GBSB GLOBAL
BUSINESS SCHOOL

Postgraduate Diploma in Finance

MQF/EQF Level 7

Course Outline

Duration: 9 months

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Overall Course Objectives

The learning outcomes presented below have been defined in line with the descriptors for the Level 7 of the Malta Qualification Framework.

Knowledge:

- Has comprehensive specialised knowledge and understanding of how cultural, economic, political, and technological frameworks affect management practices and how they can be managed effectively;
- Identifies and evaluates theoretical approaches necessary for planning and decision-making in business. These include ideas that support the modelling and management of the decisions across the broad range of functional areas;
- Has relevant knowledge of organisations, and their role in pursuing sustainable business in the context in which they operate and how they are managed in compliance with codes of ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility;
- Has a comprehensive and critical understanding of the principal current research issues in management.

Skills:

- Performs critical evaluation and analysis of business environment and of the main concepts, structures and approaches of strategic business management with incomplete or limited information;
- Demonstrates capability in using specialised skills to make decisions and create global strategies in different business operations, digital transformation, and finance in order to adapt to fast-changing business environment;
- Demonstrates leadership skills necessary to empower, inspire and manage teams, innovation and creative problem-solving while managing a business;
- Develops new skills in response to emerging knowledge and techniques in the domain of business management including digital skills and use of modern technologies;
- Demonstrates capability in using knowledge and skills of management to conduct research, taking into account the need for synthesis, setting objectives, methodological process and application of strategies;
- Develops an ability to identify and assess risks relating to the business, digital and financial environment and to design strategies to mitigate specific managerial risks;
- Monitors and maintains compliance with appropriate business regulations and formulates practical responses to the legal and external environment challenges associated with operating a business;
- Demonstrates capability in using data referring to business analytics to better forecast and execute business strategies and operations;
- Demonstrates specialised knowledge of management that includes reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to execution of the managerial function;
- Demonstrates capability in using knowledge and skills of management to conduct research within a specific industry or functional area of a personal professional interest, taking into account the need for synthesis, setting objectives, methodological process and application of strategies.

Competencies:

- Demonstrates the ability to respond to the main political, economic, social, and technological variables and to formulate the priorities and strategies necessary for an organisation to succeed considering the global outlook and trends;
- Manages business projects by establishing a global vision that incorporates every facet of business development and constructs innovation and cultural diversity as an advantage in business contexts that are complex and unpredictable and require new strategic approaches;
- Is accountable for managing people and practicing management with commitment to democratic values and sustainability adopting the practices based on learning, service and social inclusion;
- Demonstrates autonomy in the direction of personal development and lifelong learning applicable to the business environment;
- Engages in critical analysis in the area of management and demonstrates independent thought, evaluation and problem-solving underpinned by evidence-based arguments;
- Takes responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge in management or a specific industry/functional area of a personal professional interest by identifying an existing business problem and by conducting original research.

COURSE OUTLINE

Global Financial Markets and Instruments

This unit looks at the competitive dynamics and performance of global financial markets and highlights the risks and opportunities of doing business in today's financial markets and the challenges presented by both regulators and market participants. Students learn about the role of financial markets in the global and local economy, in financing infrastructure development, large enterprises, and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and examine a wide range of financial instruments, their features and valuations. Upon completion of the unit, students will be able to use knowledge and skills of global financial markets to lead actions related to sourcing funding from the capital markets and/or engage with investment opportunities.

Competencies

- Assess and evaluate problems associated with investment alternatives and risks of investing in different types of financial instruments;
- Demonstrate the ability to respond to the fast-changing global financial markets environment by assessing performance of global financial markets in different economic and political contexts and on a global scale;
- Take responsibility for leading projects associated with looking for financing opportunities on global financial markets;
- Implement an ability for managing investment risks and for adapting investment initiatives to changing circumstances on global capital markets.

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International Banking, Insurance, and Financial Services

This unit provides an overview of the international banking system, including such topics as: the role of the banks in the financial system, regulatory and policy aspects, financial services offered by banks, and analysis of bank performance. Additionally, the unit provides students with a thorough understanding of insurance activities, including optimal insurance contract design under information asymmetry and moral hazard. Upon completion of the unit, students will demonstrate specialised knowledge of international banking and insurance that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to operations in the financial services industry.

Competencies

- Manage and transform work or study contexts in the financial services industry that are complex and unpredictable and require new strategic approaches considering the changing characteristics of the banking and insurance sectors;
- Create a research-based diagnosis to problems in international banking and insurance by integrating knowledge from interdisciplinary fields such as finance and fintech;
- Has the learning skills to allow continuation to study international banking and insurance in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous;
- Take responsibility for reviewing the performance of major financial organisations with the purpose to determine their financial health and prospects.

Advanced Corporate Finance

This unit aims at developing an understanding of the decisions financial managers/investment bankers face by considering corporate investment decisions (project valuation, mergers & acquisitions) and decisions that involve financing those investments, and focuses on the following areas: valuation, capital structure and financial policy, and key aspects of the M&A business process. Upon completion of the unit, students will be able to demonstrate capability in using knowledge and skills of financial valuation to apply corporate valuation techniques to identify estimated market values and intrinsic values of a firm, determine the appropriate/optimum capital structure of a firm given refinancing requirements, and evaluate several long-term financing alternatives with the purpose to justify choices for mergers and acquisitions.

