

Application Form

Innovative Teaching Award 2019¹

APPLICANT
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GENERAL INFORMATION
Course level: Bachelor's
Course numbers: 0752, 0753, 0754, 0755, 1226, 1227
Semester: Winter Term 2018/2019
ECTS credits: 4
Course title: International Business Applications
Number of students in the course: 20 per course (120 in total)
Further information on the course: (e.g. prior knowledge of students, position in the curriculum/program) bachelors <i>International Business Applications is course II of the specialization International Business and is a companion course to Foundations of International Business (course I).</i>

¹ Eingereicht werden können Lehrveranstaltungen, die im Verlauf des Kalenderjahres 2018 umgesetzt werden bzw. umgesetzt wurden.

² Bitte nennen Sie hier alle Personen, die an der Entwicklung des LV-Konzepts beteiligt waren. Die hier genannten Personen werden im Falle einer Prämierung mit ausgezeichnet.

Information on application

Please use the template on the following pages to describe your course. In part 1, please insert a short description of your course design (maximum of 180 words). If your course design is selected for the award, the short description entered in this field will be published online in the Teaching & Learning Academy (TLAc) alongside with your application form.

The detailed description of your course design (part 2) is divided into three parts:

- 2a is intended to give the jury an overview of your course.
- In section 2b we would ask you to elaborate on the teaching methods and didactic elements.
- Section 2c is intended to highlight the innovative nature of your course in relation to the focus topic.

The questions mentioned in each section are intended as support for the description of your course design.

Please complete the template directly in word and send it as a .doc or .pdf file to lehrenundlernen@wu.ac.at by 10 February 2019.

1. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN (max. 180 words)

If your course design is selected for the award, the short description entered in this field will be published online in the Teaching & Learning Academy (TLAc).

International Business Applications is the second course of the specialization *International Business*. The objective of the course is to guide students to apply acquired theoretical key concepts and frameworks of international business to real-life business cases. These cases have a variety of foci including different industry and country settings where students have to find a solution to a current complex challenge a firm faces. In addition, students are required to work in differing and diverse teams, learn to give constructive feedback, and substantially improve their debating and presentation skills.

The course builds on innovative teaching and assessment methods to create a holistic learning experience and achieve the pre-defined learning outcomes. With the changes of the specialization, i.e. the implementation of the track system and a larger and more diverse student base, the concept of this course was adapted to ensure that the class is the critical link in the specialization. In this way, students are well prepared for the following courses and are able to apply a diverse set of skills as well as the acquired knowledge.

2. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN

2a.) Course structure

- What are the learning outcomes to be achieved by the students?
- What are the content elements of the course and how is it structured?

Teaching methods

- Which methods do you use to support your students in achieving the learning outcomes?
- In which way do the students benefit from the teaching methods used in the course?

The Bachelor-level course *International Business Applications* discusses theoretical key concepts of international business (IB) taught in the introductory class of the specialization (SBWL) by focusing on a practical application of said concepts, theories and strategies in the form of real-life business cases. The class aims at deepening students' understanding of fundamental IB content, fostering their critical thinking and analytical skills while, at the same time, preparing them for the specialization's subsequent focus courses and the new tracks: *Central Europe Connect (CEC)*, *Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility (SaC)* introduced in the winter term (WT) 2018/19, and *SME Internationalization (SME)* introduced in the summer term (ST) 2019. Therefore, the learning outcomes span multiple levels and forms of knowledge. During the course, students acquire essential method, self-competence, and social competence skills that ultimately lead to a broad set of learning outcomes:

Method skills

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Apply, critically discuss and evaluate IB content as covered in the lecture *Foundations of International Business* as well as other related aspects.
- Assess and analyze real-life management situations in a complex IB context.
- Connect different IB topic areas and key IB concepts in a holistic way.

Self-competence (intrapersonal) skills

Additionally, students will be able to:

- Present clearly and convincingly in front of an audience.
- Think outside the box and apply divergent thinking in structuring and solving case studies.
- Formulate tasks independently, develop problem solution approaches and deliver well-structured recommendations based on given case studies in both oral and written form.

