



**ABP Postgraduate Diploma  
Business Management  
Units**

ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS PRACTITIONERS

## **Units**

### **ABP Postgraduate Diploma in Business Management**

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<b>Units</b>	<b>Page number</b>
<a href="#"><u>Unit 1: Strategic Business Management and Planning</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>Unit 2: Organisational Resource Management</u></a>	7
<a href="#"><u>Unit 3: Management of Financial Resources and Performance</u></a>	10
<a href="#"><u>Unit 4: Leadership and Change Management</u></a>	7
<a href="#"><u>Unit 5: Corporate Management in Action</u></a>	16
<a href="#"><u>Suggested Reading</u></a>	19

## **Unit 1: Strategic Business Management and Planning**

### **Learning outcome:**

**1. Critically assess the nature, scope and need for strategic business management and planning in international profit and not-for-profit organisations.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Explain the scope, nature and characteristics of strategic business management and planning in a global environment
- Critically analyse the need for strategic business management and planning in a global environment
- Appraise the international dimensions of strategic business management and planning
- Critically analyse the different levels of strategy and their relationship with tactical and operational decision-making
- Appreciate the distinctions between profit and not-for-profit organisations in terms of strategic business management and planning

### **Learning outcome:**

**2. Critically evaluate classic and contemporary models, concepts and tools in business strategy and planning.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Identify classical and contemporary models, concepts and tools in business strategy and planning such as transformational, incremental, “muddling through”, strategic drift etc
- Critically appraise the use of these concepts and models in modern day organisations
- Distinguish prescriptive and emergent theories of corporate strategy and their relevance to organisations
- Critically appraise the ambiguity and debates within the academic literature

### **Learning outcome:**

**3. Appraise processes by which organisations identify their goals and values.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Clarify processes by which organisations identify their goals and values
- Appraise the conflicting needs, power and influence of stakeholders
- Evaluate means by which organisations develop their mission, vision and strategic intent
- Critically appraise theories supporting the relevance and value of vision, mission and objectives
- Examine the influence of corporate governance and regulation

**Learning outcome:**

**4. Critically analyse the impact of political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors on an organisation.**

**Indicative content:**

- Evaluate the impact and influence of the external environment on an organisation and relate it to its strategy
- Critically appraise the use of techniques such as PEST, PESTEL, STEEP and other derivatives
- Identify the sensitivities of the organisation to environmental change and the appropriate prioritisation of search mechanisms
- Analyse the approaches to forecasting environmental change (scenario planning, game theory, decision analysis, social forecasting, Delphi etc)
- Appraise determinants of national advantage using suitable techniques such as Porter's Diamond

**Learning outcome:**

**5. Identify the key forces that represent both opportunities and threats to organisations whether for profit or not-for-profit.**

**Indicative content:**

- Evaluate the purpose and attributes of SWOT analysis
- Match SWOT to organisation competences in order to generate strategic options for both profit and not-for-profit organisations
- Appraise techniques to identify the sources of competition to organisations such as five forces analysis
- Critically evaluate the turbulence of environmental change and the impact on strategic dynamics

**Learning outcome:**

**6. Critically evaluate the strategy process for an organisation to achieve competitive advantage**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify the capabilities that allow organisations to achieve competitive advantage
- Critically analyse means by which an organisation positions itself to outperform its competitors
- Identify and evaluate appropriate strategies for emerging, maturing and declining competitive positions
- Compare and contrast the strategy process supporting prescriptive and emergent strategy development

**Learning outcome:**

**7. Critically analyse future challenges affecting strategic business management and planning.**

**Indicative content:**

- Analyse global influences and the impact on internationalisation of strategic business management and planning
- Identify environmental issues impacting on strategy in the 21st century, for example global warming, scarce commodities, the emerging economies (BRIC) etc
- Critically evaluate the effect of these future challenges on strategic business management and planning
- Appreciate the impact of the increasingly competitive global environment and the need for innovation, intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship in organisations

**Reading List for Unit 1**

**Unit 1: Strategic Business Management and Planning**

Johnson, G., Scholes, K., and Whittington, R. *Exploring Corporate Strategy: Texts and Cases* (2008). Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-1408206935

Lynch, R. *Corporate Strategy* (2005). Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-0273701781

