



## **Business and Management Programme**

### **BAM321 Business Ethics**

#### **Module Handbook 2007/08**

*"No pleasure is evil in itself; but the means by which certain pleasures are gained bring pains many times greater than the pleasures."*  
- Epicurus

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## Contents

<b>Module welcome and aims</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Our practices</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Reading advice</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Student absence</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
Appendix A	
<b>Module Descriptor</b>	<b>Page 9</b>

## Welcome

The standard dictionary definition of ethics is “the study or the science of morals” (Chambers Harrap).

In this module it will be useful to bear in mind throughout that ethics is about what is good, and is concerned with questions such as: how should we live? and how should we behave? These are not easy questions. People have constructed elaborate arguments in order to try to provide answers. And it is important that we are prepared to work hard in trying to follow and evaluate these arguments. The notion of a science of morals immediately makes it clear that in ethics we are concerned with the application of reason and rationality. We must pay attention to our reasoning, and that of other people.

In the pursuit of answers to difficult questions, new concepts may be needed - new ways of looking at the world; or concepts that we use in everyday talk may be more carefully defined and used in more specific ways. Maybe even the definition of ethics just given is a more specific way of using the term than the way you might previously have used the word yourself. So we must be prepared to work hard to try to understand new concepts or specific ways of using old concepts that are introduced by theorists.

The prospect that is offered by this module is that we might gain new insights into problems that really matter to us – problems of right and wrong. And we will also have the opportunity to further develop our skills in argument and reasoning.

So our aims may be specified as follows:

- to develop our awareness of ethical considerations relevant to business practices and issues;
- to gain in understanding of the concepts and theories used in addressing ethical questions;
- to develop our skills in critical analysis and argument;
- to discuss critically current issues of interest relating to corporate social responsibility and business behaviour;
- to reflect on our own moral values, our attitudes and behaviour and learn from this activity.

### **Our practices**

“Learning takes place when a human or other animal has a problem, attempts to solve it and survives, creating changes in the world and in the learner.”

Swann, 1999.

It is not the view of the module coordinator that learning is simply about transferring knowledge from one person, eg a lecturer, to another, eg a student. This process may be a part of learning, insofar as the knowledge of the lecturer helps the student to solve their problems, but learning is much more than this. For this reason, among others, lectures during which students are expected to take notes will hopefully not absorb a very large proportion of the time in BAM321 sessions. It is intended that the module will provide opportunities for students to learn by encountering problems and being active. This is likely to be more successful if students adopt a responsible and reflective approach. It is the module coordinator’s responsibility to create good opportunities for learning to occur. (Opportunities of varying quality occur spontaneously all the time.) Students should take responsibility for making the most of those opportunities. A key activity should be reflecting on the events that occur in each session soon afterwards and making additional notes at that stage.

Students can only take advantage of learning opportunities if they see them and to see learning opportunities one must be alive to one’s own thinking and development. In other words, one must be reflective. This is crucial to BAM321. You are expected to make notes to record your own thoughts and reflections

throughout the module. You may be asked to share these thoughts with the group. Aside from being a great way of learning, this will also assist you in producing the “learning log” that is part of the assessment requirements.

One of the benefits of argument is that we become clearer about what might be the real differences between us. People may have different moral views or values, and this may become apparent in this module. But it is to be hoped that we will become clearer about what are the real points of disagreement. We may also, of course, change our minds in light of argument and study. Such changes of mind are to be respected and not sneered at or regarded as the result of arguments lost. Argument is not about winning and losing but seeking agreement and better understanding. Please respect your colleagues’ feelings at all times during the module. Think about how you can contribute to open, friendly, productive sessions in which everyone gets an equal opportunity to participate and benefit. (Note that the University’s Commitment Charter states that students are expected to “respect the rights of, and to treat with dignity, all fellow students and other members of the University” (University of Chichester, 2006, p8.)

The sessions are timetabled for 2½ hours. We will always take at least one break; we may take more. You should feel free to suggest taking a break if you feel there is a reason to do so at a particular point. For example, you may feel the room is becoming stuffy, or you may feel some of the group are tiring. But if your suggestion of a break is taken up, be prepared to be asked to do something other than just take five minutes for coffee or anything else individual groups members may feel like doing – if the room is stuffy the group might be asked to go outside and walk twice round the building clockwise!

Finally, please keep an eye on the **module website**. You can access this from the My Courses area on Portia – follow the link to Chris Downs’s home page. You may want to bookmark it so you can get to it directly, quickly and easily. We will make extensive use of it.

