

B201 Business Organisations and their Environment

The course is designed to help students develop their personal and professional practice in business. It is practically based and grounded in students' own experience of business organisations, whether as employees, customers or stakeholders. Students will learn by sharing their experience, analysing this experience in new ways, and widening the experience they have. The work of writers about organisations and their environments is examined to explore the course themes of ways of thinking about organisations, theory & practice, and diversity & complexity, and the course focuses on a number of key issues such as enterprise, globalisation, regulation and corporate social responsibility in order to illustrate the challenges facing business organisations in the twenty-first century.

There are four blocks in the course:

Block 1: Encountering Organisations starts by asking you to assess your current knowledge and understanding of business organisations. It then helps you to develop your skills using the online tutor group forum to reach a shared understanding with your fellow students. You'll use an online tool to develop your portfolio of skills and abilities. You will also work through an introduction to the course themes and approaches.

Block 2: The evolution of organisations explores how the organisations we see today have been shaped. Within a framework of systems thinking, it investigates the internal and external factors that shape business and that business seeks to influence. These include an 'inside-looking out' perspective, with discussions of organisational purpose, culture, structure, processes and control/decision-making, and an 'outside-looking in' perspective, with explorations of the ways that national culture, external control (such as law and regulation) and technological and economic environments impact on the relationships between business organisations and their markets.

Block 3: The Context of Organisations focuses on four sets of debates that are current in the world of business. These are enterprise, corporate social responsibility, globalisation and regulation. Each topic will be approached through case-study material and theoretical debates about the implications of these issues for business organisations.

Block 4: Re-encountering Organisations considers what organisations may look like in the future. Are the new organisational forms that are emerging, such as open-source networks and social enterprises, just a transient phase? Or are such forms the start of a revolution in the operation of business? What are the implications of this for the world of work? Throughout the course, there will be a strong focus on the practical implications of the debates you consider and how these link into your experience of the world of business.