

BBM 208/05 Business Ethics course guide (2nd revision)

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BBM 208/05

Business Ethics

Course Guide

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Wawasan Open University is Malaysia's first private not-for-profit tertiary institution dedicated to adult learners. It is funded by the Wawasan Education Foundation, a tax-exempt entity established by the Malaysian People's Movement Party (Gerakan) and supported by the Yeap Chor Ee Charitable and Endowment Trusts, other charities, corporations, members of the public and occasional grants from the Government of Malaysia.

The course material development of the university is funded by Yeap Chor Ee Charitable and Endowment Trusts.

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First Revision 2012, Second Revision 2015



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Published by Wawasan Open University 2015. This edition has been revised by Wawasan Open University from the course *The Business Ethics Workshop*, version 1.0 developed by Flat World with the permission of the owner.

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1.0 The Course — A Brief Introduction

About this course

This is a 5-credit hour middle-level basic major course for Bachelor of Business in Corporate Administration programme. It also serves as elective course for all the other Bachelor of Business programmes. This course on business ethics is aimed at providing learners with the importance concepts and distinctions that have to be made in business ethics. The many ways in which business ethics are embedded in business is explored. The study units are designed to help you to understand that business ethics strategic significance for business and explains how the neglect of business ethics constitutes high risk behaviour that can cost companies dearly in terms of both reputational and financial damage.

Business ethics course is not a complicated course. Ethics are useful in business and a serious subject for executives, managers and employees. A simple way to evaluate whether or not a practice is ethical is to determine the ultimate effect of that practice. For example, if the manager of a store paid his cleaning employee less than the going rate to clean his store, knowing exactly what the going rate is, several things could happen to damage the business. The employee could suffer serious financial implications or the employee could leave and find another position where he/she does not feel exploited.

To understand the importance of ethics in business, you will want to understand how business ethics affect those involved. The ethics of a business collectively and of those involved, have the power to help or harm people. Business ethics are important because if an organisation lacks ethics, the employees, the customers, and everyone else involved with the company can be harmed.

The subject of ethics is often considered abstract or relative by those who believe that rules do not always apply to them. Rules and laws apply to everyone. It is unfortunate that some employees in the upper echelons of the corporate ladder decide to act unethically, but it is a fact of business and of life. For this reason, it is best for a business to be careful of who they promote within their company.

The purpose of this course is to expose you to the important moral issues that arise in various business contexts; to provide you with understanding of the moral, social, and economic environments within which those problems occur; to introduce you to the ethical concepts that are relevant, and to assist you in developing the necessary reasoning and analytical skills for doing so. This course is organised into five units addressing topics of business ethics in business environment.

Unit 1 introduces the fundamental theories of business ethics. Unit 2 discusses employee ethics. Unit 3 will look at managerial ethics while Unit 4 will look the responsibility of the business organisation. Unit 5 ends with a discussion on organisational ethics.

BBM 208/05 emphasizes both theories and applications. It introduces the students to concepts and theories that will help them to understand and analyse various aspects of ethical dilemma in the business world. Each unit takes about 2 to 4 weeks to finish and the whole course takes approximately 72 weeks to complete.

Icons used in course materials (with examples)

In the course materials, you will come across icons that are designed to inform you of the activities that you are required to do before proceeding to the next section. Please follow the guidelines in these examples as the content writers have included these icons in various activities of the course materials. The following icons and examples explain how these icons lead you towards a richer and more productive learning experience. Please note that this course may not use all these icons. The examples illustrated in the following table may not be applicable to all courses.

	Activities	Icons	Examples
1.	Activity		Circle the words that are used at the beginning of “closed questions”. why where did who when is what how do would will can
2.	Assignment		Write a 600-word report comparing and contrasting inflation with stagflation.
3.	Audio		Load the CD provided with the course materials and open the file ‘xyz.mp3’. Play the recorded message and answer the questions in section 2.4 on page 34 of your course materials.
4.	Case Study		Read the following case study on “Adidas versus Adventa” on copyright infringement. Proceed to answer all the questions that follow. This task should take 45–60 minutes.
5.	Diagnostic test		A substance releases heat when it changes from: A. liquid to solid B. solid to gas C. liquid to gas D. solid to liquid Note: Diagnostic tests are activities that function to test students’ background understanding of the content. It usually appears at the beginning of each section.

