

Differentiate yourself

MSc in Strategic Management

Part-time programme for managers and professionals



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“ I genuinely believe the MSc in Strategic Management is a first-rate opportunity, experience and qualification (in that order). The quality of teaching has at all times been exceptionally high and intellectually challenging. I feel the programme has always given us all the alternative views on each topic matter and then given us the challenge to work through our own views. I have found the course both highly academic and practical at all times. ”

A distinctive education for those who aspire to senior management and leadership positions

The major features that make this programme stand out are:

- A thorough grounding in strategic management from the start so that you study all subjects from a strategic perspective.
- An ethos that encourages you to develop your analytical skills, critical thinking ability and reflective practice.
- An emphasis on knowledge of lasting value, not the latest fad or quick fix.
- A wide choice of optional units, allowing you to build a distinctive profile that best suits your professional and personal objectives.
- A wealth of practical experience in a body of students who work for a wide range of organisations.
- All teaching is delivered on Saturdays and Sundays, which means minimum disruption to the normal working week, and so encourages support from employers.

The programme aims to develop your knowledge and understanding of the theory and practice of management from a strategic perspective. Its content and style is designed to encourage you to break free from the narrow prescriptive thinking that dominates standard postgraduate business and management degrees.



“ I think differently about nearly everything – I analyse and challenge much more in terms of building an intellectual argument; I have been able to build my career as a manager and leader in a way that three years ago I would never have imagined. ”

The MSc in Strategic Management

Every organisation is different, and every issue has a unique context. Our role is to improve your intellectual, conceptual and reflective skills, so that you develop sound analyses and creative solutions relevant to particular challenges in particular circumstances.

We aim to produce critical thinkers able to apply theoretical learning to practical situations at work during and beyond the period of study.

Students of the MSc in Strategic Management come from each of the commercial, public sector and not-for-profit sectors. They include managers, consultants and entrepreneurs who run their own business.

All have considerable work experience: the average age of students on the programme is thirty-seven, ranging from their late twenties to mid fifties.

The variety of experiences in different organisations and contexts means that student interaction on the programme is an important source of learning. The diversity that comes from the mix of sectors, expertise and experience makes a major contribution in enriching theoretical ideas and understanding diverse perspectives.

Teaching on our part-time degrees is designed to be interactive and to involve a variety of teaching methods. Although there are some lecture sessions, tutors work with students' lived experience, with case studies, and with exercises in order to bring theory and practice together. The teaching staff are accessible and the atmosphere in the classroom is typically supportive and friendly.

Course Structure

Programme content

The taught element of the programme consists of four mandatory and four optional units.

The programme is designed so that you complete the taught units in two years. In the third year, you undertake your dissertation.

Successful completion of the taught units and dissertation will earn you the Master's degree in Strategic Management.

Unit length

The mandatory units involve four days of contact time, spread over two weekends spaced four to six weeks apart. The optional units involve two days of contact time over one weekend. Contact with the tutor(s) and with other students includes lectures, case studies, practical exercises, and group work.

You will be expected to undertake pre-reading in the weeks before attending taught units, and again in preparation for the coursework assignment. A considerable amount of selfstudy is required to complete a unit.

Unit assessment

All units are assessed by written assignment; there are no examinations. Where possible, assignments are designed to integrate theoretical concepts with your practical experiences.



“
The MSc in Strategic Management has completely transformed the way in which I think. I have surprised myself academically, and the modules have given me much more confidence in my professional life.
”

“
Without any hesitation I feel I have developed both personally and academically. I have learnt to question where I just accepted a situation and to research information to support an argument.
”

Year	Term	Unit	Contact
1	1	The Context of Strategic Management	4 Days
	2	Strategy and Strategic Management	4 Days
	3	Option 1 Option 2	2 Days 2 Days
2	1	Realising Strategy	4 Days
	2	Option 3 Option 4	2 Days 2 Days
	3	Developing the Strategic Manager	4 Days
3		Dissertation	Supervision

Mandatory units

The Context of Strategic Management

This unit introduces the theoretical concepts that underpin the study of management in organisations, and aims to enhance in students the skills of critical evaluation that are essential for discerning between the good and the bad in management theory and practice.

