

INCREASING IMPACT AND PERFORMANCE: DIRECTED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PRACTICUM BUSA 410

Instructor: Don Melville

Class Time: Bi-Weekly (3 hours per week) 1.5 hours 2 times per week, every other week

Location: TBD

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Course Overview

This course is an experiential course designed for students engaged in part-time activities who wish to learn and implement important tools and techniques to increase impact and performance. The overarching goal of this course is to provide students the opportunity to leverage their learnings from their part-time activities in an academically rigorous and supportive environment, to provide foundational skills for their present studies and future careers. The course is targeted for students that have a concurrent part-time experience (between 65 and 104 hours, or 5-8 hours per week) and is meant to integrate in-class content and an experiential component – incorporating a “learning”, “doing”, and “reflecting” model, in-line with our eMBA, IMPM and IMHL programs. These experiences can include an internship, part-time work experience, or extracurricular activities. Students will meet twice every two weeks for in-class sessions, with classes covering relevant research and other key learnings, and also incorporating a reflective and peer learning approach, giving students the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, ask questions, and gather feedback from peers and the instructor.

Course Learning Objectives

Increasing Impact and Performance is meant to help provide students with concrete learnings that can significantly add value in their career – it will combine lectures, guest speakers, and hands-on experiential work to make the content as applied and relevant as possible.

The course will focus on three main learning objectives:

1. How to analyse organizations and provide value-added recommendations to improve performance;
2. How to implement meaningful change within an organization; and
3. How to achieve personal growth and performance in a “part-time” work/volunteer context.

Students enrolled in this course will learn ways to:

- Perform an organizational and/or industry fact-based analysis;
- Create meaningful change (in organizations and personally) through project management skills, buy-in techniques and change management tools;
- Set performance objectives for themselves and evaluate the success of those objectives;
- Implement time management techniques to improve performance;
- Identify and take advantage of professional development opportunities;
- Draw connections between real world experiences and course work; and
- Develop presentation, communication, and professionalism skills.

Instructional Method

This course will integrate a part-time experiential component with in-class learning and reflection. Students will complete between 65 and 104 hours (on average 5-8 hours per week) over the course of the term on their Experiential Learning activity, and will attend biweekly classes (3 hours). Classes will include both conceptual material and case studies, and require active participation from students. Class material will also include workshops, for which students will be expected to prepare materials ahead of the session. Students will be expected to share their experiences with their peers and be engaged participants in in-class activities. It is vital that you read the assigned material before coming to class. Some classes will be entirely devoted to a “live” case.

Course Requirements

All students enrolled in this course must be in their U2 or U3 year. Students must apply to the course and receive instructor approval. Applications open August 1st, and must be submitted by the first day of class. Approvals will be finalized prior to the add/drop deadline.

Application requirements include:

- A description of the proposed internship, extracurricular, or work experience;
- High level description of the organization;
- Estimated weekly schedule, amounting to at least 65 hours over the course of the semester;
- Student's roles and responsibilities; and
- Outside Confirmation of the activity.

See "FAQ's" For more information about what activities count, and possible scenarios.

Frequently Asked Questions

What activities count for the course:

1. Internships: these are generally understood as career-orientated activities. Students will be working in an environment they might hope to work in after graduation. Internships should nonetheless be paid, and students may get assistance finding the internships with the help of the Industry Liaison.
2. Part-time work: these are not necessarily in fields or industries that students plan to work in post graduation but are important for helping students fund their study/lives.
3. Volunteer work: Students work with an established organization, generally off-campus.
4. Extra-curricular activities: Students engaged in leadership roles in an extracurricular activity, that meets the time requirement, may take the course.
 - a. E.g. MUS or other undergraduate club leadership roles would count
5. Working at an established start-up, even your own start-up, would count IF:
 - a. You have demonstrated clients AND
 - b. There are at least 5 people involved in the start-up

What does not count:

1. Case participation. If you are interested in cases, take BUSA 399
2. Independent project or your own new start up: There needs to be an organizational around or within which the activity place. Although creating a new start-up is valuable, the student would not be able to complete the course with this activity.

Questions:

1. What is the ideal type of activity for this course?
 - a. The ideal activity is one where students have some degree of familiarity with the activity and are confident they will be able to do the activity while also completing regular coursework.
 - b. The ideal activity is spread out over the course of the semester and allows students some flexibility in scheduling.
2. A student quits or is asked to leave their activity halfway through the semester:
 - a. If they quit before the withdraw deadline, they should withdraw from the course.
 - b. If they quit after the withdraw deadline, they will have a 2 week grace period to find a new activity.
3. Can the activity take place during only one month of the semester, rather than spread out?
 - a. No, this is not recommended. The weekly average does not have to be exact, students may have some weeks where they spend more than 8 or fewer than 5 hours on their activity, but they should plan to be engaged in the activity throughout the entire semester.

4. Can the activity be more than 100 hours?
 - a. Yes, though students should be mindful of workload.
5. Can a student be involved with two activities that together add up to the hour requirement?
 - a. This is handled on a case by case basis and is up to the discretion of the professor.
 - b. Students should not apply if they are planning on counting more than two activities.
6. Can a student switch activities halfway through the semester, while still meeting the hour requirement?
 - a. Yes, with approval.
7. Can an activity extend beyond the length of the course?
 - a. Yes, with approval that the course deliverables can still be met.
8. Why is there a 65 hour minimum requirement?
 - a. This is to ensure that the student is regularly and meaningfully involved in the activity.