*Mastering Strategy* (2000). Financial Times Mastering Series, Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-0273649304

Thompson, J.L. *Strategic Management: Awareness, Analysis and Change* (2005) Thomson Learning. ISBN-13: 978-1844800834

Porter, M.E. *Competitor Advantage* (2004) Free Press. ISBN-13: 978-0743260879

Mintzberg, H. *The Rise and Fall of Business Planning* (2000). Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-0273650379

## **Unit 2: Organisational Resource Management**

### **Learning outcome:**

**1. Critically evaluate, appraise and analyse the management of human resources to aid the development of business strategy within an organisation.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Critically evaluate approaches to human resource management to aid the development of business strategy
- Critically evaluate and explain the necessity for alignment between an organisation's corporate strategy and objectives, and its human resource strategy
- Evaluate the processes required in order to assess the effectiveness of a given human resource strategy and its impact on overall corporate strategy
- Design human resource strategies for organisations confronting mergers, acquisitions, strategic alliances and joint ventures

### **Learning outcome:**

**2. Critically evaluate strategies for people recruitment, retention, training, learning and development which maximise the skills and contributions of people.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Critically explain and evaluate approaches to the search for and selection of employees
- Evaluate strategies for deployment and redeployment, coping with poor performance and employee retention
- Evaluate and explain the creation of the learning organisation through self-managed learning, the promotion of 'intellectual capital' and knowledge management
- Appraise the role of performance review and strategies for management development

### **Learning outcome:**

**3. Critically appraise strategies for positive employee relations, performance management and reward.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Evaluate alternative approaches to employee relations with a focus on the benefits of 'partnership', involvement and engagement
- Appraise the effectiveness of alternative communication approaches with the workforce, including grievance management
- Critically review the purposes and benefits of performance and reward management including the role of performance appraisal as a tool for measuring contribution and recognising achievement

- Design and implement performance management and reward processes to improve organisational performance
- Evaluate the effectiveness of both financial and non-financial rewards and benefits

**Learning outcome:**

**4. Understand and critically appraise the importance of marketing within the development of business plans and strategies.**

**Indicative content:**

- Critically analyse the contribution of marketing planning to the processes of strategy development
- Examine the core concepts and techniques for operationalising marketing strategy and elements of the marketing mix
- Evaluate the applicability of strategic marketing to a range of business contexts including supply chain and service delivery management
- Apply and implement marketing plans
- Critically evaluate the impact and influence of information technology on marketing

**Learning outcome:**

**5. Evaluate and analyse the processes of market development in a dynamic business environment.**

**Indicative content:**

- Demonstrate and apply portfolio models to the analysis of markets and competitors
- Define and evaluate the value of market segmentation appropriate to market conditions
- Analyse the nature and structure of competition in markets, distinguishing between undifferentiated, differentiated and monopoly markets
- Evaluate the process for developing and using brand identity
- Evaluate the stages of and influences on the product life cycle and strategies for product life cycle extension or replacement

**Learning outcome:**

**6. Evaluate and analyse the linkages between marketing and operations in manufacturing, service and not-for-profit organisations.**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify and evaluate approaches to matching operations capacity to demand through manufacturing technology, cost management, quality etc.
- Evaluate the attributes of lean enterprise, total quality management and supply chain architecture
- Identify and evaluate marketing strategies to optimise demand through pricing, promotion, differentiation, product range, distribution etc

- Identify and differentiate appropriate marketing strategies for manufacture, service and not-for-profit organisations

**Learning outcome:**

**7. Critically evaluate, appraise and analyse the place of information systems and new technologies in developing business and marketing strategies and planning.**

**Indicative content:**

- Evaluate the importance and role of traditional and internet based information systems in today's competitive business environment
- Critically evaluate the role and function of the information systems supporting the major business operations and assess how these information systems support the activities of managers in the organisation and competitive advantage
- Identify and describe the strategic activities in the system development process and critically evaluate alternative methods for building information systems
- Analyse and evaluate current technologies and their use as a platform for e-marketing and e-commerce, and the use of database marketing and data mining in focussing marketing operations

**Reading List for Unit 2**

**Unit 2: Organisational Resource Management**

Lucas, R., Lupton, B., and Mathieson, H. *Human Resource Management in an International Context* (2007). CIPD. ISBN-13: 978-1843981091

