

SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTING & COMMERCIAL LAW

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ACCY 404: PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Trimester Two 2007

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

<i>Course Co-ordinator and Lecturer</i>	<i>Office</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>
Rose Anne MacLeod	RH 702	463 5044	RoseAnne.MacLeod@vuw.ac.nz
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Class Times and Room Numbers

Lectures

From 12 July 2007 to 16 August 2007

Thursday 2.40pm to 4.30pm, RLWY 315

Course concludes 11 October 2007

Tutorials

None

Course Objectives

The main objectives of this course are, in relation to public sector accounting and financial management, to develop students:

- ability to critically evaluate different positions on issues, and communicate their findings;
- knowledge of selected topical issues; and
- understanding of the range and diversity of research.

Course Content

This course introduces students to key concepts, theories, research methods and research findings in topical areas of public sector accounting and financial management. The emphasis will be on critically evaluating the theoretical underpinnings and assumptions of accounting and financial management in the public sector.

Lecture Programme

The first two weeks lectures will be provided by the lecturers and will represent an introduction to the course, and provide background on the public sector in New Zealand in an accounting/financial management context. From week 3 to 7 students will present seminars on public sector accounting issues. From week 8 to 9 students will debate topical public sector issues. From week 10 to 11 students are to present their research interest and how they are approaching the research, issues, findings etc. Topics for the seminars and debates will be agreed by week 2.

Note: the Programme may vary if there are less than six students enrolled.

Seminars / Presentations

From week 3 to week 7 the two-hour class sessions will be in the form of seminars, involving discussion and critique of assigned weekly readings to be presented by students on a rotational basis. For effective discussion on the material in the class, it is very important that students read and understand the assigned articles beforehand. Students lead two sessions with a presentation on a particular topic.

Students select a topic of interest in public sector – possible topics include: : *Accounting for infrastructure; service performance reporting; public sector auditing; public sector assets – accounting issues; government financial management issues; capital charge regimes; local government developments; analysing the government's performance, convergence of accounting standards between public and private sector; the public sector and financial reporting standard setting*

Students to advise the topics (2) of their choice by week two – 19 July 2007

Readings lists for topics will be provided to students a minimum of two weeks prior to their presentation date.

Seminars require:

- (a) A two to three page critique which identifies the main points (in own words) and critically analyses them. Articles must be appropriately referenced if quoted in the critique. Two discussion questions must be posed for class discussion.
- (b) Emailing of the critique to **all class members and lecturers** by midday Tuesday prior to the presentation.
- (c) Individual presentation of key points for 30 to 40 minutes, and class discussion for 10 to 20 minutes. Total time allotted 50 minutes.

One seminar is required to be presented by each student.

The presentations and critique will be assessed at 15% of overall grade.

Note: The seminars will be reduced or eliminated if less than six students are enrolled. The marks may be reallocated to an additional research paper.

Debates

From week 8 to week 9 the two-hour class sessions will be in the form of two one hour debates on an assigned topic.

For the debate:

- Four students (where possible) will be involved in each debate.
- Two students will argue for a particular view on a public sector accounting issue and two students will argue against the view.
- Students will be provided with readings but will be expected to research for additional material to support their position.
- Both teams will have 20 minutes in total to present their arguments, followed by open class discussion for 10 minutes where other students can contribute and comment on the debate.

For students not involved in the debate:

- (d) Students are expected to read the material provided and participate fully in discussions.
- (e) Each student **not** participating in the debate will be required to compile a two page précis of the main arguments in favour and against the view. These are to be in the students own words and articles must be appropriately referenced if quoted in the précis.
- (f) Emailing of the précis to **the lecturers ONLY** by midday Tuesday prior to the presentation.

Each student will participate in two debates. Each student will have the role of the first speaker for one debate and second speaker for the other debate. Each student not involved as a speaker in the debate will submit a précis, two précis are to be submitted. Each debate will be assessed at 7.5% of the overall grade. Each précis will be assessed at 2.5% of the overall grade. The total assessment for 2 debates and 2 précis is 20% of the overall grade.

Note: Debates will not be required if there are less than six students enrolled. The marks will be reallocated to the research paper.

Research

Students are required to undertake a Research Paper of 4,000 to 5,000 words which accounts for 40% of the overall grade.

The research paper is a major project, which can be a critical and comprehensive literature review, or a detailed research proposal, or an empirical study. Topics for the project must be discussed with and approved by the assigned supervisor.

In week 11 and 12 students will present for 15-20 minutes with 5-10 minutes for discussion as to what they are researching, the methodology they are using and what they are finding. This is an opportunity to for students to gain input and discussion on their research.

