

Business Simulation (21811)

Degree: Degree in Labour Relations

Year: 3rd

Term: 2nd

Nr of credits ECTS: 4

Dedication of the student: 100 h

Language: English

Teacher: Oriol Palom Rico

1. Introduction to the course

Despite “Business games” (also known as “Business Simulations” or “Serious Games”) have more than half a century of history, still have a great potential for development, and some experts agree that are one of the most promising methods in the future of higher education.

Throughout the development of the sessions of a simulation, students can be approximated in a practical way, and also in a low risk context, to the complex of organizations and markets. Students can take, individually or in groups, decisions about different subjects and test their effects on environment that approximates the conditions later found in real life.

In this case, we are introducing a new business simulation with a different approach to the traditional business games. Usually this tools look at competition, short term profit maximization, maximum operational efficiency and obtaining greater market shares, as the key indicators of success in the game. These elements are usually described as the main aspects of the learning process, and other aspects related to the role of collaboration between organizations, potential market failures or environmental sustainability, are not taken into account.

One of the main contributions of this business simulation course is that, following the aspects mentioned above (competition, profit, development...) we are also introducing new elements of learning related with a good management of the natural resources, and the necessity to achieve a long term vision, with better harmony with the natural environment.

Thus, it is intended that students discover for themselves the need to organize, teamwork, negotiate and respect competition rules, taking economic decisions based in quantitative and qualitative data, but also taking into account these new concepts related with sustainability, and eventually discovering the need of setting institutional agreements, that are often overlooked or considered to be secondary in the context of business.

2. Skills acquired

- G1. Problem solving
- G2. written and verbal communication
- G3 . capacity for analysis and synthesis of information
- G4. ethical commitment
- G5. team working
- G6. motivation for quality
- G7 .capacity for autonomous work
- E11. assessment of private companies and unions
- E17. data and socioeconomic indicators analysis
- E19. transfer and apply knowledge into practice

3. Contents

1. Basics business & management concepts and teamwork guidelines
2. Introduction to the business Simulation
3. Development of the simulation: decision-making and performance evaluation
 - Phase I - Following the usual paradigm focused on profit maximization
 - Phase II - introducing new elements
4. Synthesis and evaluation

4. Evaluation

4.1. Evaluation system

General evaluation					
Evaluation activity	Criteria	% final grade	Options for recovery	% recovery (over final grade)	Skills
Class participation and attendance	From 0 to 10 points depending on the % of class attendance	25%	Not possible	Not possible to recover	G1 / G3 / G4 G5 / G6 / E11 E17 / E19
Intermediate and final academic work (by teams)	From 0 to 10 points Student need to meet deadlines of the works	50%	Possible to recover at the end of the course	25%	G2 / G3 / G4 G5 / G6 / E11 E17 / E19
On-going short work deliveries (associated to activities of the business game)	From 0 to 10 points Student need to meet deadlines of the works	25%	Possible to recover (through a written test) at the end of the course	50%	G1 / G2 / G3 G4 / G5 / G6 G7 / E11 / E17 E19
Evaluation system for students coming from mobility programs					
Evaluation activity	Criteria	% final grade	Options for recovery	% recovery (over final grade)	
Oral and written test	From 0 to 10 points	100%	July 2013	G1 / G2 / G3 / G4 G5 / G6 / G7 / E11 E17 / E19	

4.2. Terms eligibility to recovery

The recovery process is only available for students who having participated in at least 50% of the continuous assessment activities have obtained the final three months of suspense in the evaluation. Students may only recover that or those activities that have received a rating below 5.

5. References and resources

5.1. Basic references

- LEVY, MARGI (2006) “Strategies for growth in SMEs: the role of information and information systems” Ed .Oxford
- PABLO CARDONA Y HELLEN WILKINSON (2006) “Trabajo en equipo” Ocasional papers - IESE Business School,
- JOHNSON, D. I F. JOHNSON (2003): Joining Together. Group Theory and Group Skill. Ed. Pearson.
- PETER SENGE (2008) “La revolución necesaria”. Ed. Norma

5.2. Complementary references

- DAN CORMANY (2008) “Implementation of effective experiential learning environments” Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 35 pp. 34-60
- GARRETT HARDIN (1968) “The tragedy of the Commons” Science, 162 pp. 1243-1248
- ALAN L. PATZ (2006) “The business strategy game: A performance review of the new online Edition” - Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning, Volume 33 pp.58 -64
- A. J. STAINTON (2010) “Educational Validity of Business Gaming Simulation: A Research Methodology Framework” Gaming and simulation, 41 pp. 705-723
- THOMPSON, A. I G. STAPPENBECK (1999): The Business Strategic Game 6.0., Editorial Irwin McGraw Hill.
- THORELLI, H. B.; GRAVES, R. L.; LÓPEZ, J. C. (1998): INTOPIA 2000. Simulación de Operaciones Internacionales. Manual del ejecutivo, Marcombo Boixareu Editores, Barcelona.

5.3. Teaching resources

- Individual Quest for team building (Belbin test)
- Group quests for decision taking during the simulation
- Results and data provided by the business game
- Videos and other resources for the development of the business game

6. Methodology

Given that this course is entirely practical the methodology is based on the “learning by doing” approach, provided through working groups.

Through the teaching methodologies and tools that are built inside the simulation, and under the supervision of the teacher acting as facilitator, we provide an active learning framework that allows students to apply theoretical concepts through personal experiences inside and outside the classroom.

Students learn through experience, bringing into play their analysis skills, but also their empathy and creativity.

This is a board game (still not a “computer based” game, but it is intended that in future editions of the course it will be) but at the same time it is also expected to use some digital material and real data that make this framework more close to reality.

The entire course will be based on teamwork, and therefore the first session aims of creating teams that are well balanced. For this purpose we are using a methodology for creating teams inspired in the “Belbin test” for choosing coordinators and other team members in the most professional way possible.

The following sessions (first stage of the game) aim that the students become familiar with the game and its rules, and start playing for several rounds. Students will learn the consequences of their decisions in each game, which can affect several variables.

Midway through the course, there is planned a wrap-up session where each group will report results, trying to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each team and analyze the industry trends into the future, and make decisions to improve.

The following sessions (second stage of the game), students are invited to continue playing in the simulator adding new conditions and rules such as searching for help from outside experts who might know the solutions to the problems, and the establishment of collaboration.

The last session is again a report summarizing the results of what has happened in the last sessions of the simulator and the new concepts to be learned.

7. Planning of activities

1st session: Building teams

Sessions 2nd to 6th: Initial organisational decisions and first rounds of the business game

7th Session: Analysis of early results

Sessions 8th to 11th: Alternative decisions and new rounds of the business game

12th Session: Presentation of the results and final summary