Social competence (interpersonal) skills

Finally, students will be able to:

- Organize themselves in a diverse team setting and divide work among the team members.
- Provide constructive feedback as a team on others' presentations.

The course structure, content, and teaching methods are closely aligned with these learning outcomes. The course consists of eight individual sessions. It starts with a general introduction of globalization at the supra-national level. For the following sessions, a funnel approach is applied (see Figure 1, Course structure & content), subsequently narrowing the session foci to the national (macro-environmental perspectives and foreign market entry), industry (micro-environmental perspectives), and finally the firm level (cross cultural & human resource management, marketing management). This course structure was specifically chosen to start with a discussion and reflection on the importance of the international component in today's business world, and the multi-level implications of globalization and cross-border trade right at the beginning of the first session. After this introductory module, the subsequent sessions become more narrow in scope and, at the same time, increase in depth and detail. In that way, the *International Business Applications* course structure ensures that all students, WU and exchange students, refresh their existing knowledge and prepares them for the subsequent national, industry and firm level perspectives. Different types of assessments reinforce the structure and the linked learning processes. They will be explained in detail in the following chapter.

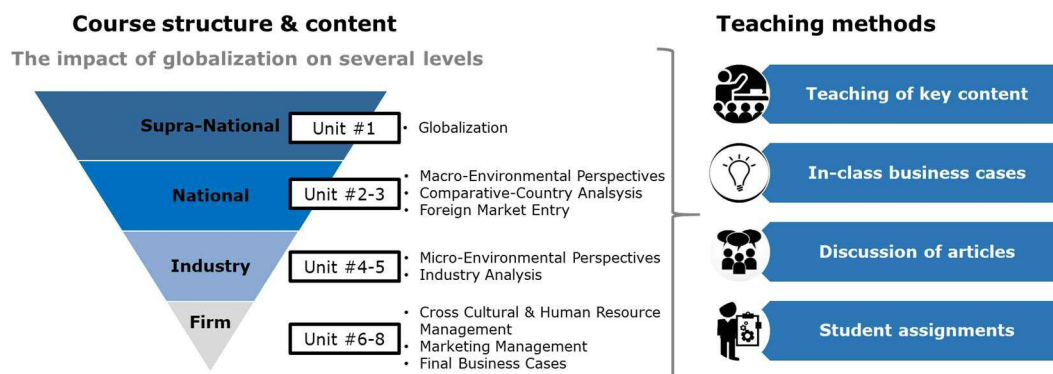


Figure 1: Course structure, content, and teaching methods

In each of the eight course sessions, a holistic approach of four different yet intertwined teaching methods (Figure 1, Teaching methods) ensures that students refresh knowledge, apply it in different contexts and, thus, achieve the pre-defined learning outcomes:

- 1) The instructor revises and explains key IB content such as theoretical models and frameworks (e.g., PESTEL, Porter's 5 forces, IR framework) with the help of videos, slides, and critical discussion questions to activate students' previous knowledge.
- 2) The theoretical input is directly applied in the form of in-class mini business cases to foster a hands-on mentality and encourage students' active participation.
- 3) Moreover, students discuss current articles (from reputable sources, e.g. The Economist, Harvard Business Review) linked to the session's content in in-class discussions, which are facilitated by the instructor through a set of critical questions.
- 4) Students acquire knowledge and a deep understanding through assignments in the form of group work.

To summarize, the versatility of applied teaching methods challenges students while keeping their level of motivation high. Each session of *International Business Applications* is highly interactive and leaves room for extended discussions and brainteasers. Overall, course structure, content and the applied teaching methods (Figure 1) ensure that the participating students will face a highly interesting and rewarding experience, while deepening their knowledge and training multiple of their method, self-competence, and social competence skills. The next chapter describes in detail how the variety of chosen assessment methods reinforce and complement said course design.

2. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE DESIGN

2b.) Types of assessment

- What are the elements on which the final grade is based?
- Which forms of assessment are used and why did you choose these forms?
- What purposes does the assessment fulfill?
- Why did you choose this/these particular method(s) and forms of assessment? What specific advantages does it / do they offer in your teaching? What do your students learn through the use of this/these method(s)?

Innovative character of the course

- In which dimension of innovative assessment (see call section 2) do you place your submission?
- Which elements of your course design do you consider to be particularly innovative with regard to the focus of this year's award, i.e. innovative assessment methods?
- Transferability: In which ways can your course design be adapted for other courses? Which elements of your course can also be used in other courses?
- Which elements could be improved/considered in a second edition of the course?

Alignment of innovative assessment forms with comprehensive set of learning outcomes and teaching methods

For a successful and educational course design, it is crucial that learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment forms of a course are closely aligned in a way that students can benefit from a multi-level learning experience. The extensive sets of learning outcomes and teaching methods as defined above call for innovative assessment techniques. Hence, *International Business Applications* draws on both formative and summative assessment forms, which put equal emphasis on method, self-competence, and social competence skills. The following sections explain the course's different assessment forms and demonstrate how the individual elements are blended together to foster students' motivation, learning, and overall experience.

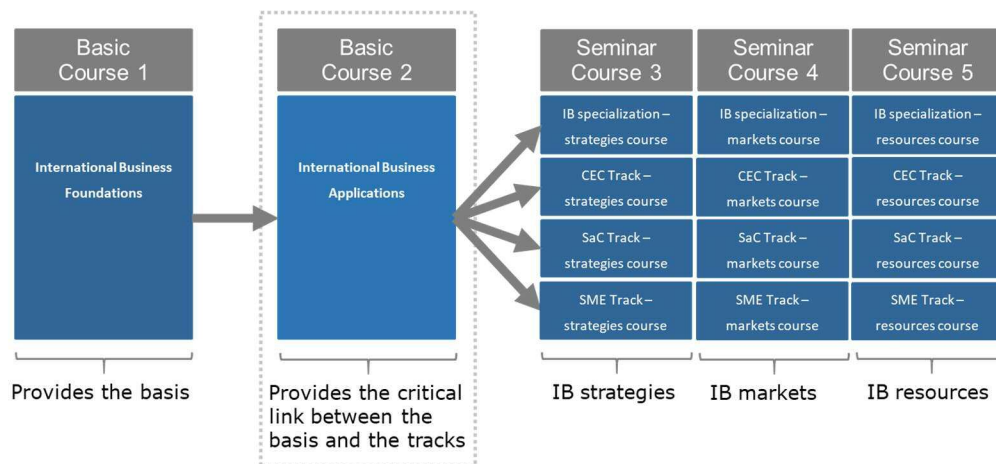


Figure 2: The positioning of *International Business Applications* in the SBWL

I. The course facilitates a combination of different, complementary types of assessment

In regard of the overall curriculum of the IB specialization (Figure 2), the course serves as the critical link between the basic course of the specialization and the course tracks that follow. The first course *Foundations* of *International Business* teaches essential IB concepts while the assessment is primarily based on one written final exam. Building on that, *International Business Applications* applies a wide range of innovative assessment forms that allow the evaluation of different skill sets and thereby optimally prepare the students for the subsequent IB specialization tracks (CEC, SaC, SME) and focus courses (strategies, markets, resources).

a) Formative assessment forms

Recently, teaching practices have highlighted that formative assessment "is one of the most powerful ways of improving student achievement"¹. Therefore, *International Business Applications* is designed as a highly interactive class that constantly allows students to assess their current level of knowledge, the expected target level for the

¹ William, D. (2013). Assessment: The bridge between teaching and learning. *Voices from the Middle*, 21(2), 15.

graded assignments, and how they can progress to achieve said level. First, the instructor puts emphasis on activating student’s knowledge at the beginning of each session as well as on harvesting new knowledge at the end of each class with the help of a short wrap up and “take home” messages. Consequently, students are strongly encouraged to participate actively during class discussions, which are based, inter alia, on:

