

**SUMMER
2024
WEEKS 1-3**



Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Business Ethics

ULMS073

Credit Value	Delivery	Contact Hours Per module	Self-Directed Hours Per module	Total Hours Per module
5 UoL credit, 2.5 ECTS	On-campus	12-16	34-38	50

Module Leader: Matt Mitchell

Matt Mitchell is a postgraduate researcher, graduate teaching assistant and writing tutor in operations and supply chain management at the University of Liverpool Management School. Matt has submitted his thesis on the market value effects of new product introduction delays for focal companies and suppliers. He holds a distinction in a masters degree in programme and project management and a first class business management bachelors degree with honours. Matt also has a teaching qualification, being an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA). Additionally, he has industry experience of being a finance analyst on a large IT programme for a national organisation.

Matt has been involved in a number of research projects on modern slavery and sustainability of food supply chains. He has a wide range of teaching experience at both postgraduate and undergraduate level on modules including: strategic risk management; planning for risk, uncertainty and complexity; service operations management; Big Data analytics for business; digital business strategy; and executing, controlling and closing projects. Matt is interested in research related to contemporary supply chain management challenges and what these mean for both organisations and society. He enjoys teaching in areas where students can

question and explore the strategic and ethical decisions organisations make, whilst reflecting on the outcomes and unintended consequences of these decisions.

Module Description

This module will provide students with a critical introduction to the behavior of organisations and businesses in society. Students will be introduced to the role of organisations within their wider stakeholder environment, with a particular focus on understanding the reasons behind legal and voluntary decisions, and other issues linked to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

This module is designed to give an understanding of core issues in current management practice, guided and illustrated by relevant theory, with time for discussion and reflection, using case studies as stimulus for debate. During this time students, equipped with a core understanding of current issues, will be able to critically engage with some timely questions in a discursive manner to develop and challenge their own opinions. We will consider questions like, what are the reasons behind the current popularity corporate ethical behavior? Why is it important and who do these decisions effect? What is corporate governance and what are the links to business strategy? How does an organization's CSR agenda effect their stakeholders including customers, business partners, employees, the environment? How would stakeholders from different parts of the global supply chain feel about this issue, would they likely share your perspective and if not why?

Key areas of study will include corporate governance, corporate social responsibility and business ethics. These concepts will be interactively and practically explored through the use of a case studies and scenarios linked to core theoretical perspectives and global perspectives brought by students studying the module who live in countries with differing positions in the global supply and manufacture chain of many multinational corporations.

This course will provide students with an opportunity to learn essential core skills and techniques involved in understanding the necessary and voluntary ethical conduct and corresponding decisions made by organisations in a range of sectors. Students will be able to use their new understanding of corporate conduct in society to understand and rationalise how these decisions can help organisational performance.

Module Aims:

To introduce students to the understanding the concept of corporate social responsibility from various theoretical perspectives, with a focus on corporate governance, ethical leadership and organisational strategy.

To highlight the importance of the role of ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility within contemporary society and how this links to organisational decision making.

To understand the current ethical challenges facing managers and employees in organisations today, and the corresponding issues for stakeholders.

To develop skills in research, collaborative learning, critical thinking and communicating academic ideas using relevant theory and appropriate case study materials.

Content

Broadly the module syllabus will cover position of the corporation in society, corporate governance and strategy, the ethics of corporate behavior, corporate social responsibility and philanthropy. These concepts will be illustrated using core theory and engaging case study material to enable students to understand the practical outcomes of the issues in question.

Module Structure

The module will be delivered over a three-week period in six two hour sessions (four hours per week, total 12 hours contact time).

Each session will consist of short lecture-style sessions interspersed with case study material to enable group discussions. The lecturer will introduce and teach the core ideas and concepts for the session before engaging the students in collaborative learning time, where as a group we will discuss the issues and range of connected perspectives. Students will be expected to participate fully and actively throughout the sessions, undertaking prior reading and research where necessary to enable them to have adequate knowledge and examples to enable them to participate during the contact time.

In addition, it is expected that students will spend 34-38 study hours outside of the classroom contact hours on activities including assigned reading, optional reading of areas of personal interest, homework tasks, web research and preparation for assessment. The 'flipped classroom' approach will be used, requiring students to prepare in advance for the sessions. Students should be aware that in order to fully benefit from the face-to-face classroom sessions, the preparation work assigned should have been done prior to the lecture.

Teaching Methods

The teaching approach will include the following:

Taught sessions

Flipped classroom – preparation work

Small group working

Group discussions

Online learning

Use of multimedia and interactive materials

Use of case studies

Assessment:

Assessment will be by a reflective written essay with a total word count of 1,000–1,200 words. This assessment will give 100% of final grade. Guidance will be given within the lecture time, with opportunity for questions.

Standard University policies apply with regard to late submission of assessments

Course Structure:

The course will be practical in nature, with the sessions highly focused on giving the students as much practical experience as possible, and encouraging them to put theory into practice throughout.

The indicative schedule is as follows:

Session One:

What is responsibility and who is responsible?