Note: If there are less than six students enrolled, a further research paper may be required and other requirements reduced or eliminated. For example if there are two students two research papers will be required which will account for 50% each of the total grade.

Class Participation

Class participation for research presentation, seminars and debate will be assessed at 5% of the overall grade.

Note: If there are two students or less no marks will be assigned for class participation.

Test

A 100 minute test will be scheduled in week 12 and will be assessed at 25% of the overall grade.

Note: If there are two students or less passing of a test will not be required.

Penalties – Late Submission

In fairness to other students, work submitted after the deadline will incur a 5% penalty (of the mark obtained) for each day late. Extensions may be granted with no penalty to those who meet the University's aegrotat rules (e.g. medical certificate, family bereavement).

Readings

The readings that will form the start of discussions for each session will be provided. However students are expected to develop their own reading programme to supplement that material. To aid this reading lists will be handed out during the course and students' attention is drawn to the attached list of relevant sources.

Most class sessions will be assigned readings. These are the **minimum** preparation required for each session. Reading in preparation for the research paper will need to be wider than the assigned readings. Students are encouraged to make full use of the library.

Legislation and authoritative pronouncements

- Local Government Act 2002
- Public Finance Act 1989 and Amendments
- State-Owned Enterprise Act 1986
- Crown Entities Act 2004
- Public Audit Act 2001

- ICANZ Statement of Concepts
- Crown Financial Statements
- Departmental Annual Reports
- Departmental Statements of Intent

Journals available in hard copy in VUW library include:

- Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal
- Accounting, Organisations and Society
- Financial Accountability and Management
- Governance
- Government Accountants Journal
- Journal of Accounting and Public Policy
- Public Administration Review
- Public Budgeting & Finance
- Public Finance and Accounting
- Public Sector
- Research in Governmental and Nonprofit Accounting
- The Chartered Accountants Journal of New Zealand

Books

Boston J. et al, *Public Management: The New Zealand Model*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1996

The Treasury, *Putting it Together - An Explanatory Guide to the New Zealand Public Sector Financial Management System*, Wellington, 1996

Norman R., *Obedient Servants? Management Freedoms and Accountabilities in the NZ Public Sector*, Victoria University Press, 2003

Pallot, June. *The Legacy of June Pallot: Public Sector Financial Management Reform* edited by Susan Newberry, Information Age Publishing, USA, 2006

Schick A., *The Spirit of Reform: Managing the State Sector in a Time of Change*, State Services Commission, Wellington, 1996

Scott G.C., *Public Management in New Zealand: Lessons and Challenges*, New Zealand Business Roundtable, 2001

The Internet

The following addresses contain information about aspects of the New Zealand public sector:

http://www.govt.nz/	NZ Government Home Page – includes links to departments
http://www.oag.govt.nz/	Office of the Controller & Auditor-General
http://www.treasury.govt.nz/	The Treasury
http://www.ssc.govt.nz/	State Services Commission
http://www.wcc.govt.nz/	Wellington City Council
http://www.oecd.org/	OECD – Includes many papers on Public Management

There are many sites nationally and internationally that relate to the public sector and public sector accounting - you are encouraged to surf the Internet.

Materials and Equipment

No fee will be charged for course materials.

Assessment Requirements for Enrollments of Six or More Students

Seminar /Presentation	15%
Two debates (7.5% each)	15%
Two précis (2.5% each)	5%
Class participation	5%
Research Paper (around 5,000 words)	40%
Test (100 minutes)	20%

To pass this course a student must:

- attend and satisfactorily contribute to 75% of sessions;
- complete and gain a satisfactory grade for the research paper, and presentations and
- gain an overall pass mark for the assessed items (see assessment requirements above).

Note: Assessment requirements will vary for less than six students. For two or less students assessment will be two research papers of 50% each.

Terms Requirements

None

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information concerning this course will be posted on Blackboard.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures.

Student Conduct and Staff Conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor. This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office or on the website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct.

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct.

Academic Grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the Associate Dean (Students) of your Faculty. Class representatives are available to assist you with this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Policy which is published on the VUW website: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html.

Students with Disabilities

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity with all other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, then please contact the Course Coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services to confidentially discuss your individual needs and the options and support that are available. Disability Support Services are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building, or phoning 463-6070, email: disability@vuw.ac.nz. The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant or the School Prospectus.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students' learning experiences at the University to be positive. If your academic progress is causing you concern, please contact the relevant Course Co-ordinator,

or Associate Dean who will either help you directly or put you in contact with someone who can.

The Student Services Group is also available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/ or email student-services@vuw.ac.nz.

VUWSA employs two Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building, phone 463 6983 or 463 6984, email education@vuwsa.org.nz.