MSc in Sustainability Management

Advanced Sustainability Metrics

Professors: Axel Ehberger
Office hours: By appointment
Course Type: Elective
Credits: 3 ECTS
Term: Third

Course Description

This course addresses the critical need for organizations to comprehensively track and manage their sustainability performance.

This subject provides an overview of the current regulatory environment, the basic concepts of management and internal control and integrated information systems for decision-making. It also deals with the relationship between financial and sustainability reporting.

One focus is the integration of sustainability goals into corporate planning and management. In this context, questions such as 'What is controlling?' 'What is sustainable management?' are addressed. Sustainable strategies and their implementation (influencing factors, intensity of implementation, materiality) are explained. The concept of Green Controlling (strategic planning, strategic analysis, implementation of strategic goals and measures, reporting [data requirements, data sources, reporting] and accounting) is explored in greater depth.

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is discussed as a recommended tool for integrating sustainability goals into corporate management: Introduction to key figures, key figure systems, and the process of developing a strategic key figure and the application of various Sustainability BSC architectures

Another focus is the application of concrete metrics based on existing sustainability standards frameworks (ESRS, ISSB, GRI, etc.). In this context, the aim is to select a number of examples and analyze the calculation of the metrics.

To link the points discussed above, the integration of sustainability into the strategy and business model and the information that the members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Board need to monitor and make decisions based on the company's strategy, legal framework, customer requirements, etc. are treated in more detail.

In this context, the internal and external review of sustainability reporting and the need to create trust in sustainability information within and outside the company are also discussed.

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The course in the study plan

This elective course belongs to the subject of **Environmental** Dimension of Sustainability of the study plan. It takes place in the **third** quarter of the course.

Objectives (learning outcomes) and competences

This course equips students with the skills to understand, implement, and analyze advanced sustainability metrics, ensuring that firms can effectively measure their impact and progress towards sustainability goals.
Learning objectives:

- Understand the current regulatory environment in the context of Sustainability.
- Understand both the need of metrics for external reporting and the internal need for corporate planning and management.
- Gain knowledge of the role of Controlling in the implementation of objectives in the planning and management process.
- Be familiar with the influencing factors of strategies in the context of sustainability and their implementation.
- Know how to apply tools for the implementation of strategic objectives and the development of metrics.
- See metrics in the global context of the corporate decision-making process.

COURSE LEARNING PLAN

Content

The content of this subject includes the following topics:

1. The current regulatory environment.
2. Integrating sustainability objectives into business planning and management.
3. The Balanced Scorecard as a recommended tool for integrating sustainability objectives into business management.
4. Applying concrete metrics based on current standards.
5. Build an implementation plan.
6. Corporate governance and sustainability reporting.
7. Internal and external verification of sustainability reporting.

Methodology

The course comprises eight 3-hour sessions, which combine theory lecturing with general debates and applied discussions on chosen cases. Participants will also engage in presentations of reports or project assignments. Activities will require both individual and group work. During the discussion of some cases, the students will be divided in groups using the role-playing approach.

The course also involves autonomous work outside the classroom, combining readings that will help you to gain a deeper understanding of the material covered in the class.

Hours devoted by the student (according to ECTS) **75**

Evaluation criteria

Three elements concur in the final mark:

- **Final exam (40%):** The final exam is used to assess the individual level of knowledge and understanding of each student. The minimum grade to pass the final exam is 5.
- **In-class activities (40%):** Activities and Cases. Some cases will be presented in class by a group of students and (when asked) in written format by all students.
- **Class attendance and active participation (20%):** Attendance in every session is expected and recorded by means of an attendance sheet. It is your responsibility to comply with this measure. Class attendance is compulsory and will be reflected in your final grades; punctuality is a must. Note that unexcused absences reduce your score on the "attendance and participation" element of your final grade.

Other evaluation criteria to take into consideration:

Retake

Students who fail the course during regular evaluation will be allowed ONE re-take of the examination/evaluation. Students that pass any Retake exam should get a 5 by default as a final grade for the course. If the course is also failed after the retake, students will have to register again for the course the following year.

No-show

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the “Retake” period). In the meantime, the student will get an “incomplete”, which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The “incomplete” will not be reflected on the student’s Academic Transcript.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is to use someone else’s work and to present it as one’s own without acknowledging the sources properly. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a

student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the “Honor Code,” students acknowledge that they understand the schools’ policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program.

Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

No textbook is required for this course. All the required material will be provided through each lesson, so that it is fully findable on the e-campus.

Bio of Professor

Axel Ehberger, Management Controlling Consultant, offers external Controlling services as well as seminars, courses and internal training.

In addition, he teaches at several universities, such as TecnoCampus and FedaEDU (German Business School), collaborated in the Chair of Circular Economy and Sustainability at TecnoCampus and participates as a guest speaker in Master's programmes (TBS, BSM).

At the same time, he actively collaborates with professional associations such as the ICV (International Controller Association), as president of the working group in Spain and of the International Work Group. The ICV is a source of knowledge for its members thanks to its expert groups on current topics such as GreenControlling, the integration of sustainability objectives in business management. It is also a passive member of the IBCS (International Business Communication Standards).

He obtained the CA Diplom Controller, after having participated in the five-stage programme for Controllers of the Controller Akademie.

After studying ‘International Business Administration’ at RheinMain University of Applied Sciences (formerly: FH Wiesbaden), Germany, and at the University of Zaragoza, including practical training at a financial derivatives exchange in London, he specialized in the areas of Information Analytics and Reporting, having worked as a Controller in an industrial company and in consulting in the banking sector.