- Instructor input
- Questions raised by students about general IB topics
- Additional readings that students have to prepare in advance
- Mini business cases that connect the content of the session with a real-life business example

This diverse mix of exercises ensures that students develop a thorough interest in IB, consider the respective issues critically, think outside of the box, and interact with their peers. Additionally, students regularly receive feedback on their performance and potential areas for improvement. In particular, the mini business cases prove to be highly helpful. In almost every session, students are required to prepare an analysis where they have to apply their knowledge of concepts discussed in class to short case studies without much additional information and preparation time. Students, therefore, learn how to work under time pressure, how and where to independently search for supplementary information, and how to relate and apply this information to broader IB topics. In return, the instructor is able to keep track of students’ development, and to determine and adjust the future learning environment of the class accordingly. Finally, students are provided with a set of in-depth skill builders that focus on some of the core concepts discussed in class (e.g., PESTEL, Porter’s 5 forces, IR framework). These supplementary documents serve as voluntary materials for students to deepen their understanding of the concept and can be used as additional resources for the preparation of the assignments where these concepts have to be utilized. As an example, one skill builder is attached to this application.

b) Summative assessment forms

In addition to the formative assessment, complementary types of summative assessment are employed throughout the course to evaluate to what extent students meet the pre-defined learning outcomes. As shown in Figure 3, the summative assessment is split between group and individual work. The three group assignments require theoretical knowledge to be applied to a real-life business case and consist of three oral presentations and one written report. The presentations build upon each other in terms of content and scope: The first presentation in session 3 focuses on a comparative country context; the second presentation in session 5 focuses on a specific industry context; the final presentation in session 8 mirrors a real-life business case and focuses on a concrete company context taking both countries of operation and the firm’s industry into account. While the topics of the assignments build on each other, they are graded separately. The instructor provides detailed feedback after each assignment to enable students to improve their successive performance (cf. attachment for an example). At the end of the course, the students apply their knowledge gained in class and their learnings from the group project to write a management report about the case company of the final assignment.

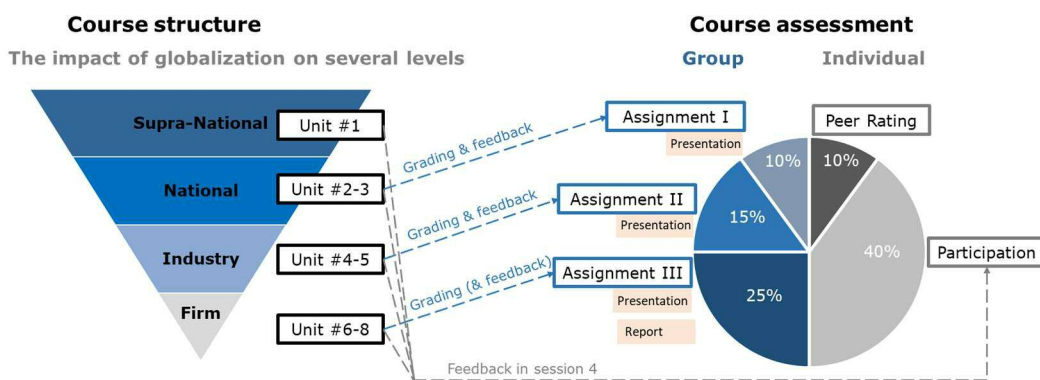


Figure 3: Overview of course assessment

For the individual component of the grade, students evaluate the individual commitment and work of their group members in a peer rating at the end of the course. This form of assessment ensures that the individual student effort and participation is not only assessed by the instructor but also by the fellow team members. On the other hand, the individual grade is complemented by the summative individual class participation. To guarantee a transparent and fair assessment of the individual participation, continuous in-class feedback loops are established and a detailed feedback on student participation is provided in session 4.