## Schedule

Our schedule is flexible and may be influenced by current news events and students' interests. However, we will cover the main ethical theories, some classic papers concerning business, and some issues that affect business in the contemporary world.

<b>Session no.</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	
1	24/01/08	
2	31/01/08	
3	07/02/08	
4	14/02/08	
	21/02/08	<b><i>Reading week (no meeting)</i></b>
5	28/02/08	
6	06/03/08	
7	13/03/08	
8	20/03/08	
9	27/03/08	
10	03/04/08	<b><i>Hand in date for assessed log</i></b>
	10/04/08	<b><i>Easter break (no meeting)</i></b>
	17/04/08	<b><i>Easter break (no meeting)</i></b>
11	24/04/08	<b><i>In-class assessment</i></b>

Sessions are scheduled to take place in room F31 in The Dome.

## Reading advice

The reading list is on the module website.

There is no particular book recommended for purchase. You are requested to cooperate with other students in order to make best use of the library book stock.

## Module Assessment

There are two elements to the assessment of this module, each carrying 50% of the total marks.

A: Learning log

You are required to do the following.

1. Keep a regular log. Include all and any thoughts arising from the module, and also issues you may read about in the papers, see reported on TV, encounter at work, on another module, down the pub or in the supermarket etc, that seem to have an ethical dimension.
2. Select one or two issues from your log entries and develop fuller accounts from these to produce the “log” you will submit for assessment.

Assessment criteria

1. Extent to which relevant issues are described and explored.
2. Extent to which student’s own feelings and thoughts are described and explored.
3. Extent to which relevant use is made of ethical theory and concepts from the module.

In exploring issues and your feelings and thoughts you should demonstrate critical thinking. We will discuss what this means, but you will need to be reflective, and selective. You should aim to produce an interesting document that highlights significant issues/developments. It should not be a description of what you physically did, nor a chronology of events. Rather it should be an account of your intellectual and emotional journey over the course of the module – how has your thinking developed? how have your feelings about certain issues changed? There must be an emphasis on reasoning. Our thinking develops in response to new experiences and reasoning/argument. You should write about these developments, eg “my view about human resource management changed from X

to Y after the classroom discussion on such-and-such a date, and these are the reasons why my view changed”; or “I now think it is wrong for businesses to do Z because....”.

You should pay particular attention to any examples where you have been listening to the news or reading the newspaper and been able to see a new ethics-related angle on an issue. These would be good examples to demonstrate your learning and development.

It is likely that you have had some experience of writing reflectively, eg on BAM122, BAM201, and BAM244. You are encouraged to look back at the guidance given on those modules, at the work you did on them, and the feedback you received. You may also find it useful to consult Cottrell (2003).

The word limit is 1,750. If you exceed the word limit by more than 10% your mark will be reduced by 10 percentage points. Appendices, bibliographies etc are not to be included within the word count. You must state the number of words clearly in your assignment (at the beginning or end).

Please hand your work in to Lesley-Anne Holder (BAM Programme Administrator) in room G14 (ICT Building) before 1pm on the hand-in date. Failure to submit work on time will result in a fail mark for the module.

The hand-in date for the learning log is Thursday 3 April.

#### B: In-class assessment

This will take the form of a question to be answered in the form of a short essay written under exam conditions. It will be associated with a reading that you will be given in advance. You will have one and half hours to complete the task. Students who are normally allowed extra time in exams will be similarly allowed extra time for this assessment.

#### Cheating, Plagiarism and Collusion

In light of the increasing incidence of academic malpractice, Chichester has joined other universities and colleges in using electronic plagiarism detection services. You are therefore required to submit an electronic version (on disk or CD-ROM) alongside a hard copy of your written work.