	Activities	Icons	Examples						
6.	Feedback		Great! You have completed the exercises and we hope you have got them right. Here is an example of the suggested answers. If you have most of these keywords, you have done well!						
7.	Grammar		<p>Fill in the blanks using the phrases listed in the box (you may use the phrases more than once):</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>be over</td> <td>call back</td> <td>hang up</td> </tr> <tr> <td>give up</td> <td>put through</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>1. Could you _____ in a moment? I'll check if she is around.</p> <p>2. Don't _____ on me, I will _____.</p>	be over	call back	hang up	give up	put through	
be over	call back	hang up							
give up	put through								
8.	Multimedia		Run the Flash file uploaded to <i>WawasanLearn</i> and answer the following question Submit your answer to the tutor through your tutorial discussion board.						
9.	Reading		Please read "How monopolies make production and pricing decisions" on pages 318–325 of your textbook.						
10.	Reminder		The description about the e-filing system in section 2.1 that you have just read is a useful guide for you to answer question 2b of TMA 2. Please attend to TMA 2 as soon as you can.						
11.	Self-test		Answer the following questions using your own words. Please do not look at the suggested answers at the end of this unit until you have completed this self-test.						
12.	Summary		It takes enormous effort and great soft skills to placate an irate phone-in customer. You need patience and diplomacy to reduce the anger expressed and to persuade the irate customer to become a satisfied customer. This section discusses some of the many strategies at your disposal.						
13.	Telephone Feedback		<p>"Hi! I am Roger, your tutor for WOU 333/03 ... I called to check if you have received my email about ... as I am awaiting your confirmation about the group meeting the following week."</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Make an effort to call your tutor within the next two weeks and see if he/she has any new guidance for you.</p>						

	Activities	Icons	Examples
14.	Tutorial		Please use the following question to prepare for your next tutorial: "Elaborate on the FOUR major economic activities considered essential for the New Economic Policy to succeed within 20 years."
15.	Video		Load the VCD provided with the course materials and open the file 'xyz.wma'. Play the video and answer the questions in section 3.8 on page 53 of your course materials.
16.	Vocabulary		Inferring the meaning of words Look at the underlined words in the passage above. Match each word with its corresponding synonym. The first one has been done for you.
17.	Web Reference		To know more about Malaysia's New Economic Policy, try browsing the Web by typing the keywords or log onto the following website: http://members.tripod.com/formulapm/razak2.html

Course organisation

Units	Titles	Weeks	Assessment activities
1	Foundation of Business Ethics	3	TMA 1 (25%)
2	Employee Ethics	3	
3	Managerial Ethics	4	TMA 2 (25%)
4	The Responsible Organisation	4	
5	Organisational Ethics	4	
	Total	18	50%

Objectives

The course component will incorporate the following aims to:

1. Enable you to demonstrate how ethics is ingrained in both the idea and practice of business.
2. Infuse a thorough knowledge of business ethics to enable you to practice business ethics effectively within your organisation.
3. Develop skills to manage business ethically and achieve organisational objectives.

Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Introduce the fundamental theories of business ethics.
2. Describe the role of employee ethics in business organisations
3. Apply managerial ethics in business organisations.
4. Review the responsibilities of business organisations
5. Analyse the ethics faced by organisations and the environment.

Course assessment

This course is designed to help you move easily from the stated objectives through the required readings, self-tests, practice exercises and tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) to a final examination. In an assessment, you will be expected to:

1. Demonstrate comprehension of the concepts you have learnt in the course.
2. Integrate course concepts and knowledge with your own experience and observations.
3. Apply course concepts you have learnt in the course to a variety of situations.

The TMAs and an examination are designed to test and facilitate your progress.

Tutor-marked assignments (TMAs)

You are required to complete two TMAs for this course. For TMA submission deadlines, please refer to the Online Assignment Submission (OAS) system and *WawasanLearn*. The TMAs are timed to allow for feedback on one TMA before the next one is due. They require you to apply the concepts introduced in this course. In all cases, you need to show an ability to write various types of text effectively to complete the tasks prescribed in the TMAs. The weightage of the TMAs are: TMA 1 (25%) and TMA2(25%).