II. All assessment methods take transferable skills into account

Imparting knowledge and transferable skills is a major goal of *International Business Applications*, which is reflected in the learning outcomes, specifically concerning self-competence and social skills. Such skills are highly relevant for the specialization's tracks and focus courses as well as for the students' future careers. Consequently, emphasis is put on the assessment of named skills.

Particularly in the stage of formative assessment, students constantly learn and work on transferable skills and receive feedback on how to improve their skills in four areas: 1) Students learn how to argue convincingly in discussions and express their point of view succinctly to the instructor and their peers. 2) They learn how to work in changing and randomly assigned group settings which trains them to constantly adjust to new group constellations. 3) Students learn how to present the findings of their group work in an interesting and convincing way. 4) Finally, they learn how to give helpful feedback and challenge their peers' presentations.

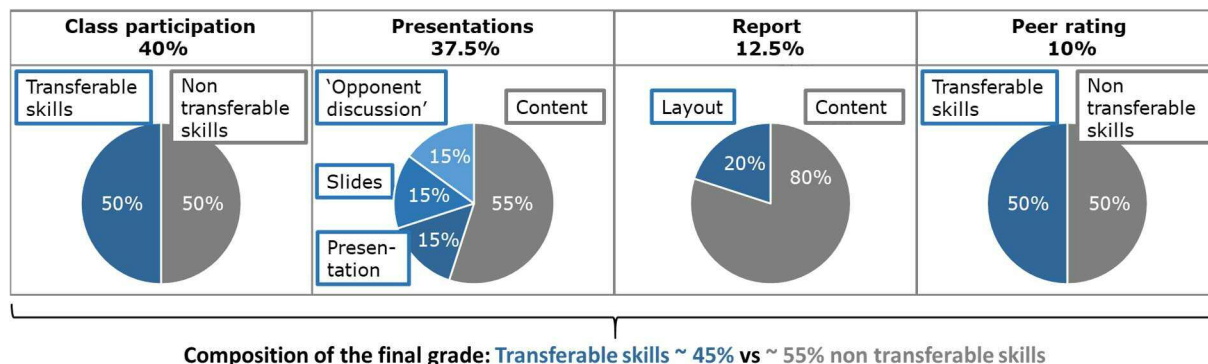


Figure 4: Diverse assessment of transferable skills

In total, about 45% of the final grade concern the assessment of transferable skills (see Figure 4). They are assessed in various ways: 1) Class participation is not only evaluated based on students' individual knowledge, and quality of comments (primarily non-transferable skills), but also on transferable skills such as their engagement in class discussions and the quality of the in-class feedback provided to other students and groups. 2) Besides content, the three course assignments are graded on presentation style, quality of slides, and the discussion of another group's presentation. Each group acts as an 'opponent group' that provides feedback to another team's presentation in terms of structure, content and overall quality. This type of assessment motivates students to not only present in an activating and interesting way, to prepare well-structured slides, to work on their English communication skills, but also to critically and constructively assess the presentations of others. In addition, the instructor provides individual feedback and evaluation to each group after the session to enhance students' progress. 3) For the final report, 20% of the grade are based on structure, writing style, and layout. This encourages students to hand in a report with a polished and appealing layout, in well-written English, with correct citations, and a logical argumentative structure. In that way, students enhance transferable skills for future assignments and scientific projects, i.e. Bachelor and Master theses. 4) Finally, students are instructed to evaluate their group members on transferable skills for 50% in the peer rating. This includes the ability to meet deadlines, to communicate effectively, to treat each other respectfully, and to follow a set of pre-agreed rules.

III. Feedback is provided by different stakeholders of the course

Giving feedback is a crucial step to ensure that students achieve the pre-defined learning outcomes. A special characteristic of *International Business Applications* is that students constantly receive feedback on their performance - not only from the instructor but also from their colleagues. Throughout the formative assessment, students benefit from professional instructor feedback and are motivated to implement given recommendations in the following assignments and tasks. Additionally, the instructor activates students as learning resources for each other. Given the interactive character of the course, students are encouraged to provide feedback in every session to other students on their contributions to the discussions and on their short presentations / case analyses. The instructor guides and leads these valuable discussions, allowing for different opinions to be voiced and discussed. In this way, students learn how to formulate constructive feedback and how to respond to it. This allows them to develop a sense of critical thinking concerning their peers' contributions and the general IB content.

