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Note: The modules offered and their timing are conditional upon the availability of faculty and may be subject to change.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Judge Business School

Strategic Management pathway (Stream A): Course outline

Stream A of the Strategic Management PhD pathway at Cambridge Judge Business School is specifically designed to prepare you to conduct independent, high-calibre quantitative research in strategy and pursue an academic career as a faculty member at a top business school.

The stream runs over a period of 5 years. In your first year you will be registered as a masters student– either on the **MPhil in Strategy, Marketing, Operations and Organisational Behaviour** (SMOOB) or on the **Master of Research** (MRes). This is followed by 4 years of study towards your doctoral degree.

The stream has a coursework component consisting of various taught courses and a research component that leads to the PhD thesis, which in most cases is a collection of research papers.

Coursework

The coursework is a combination of foundational courses, methodological courses and advanced research seminars that introduce you to the main research streams and current academic debates in the field of strategic management. The coursework component (**9 examined required modules**) will be completed during the masters degree and the PhD first year. Some MRes students may have fewer modules depending on their previous training.

A typical set of coursework requirements includes the following modules.

RESEARCH SEMINARS

- Seminar in Strategy Content (biennial)
- Seminar in Strategy Process (biennial)
- Organisations and Strategic Innovation

FOUNDATIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL MODULES

- Econometrics I
- Econometrics II
- Organisational Research Methods Part 1 (biennial)
- Organisational Research Methods Part 2 (biennial)
- Advanced quantitative research methods training (topics provided vary each year) not examined)

A SAMPLE OF POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL MODULES

Research seminars in cognate management disciplines, e.g.

- Organisational Behaviour
- Organisation Theory
- Marketing Strategy

Your individual coursework requirement may deviate from the above list as we consider your prior training and the requirements of your developing programme of research when we design your coursework programme. We will determine the final list of assessed courses during and towards the end of your masters year.

While the range of assessed courses is confined to 9 modules, you will be strongly encouraged to continue to attend relevant courses and workshops offered by the University and other institutions throughout the course of your PhD.

Research component

The research component builds on your coursework and normally consists of a research project either conducted jointly with faculty members or closely supervised by the faculty. These projects will lead to papers for journal publication, and these papers will constitute the core of your PhD thesis and form the basis of your academic job market application.

Foundation year: research masters degree

During the foundation year, you are registered for a masters programme: either the MPhil in SMOOB or the Master of Research (MRes).

During the MPhil you will take **6** of the 9 required modules and a dissertation (if you have a well-formulated dissertation proposal)

During the MRes, you will take **5** of the 9 required PhD coursework modules during the MRes year and write a masters dissertation.

You will take any remaining PhD coursework modules during the subsequent first PhD year.

Preparatory Mathematics & Statistics (September)

The MPhil in SMOOB offers a pre-term mathematics refresher course, which starts in mid-September. Its aim is to review the mathematical and statistical methods required for the econometrics modules. Students with strong and appropriate prior training may apply for exemption from this preparatory course.

Otherwise, the course is mandatory.

Masters dissertation

MRes students write an MRes dissertation, supervised by a faculty member, which counts for 50% of the overall mark for the MRes degree. MPhil students must write a dissertation, counting for the equivalent of 3 modules, ie one third of the final mark of the MPhil.

PhD continuation requirement

We strongly encourage MPhil students to apply for continuation to our PhD programme. Availability of specific PhD Principal Supervisors will vary from year to year because each typically works with a maximum of 2 PhD students at any given time. The PhD programme aims to admit between 6 and 10 students (PhD and MRes) per year, depending on the strength of applications, among other factors.

