
Corporate social responsibility

Professor: Fàtima Vidal Ayuso

Office hours: by appointment

Course Type: Compulsory

Credits: 3 ECTS

Term: First

Course Description

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a first-term course in the MSc in Sustainability Management, at UPF Barcelona School of Management. It is a core, compulsory course, whose aim is to describe and analyse the social dimension of companies based on corporate social responsibility. The company, considered as an economic organisation, should assume a commitment to socially responsible management with the groups directly affected, such as employees, customers, shareholders, or suppliers, considering the effects on society as well as the environment.

Corporate social responsibility indicates the voluntary commitment of an organisation, company, or enterprise to society, environment, and sustainable development. Through this course, the participants will obtain the key knowledge to be able to analyse, design, implement and execute CSR strategies aligned with the purpose of the organization and the environment in which they operate, as well as the preparation of quality sustainability reports.

Objectives (learning outcomes) and competences

The main objectives of the course are:

- To gain deep understanding of the Corporate Social Responsibility concept
- To apply CSR techniques in companies according to their characteristics, and choose the most appropriate management instruments
- To assess companies' performance based on its impact on society and environment
- To identify problems related to ethics, company-society relationship, and the impact on organisations
- To evaluate business performance based on its impact on society and environment

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- To prepare, analyse and assess companies' sustainability reports

Methodology

The course comprises eight 3-hour sessions, which combine theory lecturing with general debates and applied discussions on business cases and exercises. Depending on the type of business cases or activities, they will be required individually or in groups, determined by the magnitude of them.

The course also involves a substantial amount of autonomous work outside the classroom combining reading and activities that will help participants to gain a deeper understanding of the material covered in class.

Evaluation criteria

Three elements concur in the final mark:

- **Final exam (30%):** the final exam is used to assess the individual level of knowledge and understanding of each student. It will include questions covering topics from all the sessions. This item counts for 40% of the final mark. The minimum grade to pass the exam is 5.
- **Final project and presentation (30%):** Students will apply their knowledge to a real-life situation. They are expected to use the topics they learnt during the sessions. Students will prepare a final project and present it in front of the class. During the first session, the format and content of the project will be specified.
- **Activities and business cases (20%):** During the sessions, activities and business cases will be carried out. These will be handed in at the end of the session and will be evaluated individually or during the session, depending on the type of activity.
- **Class attendance and active participation (20%):** Attendance in every session is expected and recorded by means of an attendance sheet. It is your responsibility to comply with this measure. Class attendance is compulsory and will be reflected on your final grades; punctuality is a must. Note that unexcused absences reduce your score on the "attendance and participation" element of your final grade. In fact, two or more unexcused absences will result in an automatic score of zero and, in all likelihood, a failure mark for the course as a whole.

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Attended all the sessions + actively and consistently participated in the class discussion and activities during the entire course period	20
Attended all the sessions + actively and consistently participated in most of the class discussions and activities	15-19
No more than one unexpected absence + often participated in the class discussion and activities	10-14
No more than one unexpected absence + participated in some class discussions and activities	5-10
No more than one unexpected absence + limited or no participation in class discussions and activities	1-5
Otherwise	0

Other evaluation criteria to take into consideration:

Retake

Students who fail the course during regular evaluation will be allowed one re-take of the examination/evaluation. Students that pass any *Retake exam* should get a 5 by default as a final grade for the course. If the course is also failed after the retake, students will have to register again for the course the following year.

No-show

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the “Retake” period). In the meantime, the student will get an “incomplete”, which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The “incomplete” will not be reflected on the student’s Academic Transcript.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is to use someone else’s work and to present it as one’s own without acknowledging the sources properly. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF-BSM Master of Science and signing the “Honor Code”, students acknowledge that they understand the schools’ policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicate by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion of the program.

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Bio of Professor

Fàtima Vidal Ayuso is a professor of the Business and Management Strategy department at UPF Barcelona School of Management. Prior to joining UPF-BSM, she worked in auditing and was a financial consultant for private companies.

Fàtima has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management from the Universitat de Lleida and a master's degree in Financial and Accounting Management from UPF-BSM. She is currently a PhD candidate in Economy and Business at Universitat Internacional of Catalunya. Her lines of research are focused on sustainability, circular economy, and specifically on consumer understanding in the circular economy loop.

Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

No textbook is required for this course. All the required material will be provided. Any reading, notes, handouts, dataset, or additional course material will be available through the course website.

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