



# ME2830 Ethics for Start-ups 7.5 credits

## Etik för start-ups

This is a translation of the Swedish, legally binding, course syllabus.

If the course is discontinued, students may request to be examined during the following two academic years

## Establishment

Course syllabus for ME2830 valid from Spring 2014

## Grading scale

A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

## Education cycle

Second cycle

## Main field of study

Industrial Management

## Specific prerequisites

Students must have a minimum of 120 university points.

## Language of instruction

The language of instruction is specified in the course offering information in the course catalogue.

# Intended learning outcomes

After completing this course you should be able to critically analyse the ethical behaviour or non-behaviour of organizations, and in your own ethical thinking, attitudes and behaviour in your professional and private life, using ethical theories and analytical methods. More specifically, you should

- have a basic understanding of normative ethical theories;
- be able to analyse them in business/organizational and individual contexts;
- have an understanding of the theoretical developments and research in business ethics;
- be able to identify and suggest solutions to ethical problems and dilemmas in organizations;
- be able to relate the contemporary practical work and efforts in the business ethics area.

## Course contents

The course is designed to reach the learning objectives by several activities. The basic learning comes from reading the literature, reflecting, discussing, writing and presenting the ideas and analysis. The course tasks are based on these activities. Each one is evaluated and together they form the final grade. There is no traditional exam on this course.

### **1. Business ethics in general.**

#### a. Ethical theories.

This part forms the basic theoretical and analytical framework for the course. The theories are outlined in the main textbook. These theories are used in all teaching activities throughout the course. The first course task is dedicated exclusively to make the students understand the theories in a general sense through dilemma exercises.

#### b. Business related ethical issues.

The second course task is devoted to issues that are primarily those that business decisions makers face in developing policies about employees, customers and the general public. Based on the ethical theories, the students are focusing on one particular issue in solving cases.

#### c. Guest lecture.

The purpose of this lecture is to give the students an insight into practical real life activities with ethical issues in order to enhance the understanding of these issues.

### **2. Individual ethical awareness.**

No business or organization will think and act better than the managers and employees in them. To reach the second expected learning objective, this course task asks the students to focus on their own ethics and shift the attention of the course from analysis of organizations and “the others” to an analysis of the thinking, attitudes and behaviour of oneself.

# Disposition

The course is a mixture of group- and individual performances, expressed in papers, orally on seminars and in a multiple choice quiz. Group performances comprise 40 % of the final examination, and individual performances 60 %, distributed as follows:

40% papers (group)

20% quiz (individual)

20% active qualitative participation on the seminars (individual).

20% individual ethical consciousness (individual).

## 1. Group work

Group work enables the students to discuss and solve complex issues among themselves in absence of the teacher and enables the students to transcend their own thinking when thinking together with others, etc. There is also a continuous peer-review between groups on the papers (discussant/opposition) and self-assessment within groups (see examination). Group work also introduces the students to a real working life situation and develops their skills in collaborative work towards a common goal, in terms of responsibility for the final paper, their own contribution, ability to solve conflicts etc.

## 2. Quiz.

The purpose of the quiz is to check for reading of the literature. The learning activities on the course basically take place in other course tasks. The results of the quiz are integrated in the final examination (see examination).

## 3. Active qualitative participation.

Active qualitative participation on the seminars is important for enhanced learning and understanding of the issues and experiences pertaining to ethics. Ethics is not an objective subject. Reflective, well-founded and knowledgeable arguments are an important part of the subject itself and for the developing of understanding of the subject, as experiences, ideas and differences of opinions are displayed. The active qualitative participation encourages the students to discuss topics of their concern and interest, and facilitates the embodiment of knowledge. Speaking without any foundation relating to the material on the course is considered active, but not qualitative, participation.

## 4. Papers.

Group papers enhance and make the team discussions and analysis more stringent. They should be written as a team effort and follow the purpose of the particular activity (dilemma, practical application, final paper, and ethical awareness). The content in the textbooks and other materials is the basis, for the analyses in the papers.

## 5. Presentations.

Group papers are presented on scheduled seminars. Presentations enhance the learning activity by revealing to the other students the group's work and it introduces the students to a real working life situation in practicing the art of presentations.

# Course literature

Information om kurslitteratur kommer att delges anmälda studenter innan kursstart.

Will be announced in connection to the start of the course and communicated to enrolled participants.

# Examination

- PRO1 - Project, 7.5 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Based on recommendation from KTH's coordinator for disabilities, the examiner will decide how to adapt an examination for students with documented disability.

The examiner may apply another examination format when re-examining individual students.

Grades are linked to the two learning objectives following the seven grade scale according to the following criteria:

Learning objective 1:

Critically analyse the ethical behaviour or non-behaviour of organizations using ethical theories and analytical methods, particularly in accounting.

Learning objective 2:

Critically analyse one's own ethical thinking, attitudes and behaviour in one's own professional and private life.

A

Exhibited an excellent ability to generalize in an original way ethical analysis beyond the immediate subject area. Being able to perform a relevant, original and convincing ethical abstract discussion, and transfer the principles from the specific to the abstract.

Exhibited an excellent ability to generalize in an original way ethical analysis to other applicable areas than oneself. Being able to perform a relevant, original and convincing ethical abstract discussion on the basis of one's own experiences.

B

Exhibited a stringent ability to generalize in an original way ethical analysis beyond the immediate subject area. Being able to perform a relevant ethical abstract discussion, and transfer the principles from the specific to the abstract.

Exhibited a stringent ability to generalize in an original way ethical analysis to other applicable areas than oneself. Being able to perform a relevant, original and convincing ethical abstract discussion on the basis of one's own experiences.

C

Demonstrated an ability to orchestrate facts and theory, action and purpose: demonstrated relationships and differences between ethical theories; demonstrated relationships between practical applications and ethical theories.

Exhibited an ability to demonstrate relationships between one's own thinking and behaviour and ethical theories.

D

Displayed understanding of boundaries, but not of systems: having made a number of connections between ethical theories and/or practical applications, without specifying the significance of the relationship.

Demonstrated a number of connections between ethical theories and/or oneself, without specifying the significance of the relationship.

E

Shown a minimalistic understanding: an ability to memorize, identify and recognize fundamental concepts in the course. Performed an ethical analysis of a company making simple and obvious connections. Being present and active at the seminars and lectures.

Performed an ethical analysis of oneself making simple and obvious connections.

Fx

Failed on the quiz twice. Exhibited pieces of unconnected information from the course. Not being able to organize the information. Not exhibited a sense for the whole.

Not exhibited basic understanding for fundamental ethical concepts in the analysis of oneself. Analyzed other objects than oneself.

F

Failed on the quiz four times. Not exhibited basic understanding for fundamental ethical concepts. Not being present at more than two seminars.

Not performed an ethical analysis of oneself.

Attendance on all course activities is mandatory. Absence more than twice (2 times) implies failure on the course. Supplementary work to compensate absence is not applicable.

## Ethical approach

- All members of a group are responsible for the group's work.
- In any assessment, every student shall honestly disclose any help received and sources used.
- In an oral assessment, every student shall be able to present and answer questions about the entire assignment and solution.