Marchington, M., and Wilkinson, A. *Human Resource Management at Work* (2005). CIPD. ISBN-13: 978-1843980629

Jobber, D. *Principles and Practice of Marketing* (2006) McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN-13: 978-0077114152

Laudon, K., and Laudon, J. *Management Information Systems: Managing the Digital Firm* (2008). Pearson. ISBN-13: 978-0132415798

Kotler, P., and Keller, K. *Marketing Management* (2008). Pearson. ISBN-13: 978-0131357976

### **Unit 3: Management of Financial Resources and Performance**

#### **Learning outcome:**

**1. Critically consider the impact that resource decisions have both internally and externally on an organisation's performance and effectiveness.**

#### **Indicative content:**

- Identify the need for resources within a strategic plan
- Identify and appraise methods by which resources are allocated and controlled effectively and efficiently within strategic implementation (such as budgeting, measurement, and control systems)
- Develop strategies for identified resource gaps, for example human resources, finance and facilities etc

#### **Learning outcome:**

**2. Critically evaluate, appraise and analyse financial data, techniques and tools to aid decision-making in business strategy and planning.**

#### **Indicative content:**

- Identify and evaluate alternative sources of finance available to organisations
- Calculate an organisation's cost of capital and use to evaluate capital projects
- Evaluate strategic investment opportunities and financially appraise alternative strategic proposals
- Appraise the role of treasury management in the financing and control of working capital
- Critically debate the tensions between financial and strategic objectives

#### **Learning outcome:**

**3. Evaluate, appraise and analyse international aspects of financial strategy**

#### **Indicative content:**

- Appraise the role and importance of the international financial environment and financial markets
- Identify and analyse the different financial risks of operating in an international market
- Evaluate international investment decisions
- Evaluate financing options for multinationals and overseas subsidiaries

**Learning outcome:**

**4. Identify and critically assess the management and performance of tangible and intangible resources in business strategy and planning.**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify and map the key processes and activities of an organisation and use these to reduce and re-engineer processes to improve resource efficiency and effectiveness
- Benchmark an organisation's products, services, processes, practices and performance against best practice to identify opportunities to reduce cost and deliver value
- Interpret and use financial statements to evaluate performance, and appreciate the limitations of such analysis
- Use published financial statements and industry intelligence to evaluate performance and to assess intangibles – goodwill, patents, corporate image, brands etc
- Undertake an audit of an organisation's tangible and intangible resources to assess management competences and the congruence of goals at corporate, business and divisional level

**Learning outcome:**

**5. Critically evaluate and appraise contemporary management accounting methodology to support the effective management and control of resources.**

**Indicative content:**

- Appreciate the role of activity based management and use activity based cost approaches to support re-engineering, product costing, budgeting and benchmarking
- Use cost management methodology to support lean enterprise, business excellence, and value chain analysis
- Critically analyse the role and limitations of traditional budgets and approaches to driving value through better budgeting
- Prepare and present strategic management accounting information to support investment in advanced manufacturing technology and product/market decisions

**Learning outcome:**

**6. Analyse the risks attached to environmental change, the consequences and appropriate responses.**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify types and sources of risk for organisations, for example financial, technological, reputation, social etc
- Appraise the risks associated with international operations, for example cultural, regulatory, economic, political etc
- Assess the role of treasury management in managing financial risk
- Use techniques for evaluating environmental risk, for example risk mapping, contingency planning, gap analysis etc

- Identify and assess techniques to manage risk through avoidance, reduction, transference and retention
- Prepare and utilise risk management reports

**Learning outcome:**

**7. Critically appraise the importance of communication for information providers in organisations and appraise and develop your own communication skills**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify the types and appraise the importance of internal communication of strategic tasks within an organisation
- Identify and evaluate external communication to government and the community at large
- Appraise the effectiveness of different types of communication to different stakeholder groups
- Critically assess the impact on communication strategies of the relative power and importance of individual stakeholder groups

**Reading List for Unit 3**

**Unit 3: Management of Financial Resources and Performance**

Arnold, G. *Corporate Financial Management* (2008). Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-0273719069

Kaplan, R.S., and Cooper, R. *Cost and Effect: Using Integrated Cost Systems to Drive Profitability and Performance* (1997). Harvard Business School Press. ISBN-13: 978-0875847887

