



The University of Hong Kong

Faculty of Business and Economics

**BUSI1807 Business Consulting Practicum (BCP) 2020
Course Outline (6-Credit)**

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a 6-credit course which aims to provide an opportunity for students in the Faculty of Business and Economics to gain hands-on consulting project experience while providing a valuable service to the business community. The course is operated on a team basis. Students will work in groups on assigned business projects under the guidance of the faculty teacher (Dr. C K Lok), consultant-in-residence, and professional mentors (each group will have a professional mentor with extensive expertise and experience).

Each group of students will dedicate around 6 weeks FULL TIME* to a specific business project and work as consultants on a full-time basis (hereafter referred to as “the practicum”). There will be training workshop(s) on business consulting to get students prepared for the practicum. At the start of the practicum, with the assistance and support of the faculty teacher, students must take the initiative and meet with the client to formulate the project and prepare a business consulting proposal. The proposal acts as a mutual agreement between the client and the student consultants on the scope of the business project. Following the proposal, student consultants should then coordinate their work and keep the client, the faculty teacher and their professional mentor informed of progress. A final written business consulting report is due at the conclusion of the practicum, along with an oral presentation to the client, faculty teacher, professional mentor and invited guests.

Business projects will mainly originate from the SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) in Hong Kong and may include projects derived from some social enterprises in our local community. These are **real-life projects** which may come from any area of business and students may need to work outside Hong Kong. Students will not receive any salary compensation from the client organizations but each participating student will be given a stipend by the Faculty upon successfully completing the practicum (with a PASS grade). Additional subsidies will be provided by the client if students are required to work outside Hong Kong. Different awards (certificates, internships, etc.) may also be given to teams with outstanding performance.

II. PRE-REQUISITE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This course is open to students in the Faculty of Business and Economics. Students are required to have good incentives of taking the course and strong motivation of completing the course with efforts. Students should possess the following pre-requisite skills and knowledge in order to cope with the challenging real-life business projects:

- ♦ good knowledge in business subjects;
- ♦ good interpersonal and communication skills;
- ♦ good presentation (written and oral) skills; and
- ♦ good analytical skill.

Students may be invited to attend interviews for evaluation of the pre-requisite skills and knowledge.

* A violation may result in receiving a “F” grade”

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the course are to:

1. Enable students to integrate and apply what they learn in the classroom to provide solutions to real business problems or issues;
2. Develop students' business consulting skills such as team management, client management, and project management through real-life projects;
4. Develop students' competence in making professional and persuasive business reports and presentations to knowledgeable business audiences.

IV. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (ILOs)

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

ILO1: Integrate and apply theoretical knowledge to tackle a real business challenge;

ILO2: Research, analyze, assess and propose practical business options and solutions given the project constraints;

ILO3: Identify key strategic questions, communicate and evaluate progress with the client, team members, faculty teacher as well as professional mentors;

ILO4: Present findings and business solutions (both written and oral) in a professional and persuasive manner; and

ILO5: Build relationship with client and work effectively in and as a team

V. ALIGNMENT OF PROGRAMME AND COURSE ILOs

Programme ILOs	Course ILOs
1. Acquisition and internalization of knowledge of accounting, business and economics	ILOs 1, 2 & 3
2. Application and integration of knowledge	ILOs 1, 2 & 3
3. Inculcating professionalism and leadership	ILOs 4 & 5
4. Developing global outlook	ILOs 1 & 2
5. Mastering communication skills	ILOs 3, 4 & 5

VI. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES (TLAs)

Pre-Practicum Preparation Activities

TLA1. Orientation seminar (for all participating students)

An orientation is organized to help students gain a more thorough understanding on the objectives of the course, the operation of the practicum, the elements to be assessed, the method of assessment and other important information of the course.

Major focus: ILO 3.

