexity in attempting to get more out of a situation than might otherwise be expected.

The module draws on a range of frameworks and tools that we use in order to equip learners with the ability to identify and diagnose relevant information and trends that might be useful in ensuring the future performance of any business situation you find yourself in in future.

In completing this module, we aim to enable you to think about the kind of decisions and methods that are required to guide the activities of a business in a coherent way. Learners will examine the importance of remaining open and aware to be sufficiently adaptable in dealing with adverse developments and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

We use a range of teaching methods from lectures and tutorials to case studies and class exercises. A range of traditional academic and non-academic sources are used as well as group work using online tools, and more traditional written assignments. The aim is to engage learners in the module content and associated competencies that are necessary for learners to develop.

The use of class exercises, tutorial presentations, case studies and an iterative, online canvas assignment to present group work should help learners to develop ideas for their group and individual assignments which represents 100% of the assessment for the module.

6.4.6 Module content, organisation and structure

Introduction to strategy, strategic thinking and strategic approaches
- Overview of what strategy is and what strategy involves as an activity and process
- Overview of the principal concepts associated with the field of strategy
- Historical influences and dominant paradigms on conceptions of strategy and how it is done
- Review of the principal perspectives and approaches to strategic process, context and content

Corporate and business level strategy
- Linking strategic analysis to strategic choices and content
- The central components of strategy content
- Achieving coherence and consistency in strategy content
- Supporting organisational arrangements for strategy implementation
- Business units and business models

External analysis
- Identifying and assessing the implications of macro environmental forces and trends
- Issues of stability and turbulence and the problems with anticipating the future
- Understanding and evaluating the competitive environment, competitive forces, and strategic groups
- Issues in cooperation and coordination

Internal analysis
- Understanding the importance of assessing resources, capabilities and knowledge in developing competitive advantage
- Understanding and assessing issues in value creation, value chains, value systems and achieving sustainable competitive advantage

Strategic purpose
- Mission, values and global issues
- Goals, objectives and targets
- Long term versus short terms strategic orientation
- The implications of ownership structure on business choice and performance

The context of internationalisation
- Understanding the rationale behind firm internationalisation
- Identifying and assessing the appropriateness of various modes of, and processes associated with, internationalisation
- Understanding the nature of risk, the desire for control and the importance of trust in an internationalised business
- Assessing the extent of responsiveness and standardisation appropriate in an international strategy
- Assessing locations for opportunities, challenges and constraints
- Assessing modes for firm internationalisations

6.4.7 Module teaching and learning strategy

Along with a clear statement on the relevant learning objectives and expectations at the beginning of each topic, learners are directed to the range of relevant materials to support the deepening of their learning experience and knowledge of the topic. Lectures are delivered with an attempt to make the experience as engaging as possible in order to support the learners achieve the learning objectives.

After a review of the relevant concepts and core knowledge in an interactive lecture format, a class exercise is conducted. The aim of the exercise is to provide learners with an appreciation of applying the concepts and models to strategic issues in as-near-to-real-life as possible. Outside the classroom, learners are expected to engage in significant preparatory and post hoc reading. As the module focuses on strategy, there is a strong emphasis on linking the content to other relevant business disciplines emphasising the overarching concerns of the discipline.

The iterative application of class content to both the development of the group-based, case study assignment and the individual case study assignment are aimed at the learner engaging with and applying the material in an incremental way. In this way, they accumulate knowledge and insights that are often not achieved in summative exam type assessments, which deals with complex and subjective issues, and concepts that are covered in strategy.

6.4.8 Work-based learning and practice-placement

There is no work based or practice-placement element within this module.

6.4.9 E-learning

Moodle, the college VLE, is used to disseminate notes, advice, and online resources to support the learners.

6.4.10 Module physical resource requirements

Normal lecture room with internet access and good-quality audio-visual equipment. All learners have access to an extensive range of 'actual' and 'remote access' library resources. The library monitors and updates its resources on an ongoing basis, in line with the college's Library Acquisition Policy.

6.4.11 Reading lists and other information resources

Primary reading
Clegg, S. R. et al. (2016) Strategy: Theory and Practice. London: SAGE Publications Ltd
de Wit, B. (2017) Strategy: An International Perspective. Andover: Cengage Learning EMEA.

Secondary reading
Bartlett, C. and Beamish, P. (2018) Transnational Management: Text, Cases & Readings in Cross-Border Management. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 8th ed
Collins, James, Porras, J. and Collins, Jim (2005) Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies. London: Random House Business
Faulkner, D. O. and Campbell, A. (eds) (2006) The Oxford Handbook of Strategy: A Strategy Overview and Competitive Strategy. Oxford: OUP Oxford
Frynas, J. G. and Mellahi, K. (2014) Global Strategic Management. Oxford: OUP Oxford
Johnson, M. W., Christensen, C. M. and Kagermann, H. (2008) 'Reinventing Your Business Model'. Available at: https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/item.aspx?num=34830 (Accessed: 22 May 2018)
Kay, J. & Dept. for Business Innovation and Skills (Great Britain), (2012) Review of UK equity markets and long-term decision making report [an independent review, chaired by Professor John Kay], London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (UK).

6.4.12 Specifications for module staffing requirements
Lecturers should be qualified to at least masters level in strategy or business equivalent preferably with a third level teaching qualification (e.g. Certificate in Training and Education).

6.4.13 Module summative assessment strategy
Module is assessed by continuous assessment alone, with two parts. Firstly, working as a team learners complete a detailed presentation and oral defence on a provided case company. Individually, learners also complete an end of semester individual assignment based on a case study problem.

No.	Description	MIMLOs	Weighting
1	Presentation and Oral Defence	(ii) (iii) (vi)	70%
2	Case Study	(i) (v)	30%

6.4.14 Sample Assessments
Please see Sample Assessment Handbook.