Course delivery

Supplementary readings

1. Ferrell, O C and Fraedrich, J (2014) *Business Ethics: Ethical Decision Making & Cases*, USA: Cengage Learning.
2. Boatright, J R (2012) *Ethics and The Conduct of Business*, 7th edn, USA: Pearson Education.
3. Shaw, W H, Barry, V E and Panagiotou, S (2010) *Moral Issues in Business*, 11th edn, Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
4. Weiss, J (2009) *Business Ethics: A Stakeholder and Issues Management Approach*, 5th edn, USA: Cengage Learning.

Additional readings may be taken from journals, magazines and other books. These may be given in the form of hard copy or uploaded to *WawasanLearn*. You will also be supplied with the necessary web addresses for readings from the Internet.

Course materials and student support

Course materials are the primary source of content that WOU provides for you to study. They normally consist of all or some of the following:

- Study Units [developed and written by course developer(s)].
- Course Guide.
- Self-tests and activities.
- Instructions for 2 TMAs on *WawasanLearn*.
- Specimen examination questions on *WawasanLearn*.
- Other print and non-print media that may accompany the set of course materials.

Apart from *WawasanLearn* and tutorials, WOU is mindful of the need to support you throughout the course. Our Regional Centres are well-equipped and staffed to attend to your queries whenever they arise. We have Regional Centre Directors and tutors who will be glad to listen to you. The Regional Centre staff will link you to the relevant person when there is a need. The Regional Centres have access to the WOU campus in Penang and are also able to contact the Course Coordinator when required to do so.

Learning management system

This course is supported by the Learning Management System (LMS). You can find course materials and the latest course information in the LMS known as *WawasanLearn*. Access to *WawasanLearn* is by way of a single login password entry into the Student Portal and you can “click” into the course sites and associated e-forums. You can also communicate with your tutors, the Course Coordinator and your coursemates using *WawasanLearn*.

Self-help groups

You are advised to organise informal meetings between your coursemates from the same tutorial group. We want to emphasise the benefits of such activities as the collaboration and interaction will be most useful in supporting your efforts to complete your TMAs and to form a learning community. These meetings which are purely voluntary provide a way for you to help one another.

Online support

1. <http://sites.wofford.edu/kaycd/ethical-theory/>
2. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/ethics/>
3. <http://www.miracosta.edu/home/lmoon/ET.html>
4. <http://www2.onu.edu/~m-dixon/handouts/ethical%20theories.html>
5. http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/INTRO_TEXT/Chapter%208%20Ethics/Ethical_Theories.htm

Content writer profile

James Brusseau (PhD, Philosophy) has taught ethics at the Mexican National University, California State University, and the Pennsylvania State University. He is author of *Decadence of the French Nietzsche and Isolated Experiences: Gilles Deleuze and the Solitudes of Reversed Platonism*. Currently, he teaches at Pace University near his home in New York City.

Content adapter profile

Ms Yap Li Lian has a MBA (Marketing Management) from Central Queensland University, Australia and is currently pursuing her PhD. She started her career in investment banking industry in Singapore, where she stayed for 13 years. She started her academic career in 2005, lecturing in Marketing courses, such as Principles of Marketing, Marketing Research, Marketing Consultancy, Retail Marketing and Consumer Behaviour at a local college's twining program with a UK university. She has also lectured on other management courses, such as Practices of Management, International Business and Business Research Methods and Ethics and Governance for the same twining program. Currently, she is with Wawasan Open University.

2.0 Tutorials — Optimising Tutorial Sessions

To assist you in this course, the appointed tutor will conduct five tutorials. Each tutorial is two hours long and is held during weekends. Tutorials are face-to-face sessions that enable you to exchange ideas and experiences and also initiate contact with others. This will benefit you.

Note: These sessions complement distance learning materials and are not intended to replace them in the form of lectures. In this course, the primary means of learning is through WOU course materials, textbooks and online references.