TLA2. Training workshop (for all participating students)

Training workshop(s) will be organized to provide the knowledge and instill basic skills of business

consulting to participating students. Students must attend all workshops(s) to get themselves prepared for undertaking clients' projects. A good mix of theoretical knowledge and case analyses will be introduced in the workshop(s). The success of the workshop relies heavily on active learning through participation. There will be plenty of opportunities for students to volunteer, involve and participate through different activities and discussions. Students should take the responsibility for establishing a positive learning atmosphere. They should interact openly with others, enable and encourage others to engage, question and respond to others' ideas in a respectful manner.

Major focus: ILOs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

TLA3. Meeting with professional mentors and clients (team basis)

A meeting is organized to help each project team get acquainted with the assigned professional mentor and client. Students will be clearly informed about the channels and appropriate ways for getting professional advice and project information.

Major focus: ILOs 3 & 5.

During-Practicum Learning Activities

TLA4. Full-time practicum (team basis)

Each consulting team is required to work for about 6 weeks on a full-time basis. The consulting team should take the lead to formulate the consulting project with the client. The team should meet and communicate with the client and/or the representative of the client organization for resources and business information. Student consultants should apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to develop innovative solutions for solving clients' problems and high quality consulting advice for meeting clients' needs. By end of 1st week, each consulting team is required to submit a business consulting proposal for synchronizing the goal and scope of the consulting project with the client and among the teammates. By end of the practicum, a final business consulting report is to be submitted with thorough, convincing and practical solutions.

Major focus: ILOs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

TLA5. Weekly meetings with Professional Mentor (team basis)

Each consulting team is required to meet with the professional mentor at least every week in the 6-week practicum period. The team has to present their progress and work done on the project. This allows the professional mentor to keep track of students' activities, provide feedback and advice for improvement, and assess their team work continuously. The faculty teacher and/or the consultant-in-residence will observe the weekly meetings whenever appropriate or needed.

Major focus: ILOs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

TLA6. Final presentation (team basis)

Each team has to provide an oral presentation including Q&A on their final business consulting report. The final report will be presented to the client, faculty teacher, professional mentor, consultant-in-residence and invited guest(s). Feedback on performance will also be given to the consulting team.

Major focus: ILO 5.

Summary of TLAs

TLAs	Approximate Learning Hours (inside classroom)	Approximate Learning Hours (outside classroom)
<p>Pre-Practicum Preparation Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Orientation seminar ♦ Training workshop on business consulting ♦ Meeting with faculty teacher/professional mentor/client/consultant-in-residence 	3 24	9
<p>During-Practicum Learning Activities</p> <p>6-week full-time practicum, including the preparation and submission of the following deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Business consulting proposal ♦ Weekly meetings with professional mentor/consultant-in-residence/faculty teacher ♦ Final business consulting report ♦ Oral presentation 	1	23 hours/week x 6 weeks = 132 hours
TOTAL:	28	147

VII. BUSINESS PROJECTS

The real-life projects cover different areas of business. The following are some business projects that students completed in the past:

1. To explore the potential market for an IT startup
2. To propose a viable business model to a financial institution to incorporate Fintech and to study its regulatory requirements
3. To recommend to a locally grown eyewear brand on increasing the brand awareness and recognition through e-Marketing
4. To propose a branding and marketing strategy for a watch maker and exporter
5. To increase the brand awareness of a locally grown skin care product company in both Hong Kong and mainland China through social media
6. To study the production efficiency for a manufacturing company with factories in mainland China

VIII. ASSESSMENT TASKS

Students will be assessed by the following tasks:

Assessment Tasks (ATs)	Assessment basis	%	Assessed by		
			Faculty Teacher	Professional Mentor / Client / Consultant-in-Residence	Teammates
1. Participation in the following pre- and during-practicum activities: a. Orientation Seminar b. Training Workshop	Individual	10 10	✓	✓	
c. Meetings with Professional Mentors and Clients	Team	20		✓	
2. Final Report	Team	35	✓		
3. Peer Evaluation	Individual	10	✓		✓
4. Oral Presentation to Client	Team	15			
	Total	100			

Notes:

- (i) Evaluations by the professional mentor, client, consultant-in-residence serve to inform the faculty teacher to determine the final assessment marks on individual tasks.
- (ii) If a task is assessed on a team basis, the score of the task will be applied universally to all members of the group.
- (iii) Students may receive final grades ranging from A+ to F in the course.

