

## Business Problem Solving (Consulting Skills)

---

### MODULE DESCRIPTION

Business Problem Solving (Consulting Skills) aims to equip you with a range of frameworks, tools and techniques, many of which have been developed by the management consulting industry. By following a simulated client engagement you will learn how to structure and solve open-ended, complex business problems and present analysis and recommendations with impact. This module is particularly useful for aspiring consultants who wish to gain an insight into a career in consulting, but the content is useful to any student looking to improve their ability to address complex business problems.

NOTE: This module contains weekly exercises with deadlines that contribute to the participation grade and therefore students will need to keep up with the content on a weekly basis.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Critically analyse and devise solutions to complex, open-ended business problems
- Frame the problem appropriately to facilitate the delivery of value
- Choose or construct an analytical framework to structure the problem
- Plan data gathering and analysis, and synthesise your findings to deliver insights and recommendations
- Communicate findings persuasively
- Demonstrate an understanding of the management consulting industry, including client management and career paths

### MODULE CONTENT

The module is built around a structured process which aims to provide you with a business problem solving “toolkit”.

1. Defining the problem – scope the problem and gain agreement on success criteria
2. Structuring the analysis – choose appropriate analytical frameworks and apply logic trees (issue and hypothesis trees) to decompose the problem into manageable options / hypotheses which can be tested through analysis.
3. Sourcing data - understand the range of data sources and information that you can draw on and how to select the most appropriate. Learn how to conduct information gathering in an efficient and effective way.
4. Analysing and synthesising data – Create insights from data and information to address the problem or generate solutions
5. Communicating results –present information and ideas with impact in order to influence and persuade your clients / stakeholders
6. Implementation and change – apply techniques to manage change impacts from the recommendations to facilitate effective implementation.

You will develop your skills by applying the tools and frameworks to conduct a hypothetical client engagement. This will be supplemented with examples and exercises based on real consulting projects.

You will also learn about the “business” of consulting; how to manage clients, develop credibility as a consultant and learn about the different types of consulting firms and projects.

Knowledge objectives: The purpose of this module is to develop:

- a) An understanding of a typical strategy consulting problem solving process.
- b) Knowledge of a range of analytical frameworks that can be applied to structure business problems.
- c) An understanding of how to use various data gathering techniques including surveys and interviewing.
- d) Knowledge of the consulting industry and consulting careers.

Skills objectives: Students will develop skills relating to:

- a) Critical thinking
- b) Structuring and analysing complex, open-ended business problems
- c) Synthesising and analysing different types of information and data
- d) Presenting complex ideas for impact and action
- e) Managing the impacts of business change
- f) Presenting oneself with impact

## **TEACHING METHODS**

Teaching is delivered by a pragmatic blend of pre-recorded lectures, synchronous scheduled live tutorials, asynchronous peer-to-peer and staff-moderated discussion forums, case studies, problem exercises and formative assignments. This approach encourages the achievement of the various learning outcomes by ensuring the acquisition of knowledge and facts, as well as the development of critical appreciation of the theory and concepts covered in the module and how these can be applied to real-world contexts. Learning throughout the module is typically structured around 10 1-week sessions.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

The module will be assessed by:

- 30% participation
- 30% individual coursework (synthesis for a client presentation)
- 40% group coursework (8 minute presentation).