The unit is also designed in part as an induction to the programme, and to introduce you to the Library, online databases and other resources needed for the study of strategic management. You will learn about the programme expectations in self-study and writing, and practice searching for the sources of information you will need to research and write your assignments during the programme.

Strategy and Strategic Management

This unit builds upon the first, establishing a thorough grounding in the core subject of the programme to provide the base upon which you will study later optional units.

Differing views about the nature of strategy and strategic management are explored, as are the theoretical assumptions that underpin them. Your practical experiences are brought to the study of strategic analysis and decision-making, and these are enhanced through the use of case material, examples, readings and exercises.

Realising Strategy

This unit is designed to enable you to understand how the dynamics of change within organisations play out in practice, using a variety of theoretical and practice lens. Organisations are increasingly organising on a programme and project basis, where the project becomes a major instrument of strategy realisation.

The unit takes a critical perspective on projects, encouraging you to reflect on how projects might best be managed in the light of the broader organisation's culture and values. You will review the major approaches to strategic change using living case studies drawn from your experiences of change programmes.

Developing the Strategic Manager

This unit integrates your learning and reinforces your transition from manager to strategic manager.

The unit develops the concept of reflective practice and sets up continuous learning for the dissertation and beyond the end of the programme. Reflective practice allows you to step back from a situation to ask questions about the effectiveness of current and past interventions in order to learn lessons that can be incorporated into future challenging situations. It also helps you bring together theory and practice by using the process of reflective practice to think about how useful or otherwise academic theories and models have been, and to think about which ones might help in similar situations in the future.

Options

Options are designed to enable you to tailor the degree to suit your own learning needs. Some units focus on a particular area of management expertise, others aim to extend your understanding of the organisation and its environment, while others again focus on personal competences that distinguish strategic managers. The range we offer is subject to change, with new topics being introduced and older ones being replaced in a reflection of the dynamic nature of management at the strategic level.

A list of current options is available from our website.

The dissertation

Students pursue a major piece of research into an area of personal interest in the field of management. The dissertation aims to develop your skills in inquiry so that you can better understand the contribution that research makes to management knowledge. There is a considerable freedom of choice in the topic you select as long as it clearly relates to an aspect of strategic management. A supervisor will help and guide you through the process of your research.

About us

About the Department

Members of the department have come to study management through different routes, and therefore we bring a range of perspectives to our teaching and research.

We question the assumptions that dominate management thinking with the conviction that being critical is positive and a fruitful basis for improving ideas and so bring new perspectives to the field of management.

We all share an enthusiasm, however, for pluralism, diversity and social justice.

About the School

The School of Economics, Finance and Management can trace its history back to the foundation of what was then University College Bristol in 1878, where economics was one of the subjects taught. Finance was first taught in the 1930s, and management in the 1990s. Now the School has an academic staff of 74, including 16 Professors and 15 Researchers.

The School places a strong emphasis on research excellence. Academic staff publish regularly in international journals and are on the editorial boards of leading general and specialist journals.

The most recent RAE (the official Research Assessment Exercise) put Bristol among the top universities in the UK.



How to Apply

Your application 'pack' should include:

- Postgraduate application form
- Two letters of reference
- Copies of relevant qualifications
- Current CV

All potential candidates are invited to interview with the Programme Director.

Entry Requirements

Normally a good honours degree in any academic discipline or relevant professional qualification.

Approximately five years relevant work experience is also required, including significant managerial responsibility.

Evidence of language ability (if applicable) through the possession of an overall score of 7.0 in the British Council's International English Language Testing Service (IELTS).

Fees

For details of the current fees please see our website.

Overseas Applicants

This programme is offered for part time study only. There is no full time option. Potential applicants should be aware that part-time study is only open to international students if they already have the correct permission to be in the UK. This programme does not meet the requirements for a student visa.



For Further Information:

See our website at: www.efm.bris.ac.uk/management/

Or contact:

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