INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Head of specialisation: Marie Brechbühler Peskova

The specialization International Business Management prepares students for their future career in an international environment; i.e. a multinational enterprise, international organization or an SME with an international operations.

Nowadays all businesses are part of world’s globalized economy and doing business and managing enterprises is a global issue. Expanding business across borders, going global is a reality not only for large enterprises but also for middle-sized and even small companies (SMEs hidden champions).

Being successful in this international, multicultural and interlinked environment requires not only a solid basis of business and management knowledge but also a global mind set, the practical skills and experience in dealing with the complexity of the international markets and cultural diversity.

Next to proving the students with international business knowledge (international economy, strategy, operations, supply chains, negotiations, etc.) the International Business Management specialization offers students the opportunity to experience working in an international environment in multinational teams on a live business case. As such students also acquire a set of practical skills to work and negotiate in a multinational setting.

Therefore the focus of IBM major modules is to expose students to an international environment in both semesters. A highlight of students learning and work in autumn semester is the “live case” connected study trip “CZeCH out” to Prague, Czech Republic. During the spring semester students will follow up on their study trip experience in Getting to YES! - live simulation of business negotiations with Indian students taking place in Bern.

During their last year of their study the IBM specialization students will acquire a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills relevant to international business in order to perform management tasks and manage projects in globally oriented organizations, develop skills to act, communicate and negotiate in a multicultural business environment and gain international team work experience.

Students will get an opportunity to integrate the knowledge, skills and experience to competently navigate in a complex and dynamic globalized economy.
MBM1 – Going Global: Strategy and Operations

Short description:

The module aims to develop an understanding of the international enterprises and its opportunities and challenges in a globalised world. The module covers the following three areas:

- FOUNDATIONS on international business such as globalization and the internationalization paths of an enterprise.
- Headquarter and Subsidiary Level STRATEGY of an enterprise expanding into foreign markets.
- And OPERATIONS of a company with an international/global presence and its the cross-border management of business functions (i.e. international HR, Marketing, etc.)

Next to the relevant theories and concepts of international strategy and management this module builds on real cases of companies entering and operation in foreign markets. The cases are presented by the company representatives and the students get an opportunity to develop and discuss the solutions for company's situation, i.e. the international expansion strategy and/or international operations.

During the module students work on a “live case” of a company aiming to go global or to improve its global operations. The live case and the challenge the company is facing in their international strategy and/or operations will be presented to the students. The assignment in this module covers the global analysis of a live case. Students implement the knowledge acquired in this module and prepare for the study trip following in Going Global-Study Trip module.

Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. understand the phenomena internationalization of firms and the reasons and drivers of companies to go international/global
2. understand the strategic process of going international/global
3. understand and be able to develop a strategy for international expansion: headquarter- and subsidiary level strategy
4. understand the specifics of an international operations of an enterprise

Main content of this module:

- Foundations: Globalization drivers, internationalization of a firm
- Operation: Cross-border management of business functions; transnational leadership, international HR, international Marketing (to be adopted according to live case)
- Introduction live case

ECTS-Credits: 3
Offered: AS 2019/20
Study language: English
MBM2 - Going Global: Strategy and Operations – study trip Major

Short description:
This module offers students an intense exposure to an international and multicultural environment during a study trip CZeCH out mission to Prague, Czech Republic. In this module students work on the “live case” of a company aiming to go global or to improve its global operations building on the global analysis their performed in GLoing global (MBM1) module. They work together with their fellow students from Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. During the semester students work with their colleagues from abroad in virtually. In the block week students go on study trip “CZeCH out” mission to Prague and finalize their assignment in teams. The CZeCH out study trip closes with student teams presentations of live case solutions. The module focuses on applying the knowledge and skills of international expansion strategy and international operations in an international environment in a multinational team based on an live case of an international company.

Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
1. apply the strategic process of going international/global
2. develop the elements of firm’s strategy for international expansion: headquarter- and subsidiary level strategy
3. develop solutions for challenges company is facing within its international operations

Main content of this module:
- Working in virtual teams, working in multicultural teams
- Strategy development: Going global: Headquarter and Subsidiary Level Strategy
- Solving Operational Issues such as Cross-border management of business functions; transnational leadership, international HR, international Marketing (to be adopted according to live case)
- “live case” of a company aiming to go global or to improve its global operations

ECTS-Credits: 3
Offered: AS 2019/20
Study language: English

MBM3 – Managing Global Supply Chains Major

Short description:
International competition is increasingly between whole supply chains rather than just individual companies. The aim of the module is to familiarise students with the discipline of operations and supply chain management, which enables firms to better coordinate information, financial and materials flows and customer service activities relevant to purchasing, logistics and operations processes that occur along a supply chain. The primary objective is to ensure that students can diagnose issues and recommend actions pertinent to specific situations that occur in organisations and their supply chains. The module explores planning, organisation and control of the resources and capabilities to improve organisational performance and to satisfy customer requirements. Topics include resource planning, demand management, process optimisation, supply chain strategies, supply chain integration and network design. Additionally, sustainability issues in terms of materials and resources management as well as labour conditions are addressed. Case studies from multinational companies will be used to get an overview of the spectrum of practiced supply chain management.
Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
1. Describe the key challenges associated with the management of global supply chains.
2. Explain the interactions between strategy, planning, sourcing, producing, delivering, and returning of products.
3. Evaluate the risks and benefits associated with different supply chain strategies in the context of internationalisation.

Content of this module:
- Introduction to supply chain management
- Global logistics and operations
- Supply chain strategies
- Process optimization
- Dynamics of supply chains
- Sustainability: materials, labour conditions

ECTS-Credits: 3
Offered: SS 2020
Study language: English

**MBM4 – Negotiating in Multicultural Environments Major**

Short description:
This module explores the effect of culture on decision making in the international business environment. It exposes students to issues and problems that inevitably arise in international business negotiations and sets forth to develop their cross-cultural communication competence and management and negotiation skills to successfully solve problems and capitalise on opportunities in a multicultural environment. Students will be required to apply their knowledge from previous courses, in particular cultural theories.

Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. understand the influence and effect of their own behaviour and culture on team performance, organisational performance, negotiations, business deals
2. switch between different business and cultural perspectives
3. recognize difficult situations, develop an understanding for viable solutions, and realize them in an international business context
4. understand the negotiation process and conduct a multicultural negotiation successfully
Content of the module:
In this module students will apply their knowledge in the following key areas:
- Motivation, leadership and decision making across cultures
- How attitude to work, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, working with other countries impacts international organisations and decision making.
- Managing cultural groups, teams, virtual teams
- Negotiation and conflict resolution in global business settings

ECTS-Credits: 3
Offered: SS 2020
Study language: English

IMD1 – International Economy

Short Description:
What is the meaning of globalization? What economic and social challenges does a globalized business environment pose to companies? What are the main (macroeconomic) variables and constraints to take into consideration when doing business with or in another country? What limitations are there to the free exchange of goods and services across national borders? How should a company limit its exposure to exchange rate variability? What factors determine the international location of firms and production facilities? In this course, we will provide answers to these questions.
We will begin by looking at important trends and phenomena characterizing a globalized world. We will then examine different sources of gains from trade and the asymmetric impact that trade has on the welfare of different groups in society. The relation between trade and economic growth, barriers to free trade – such as tariffs and quotas – as well as a variety of currently prevailing trade agreements and preferential trade arrangements will also be considered. Short- and long-term determinants of nominal exchange rates as well as theories of the balance of payments and of the real exchange rate will complete our analysis of the global business environment that companies face today.

Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
1. Understand and illustrate the meaning of globalization by identifying trends and phenomena relevant to the present globalized economic and social environment
2. Identify key conditioning variables and parameters of the global business environment with respect to the company’s strategy when conducting operations abroad or in relation to partners located abroad
3. Understand the impact of those variables and parameters on the company’s objectives as well as possible courses of action to minimize their potential negative effects
4. Enumerate different sources of gains from trade as well as trade agreements currently in place today, and understand the relation between trade and economic growth
5. Explain the interaction of different market forces in the determination of equilibrium values of nominal and real exchange rates and of the goods and financial flows in the balance of payments
Main content of this module:

- Trends and phenomena characterizing globalization
- Gains from trade, trade and welfare, barriers to trade, trade and economic growth
- Brief history of trade agreements and preferential trade arrangements
- Short- and long-term determinants of nominal exchange rates
- The balance of payments and the real exchange rate

ECTS-Credits: 3
Offered: AS 2019/20
Study language: English

IMD2 – Trends


Im Modul beschäftigen wir uns mit der Frage, wie sogenannte Trends entstehen, welche es in der Vergangenheit gab und welche allenfalls zukünftig entstehen könnten. Wer setzt eigentlich Trends? Warum wird ein Thema zum Trend, warum zum Megatrend? Und was ist mit Moden, In-Themen und Hypes? Was können wir tun, um die wichtigen von den unwichtigen Trends zu unterscheiden? Auf diese Fragen wollen wir versuchen, Antworten zu finden.

Der Kompetenznachweis besteht aus Gruppenpräsentationen während des Semesters sowie einer individuellen schriftlichen Prüfung am Ende des Semesters.

ECTS-Credits: 3
Durchführung: HS 2019/20
Unterrichtssprache: Deutsch

IMD3 – Global Corporate Sustainability

Short Description:
This module provides an insight into the actual topics of the Global Corporate Sustainability. It also introduces the role of enterprises as a Global Corporate Citizens and explores the topic of Global Corporate Sustainability.

The students will understand the concept of sustainable development and the challenges our society and environment is facing nowadays (such as global warming, loss of biodiversity, etc.). The module disuses the role of the businesses in the sustainable development and the trends such as (Sharing Economy, Circular Economy, Sustainable Consumption, Sufficiency, etc.).

Students will learn based on a lot of practical examples and discussions of a challenges and issues companies face when moving towards corporate sustainability. The learning is based on real cases and “best practices” of corporate sustainability in selected industries (such as cocoa/chocolate, electronics, etc.)
Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Concept of corporate sustainability and the role of business as a global corporate citizen
2. Green Innovations
3. Circular Economy, Sharing Economy
4. What are the best practice examples of corporate sustainability

Main content of this module:
- Global Businesses facing Global challenges
- Sustainable Development, Tipping Points
- Role of Businesses, Global Corporate Citizenship
- Case Studies (Real Cases)

ECTS-Credits: 3
Offered: AS 2019/20
Study language: English

ICSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

Short Description:
The Corporate Social Responsibility Module (ICSR) is a so-called Collaborative Online International Learning Module. This Module is taught virtually, in English and in cooperation with three Universities (BFH, HAMK Finland, Hochschule Niederrhein, Germany). The students of all three participating Universities participate in the module. Teaching and Learning in this Module is held online, flexible and organized as a platform, where
- the participating institutions and responsible lecturers/supervisors present and discuss their specific theoretical/scientific as well as practical expertise
- the students in mixed international teams und supported by the participating supervisors develop corporate responsible strategies and solutions to a sustainability challenge of their choice.

The participating Institutions and lecturers are:
- Bern University of Applied Sciences, Business School, Prof. Dr. Marie Brechbühler Peskova
- Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK), International Business Degree Programme, Valkeakoski, Finland. Lecturer, Dr. Iris Humala
- HN Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Business Administration and Economics, Mönchengladbach, Germany, Prof. Dr. Martin Wenke; Economics

Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
1. understand the concept of sustainable development and the challenges our society is facing
2. understand the difference between corporate sustainability and CSR
3. understand how the concept of sustainability is integrated into companies strategic decisions
4. understand how CSR is managed within the companies
5. understand the way of implementing sustainability into companies operations
6. understand what sustainable consumption means
7. understand the concept of behavioural economics and sustainability and nudging to sustainability
Main content of this module:
There are three blocks within the CSR module. Each supervised by one of the partner Universities.

