

AC4391: ACCOUNTING AND BUSINESS ETHICS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Accounting and Business Ethics

Subject Code

AC - Accountancy

Course Number

4391

Academic Unit

Accountancy (AC)

College/School

College of Business (CB)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

AC3202 (Corporate Accounting I); and CB2500 (Information Management)

Precursors

AC4332 (Corporate Finance and Control); and
AC4251 (Taxation and Tax Planning); and
AC4342 (Auditing)

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to explore the ethical dimensions of accounting and business practice, relationship of accounting and business ethics to general field of ethics and the ethical foundations upon which accounting and business practice are based from a global perspective; develop students' ability to recognize issues in accounting and business practice that have ethical implications; improve students' ability to deal with ethical dilemmas and make ethical decisions in accounting and business practice; develop students' ability to engage in discussions and debates of resolving ethical issues and dilemmas in accounting and business practice, both verbally and in written form, with appropriate supporting reasons and analyses, individually and in a team environment.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

| CILOs | Weighting (if app.) | DEC-A1 | DEC-A2 | DEC-A3 |
|-------|---|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Describe, explain and critically evaluate a number of ethics theories and apply these theories in the analysis of accounting and business ethics in a global context. | x | x | |
| 2 | Describe, explain and critically evaluate the ethical foundations and the factors that influence ethical decision making in accounting and business practice as part of the managerial decision making in market economics and corporate governance. | x | x | |
| 3 | Identify accounting ethics issues and dilemmas as they arise in a wide range of core accounting areas including financial accounting, management accounting, financial management, tax, audit, MIS and corporate social responsibility reporting; apply ethical theories to the issues and recommend or make decisions to resolve these issues and dilemmas accordingly, reflecting students' own sense of ethical commitments. | x | x | x |
| 4 | Identify selected business ethics issues and dilemmas as they arise in specific business situations including conflicts of interest, in the workplace, international operation, crisis management and other situations; apply ethical theories to the issues and recommend or make decisions to resolve these issues and dilemmas accordingly, reflecting students' own sense of ethical commitments. | x | x | x |
| 5 | Write structured reports and make oral presentations in a precise and concise manner, display skills of collecting, organizing, critically analyzing and synthesising relevant material in the application of knowledge, individually and in a team environment. | x | x | |

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

| | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|---------------|----------|
| 4 | Outside regular class hours* | Students will engage in online discussion board or another platform (e.g. Facebook or Twitter) that will be created for the course. Students' engagement in discussions on the e-platforms will be counted towards Assessment Task 3. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | No Limit |
|---|------------------------------|--|---------------|----------|

Additional Information for LTAs

*DEC element

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

| | ATs | CILO No. | Weighting (%) | Remarks ("- " for nil entry) | Allow Use of GenAI? |
|---|---|---------------|---------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Individual written report (homework)*: Students will analyze and critically evaluate real-life cases involving ethical situations, then apply ethical theories to recommend or make decisions, to resolve the ethical issues and dilemmas. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | 15 | Students are permitted to use Generative AI tools for information searching; however, they are strictly prohibited from using AI to write any part of their assessment reports. | Yes |
| 2 | Group presentation (inclusion of a group written report is at the discretion of the lecturer)*: Students will work in groups to prepare and deliver presentations on assigned real-life ethical cases. Students will critically evaluate the assigned cases and then apply ethical theories to resolve the ethical issues and dilemmas. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | 20 | Students are permitted to use Generative AI tools for information searching; however, they are strictly prohibited from using AI to write any part of their assessment reports. | Yes |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|----|---|-----|
| 3 | In-Class and E-Platform Activities: Participation including in-class quizzes, exercises, and group discussions as well as outside classroom discussions in e-platforms. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | 15 | Students are permitted to use Generative AI tools for information searching; however, they are strictly prohibited from using AI to write any part of their assessment reports. | Yes |
|---|--|---------------|----|---|-----|

Continuous Assessment (%)

50

Examination (%)

50

Examination Duration (Hours)

3

Additional Information for ATs

*DEC element Final examination [Open-book examination] : Students will be assessed in the final examination based on their understanding of concepts learned in class and the application of these concepts in this assessment. Students are required to pass both coursework and examination components to guarantee to pass the course. Failing either component may lead to failure in the course. The passing mark is generally 50.

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Individual written report

Criterion

Ability to describe, explain and critically evaluate the theories of ethics; capacity in analysing and synthesizing accounting and business ethics in practice; ability in writing structured reports and making presentations.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Below basic levels

Assessment Task

Group presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Below basic levels

Assessment Task

In-class and e-platform activities

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Below basic levels

Assessment Task

Final examination

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High

Good (B+, B, B-)

Significant

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Moderate

Marginal (D)

Basic

Failure (F)

Below basic levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

1. Accounting ethics, business ethics, ethics theory, utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics.
2. Ethics environment, ethical governance, professional codes of ethics, ethics decision making process.
3. Ethics and financial accounting, ethics and management accounting, ethics and financial management, ethics and tax, ethics and audit, ethics and MIS.
4. Ethics and conflicts of interest, ethics and the workplace, ethics and international operation, ethics and crisis management.
5. Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting (CSRR).
6. Ethical dilemmas, ethics and creative accounting, accountant and whistle-blower, ethical commitments.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

| Title | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Brooks, L.J., Dunn, P., Business & Professional Ethics for Directors, Executives & Accountants, South-Western Cengage Learning, latest edition. |

Additional Readings

| Title | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Brewster, M., Unaccountable : How the Accounting Profession Forfeited a Public Trust, Wiley, latest edition. |
| 2 | Calhoun, C and Oliverio, M.E. and Wolitzer, P., Ethics and the CPA : Building Trust and Value-Added Services, Wiley, latest edition. |
| 3 | Duska , R.F. and Duska, B.S., Accounting Ethics, Blackwell Pub, latest edition. |
| 4 | Hoffman, W.M., Frederick, R.E. and Schwartz, M.S., Business Ethics – Readings and Cases in Corporate Morality, McGraw Hill, latest edition. |
| 5 | MsPhail, K. and Walters, D., Accounting and Business Ethics: An Introduction, Routledge, latest edition. |
| 6 | Professional Codes of Ethics : (a) Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants; (b) Institute of Management Accountants Standards of Ethical Conduct for Practitioners of Management Accounting and Financial Management; (c) The Institute of Internal Auditors. |
| 7 | The Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. |