

30619 - Strategic management

Syllabus Information

Academic Year: 2021/22

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

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.

These goals are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda and certain specific targets (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/en/>), contributing to some extent to their achievement:

Goal 4. Quality education.

Target 4.3. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Goal 8. Decent work and economic growth

Target 8.2. Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors

Target 8.3. Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

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 need to prove that he/she has achieved the expected learning results by means of the following assessment tasks:

Two evaluation systems are available: continuous assessment and global assessment.

1: Continuous assessment.
The student must take two individual written exams, the first one after finishing Section I, with the contents of that section (mid-semester), and the second one after finishing Section II, with the contents of Sections I and II (last days of the semester). Both tests will include one part of theoretical-practical questions and another of practical cases. In addition, the student has to carry out a group task during the semester, consisting of the production of a feasibility analysis of an investment project in a real or virtual enterprise. The group task will be supervised by the teacher of the subject. The deadline will be a few weeks before the end of the semester. It has to be orally presented during the last week of the course through a power point presentation. All the members of the group have to participate in the presentation. The teacher can make as many questions and clarifications on the work as deemed appropriate. Complete information for the group task will be given in the first sessions.

The final mark will be calculated using the following weights for each component of the assessment:

First written exam:	30 %
Second written exam:	40 %
Group task and oral presentation:	30 %

In order to pass the course via continuous assessment, it will be necessary to obtain an overall mark of 5 out of 10, a minimum of 4 out of 10 being required in each of the sections of the continuous assessment.

2: Global assessment
The student who does not choose the continuous assessment system, does not pass the subject in the continuous assessment system, or wants to improve his/her mark, will be entitled to sit the global exam, the best of the two marks prevailing in all cases.

In this system, the student has to take a final written exam that will incorporate a part of theoretical-practical issues and another part exclusively of practical issues. To pass the exam, the student has to obtain a score equal to or greater than 5 out of 10.

In addition, students can keep the grade achieved in the group work, representing 30% of the final grade, corresponding the remaining 70% to the grade obtained in the exam. To pass the course, it is necessary to obtain a minimum of 4 out of 10 in the exam and that the weighted sum of the score reached in each of the parts is equal to or greater than 5 out of 10. In the case that the grade obtained through the weighted sum of the group work and the exam is lower than the exam grade, the last one will prevail.

In the second call, the evaluation will be made only through a final exam of theoretical and practical content that will represent 100% of the grade. To pass the exam, a minimum mark of 5 out of 10 is required. The exam will be held within the context and organization of the official calendar of exams fixed by the Faculty. It is expected that all these examinations will be carried out in face to face mode, but if the health circumstances require it, they will be carried out semi-on-site or online. If the evaluation is carried out online, the student may be recorded in any test, and she or he may exercise her or his rights by the procedure indicated in the following link on the REDUCED INFORMATION CLAUSE IN TEACHING RECORDING MANAGEMENT: https://protecciondatos.unizar.es/sites/protecciondatos.unizar.es/files/users/lopd/gdocencia_reducida.pdf. The necessary software will be used to check the originality of the activities carried out. The detection of plagiarism or copying in an activity will imply a mark of 0 points in it.

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.

All lectures and seminars will be imparted on site. In the case of a new health emergency caused by the current pandemic all teaching will be moved online

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

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.