

IB007-15 Problem-Solving in Organisations

24/25

Department

Warwick Business School

Level

Foundation

Module leader

Tamara Friedrich

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This is a core module for WBS Foundation Year students.

Problem-Solving is a core activity in all our daily lives, and there are many ways in which we naturally approach problems we face. Some of these approaches may be flawed, for instance when we fail to realise the biased ways we are looking at the world (biases in decision-making), considering too many options (maximising versus satisficing), failing to see the perspective of others (empathy and perspective taking), or considering the unintended or harmful downstream consequences of our actions (ethics and systems-thinking). We also often get stuck in our normal patterns of thinking and don't look for opportunities to do things differently (creative-problem-solving). Through this module, you will learn theory and techniques that will help you sidestep these issues and become better problem-solvers, and in doing so, also improve your communication, teamwork and leadership skills.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

To equip students with the capacity to effectively communicate, solve problems and be creative

and innovative in their work, learning and other daily tasks. Problem-solving skills can improve students' success in the classroom, in their daily lives and, more importantly, in their careers. Thus, the module will establish a valuable foundation-level capability that will help students improve their skills and raise their confidence levels for degree-level study, regardless of their chosen course.

Specific aims of the module include:

To promote an understanding of key definitions, concepts and theories in regards to organisational problem-solving.

To provide students with a foundational understanding of effective communication in organisations in order to facilitate decision making and problem-solving.

To promote an understanding of the key ways a leader can facilitate problem-solving.

To encourage recognition and understanding of common pitfalls or challenges in decision making, such as biases and ethical issues.

To encourage students to approach problems in a creative and innovative way.

To develop skills in solving problems as individuals as well as in a team.

To facilitate an understanding of the importance of creativity and innovation to organisations and society

To build students' confidence in applying problem-solving techniques, both as individuals and in teams.

To develop related personal skills such as leadership, teamwork and communication.

To introduce students to the field of social science, and to familiarise them with asking questions/delivering answers through research in this field.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Lecture topics may include but are not limited to:

General communication

Conflict

Negotiation

Being a leader

Motivation (leading others and leading yourself)

Followership

General decision-making

Biases in decision-making

Ethical decision-making

Introduction to creativity and the creative person

Creative problem solving skills

Creativity in teams

Team creativity strategies
Innovation in organisations
Entrepreneurship
Innovation in society

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Define and accurately use different problem-solving concepts and strategies (e.g., creative problem-solving, critical thinking, systems thinking).
- Accurately identify common decision making biases.
- Differentiate between effective and ineffective behaviours in organisations related to common organisational practices, such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and followership.
- Situational awareness of problems and opportunities that require different problem-solving techniques.
- Creative problem-solving skills, including exploring problems/opportunities, generating ideas, evaluating and implementing ideas.
- Metacognition to recognize when they may fall into common decision making biases.

Indicative reading list

'12 Cognitive Biases Explained - How to Think Better and More Logically Removing Bias - YouTube' (no date).

'A Deeper Understanding of Creativity at Work' (2023) Harvard Business Review.

Buchanan, D.A. and Huczynski, A. (2019) Organizational behaviour. 10 edition. Harlow, England: Pearson.

Chmiel, N. (2008) An introduction to work and organizational psychology: a European perspective. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Pub.

Grant, A.M. (2021) Think again: the power of knowing what you don't know. London: WH Allen.

Grint, K. (2010) Leadership: a very short introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

'Harvard Business School's Linda Hill on Practical Skills for Today's Leaders' (no date).

Seelig, T. (2012) Ingenius. HarperOne.

The Secret to Leading Highly Collaborative Teams (2023) Harvard Business Review.

What does an effective leader look like? | News | Warwick Business School (no date).

Subject specific skills

Apply key communication techniques to effectively work on problems and present solutions.

Demonstrate leadership and followership skills.

Apply techniques to avoid common decision making errors (e.g., biases, unethical decisions).

Effectively apply the individual creative process to solve problems.
Effectively work together in teams to solve problems.

Transferable skills

Decide when and how to use different communication techniques.
Apply Leadership and followership skills.
Apply creative problem-solving skills.

Study

Study time

| Type | Required |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Lectures | 10 sessions of 2 hours (13%) |
| Seminars | 9 sessions of 1 hour (6%) |
| Private study | 48 hours (32%) |
| Assessment | 74 hours (49%) |
| Total | 151 hours |

Private study description

Private Study.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A3

| | Weighting | Study time |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Individual Assignment | 60% | 44 hours |
| Group Presentation (15 CATS) | 20% | 15 hours |
| Weekly Quiz | 20% | 15 hours |

Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided via my.wbs.

Availability

There is currently no information about the courses for which this module is core or optional.