Watson, G.H. *Strategic Benchmarking Reloaded with Six Sigma: Improving Your Company's Performance Using Global Best Practice* (2007). John Wiley & Sons. ISBN-13: 9780470069080

Ball, D.A. *International Business – The Challenge of Global Competition* (2003). McGraw-Hill. ISBN-13: 978-0072537970

Reuvid, J. *Managing Business Risk: A Practical Guide to Protecting Your Business* (2008). Kogan Page Ltd. ISBN-13: 978-0749450595

## **Unit 4: Leadership and Change Management**

### **Learning outcome:**

**1. Critically evaluate historical, classical and contemporary approaches to leadership theory.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Explain the importance of leadership theories
- Describe historical, classical, and contemporary approaches to leadership theory
- Compare and contrast these approaches

### **Learning outcome:**

**2. Determine leadership approaches relevant for the 21st century, drawing on theories and tools as practised by leading international organisations.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Identify leadership models and competency frameworks currently in use in organisations
- Define the qualities required of people in leadership positions
- Appraise generic leadership frameworks currently in use in organisations
- Select leadership development initiatives both associated with and as alternatives to leadership competency frameworks

### **Learning outcome:**

**3. Explore and examine your own personal and managerial effectiveness within an organisation through a process of personal reflection.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Reflect on your own personal and managerial effectiveness within your organisation
- Identify and put into practice areas for change within your own personal and managerial effectiveness style
- Reflect on the gains made from the change in style
- Plan a course of action to maintain reflection on your personal and managerial effectiveness within your own organisation

### **Learning outcome:**

**4. Develop an in-depth understanding of the principles of change and the organisational change process.**

### **Indicative content:**

- Describe the principles of change and organisational change processes and the different approaches possible

- Identify and appraise real life examples of the organisational change process Explain external and internal triggers of change and innovation
- Appraise these triggers of change and innovation

**Learning outcome:**

**5. Critically appraise change theories, tools and techniques.**

**Indicative content:**

- Describe change theories, tools and techniques
- Analyse these theories, tools and techniques within given organisations
- Appraise the use of risk management techniques in the management of change
- Assess the impact of globalisation on change theories, tools and techniques

**Learning outcome:**

**6. Critically appraise the implementation of the change process including resistance to change and practical management aspects.**

**Indicative content:**

- Appraise real life examples of the change process and its implementation
- Identify potential resistance to change including organisational culture and behaviour, organisational policies, power and the influence of individuals and groups.
- Critically appraise strategies and approaches to overcome this resistance to change
- Identify sources of conflict within change
- Identify strategies and approaches to deal with potential sources of conflict

**Learning outcome:**

**7. Develop the student's ability to act as a change agent within an organisation.**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify the attitudes, values and behaviour of a change agent
- Reflect on your own attitudes, values and behaviour and identify areas of change required to be an effective change agent
- Identify a plan of action to maintain effectiveness as a change agent

**Learning outcome:**

**8. Understand and appraise the need to integrate the management of change with other business and management disciplines.**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify the need to integrate management of change with other business and management disciplines including finance, human resource development, marketing, IT and business strategy Appraise methods by which this integration could be achieved, using real life examples
- Develop an integrated management of change plan of action for a chosen organisation

**Reading List for Unit 4**

**Unit 4: Leadership Change Management**

Pettinger, R. *Contemporary Strategic Management* (2004) Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN-13: 978-1403913272

McConnell, C. *Change Activist: Make Big Things Happen Fast* (2002) Momentum. ISBN-13: 978-1843040279

Drucker, P.F. *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* (2007). Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd. ISBN-13: 978-0750685092

Burnes, B. *Managing Change: A Strategic Approach to Organisational Dynamics* (2004). ISBN-13: 978-0273683360

Pettinger, R. *Mastering Organisational Behaviour* (2000). Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN-13: 978-0333792797

## **Unit 5: Corporate Management in Action**

### **Learning outcome:**

#### **1. Analyse the international business environment and the development of global organisations.**

##### **Indicative content:**

- Define globalisation and the theories of international trade
- Appraise the benefits and challenges of globalisation strategies and the supporting theories
- Analyse and identify appropriate organisational structures to support globalisation