For the summative assessment, the instructor provides detailed feedback concerning the students' presentations, their final reports, and class participation grades via Learn@WU or e-mail. Also in this stage of the assessment, peer feedback is an important component of the course. As mentioned, after every presentation, students are required to act as discussants for another pre-assigned group. This task asks them to give feedback on 1) presentation

content, 2) presentation slides, and 3) presentation style and to prepare several discussion questions that should stimulate an interesting in-class discussion on the presented content. Additionally, the anonymous peer rating (which accounts for 10% of the overall grade) solely relies on students' feedback on their peers' contribution to the group work. Hence, both the formative and the summative assessments are based on the evaluations of the course instructor as well as on the feedback of group members and fellow students.

IV. The course assessment methods take student diversity into account

In the course, the instructor uses both formative and summative assessment methods that consider student diversity. *International Business Applications* reserves several spots for exchange students who do not take the course *Foundations of International Business*. This may result in different levels of knowledge in terms of IB theories and concepts. Here, it is the instructor's task to close this knowledge gap and motivate all students to actively participate in class. At the same time, the diversity among participating students enriches class discussions, as students with different cultural and professional backgrounds can positively contribute with unique home country knowledge and international experience. Consequently, all students benefit from this diversity, as the diverse backgrounds and experiences mirror the working environment and daily routine in an international organization and, at the same time, help students to acquire pre-defined method skills, especially in the formative assessment.

A large part of the summative assessment is based on the evaluation of the students' participation; however, many students are introvert and, initially, might not have the courage to share their thoughts. Even though they have the required knowledge and are well prepared, they do not participate in class, which can have a negative impact on their final grade. Thus, the instructor takes the different personalities and cultural backgrounds of the students into account and tries to create a pleasant class atmosphere for everyone. Occasionally, the instructor asks questions to the more introvert students directly and so provides an encouraging environment for their opinion on a specific topic in which they feel comfortable (e.g., linked to personal experiences of the students found out from the introduction round in the first session). This assessment method, therefore, helps introvert students to gain important participation points and motivates them to speak up and participate actively.

V. The course uses an innovative didactic-methodological concept

The innovative character of *International Business Applications* lies in the unique and multi-level alignment of its learning outcomes (focus on method, self-competence, and social competence skills) with a broad range of formative and summative assessment methods. The individual elements as such are well-established teaching methods and forms of assessment; however, taken together, they offer a distinctive learning and training environment for every student participating in the course. After completion, students are equipped with both IB-specific knowledge and a range of transferable skills that are highly relevant – not only for the specialization's tracks and focus courses but also for other university classes and for the students' professional careers. Hence, students learn holistically by giving feedback to each other and by regularly receiving feedback from their peers as well as from the instructor. The diverse background of students and the high degree of student engagement that is encouraged by the instructor lead to a rewarding learning experience for all participants and consequently, students can directly observe the added-value of the applied teaching methods and the course organization in general (cf. attached student evaluations).

Transferability of innovative course structure and assessment forms

The described course structure and assessment forms can be transferred to other smaller-scale and interactive courses where the application of previously learned concepts and theories is key. The diverse assessment forms provide students with a deeper theoretical knowledge about the course content, which makes such assessment forms applicable to other courses. The following points should be considered when transferring the course structure and assessment forms:

1) Align learning outcomes with assessment forms and in-class activities

The first and most crucial step of designing an integrated course is the definition of learning outcomes and their close alignment with suitable assessment forms. In this regard, it is important to think about holistic learning outcomes that focus on method, self-competence, and social competence skills, and about how suitable assessment forms and activities support students to achieve these skills.

