

30619 - Strategic management

Syllabus Information

Academic Year: 2019/20

Subject: 30619 - Strategic management

Faculty / School: 109 - Facultad de Economía y Empresa

Degree: 432 - Joint Law - Business Administration and Management Programme

ECTS: 6.0

Year: 4

Semester: Second semester

Subject Type: Compulsory

Module: ---

1.General information

1.1.Aims of the course

The student, in order to pass the course, will have to show her/his competence in the following skills:

1. Understand the concept of competitive advantage, adequately use various indicators that measure value creation within a firm, and understand the role of strategy in this process. More specifically, distinguish between economic and accounting profit, identify the levels of strategy and the most important decisions within them.
2. Value the potential profitability that an industry offers according to the analysis of a set of basic dimensions.
3. Make a diagnosis of the internal situation of a firm, identify its strengths and weaknesses and identify the resources and capabilities that are a source of sustainable competitive advantages.
4. Explain the generic basic strategies, their sources and how they help to generate value from their execution.
5. Identify the main growth strategies, know their main characteristics, and be able of formulate a corporate strategy based on the specific circumstances of the firm.

1.2.Context and importance of this course in the degree

Strategic Management is a course included in the block Fundamentals, Strategies and Resources of the Firm -defined in the study program of the Degree of Administración y Dirección de Empresas. This subject is based on Essences of Management, as well as on other more specific courses that analyse different functional areas of the firm (e.g., operations, human resources, marketing and finance and accountability). Top management should be able to integrate this knowledge in order to make the best decisions and develop the activities of the firm in the most efficient way, with the main aim of maximizing firm value.

1.3.Recommendations to take this course

This course constitutes a first approach to the strategic management of a firm. Although there are no previous requirements for studying this course, the students should be familiar with the basic concepts of courses from the area of Management and Organization that have been previously given in the Degree of Administración y Dirección de Empresas (i.e. *Essences of Management, Internal Organization and Management*). Additionally, students are strongly recommended to attend the lectures on a regular basis and to participate in the different activities that will be carried out in them.

2.Learning goals

2.1.Competences

1. Making decisions and managing business organizations.
2. Knowing the operations of all the functional areas of any company or organization and having the skills to perform any task within these areas.
3. Evaluating the situation and the previous evolution of firms and organizations, and being able to acquire the relevant knowledge for taking informed decisions successfully.
4. Elaborating and writing comprehensive management projects for companies and other entities.
5. Issuing reports about specific market situations, industries, organizations, companies and their functional areas.
6. Understanding and applying professional criteria and scientific standards to the solution of economic, business and organizational problems.
7. Problem-solving capability.
8. Organization and planning capabilities.
9. Analysing and searching for information from different sources.
10. Decision-making capability.
11. Motivation towards excellence.
12. Adaptation capability to new situations.
13. Ability to put theoretical concepts into practice.

2.2.Learning goals

The coordination of interdependent activities within the firm corresponds to top managers, who are responsible for the long-term survival of the firm, fix the organizational objectives and determine how to achieve them. The basic functions of executive management include internal design and resource allocation, the integration of activities from different departments, the continuous adaptation to environmental changes, and the design of firm strategy. Top managers should be able of take charge of all activities related to efficiency (have resources been correctly allocated?), efficacy (have the planned objectives been achieved?) and effectiveness (have objectives been defined adequately?)

2.3.Importance of learning goals

Strategy has an increasing importance for firms because of the uncertainty that exists in the environment where they carry out their activities. Consequently, an adequate identification and formulation of strategy are necessary. This is an important challenge for the organization and is critical to its survival and success.

Any firm that aims to maintain high profitability rates in the long term needs a deep understanding of the characteristics and structure of the markets in which it operates. It is also important to know the key elements that determine competition in those markets. This knowledge should be combined with a diagnosis of the firm's internal strengths and weaknesses because building sustainable competitive advantages is only possible by combining the internal (resources and capabilities) and external (markets) dimensions of the organization adequately.

Strategic Management offers students the key concepts and tools to make the best strategic decisions in accordance with the dynamism and fast evolution of this field of management. Strategic Management is about how to manage organizations to achieve and maintain business success through the identification of factors that determine performance and through the implementation of a strategy to obtain the best result. Consequently, the contents of this course are of great interest to the student because it offers a good approach to these key aspects.

