

BNM805 Foundation in Business Systems

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: Please see office hours on door, use Web Appointment Scheduling System (WASS) or contact group administrator, John Morley, ABS266, Extension 3236

Pre-requisites for the module:

There are no formal prerequisites for the module.

The module recognizes that entrants to the MSc ISBA are likely to come from professional and educational backgrounds that have emphasised different skill sets and areas of knowledge. Students from a computing background, for instance, may have technical knowledge and skills in areas such as programming but are likely to lack knowledge and understanding of many key business and management concepts needed to support the study of the MSc ISBA. In a similar way, students from a business/management background may have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of areas such as Information & Communications Technology (ICT) and information systems development. With this in mind, one of the major objectives of this module is to ensure that **all** students are equipped with knowledge and understanding of the fundamental concepts needed to gain the most from the MSc ISBA. It is worth noting that few, if any, students are likely to have covered many of the topics and concepts dealt with by the module in any depth. In addition, since the topics covered will adopt a business/information systems perspective, repetition in relation to any previous learning is likely to be minimal.

Mode of Attendance:

On Campus

Module Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

This module serves as a general introduction to the MSc in Information Systems and Business Analysis (ISBA) programme, offering students an initial viewpoint on many areas that will be covered in depth in later modules. Such an approach also provides an opportunity for students to assess and address their own learning needs.

Summary of module objectives:

- > To introduce the MSc ISBA
- > To provide a common background that ensures all students have the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to study the MSc ISBA successfully.
- > To enable students to assess their own learning needs by identifying gaps in knowledge and understanding in preparation for the specialized part of the programme.

Summary of specific learning outcomes. By the end of the module, students will be able to:

- > Explain fundamental principles drawn together from areas that include information management, e-business and e-commerce, business information systems, operations and ICT.
- > Discuss how technology can be used to support key business processes/operations.
- > Apply concepts related to areas that include decision making, competitive advantage, e-business and other relevant areas in order to analyse business situations and problems.
- > Describe and evaluate general approaches towards developing information systems

It is worth noting that the content of the module is relevant to courses and assessments overseen by the Information Systems Examination Board (ISEB) of the British Computer Society.

The module is also intended to contribute to the following programme level outcomes. Note that the module may also contribute to additional outcomes not listed here.

Knowledge and understanding

- A1 The core functions of a business and how information systems/ technology supports the business and its operations
- A2 How to run projects and develop systems which meet the needs of the business and the client
- A3 Tools, techniques and methods for analysing business and system requirements
- A4 Theoretical principles, models and methodologies for developing business systems and managing IS projects
- A5 Competencies and skills which are valued by employers recruiting for careers in related fields, and knowledge of how to demonstrate these competencies

Intellectual skills

- B1 Critically assess, examine and apply information acquired from various sources, published and unpublished, formal and informal
- B3 Use appropriate conceptual frameworks for interpreting, explaining and informing practice
- B4 Base decisions upon firm evidence and analysis
- B5 Initiate and carry out problem solving enquiries
- B6 Communicate learning on the programme through a range of media

Professional skills: Specific

- C4 Develop knowledge of enterprise systems and their application in organisations
- C6 Feel confident to address the issues and challenges associated with successfully incorporating IS into an organisation

Transferable skills

- D2 Time management and organisational skills
- D3 Communication skills, including written and oral communication and presentation skills
- D4 Ability to work in a team and be effective in a collaborative environment
- D5 Interpersonal skills, including ability to work with people and communicate at different levels
- D6 Sensitivity to cultural differences and ability to work in an international environment
- D8 Career planning and ability to recognise and demonstrate the competencies which enhance employability

Module Content:

The content described here is indicative only. The topics covered in lectures and tutorials are subject to change according to the backgrounds and needs of the student group.

Basic Concepts

Information theory
Managerial Decision Making
Competitive Advantage
Systems Theory
E-business Concepts

Perspectives On IS

Transaction Processing
Process Control
Office Automation
Categories of IS: Information Reporting Systems, Decision Support Systems, EIS, etc.

IS in Business

SCM & E-Procurement Systems, CRM System, Content Management Systems

Creating Information Systems

Developing Information Systems – Approaches, Developing E-Business Systems
M-Commerce & Emerging Trends

Corporate Connections:

- > The MSc ISBA itself has been developed with the support of corporate partners.
- > The module will reflect current trends and professional practice as informed by the media (e.g. Computer Weekly), professional associations (e.g. British Computer Society), employers, corporate partners and the University's specialist careers advisors.
- > Where appropriate, guests from industry will be invited to speak to students.
- > The assessment for the module will be based around a task that involves an organisation the student is familiar with.

International Dimensions:

The methods, concepts, techniques and technologies covered within the module are principally international in nature and are applicable to Europe, the United States, Africa, Australasia and the Far East.

Contribution of Research:

Some of the techniques and concepts presented are based on research carried out at ABS e.g. material on e-business draws upon work by Ben Clegg and Nelson Tang.

Some of the pedagogical methods that will be used are based on research carried out by the module leader e.g. the use of formative assessment as a learning and diagnostic tool.

Ethics, Responsibility & Sustainability:

The module includes lectures covering ethics, professionalism and sustainable computing. In previous years, the module has covered topics such as e-waste, safety-critical systems, codes of conduct, personal privacy and legal compliance.

Method of Teaching:

There will be 10 lectures and 10 tutorial/seminar sessions. Students will be given additional reading and tasks for the weeks they do not attend a tutorial.

All students will be asked to prepare and deliver a seminar during the course of the module. While no credit will be given for delivering a seminar, participation is compulsory – failure to participate will result the overall mark for the module being reduced.

Method of Assessment and Feedback:

The module will be assessed by individual coursework (75%) and a series of computer-based assessments (25%).

The coursework will encourage students to select a genuine business problem that will be analysed using the concepts and approaches discussed during the course of the module. As well as allowing students to reinforce their learning, the task will also encourage them



to make connections between the different concepts studied and appreciate their real-world relevance.

Students will also undertake a series of computer-based assessments (CBA). Some of the tests will be formative in nature and are intended to help students guide and improve their own learning. In this context, formative testing will form part of the learning process as students will have access to personalised, constructive feedback.

Summative computer-based tests (25%) will also take place during the module. It is worth noting that the assessments will contain a variety of question styles and will be designed to test a range of higher-level skills. Together with the written assessment, the CBA will ensure that the full depth and breadth of learning is assessed. A side-benefit of this approach is that it should be possible to identify any problem areas in the module so that they can be addressed.

Formal feedback will be provided on coursework. Informal, formative feedback will be given in tutorial sessions (in relation to student-led seminars), via computer-based tests and through group activities, such as discussions.

Learning Hours:

Contact Hours - Lecture	10
Contact Hours - Tutorial	10
Directed Learning	10
Private Study	60
Work On Assignment	55
Assessment (CBA)	5
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.



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Essential Reading:

Bocij, P., Greasley A. & Hickey, S., 2008. Business Information Systems: Technology, Development and Management for the E-Business. 4th Edition. Harlow: Pearson Education

Curtis G. & Cobham D., 2008. Business Information Systems: Analysis, Design and Practice. 6th Edition. Harlow: Financial Times/Prentice Hall

Indicative Bibliography:

Avison D. & Fitzgerald G., 2006. Information Systems Development: Methodologies, Techniques and Tools. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Beynon-Davies P., 2009. Business Information Systems. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Rainer R., 2008. Introduction to Information Systems: Enabling and Transforming Business. 2nd Edition. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons



For further information on any of the opportunities that Aston Business School offers, please contact:

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