Aston Business School
Birmingham

BFM223 SUSTAINABILITY ACCOUNTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Academic Year 2013/14

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

Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

Dr. Ataur Belal, Finance and Accounting Group
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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 of various companies.

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.

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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:

Pre-reading	25
Contact hours	27
Further Private Study	98
Total	**150**

The following 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.

Pre-reading:

Owen, D. 2008. Chronicles of wasted time? A personal reflection on the current state of, and future prospects for, social and environmental accounting research ***Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal***, 21(2): 240 – 267.

Rob Gray, Dave Owen, Carol Adams 2010., Some theories for social accounting?: A review essay and a tentative pedagogic categorisation of theorisations around social accounting,

in Martin Freedman, Bikki Jaggi (ed.) ***Sustainability, Environmental Performance and Disclosures (Advances in Environmental Accounting & Management, Volume 4)***, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp.1-54

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Essential Reading:

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

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

Other Reading:

Jones, S. and Ratnatunga, J. (2012). *Sustainability Accounting, Assurance and Reporting*, Bingley: Emerald Pulishers.

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.

Blowfield, M. and Murray, A., 2011. Corporate Responsibility: A Critical Introduction, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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
Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal
Social and Environmental Accountability Journal

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]