3.Assessment (1st and 2nd call)

3.1.Assessment tasks (description of tasks, marking system and assessment criteria)

The student will be able to pass the course in either of the two sittings. For both of them, she/he will have to demonstrate the achievement of the learning results and skills through a global evaluation. The final mark of the course will be distributed in the following way:

Active attitude in class discussions and the handing in of the exercises proposed in the practical sessions (10% of final mark). Students choosing this option will have to hand in all the exercises proposed on the date indicated. This date will be announced in class and published in the moodle2 platform at least five days in advance.

In-depth analysis of a firm in groups of 4-5 people (25% of final mark).

Final exam (65% of final mark). Students choosing this option will have to obtain at least 4 points out of 10 in the final exam in order to be able to compute the course activities' marks.

When students do not meet the minimum requirements in the continuous assessment activities, they will not be allowed to continue through this evaluation process.

The students can opt to do only the final exam on the date established in the official exam calendar. In this case, the final exam will determine 100% of final mark. Additionally, if the mark of the final exam is higher than the final mark when considering course activities, the final exam mark will prevail.

In the evaluation of each assessment activity, the students will have to demonstrate that they know, understand and are able to use the concepts and tools explained in class in different real situations. Moreover, their capability to apply, integrate and synthesize the knowledge acquired will be evaluated.

4. Methodology, learning tasks, syllabus and resources

4.1. Methodological overview

The methodology followed in this course is oriented towards the achievement of the learning objectives. A wide range of teaching and learning tasks are implemented, such as lectures, practice sessions, seminars and tutorials.

Following the syllabus and achieving the learning outcomes will require continuous work from the student during the course based on the following activities:

Regular attendance to classes

Preliminary reading of the bibliographical material for each topic prior to its presentation in class and a more detailed reading after the class and during the process of doing the exercises and the project.

Regular and detailed answers to the exercises and practical cases that the teachers will propose during the course. Carrying out a group project that analyses in depth the situation of a real firm or industry that will be chosen by the students with the approval of the teacher. This project should allow to achieve an in-depth understanding of the selected industry. In the deadline that will be fixed by the teacher, students that decide to carry out this project will have to submit a preliminary proposal (about 3 pages) which includes the main objectives and analyses to be carried out.

Asking about doubts and difficulties that arise in their study of the course contents.

4.2. Learning tasks

The learning activities of the course are the following:

- Lectures: 30 hours.
- Practical sessions: 30 hours.
- Problem-based learning/ICT learning/Seminars/Tutorials/Autonomous learning: 90 hours.

4.3. Syllabus

Section I. Concept of strategy and strategic management

Topic 1. Competitive advantage and value creation

- 1.1. Introduction.
- 1.2. What is a competitive advantage?
- 1.3. Approaches to measuring competitive advantage
- 1.4. Accounting profit vs. economic profit

Topic 2. Strategy: Concept, Elements And Typologies

- 2.1. Introduction.
- 2.2. Definitions of strategy
- 2.3. Vocabulary of strategy
- 2.4. Levels of strategy
- 2.5. Corporate Social Responsibility
- 2.6. Strategic management

Section II. Strategic analysis

Topic 3. The firm and its environment

- 3.1. Introduction
- 3.2. General environment and specific environment
- 3.3. Defining the industry

- 3.4. Industry analysis: Porter's Five Forces Framework
- 3.5. Strategic groups and mobility barriers
- 3.6. Methodology for the analysis of the industry

Topic 4. Structure And Evolution Of The Industry

- 4.1. Introduction
- 4.2. Horizontal configuration of the industry
 - 4.2.1. Number of firms and size differences
 - 4.2.2. Industry concentration
- 4.3. Typology of industry structures
- 4.4. Firm behavior and industry structure
- 4.5. Demand evolution. Industry life-cycle and technological evolution

Topic 5. Internal Analysis Of The Firm: The Theory Of Resources

- 5.1. Introduction
- 5.2. Traditional approach to internal analysis: Porter's value-chain
- 5.3. The theory of resources
 - 5.3.1. Resource typology
 - 5.3.2. VRIO analysis
- 5.4. Competitive strategy and rent generation

Section III. Strategy formulation

Topic 6. Competitive strategy

- 6.1. Introduction
- 6.2. Generic competitive strategies
- 6.3. Cost leadership strategy
- 6.4. Differentiation strategy
- 6.5. Blue ocean strategies

4.4.Course planning and calendar

The calendar of sessions can be found on the website of the centre; the presentation of works and other activities will be communicated to the students through the e-learning platform of the Universidad de Zaragoza (moodle2).

The activities and key dates will be communicated via the Universidad de Zaragoza e-learning platform (moodle2). The timetable of assessment activities can be consulted in the webpage of the centres where the course is taught.

4.5.Bibliography and recommended resources