2) Formative and summative assessment methods should go hand-in-hand

While the majority of students think exclusively of grades when it comes to assessment, the instructor needs to think about both suitable formative and summative assessment methods when designing a course. The formative assessment is crucial in a way that students are informed about their current level of knowledge, the level they should reach at the end of class and effective ways to reach that level. For the instructor, the formative assessment

allows to adjust teaching and learning methods according to students' development. Hence, formative assessment methods are key to achieve the pre-defined learning outcomes, while the summative assessment predominantly looks at the achieved learning in retrospect.

3) Do not only focus on method skills but also on self-competence and social competence skills

For both formative and summative assessment, the instructor should not only evaluate method skills but also consider transferable skills, such as self-competence and social competence skills. The latter are highly relevant for students' future university and professional career. Hence, it is important to focus on such skills in a highly interactive class. The assessment of the presentations, for example, should evaluate the content as well as the presentation style and the slides. In this regard, the instructor should assess how students present (presentation style, do students stay within maximum amount of time for presentation?), how the slides are structured (logical, common theme, do students stay within the maximum number of slides?), and how the slides are designed (layout, typos). Additionally, the final report should be assessed on the content and the style of the report (e.g., structure, writing style, design, etc.).

4) Regularly give feedback and activate students as complementary learning resources for one another

To ensure that students progress throughout the semester, the instructor needs to provide regular feedback to students. Only by receiving detailed feedback on their performance, they will be capable of adjusting and improving accordingly. In addition, feedback from peers is crucial and leads to a shared learning experience among students. The introduction of a peer rating, for example, allows the instructor to involve students in the summative assessment.

5) Make use of student diversity to create an enriching learning experience

Finally, the instructors should embrace student diversity in their classes and use it as an asset to achieve a better learning experience. Each cohort of students is unique as students have different backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, it is essential that the instructor draws on this diversity and thinks about how students can best learn from each other's different sets of experiences.

Reflection on the course concept, its goals and the implementation

Overall, the students were highly satisfied with *International Business Applications* in the WT 2018/19 and expressed their appreciation in terms of the comprehensive and "applied" course design. There are, however, three areas that need to be proactively managed by the instructor. First, the majority of students is not used to being assessed on transferable skills; therefore, they are uncertain about how to prepare best for this component of the grade. For this reason, the instructor is required to provide a clear expectation management and constructive feedback, especially when it comes to the formative assessment. Students need to know right from the beginning what they are expected to deliver for a certain grade. Second, the complex assessment of the course can be confusing for students at the beginning of the semester. Hence, it is essential to establish transparency in terms of processes, grading, and expectations and frequently communicate it. Regular e-mail updates or the grading book on Learn@WU can help to achieve this level of transparency and to avoid student frustration. Third, due to the high number of assessment forms and activities, the course can be relatively time-consuming to prepare and manage for the instructor, as practical examples, readings, and case studies have to be updated on a regular basis. Moreover, providing detailed feedback to all students / groups is time-consuming, yet highly relevant for the learning process. Given these points, the course concept is most suitable for smaller-sized, truly interactive courses with 20-30 students in total. By ensuring that the broad set of learning outcomes is continuously well aligned with the diverse assessment forms, the course concept can constitute for an enriching learning experience for both students and instructors.

The attachment contains evaluations of all six *International Business Applications* courses taught in WT 2018/19. Student feedback for the course includes comments such as "it is a way better approach than just having a final exam", "very motivating approach to raise interest in issues", and "I could really deepen my knowledge and put it into practice". In addition, one exemplary feedback e-mail that instructors sent to students after one of their assignments is attached. Such emails underline that feedback is an essential part of the learning experience in this class and that instructors want to see their students constantly improve their method, self-competence, and social competence skills throughout the semester. Finally, one illustrative skill builder and a compilation of slides used in class to prepare students for the presentations, group work, class discussions, and the final case assignment are added.

Note: By sending the application form and documents, the applicant confirms that the course design has not received any other awards or grants.

Attachment: Please attach evaluation results, if available.