

BS1106 – INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Module Number: BS1106

Module Title: International Business Environment

Number of Aston Credits: 10

Number of ECTS Credits: 5
(European Credit Transfer)

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

Mr. George Jones
Languages & Social Sciences

Main Building, Room 761, Extension 3768
Email: g.w.jones@aston.ac.uk

Availability: Please see office hours on door or IBML Student Support Coordinator, Main Building 6th Floor, Undergraduate Suite, Extension 3032.

Other Staff Contributing to the Module: None

Pre-Requisite(s) for the Module: None

Module Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of the module students will be able to:

- Understand some of the conditions necessary for a market economy to function.
- Understand the impact of governments on business.
- Understand what governments can do to influence business conditions and what they can not.
- Understand the importance of the legal environment of business.
- Understand the importance of history and tradition in government choices about business.
- Understand the role of government in creating, maintaining and, sometimes, removing obstacles to competition.

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- Understand the work of competition authorities in defending a market economy.

Module Content:

The module is designed on the principle that at this stage in the degree programme, you will understand the material best if it is based on a particular country, which is used as the basis of comparison with others. The module works outwards from the business environment of the United Kingdom, which will be compared, both within the module and subsequently, with that of the United States, France, Germany, Russia, Spain, Latin America, South Africa, Japan, and China. The module has been designed to integrate with LF1041, LG1041, LS1002, and BS1102, and to provide a background to BS2209, LF2041, LG2041 and LS2002.

Within this module, we shall be dealing with the UK, the United States, Russia, South Africa, Japan, and China.

- Week 1 (i) An overview: the United Kingdom government and the business environment. (ii) Privatisation in the UK, its aims and scope (iii) obstacles to competition : the example of the utilities.
- Week 2 Deregulation and privatisation: the link and the key differences. UK special regulatory regimes for utilities. Examples of telecommunications, gas, electricity, and water.
- Week 3 The spread of the idea of the market economy. Contrast with the command or planned economies of the communist and former communist states. Outline of Marx's thinking.
- Week 4 The communist system. The uneven effects of its disappearance. Introduction to the idea of "social capital". Business in Russia today.
- Week 5 Rich and poor : examples from Africa. (i) South Africa
- Week 6 Rich and poor : examples from Africa (ii) certain other African states.
- Week 7 How Japan became a rich country. Business conditions in Japan today
- Week 8 China's transition to a market economy (if not to a democracy).
- Week 9 The importance of effective competition laws in a true market economy. Competition laws, national, supranational and international. Origin and development of US "anti-trust"; the

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Sherman Act and its application. In Europe, articles 101 and 102 of Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

Week 10 Operation of competition policy in the UK. Interplay of national and “European” elements. Recent reforms.

Week 11 Revision.

Week 12 Examination

International Dimensions:

The perspective is comparative throughout.

Corporate Connections:

This is an introductory module, which prepares the student for further study of the business environment and aims to build the knowledge which will make subsequent interventions by visitors more fruitful.

Links to Research:

The lecturer’s principal field of research is competition law and competition policy in various countries.

Learning and Teaching, Rationale and Methods:

Weekly lecture and fortnightly tutorial.

The lectures introduce the main lines of the subject. The tutorials are all linked to the subject of the lectures. They check comprehension and sort out misunderstandings, and add further examples. They aim to sharpen and stimulate thinking, and give confidence in discussing new subjects.

Neither the lectures nor the tutorials purport to give all the facts which might be required to write a convincing answer in the assessment. They are an aid to private study, making the material more accessible, and pointing you to sources from which you can draw your own examples.

Duration

Lectures and tutorials	17 hours
Private Study	81 hours
Examination	2 hours