## Grading criteria for assessed log

<b>Criteria</b>			
<b>Grade</b>	1 Exploration of issue(s)	2 Exploration of own feelings/views	3 Use of theory and concepts
<b>85+</b>	The issue(s) chosen is appropriate and described in sufficient detail and with sufficient clarity to allow a clear and interesting essay to be written about the ethical issue(s). There is no unnecessary detail. Ethically relevant aspects are explored with little obvious scope for improvement.	The writer's own views and feelings are made clear but do not dominate to the detriment of reasoned discussion using relevant theory and concepts. There is an excellent account of the progression/development of the writer's thinking that shows that the possibility of a change of view was considered, even if the writer in the end held the same view after exploring the issue as they had done previously. Feelings/views are subjected to critical reflection throughout.	Ethical theories and concepts are used accurately and with imagination and authority throughout. There are appropriate and consistently well-presented references to public knowledge (the literature).
<b>70-84</b>	The issue(s) chosen is appropriate and described in sufficient detail and with sufficient clarity to allow a clear and interesting essay to be written about the ethical issue(s). There is very little unnecessary detail. Ethically relevant aspects are quite fully explored.	The writer's own views and feelings are made clear but do not dominate to the detriment of reasoned discussion using relevant theory and concepts. There is a very good account of the progression/development of the writer's thinking that shows that the possibility of a change of view was considered, even if the writer in the end held the same view after exploring the issue as they had done previously. Feelings/views are subjected to critical reflection.	Ethical theories and concepts are used mainly accurately and with authority throughout. There are appropriate and consistently well-presented references to public knowledge (the literature).
<b>60-69</b>	The issue(s) chosen is appropriate and described in sufficient detail and with sufficient clarity to allow a clear and interesting essay to be written about the ethical issue(s). But there is scope for improvement in places. There is very little unnecessary detail. Ethically relevant aspects are explored but this exploration is lacking a little in clarity and/or comprehensiveness.	The writer's own views and feelings are made clear but do not dominate to the detriment of reasoned discussion using relevant theory and concepts. There is some account of the progression/development of the writer's thinking that shows that the possibility of a change of view was considered, even if the writer in the end held the same view after exploring the issue as they had done previously. Feelings/views are subjected to some critical reflection.	Ethical theories and concepts are used mainly accurately. There are appropriate and consistently well-presented references to public knowledge (the literature).

50-59	The issue(s) chosen is appropriate but the description is significantly lacking in detail and/or clarity. Ethically relevant aspects are explored to a rather limited extent.	The writer's own views and feelings may be made clear but are too dominant, to the detriment of reasoned discussion using relevant theory and concepts, or they may be rather lacking. There is little account of the progression/development of the writer's thinking. Feelings/views are subjected to little critical reflection.	Ethical theories and concepts are used either rather sparsely, or with significant ambiguity or inaccuracies. There are appropriate and mainly well-presented references to public knowledge (the literature).
40-49	The issue(s) chosen is arguably appropriate but the description is significantly lacking in detail and/or clarity. Ethically relevant aspects are explored to a very limited extent.	The writer's views may be completely dominant, to the virtual exclusion of reasoned discussion using relevant theory and concepts, or they may be more or less absent. There is very little evidence of any critical reflection. The writer's views are more or less absent.	Ethical theories and concepts are used either rather sparsely, or with significant ambiguity or inaccuracies. There are inadequate references to public knowledge (the literature).
<40	The issue(s) chosen is inappropriate. Ethically relevant aspects are explored to a very limited extent, if at all.		Ethical theories and concepts are used either very sparsely, or with significant ambiguity or inaccuracies throughout. There are inadequate references to public knowledge (the literature).

