



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit - 2020-2021

Management Consulting and Strategic Change

Course Code	E_IBK3_MCSC
Credits	6
Period	P5
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	School of Business and Economics
Course Coordinator	dr. K. van Bommel
Examiner	dr. K. van Bommel
Teaching Staff	
Teaching method(s)	Lecture, Study Group

Course Objective

Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, said “change is the only constant in life”. This certainly holds true for organizations. In the span of just over a decade they have had to wither a global financial- and economic crisis, relentless digitalization and the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic. In short, organizations are constantly changing and so do the people working within these organizations. Consultants play an increasingly significant role within these organizational change processes.

The course “Management Consulting and Strategic Change” offers a mix of theoretical and practical aspects. You will critically analyze various essential themes within consulting & change, through which you develop analytical skills that are essential for your future academic work (e.g., thesis writing) as well as any advisory function. Moreover, an important part of the course is that you gain experience with change processes and the work of consultants. You interview consultants and we invite them to the course for discussions. You are also asked to draw on the themes discussed in the lectures and to reflect on an actual consulting project.

The course focuses on the following learning goals:

Academic and Research Skills:

- Develop your own position and argumentation in relation to the topics discussed during the course.
- Critically reflect on the key underlying assumptions and arguments developed in the literature and position them in relation with each other.

Bridging theory and practice:

- Critically examine the connection between the themes discussed in the lectures and how these appear in real-life change and consulting

projects.

Social skills:

- Contact, interview and engage with consultants in the field.
- Organize your work in a team

Course Content

The course offers a mix of theoretical and practical elements. First, a series of lectures is dedicated to an exploration of various important themes that help you to better understand consulting and change. Typical topics one can think of are “The consultant-client relationship”, “The nature of the consultant”; “Change management”; “Resistance”; “Management fashions” and “The impact of management ideas”. A thorough understanding of these topics opens up opportunities for an engagement with the more practical elements of consulting and change and the chance to ‘experience consulting and change’. Here you will be asked to draw on the themes and theories discussed during the lectures and to reflect on an actual consulting project. We also aim to include interactions with change managers and/or consultants, for instance by organizing company visits, experience a training day or set up discussion round tables and inspiring guest speakers.

In short, the course combines theoretically informed analytical rigour with practical relevance. This helps you academically but also gives you a glimpse of a top career choice for many BA/IBA graduates: consulting/change management!

Teaching Methods

Lectures and tutorials

Method of Assessment

To be announced

Literature

To be announced

Target Audience

The course is very useful for students BK/IBA who are interested in pursuing further studies in the domains of Leadership & Change Management, Strategy & Organization and Management Consulting. Moreover, the course is relevant for anyone (also beyond BK/IBA) who is interested in change processes and for those who wonder whether one of the most

popular careers among business administration students, namely that of a consultant, can be a good start for you!

Recommended background knowledge

For BK: 1.2 Organization Theory; 1.3 Academic Skills; 1.6 Integration project); 2.2 Strategy; 3.4 Foundations of Strategic Management.

For IBA: 1.2 Organization Theory; 1.3 Academic Skills; 2.3 International Strategy; 2.6 Integrative Research Project; 3.4 Foundations of Strategic Management.