AT1. Participation in pre- and during practicum activities

Students are expected to attend all and participate actively in at least the following pre- and during practicum activities:

- a. Orientation Seminar
- b. Training Workshops
- c. Opening Ceremony
- d. Meetings with Professional Mentors and Clients
- e. Presentation Session

Absenteeism from these activities will negatively affect the evaluation of a student's performance. Students should take the responsibility for establishing a positive learning atmosphere. They should interact openly with others, enable and encourage others to engage, question and respond to others' ideas in a respectful manner. This assessment task is evaluated on an individual basis.

Major focus: ILOs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

Assessment Criteria				
Outstanding	Proficient	Competent	Adequate	Fail
Extremely well prepared for discussion	Quite well prepared for discussion	Limited preparation for discussion	Not well prepared for discussion	Never prepared for discussion
Active in sharing views	Quite active in sharing views	Limited participation in sharing views	No sharing of views	No sharing of views and experience
Attended more than 90% of the activities	Attended more than 80% of the activities	Attended more than 70% of the activities	Attended more than 60% of the activities	Attended less than 60% of the activities

AT2. Business Final Report

Students are required to work as business consultants for an assigned project on team basis. Students should integrate and apply what they have learnt in the training workshop to complete the project.

Major focus: ILOs 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

Assessment Criteria				
Outstanding	Proficient	Competent	Adequate	Fail
<p>All aspects were addressed and researched in great depth.</p> <p>Demonstrated an excellent understanding of the business issues and excellent application of theories and concepts to solve the issues.</p> <p>Developed excellent arguments and offered logically consistent and well-articulated analyses and insights into the business issues.</p> <p>The presentation was highly successful at communicating the essential elements to the audience.</p> <p>All aspects conformed to a high academic and professional standard.</p>	<p>Most aspects were addressed and researched in depth.</p> <p>Demonstrated a good understanding of the business issues and good application of theories and concepts to solve the issues.</p> <p>Showed some evidence of analysis, supported by logical arguments and insights into the business issues.</p> <p>The presentation was successful at communicating the essential elements to the audience.</p> <p>Most aspects conformed to a high academic and professional standard.</p>	<p>Most aspects were addressed and researched adequately.</p> <p>Demonstrated a good understanding of the business issues but limited application of theories and concepts to solve the issues.</p> <p>Showed some evidence of analysis, supported by some arguments but not always consistent and logical.</p> <p>The presentation adequately communicated most of the essential elements to the audience.</p> <p>Most aspects conformed to an acceptable academic and professional standard.</p>	<p>Basic aspects were addressed and researched adequately.</p> <p>Demonstrated basic understanding of the business issues and no application of theories and concepts to solve the issues.</p> <p>Showed little evidence of analysis. No clear and logical arguments were presented.</p> <p>The presentation basically covered the basic aspects of the project.</p> <p>Limited aspects conformed to academic and professional standard.</p>	<p>Basic aspects were superficial, inadequate or absent.</p> <p>Demonstrated limited understanding of the business issues and no application of theories and concepts to solve the issues.</p> <p>Showed no evidence of analysis. No clear and logical arguments were presented.</p> <p>The presentation was poorly addressed.</p> <p>No aspects conformed to academic and professional standard.</p>

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

<i>Date/Week (Tentative)</i>	<i>Experiential Learning Activities</i>
Early 2020	Invitation for course registration
Early June 2020	Orientation seminar Training workshops
Early June 2020	Opening Ceremony
Early June – mid-July 2020	6-week full-time practicum with at least the following activities: Meetings with client Weekly meetings with professional mentor
Mid-July 2020	Final oral presentation
Mid-July 2020	Final business consulting report submission
Mid-July 2020	Submission of course evaluation and peer evaluation forms by students

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