The course will begin with some introductory information about the module, including the aims and assessment method. The focus of the lecture will then be 'What is responsibility and who is responsible? We will consider this issue from the perspective of the organisation/corporate before looking at the wider stakeholder map. The session introduce students to the various views on CSR, what CSR covers

Student activity: Case study analysis and group discussion. Using case studies drawn from different organisations students will have an opportunity to identify examples of responsibility (voluntary and legally required) working in small groups before sharing their thoughts with the wider class.

Session Two:

Ethical decision making

In this lecture we will consider the rise in popularity of CSR, and what this actually means. Using case examples grounded in core theories we will consider the importance of CSR and accompanying ethical decision making and the impact of these decisions for different stakeholder groups.

Session Three:

Corporate culture: corporate values, norms and beliefs linked to corporate culture and CSR strategy

In this lecture we will look at Corporate values, norms and beliefs linked to Corporate culture and CSR strategy. This lecture will ground CSR in the organizational management and behavior of organization by linking it to other core operational areas like Corporate Strategy, Human Resource Management and marketing. We will examine examples of CSR within Corporate Culture, before critically analyzing the reasons for these decisions. We will assess the impact and value of these CSR strategy by looking at levels of integration within the organization and transparency within what is shared publicly about the CSR programme.

We will consider the use of CSR as a management tool, and how it can connect to leadership and management as well as branding and reputation.

Session Four:

CSR and the wider stakeholder map – applying CSR: motivations, methods and outcomes

The focus of this session is the application of CSR from the organization within their wider stakeholder map, to include their market place, workplace, local communities and within the environment of the natural world (rivers, air systems, soil systems). Drawing on example case

studies we will consider the reasons for interest in a prominent CSR strategy and methods organisations have used to apply their strategy and the outcomes of this. Particular attention will be paid to examples of corporate reputation in the wake of disaster avoidance and negative PR, partnered with the potential of strong CSR to create niche marketing opportunities. As a group we will consider the multiple perspectives within these cases and critically discuss and evaluate their value and merits in line with corporate responsibility and the notion of sustainable development.

Session Five:

CSR within the Globalised World

In this lecture we will adopt a global perspective and focus on the responsibilities and challenges for organisations who operate globally both from a supply chain and sales perspective. Within this lecture students will learn about the challenges of accountability and the link to business ethics when operating globally. Issues within contractual arrangements, cultural and legal challenges, diversity issues and ethical dilemmas arising from differences in local norms. As citizens within a globalising world we will consider the main actors and their contexts, looking at their responsibilities (legal and voluntary) in partnership with consumer pressures and changing expectations of the marketplace. Drawing on knowledge and experiences from within our global classroom we will consider these issues and the ideas drawn from core theories for those working at different stages of the supply chain. How are decisions that are made in organizational meetings impacting local communities and economies? Is it as simple as right and wrong, ethical and unethical?

Session Six:

Managing CSR; Strategy

This lecture will focus on understanding how organisations respond to key stakeholders in the wake of critical incidents relating to CSR, and how they use these experiences to both enforce their regular social responsibility policies but also look to readdress long-term social responsibility enforcement and short-term social responsibility recovery. Example case studies will be used to illustrate such instances and provide an opportunity to draw together learning themes taught across the module. Latterly, working in small groups students will be asked to drawing learning from across the module to plan and respond to scenarios, before presenting to the wider class and taking questions to justify their approach.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

Learning outcome	Assessment component which assesses this learning outcome
Display confidence in understanding and communicating complex ideas in written and spoken language; understanding the thoughts and ideas of others, and challenging these in an appropriate way,	Written essay/reflection/ class discussion

grounded in academic theory or case example.	
Research a topic, work to present ideas in academic written English, including the appropriate use of reference and source material.	Written essay/reflection
Analyse a company CSR strategy and apply reasons drawn from the wider environment as to why the current CSR is positioned in this manner. They will be able to provide grounded suggestions as to changes which could be made and the likely impacts of these decisions for other stakeholders.	Class discussion
Demonstrate a general understanding of various theories and approaches in leadership. They will also be able to present the core skills and techniques of corporate social responsibility from a range of perspectives. Students will be able to explain the importance of the role of ethics to multiple parts of the organisation. Students will be able to critically analyse and evaluate the importance of ethical decisions and how these are viewed by different stakeholders, whilst drawing on relevant theory to contextualise and ground their arguments.	Written essay/reflection/Class discussion

Skills:

Key skills that will be developed:

Skill	How this skill is developed	Mode of assessment
Teamwork	Group discussions, activities and case studies in class	Group work
Communication	Orally in class discussions, activities and debate in class; written communication via completion of written assignment	Written essay/reflection
Problem solving	Students will be given an opportunity to identify the problems and propose	Case studies

	solutions through case studies and brainstorming.	
Time management	Completing case studies and group presentation within defined and fixed timeframe.	Case studies and group work
Critical analysis and evaluation	Students will be prompted to think critically and be given multiple opportunities to contribute reflective thoughts on materials presented during class time.	Group discussion/class group work Written essay/reflection
Presentation	Presenting case studies and a defined subject will improve students' presentation skills.	Informal group presentation within class lecture time

Books, ebooks and websites:

The University Website at www.liv.ac.uk/library provides access to many relevant books and electronic books, as well as academic journals and databases.