Competencies

- Take responsibility for adapting the management of corporate finance projects to the dynamic nature of the business environment in which one operates;
- Create a well-reasoned diagnosis to problems related with optimal corporate financial strategies and financial decisions that have a long-term impact;
- Has the learning skills to allow continuation to study valuation, financial restructuring, or long-term financing/investment alternatives matters in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

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Asset Management and Alternative Investments

This unit provides a comprehensive understanding of the issues that are relevant to the asset management industry, with special emphasis on measuring investment performance. The unit covers aspects related to mutual funds, hedge funds and exchange traded funds, introduces the latest developments in investment strategy, and provides knowledge on the principles of investment decisions under risk, and the optimal allocation among asset classes. Additionally, the unit reviews less traditional asset classes as an alternative to traditional assets and provides students with the solid background in commodities, hedge funds, private equity, and real estate.

Competencies

- Manage strategic asset management projects and demonstrate the ability to respond to the fast-changing business environment by matching goals, risk tolerance and other investor characteristics with an investment portfolio strategy and market and economic conditions;
- Take responsibility for contributing to professional practice by planning modern portfolio management strategies and analysing, synthesising, and evaluating various financial scenarios;
- Be accountable for integrating knowledge from different fields of finance and make judgements on potential performance of different asset classes with incomplete or limited information.

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Financial Reporting and Analysis

The unit prepares students to understand the business strategy and its financial implications by reviewing current practices in corporate financial reporting and fundamental issues relating to asset valuation and income determination. The unit provides students with a set of powerful analytical tools to understand the environment in which financial reporting choices are made, what the options are, how financial data are used for various types of decisions, and how to avoid misusing financial statements. Upon completion of the unit, students will be prepared to initiate strategic actions, grounded on financial information, and to lead an organisation into a new direction by interpreting financial disclosures with the purpose to help improve risk assessment, forecasting, and decision-making when being charged with monitoring or advising on corporate performance and the behaviour of management.

Competencies

- Create a research-based diagnosis to problems in financial reporting and analysis and make judgements on company's financial position and profitability with limited information;
- Manage and transform approaches to financial reporting in an organisation by recognising financial disclosure as an important element in successful corporate governance;
- Take responsibility for initiating strategic actions, grounded on financial information, and leading an organisation into a new direction;
- Has the learning skills to allow continuation to study financial reporting and further professional qualifications in finance and accounting in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

Digital Transformation, Innovation and Technology

This unit will equip students with a fundamental knowledge of the new digital economy and will provide an understanding of how the digital economy is shaping strategic options for managers, including the new technological driving forces, digitalisation, and the new challenges. Students will analyse the impact of digital transformation on society and businesses and assess to what extent technology can be used to create meaningful and positive innovative solutions to different issues. Upon completion of the unit, students will have knowledge and skills of digital transformation, innovation and technology and will be able to find solutions to the challenges of leading and managing innovative and transformational processes in modern organisations.

Competencies

- Manage and transform work contexts that are complex and unpredictable and require new strategic approaches based on innovation and digital transformation, understanding of technology, and analysis of internal and external environment;
- Demonstrate the ability to respond to the fast-changing business environment by analysing emerging and disrupting technologies and by having a vision to detect technologies that are yet in an early maturity stage but have a potential to become disruptive;
- Demonstrate autonomy in the direction of learning of digitalisation and innovation processes by conducting independent research and analysis of economic data, articles, news, and expert opinions.

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Effective Teamwork and Project Management

This unit focuses on the issues surrounding the management of teams and projects. This is achieved by providing a specialised knowledge of organisational behaviour and factors that influence people's behaviour at work and how these factors link to performance in projects. The unit discusses an integrated approach to managing teams and projects as well as explores both technical and managerial challenges. Upon completion of the unit students will demonstrate capability in analysing workplace scenarios with the purpose to improve workforce and organisational performance and will develop applied project management skills and an ability to plan, implement, manage, and successfully achieve project objectives.

Competencies

- Take responsibility for transforming work or study contexts by leveraging individual differences, group dynamics and organisational culture and design and by balancing multiple objectives in ways that are accountable and achievable;
- Take responsibility for adapting the management of people and projects reflecting on the dynamic nature of the environment in which one operates;
- Effectively manage teams and projects and demonstrate the ability to respond to the fast-changing business environment when managing project risks, project execution, and project control.

Final Project (Capstone)

A Final Project (Capstone) is a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for Master students. Students take what they have learned throughout the course of their Master's programme and apply it to examine a specific idea/problem within their area of specialisation. A Final Project involves the identification of an existing problem in a real-world setting and the application of learned skills and methods to develop a solution that addresses the problem directly. There are several options among which students can choose for developing their Final Project: either it may be geared toward research or may be more oriented toward problem-solving. Solutions offered by students are usually interactive and realistic, meaning they can be implemented and used either in professional life or in further research and study.

Competencies

- Create a research-based diagnosis to problems by integrating knowledge from new or interdisciplinary fields and make judgements with incomplete or limited information;
- Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge in a specific industry or functional area of a personal professional interest by identifying an existing business management problem and by developing theoretical approaches to possible solutions;
- Demonstrate autonomy in the direction of learning and a high level of understanding of learning processes in a specific industry or functional area of a personal professional interest;
- Have the business research skills to allow continuation to study a specific business management problem in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.