Aston Business School
Birmingham

BFM223 SUSTAINABILITY ACCOUNTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Academic Year 2012/13

Number of Aston Credits:	15
Number of ECTS Credits:	7.5

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

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Availability: See 'office hours'

Or contact the Finance and Accounting Group Administrator:
Mrs. Rosaleen Shirley, Room ABS 404, Extension 3238

Pre-requisites for the Module:

None.

Mode of Attendance:

Full-time and part-time

Module Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

The aim of this module is to introduce students to the different theories that underpin sustainability accounting and accountability. It will acquaint students with the nature and scope of alternative forms of corporate accountability which goes beyond the traditional form of accounting model. Development of such alternative forms of corporate accountability is considered essential in the modern business world as evidenced by the publication of substantial CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)/sustainability reports by most of the FTSE 100 companies. Students will learn the theory and practice of sustainability reporting with insights into the real life corporate practices in this area.

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Module Content:

Week 1: Critical examination of traditional accounting model and its limitations. Consideration of an alternative form of corporate accountability and its historical development

Week 2: A consideration of systems oriented theories of social and environmental accounting

Week 3: Legal and quasi-legal frameworks for sustainability accounting and accountability

Week 4: Current developments in social and environmental accounting, reporting

Week 5: Environmental management accounting, sustainability and management control

Week 6: Ethical finance and investment including some discussion of financial indexes (such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and FTSE4Good)

Week 7: Climate change/carbon accounting and reporting

Week 8: Sustainability assurance

Week 9: Revision

Week 10: Individual work on assignment

Corporate Connections:

The course draws on examples from corporate practice and students will specifically look at corporate sustainability reports. A guest lecture by industry experts is scheduled to provide practical insights in to the CSR reporting and assurance practices.

International Dimensions:

Mention will be made of EU, US and international CSR reporting practices. International comparisons are discussed throughout the module.

Contribution of Research:

Where necessary, module lecturers' own research findings and academic literature will be brought in the class for discussion.

Ethics, Responsibility & Sustainability:

This module is specifically aimed at critical examination of accountability and transparency of organisations with regard to their social and environmental performance.

Method of Teaching:

The module of will be taught via three hours weekly teaching sessions comprising lectures and syndicate group work.

Method of Assessment and Feedback:

100% course work based end of the course assignment. Summative and formative feedback would be provided as appropriate.

Learning Hours:

Contact hours	27
Directed learning – Exercises	23
Further Private Stud	100
Total	**150**

The following essential and recommended readings are subject to change. Students should not therefore purchase textbooks prior to commencing their course. If students wish to undertake background reading before starting the course, many of the chapters/readings are available in electronic form via on-line library catalogues and other resources

Essential Reading:

Deegan, C., & Unerman, J. 2011 (Second European Edition). *Financial Accounting Theory*. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw Hill.

Unerman, J., Bebbington, J., & O'Dwyer, B. 2007. *Sustainability Accounting and Accountability*. Essex: Taylor & Francis.

Other Reading:

Hopwood, A. and Unerman, J. 2010. Accounting for Sustainability: Practical Insights Book, London: Earthscan.

Gray, R., & Bebbington, J. 2001. *Accounting for the Environment*. London: Sage.

Gray, R., Owen, D., & Adams, C. 1996. *Accounting and Accountability: Changes and Challenges in Corporate Social and Environmental Reporting*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.

Articles from the following Journals will be useful:

Accounting, Organizations and Society
Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal
Critical Perspectives on Accounting
Accounting Forum
British Accounting Review
Journal of Business Ethics

Useful Electronic Sources:

UK CSR Disclosure Database [Available at: http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~csearweb/researchresources/csrdbase.htm]

GRI Database [Available at: http://www.globalreporting.org]