### **Learning outcome:**

#### **2. Identify those actions that determine whether an organisation survives, prospers or dies.**

##### **Indicative content:**

- Examine the effectiveness and efficiency of existing operations
- Examine strategic alternatives available for achieving organisational goals
- Evaluate consolidation and product market development alternatives
- Evaluate direction and the means to achieve unrelated development
- Evaluate the use of strategic alliances and joint ventures, and alternative routes to survive, prosper and avoid failure
- Evaluate the balance of the corporate product market portfolio

### **Learning outcome:**

#### **3. Critically analyse given organisations to identify hard and soft system factors that impact upon success and failure in the development and implementation of a business plan**

##### **Indicative content:**

- Within real life organisational case contexts, use and contrast hard and soft systems methodology to analyse the effectiveness of corporate resources and processes:
- Analyse the dynamics between strategic, management and operational levels
- Analyse the dynamics of people management and culture
- Analyse the dynamics of access to and processing of information
- Analyse the dynamics of the management of financial resources
- Analyse the dynamics of technology and operations
- Critically appraise the importance of the value chain and value system in adding competitive value
- Understand how resources and competences need to be integrated to enable corporate success

**Learning outcome:**

**4. Integrate knowledge and understanding of an organisation's external business environment, its management and leadership potential and its ability to change and to develop and implement a business strategy, for a given organisation.**

**Indicative content:**

- Within real life organisational case contexts:
- Analyse the impact on the business strategy of the external business environment
- Analyse the importance of markets and competition in developing and implementing a successful business strategy
- Analyse the importance of customer driven strategies in developing and implementing a successful business strategy
- Analyse the importance of management and leadership in developing and implementing a successful business strategy
- Critically assess the impact of change management in the development and implementation of a successful business strategy

**Learning outcome:**

**5. Critically appraise the effect of changes in corporate governance on an organisation.**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify the principles of sound corporate governance in an organisation
- Appraise the impact of corporate governance on internal controls in an organisation
- Describe recommendations and regulations on corporate governance within organisations
- Critically analyse the impact of recommendations and regulations of corporate governance on organisations within a global context

**Learning outcome:**

**6. Appraise the effect of a move to ethical management on organisations.**

**Indicative content:**

- Explain the meaning of ethics in a business context
- Analyse the extent of ethical considerations and their cost
- Identify the responsibility for ethics within an organisation
- Discuss the relationship between ethics and corporate governance
- Critically appraise organisational arrangements for supervising ethical issues, for example ethics committees, audit committees, whistle blowing etc

**Learning outcome:**

**7. Monitor implemented strategies and plans**

**Indicative content:**

- Identify the elements of the implementation process – objectives, plans, resource allocation, monitoring and control
- In a real life organisational context:
  - i Identify appropriate control mechanisms to monitor strategies and plans
  - ii Evaluate the use of alternative communication mechanisms for strategic implementation
  - iii Appraise the use of control systems and targets, for example scorecard, financial measures, budgets, to monitor strategies and plans
  - iv Evaluate market based review mechanisms, for example customer satisfaction, quality measures, market share
- Analyse the benefits and challenges of the use of target setting to monitor strategies and plans within both public and private sector organisations

**Reading List for Unit 5**

**Unit 5: Corporate Management in Action**

Checkland, P.B., and Poulter, J. *Learning for Action: A Short Definitive Account of Soft Systems Methodology, and its use for Practitioners, Teachers and Students* (2006). John Wiley & Sons. ISBN-13: 978-0470025543

Mintzberg, H., Lampel, J., Quinn, J.B., and Ghoshal, S. *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts and Cases* (2002). Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-0130479136

Grant, R.M. *Contemporary Strategic Analysis* (2007). Blackwell. ISBN-13: 978-1405163095

Johnson, G., Scholes, K., and Whittington, R. *Exploring Corporate Strategy: Texts and Cases* (2008). Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-1408206935

Thompson, J.L. *Strategic Management Awareness, Analysis and Change* (2005). Thomson Learning. ISBN-13: 978-1844800834

Lynch, R. *Corporate Strategy* (2005). Prentice Hall. ISBN-13: 978-0273701781

Lasserre, P. *Global Strategic Management* (2007). Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN-13: 978-0230008366