**References:**

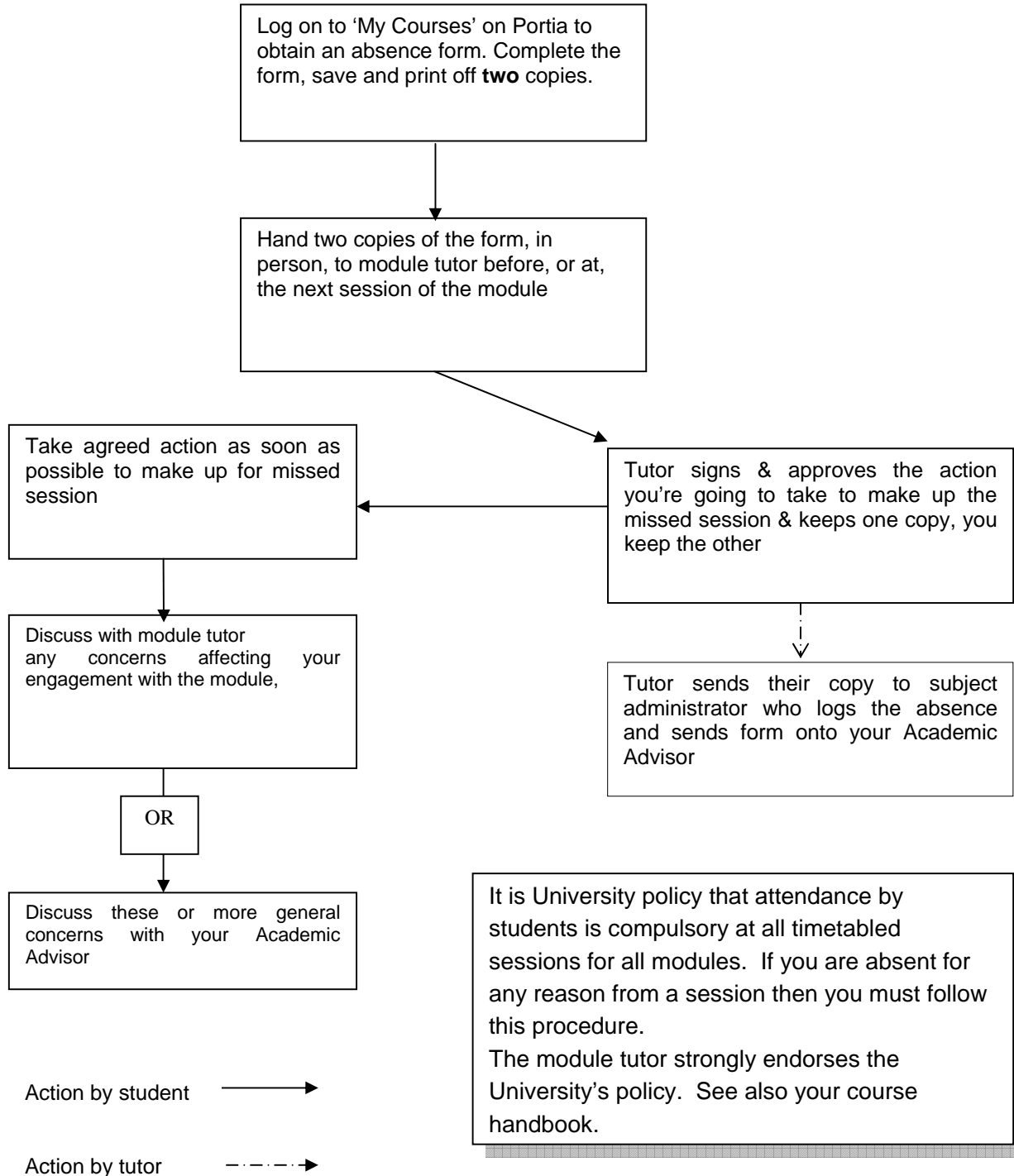
Cottrell, S. (2003) *Skills for Success: the personal development planning handbook*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd *Chambers Reference Online* (online).  
URL: <http://www.chambersharrap.co.uk/chambers/chref/chref.py/main>  
Date accessed: 15th December, 2004

Swann, J. (1999) "What happens when learning takes place?". *Interchange*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp.257-282

## Student absence

What to do when you've been absent from a module session.



## Appendix A

### Module descriptor

Please note this is an official document used by the College for academic purposes. It is primarily intended to be used by academic staff and others involved in curriculum design and course quality assurance. Students are given a copy of this document for background information only.

<b>Module Title:</b>	Business Ethics and Social Responsibility
<b>Module Code:</b>	BAM321
<b>Credits:</b>	15
<b>Level:</b>	3
<b>Home School and Subject Area:</b>	Social Studies (Business and Management)
<b>Programme to which the module contributes:</b>	BA(Hons) Management BA(Hons) Business Studies BA(Hons) IT Management
<b>Module Co-ordinator:</b>	Chris Downs

#### Entry Requirements:

#### Aims:

- To raise awareness of ethical considerations relevant to many business practices and issues, and of corporate social responsibility.
- To introduce students to the concepts, theories and techniques used in addressing such ethical considerations.
- To develop students' skills in critical analysis and argument, in particular ethical reasoning.
- To have students discuss critically current business and government policies relating to corporate social responsibility.
- To have students reflect on their own moral values, their attitudes and behaviour.

Paine (1991) argues that ethics education should aim to provide both character development and development of skills in using the analytical concepts and techniques of ethics. Rossouw (2002) argues for a blend of three approaches, the addition to the two aims mentioned by Paine being that ethics teaching should also strive to develop capability in influencing organizational behaviour for better ethical outcomes. Clarkeburn (2002) argues, in relation to science education, that only skills development is an appropriate and reasonable aim. Development and delivery of this module will be informed by the debate about ethics education in undergraduate degrees, and the UCC Business & Management academic team will be invited to monitor progress and form a view on the way in which we should approach business ethics.