1. Strategic CSR (HAMK, Finland)
   - Understanding the basic concepts and driving forces of CSR and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
   - Understanding the links between corporate vision and mission and CSR
   - Familiarizing with CSR, core business strategies and business models in practice

2. CSR Management (HN; Germany)
   - CSR management (management system, Implementation of strategic CSR into functional strategies, setting base-line)
   - CSR goals and controlling system (measuring CSR)
   - Guideline ISO 26000, ISO 14000/9000, SA8000; measuring CSR & reporting GRI and others
   - Evaluation with ratings and rankings, maturity models;

3. Sustainable Consumption (BFH, Switzerland)
   - Global CSR and Sustainable Consumption
   - The challenges of global CSR and consumer behaviours, consumption patterns
   - Sustainable consumer behaviour, behavioural economics, nudging for sustainability.

During the term students work in a mixed teams on a Corporate Social Responsibility Project. They implement the material and knowledge they acquire in the three blocks of the module. During the whole semester they are coached by the supervisors. Every 4th weeks there is a virtual meeting in the module.

ECTS-Credits: 9
Offered: AS 2019/20
Study language: English
IMD5 - Change Management

Globalisierung, Digitalisierung, technologischer Wandel, Alterung der Bevölkerung und globale Vernetzung sind nur einige der aktuellen Entwicklungen, die Unternehmen dazu zwingen, ihre Geschäftsmodelle, Strukturen und Prozesse in Frage zu stellen, anzupassen oder sogar komplett zu verändern. Das Ziel dieser Anstrengungen besteht dabei darin, das Unternehmen laufend an den neuen Gegebenheiten auszurichten und somit dessen Zukunftsfähigkeit und langfristigen Erfolg sicherzustellen.


Der Kompetenznachweis besteht aus einer schriftlichen Prüfung am Ende des Semesters.

ECTS-Credits: 3
Durchführung: FS 2020
Unterrichtssprache: Deutsch

IMD6 – Innovation and Business Creativity

Innovations are considered one of the key success factors for economic sustainability. This module looks at drivers of innovations, sources of ideas, the role of inventions, different innovation methods and management approaches, going to market, and lifecycles of innovations. Theoretical models will be accompanied by concrete examples and case studies. Students will learn the importance of innovations in an increasingly volatile and international environment, the contradictions in management practices that demand and impede innovations, typical roadblocks in the development of innovations, and common reasons for innovation failures.

Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
1. Describe the key challenges associated with the development and roll-out of new products and services.
2. Explain the interactions between firm-level strategy, the business environments of various markets and market reactions.
3. Evaluate the risks and benefits associated with different innovation strategies in the context of internationalisation.

Main content of this module:
- Lifecycle of innovations and business models
- Business creativity and idea management
- Innovation methods and levels of innovation
- Going to market
- Innovation diffusion
- Success factors of the ecosystem innovation
Classroom discussion will focus on the topics above, expanded by aspects from other modules of IBM, e.g. sustainability, HR management, or expansion strategies.

ECTS-Credits: 3  
Offered: SS 2020  
Study language: English

**Possible Future Career**

As the global economy continues to expand, the demand for employees with an international business background is higher than ever and expected to increase especially within an internationalized economy like Switzerland. As a specialist who understands the diversity of international business – and is armed with a strong knowledge in international business management, experience with work in international environment abroad, virtual and multinational teams and experience with negotiations in multicultural environment – the student can enlarge his/her employability in the global job market and can be a valuable part of global ventures.

The Bachelor's degree with a specialisation in International Business Management gives the student a wide range of professional perspectives. Typically a student will work in international companies and institutions in Switzerland or abroad afterwards.

Popular career areas for graduates of a B.Sc. with an International Business Management focus encompass:

- International business consulting
- International project work
- International auditing, marketing, HR etc.
- Business/Enterprise Development in international context
- Team leader of an international team