Preparing for tutorials

In order to benefit fully from a tutorial, complete the readings and various activities for the topics you learn. You are also advised to prepare the answers to the assigned case studies so that you can participate meaningfully in the tutorial discussions. Time has been allocated in the study schedule for this.

Tutors

The appointed tutors will:

- Conduct tutorials.
- Assess students' TMA answer scripts.
- Be available at designated times for online consultation and by telephone (if necessary) with students.

Tutors are your first point of contact with WOU. If you need any information or have any problems, please speak to the tutors before contacting the Course Coordinator.

Study schedule

Course materials	Self-study	Tutorials	TMA's	Library research	Telephone consultation	Wawasan-Learn	Total hours
Course Guide	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Unit 1	18	2	10	2	1	10	44
Unit 2	20	2	10	2	1	10	46
Unit 3	20	2	0	2	1	10	36
Unit 4	25	2	0	2	1	10	36
Unit 5	20	2	0	2	1	10	36
Total hours	105	10	20	10	5	50	200

TMA policy

The assignment policy of the University as stated in the Student Handbook should be observed. You are required to submit the TMA's for a course in accordance with the deadlines published in *WawasanLearn*. Please submit your TMA's early.

Online submission

Please attach the right file for online TMA submission. In the event where you have submitted the wrong TMA, you may apply for TMA resubmission from the OAS system. Note that your application to resubmit your TMA's is subject to your Course Coordinator's approval. To submit your TMA's online and for further details, you have to log onto <https://assignment.wou.edu.my>.

Submission extension application

You may apply via the Online Assignment Submission (OAS) system for a submission extension on the grounds of illness, accident, disability, bereavement or other compassionate circumstances. Applications for extensions of up to seven days should be applied through the OAS system to the tutor who will consider valid and unexpected emergencies on an individual basis. The tutor will also decide and advise you of the revised date for submission. Applications for extension should be lodged **before** or **on** the due date. To submit your extension application and for further details, you have to log onto: <https://assignment.wou.edu.my/onlineExtension.asp>.

3.0 Assessment and Examination

Assessment

Assessment in the course is based on two components — TMAs and a final examination.

The TMAs can be submitted in a variety of modes. For instance, assignment questions can be answered at home and submitted before the due date. All the assessment modes fit into two TMAs for computational and grading purposes. The final examination will be conducted at the designated examination centre after the one-week study break.

With your student ID and password, you should be able to download the two TMAs from the University's Learning Management System — i.e., *WawasanLearn*. If you encounter any difficulty, please contact your Regional Centre (RC) for assistance.

Examination

The final examination contributes 50% of the total course marks. The examination of three hours' duration consists of structured questions and essay questions. The overall assessment will be constituted as follows:

Types	Weightage
TMA 1	25%
TMA 2	25%
Final examination	50%
Total course marks	100%

Examination policy

You are required to attend all scheduled examinations that make up a final grade at the appointed time and place.

Students who are experiencing illness or a personal crisis and are unable to sit for any examination have to state [in writing] to the Registrar the reasons for their absence. Each submission must be supported by valid documents within seven (7) days from the date of the examination and will be considered by the University on its merits and on a case-by-case basis.

Passing marks

The grade for a course is assigned based on the overall score, which combines both the continuous assessment and the final examination component. You are advised to submit your TMAs and sit for your final examination. The marks for both TMAs will contribute to the continuous assessment component. Please refer to the *Student Handbook* under the Assessment and Examinations section for further details pertaining to achievement of overall marks for the courses that you have enrolled.

Specimen examination questions

For samples of specimen examination questions, please download them from *WawasanLearn* (<https://lms.wou.edu.my>).

4.0 A Word of Encouragement

Business Ethics is a very interesting and challenging subject. Knowledge in this area will help you improve your ability to understand how ethics should be considered in every business activity. It will also help you to manage your daily life better. However, some of the material may not be very easy for you to understand. You should study hard and try to get help from your tutor as much as you can. Remember that, if there is a will, there is a way! If you try hard and do not give up, you can succeed. We hope that all of you can succeed. We hope that all of you will complete this course successfully and the material will help you in climb the future corporate ladder.

Good luck.