#### References:

- Clarkeburn, H. (2002) "The aims and practice of ethics education in an undergraduate curriculum: reasons for choosing a skills approach". *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp.307-315
- Paine, L.S. (1991) "Ethics as character development" in: Freeman, R Edward (ed.) *Business Ethics: the state of the art*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rossouw, G.J. (2002) "Three approaches to teaching business ethics". *Teaching Business Ethics*, Vol. 6, pp.411-433

**Learning Outcomes:**

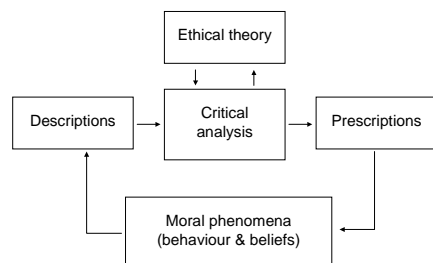
On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- Examine a range of ethical theories, distinguishing between them on the basis of what are accepted as their most salient differences.
- Reflect on their own attitudes to ethical issues in the business sphere using appropriate concepts from ethical theory.
- Identify ethical issues that arise in business situations.
- Analyze and evaluate ethical reasoning and debate about ethical issues.
- Apply a range of ethical approaches to such issues in order to analyze them and produce prescriptions for action or policy.
- Evaluate corporate and government policies relating to corporate social responsibility.

**Indicative Curriculum Content:**

- Approaches to ethical thinking: teleological and deontological; utilitarianism; virtue ethics; relativism; justice etc.
- Approaches to thinking about business including the development of stakeholder theory and the notion of corporate social responsibility.
- Environmental and sustainability issues.
- Fair trade.
- Human rights and social justice.
- Whistle-blowing.
- The ethics of financial reporting, human resource management, marketing etc.
- Socially Responsible Investment.
- Ethical consumerism.

**Learning Strategy:**



Chryssides & Kaler (1993) p16

The strategy of the module is to place critical analysis at its centre, ensuring students are aware that the role of business ethics is to develop prescriptions for action, and that the purpose of studying business ethics is to develop skills of practical importance. The various approaches to ethical thinking (ethical theories) will be introduced through readings and subsequent discussion and workshop activities. Armed with an understanding of theory, students will subject a broad range of issues to critical analysis to produce prescriptions for business practice and public policy. Workshops based around case studies and issues will thus become the norm as the module progresses. Use may also be made of classroom experiments. Formal lectures are only expected to have a role if and when guest speakers are invited.

Students will use published questionnaires (eg those available online from the Institute of Business Ethics) as a stimulus to reflect on and discuss their own ethical attitudes and behaviour. Full use will be made of Portia and the internet to make resources and module materials available.

**Reference:**

Chryssides, G. and Kaler, J.H. (1993) *An Introduction to Business Ethics*. London: Thomson

**Mode of Assessment:**

Students will be required to keep a learning log in which they will record their reflections on and responses to module activities and resources and other stimuli, eg news items students might hear or read about, events at their workplaces etc.

At the end of the module students will be required to complete a time constrained exercise on an individual basis.

**Formative:**

Students will receive feedback on exercises and their learning log entries from peers and staff throughout the module.

**Summative:**

Learning log (50%). Time constrained exercise (50%).

**Assessment Criteria:**

- Ability to identify and explain ethical issues in broader business issues, practices and policies – to work with and produce descriptions of moral phenomena and behaviour.
- Ability to reflect on own attitudes and behaviours from an ethical perspective (drawing on ethical theory).
- Ability to apply ethical reasoning to produce prescriptions for action or policy (critical analysis).
- Ability to evaluate business and government policies relating to corporate social responsibility.

All four criteria may be relevant to both assessment items, but demonstration of the first two will be specifically required in the learning log and of the latter two in the exercise.

**Indicative Reading:**

Boatright, J. (2004) *Ethics and the Conduct of Business*. 4th. edn. Pearson.

Bradburn, Roger (2001) *Understanding Business Ethics*. London: Thomson Learning.

Chryssides, G. and Kaler, J.H. (1993) *An Introduction to Business Ethics*. London: Thomson. (Publication of a second edition, planned for 2004, has been postponed.)

de George, R.T. (1999) *Business Ethics*. 5th. edn. Pearson

Fisher, C and A Lovell (2003) *Business Ethics and Values*. Pearson.

Law, S. *The Philosophy Gym*. London: Headline.

Selgin, J.L. (2003) *The Right Thing: Conscience, Profit and Personal Responsibility in Today's Business*. London: Spiro Press

Thomson, Anne (1999) *Critical Reasoning in Ethics*. London: Routledge.

Whyte, J. (2003) *Bad Thoughts*. London: Corvo.

*Business and Society*

*Business Ethics: A European Review*

*Harvard Business Review*

*Journal of Business Ethics*

Business Ethics (online) <http://www.business-ethics.com/>

FTSE4Good (online) <http://www.ftse.com/ftse4good/>

CSR Forum (online) <http://www.csrforum.com/csr/csrwebassist.nsf/>

CSR Europe (online) <http://www.csreurope.org>