If you wish to apply for continuation to the PhD at Cambridge Judge Business School, you will need to develop an initial research proposal during the first term of your MPhil year, talk to faculty about the fit of your research interests and then apply for admission to the PhD in January. Faculty will assist with the development of this proposal. Applications are assessed by the PhD Admissions committee in January on the basis of:

- quality of the research proposal and strength of references
- module performance during the first term
- performance in the admissions interview
- fit between the proposed research and the research expertise in the subject group, resulting in a recommended supervision arrangement from PhD pathway faculty
- ranking compared to other applicants, which includes prior academic performance

An admissions offer would be conditional on your overall performance in the MPhil or parts thereof. The usual condition is a mark of 70% overall [and 70% in any dissertation or project].

Due to the competitive nature of our programme, an offer of admission to the PhD is not guaranteed and we also encourage and support MPhil students in making applications to other leading PhD programmes.

If you are an MRes student, you will proceed to PhD registration without a further application process, if you achieve a mark of 70% in your dissertation and a mark of 70% overall average in your MRes year.

Summer (July–September)

As a continuing PhD student you will be strongly advised to discuss with your faculty supervisor how to continue your research over the summer prior to the start of your first PhD year. This ensures that you don't lose valuable time that could be put towards completing your PhD. Students may continue the work that they have begun on their masters dissertation or an individual research project. We prefer students to remain in Cambridge over this period if possible. If this is not practicable (e.g. for visa reasons), students can be supervised remotely via Skype and email.

First year of the PhD

During the first year of your PhD you will complete your coursework requirements and develop a convincing research proposal and execution plan for your PhD. A senior faculty member (your principal supervisor) will work with you to develop your PhD research programme throughout the year.

First year report

You will work with your faculty supervisor to produce a first year report. This research report can take one of 2 forms:

- a working paper on a specific research question; this working paper will normally be expanded to become your first PhD paper
- an extended research proposal on the broader theme that you wish to address in your PhD research, including a thorough literature review and a clear plan for the execution of a first research paper during the second PhD year

Your first year report should demonstrate your ability to formulate sharp research questions, summarise relevant academic debates, critically assess the extant literature and choose appropriate research methods. While you are not required to, you can incorporate parts of your masters work, such as your module essays or a summer project (if applicable), into your first year report.

Coursework

In your first year you are required to complete the assessed coursework requirements for this pathway.

This will typically be 3 remaining modules for continuing MPhil students and 4 remaining modules for MRes students.

Not-for-credit modules

During the first and subsequent years, you will be required to attend other module(s) (not for credit) to broaden your research methods, for example PhD Research Practicum: Advanced Quantitative Methods Part 1 and 2.

Second year continuation requirements

To proceed to the second year of the PhD you must gain a mark of 70% for your first year report and pass all required courses (60% pass mark).

While we will continue to monitor your progress closely after the first year of your PhD, there will not be any more formal continuation assessment until the final PhD assessment.

Second year of the PhD

During the second year, you will focus on producing your first research paper. Many students do this by 'learning on the job' and working closely and collaboratively with their PhD advisor, who will normally be a co-author on the paper. You will present your progress frequently – both formally and informally – to the faculty and PhD students in the Strategy and International Business subject group. You will also be expected to submit an abstract of the paper for presentation at the Academy of Management conference. The target for journal submission for this paper is the end of the calendar year, following the Academy of Management presentation.

Third year of the PhD

Following the submission of your first paper, your focus in your third year will be on beginning work on your second paper. You may continue to work with your faculty co-author or another co-author or choose to work on your second paper independently. You can expect your advisors to play a significant role in helping shape the idea for this paper, but you will be expected to take the lead in executing it and be the clear primary author. You will be expected to submit an abstract of the paper for presentation at the Academy of Management conference in the autumn, after which you will be expected to submit the paper to a journal. In parallel with the development of this second paper, you will revise your first paper and continue to present it at seminars and conferences.

We will encourage you to spend part of your third or fourth year as a visitor in a strategic management department of another university, typically in the USA, to build closer ties with potential collaborators and the global strategic management community. Our students have visited top schools around the world, including MIT, UC Berkeley and the University of Michigan.

Fourth year of the PhD

The fourth year is your job market year. You will present your 2 papers at the Academy of Management conference and continue to revise and polish them.

You will submit your PhD thesis at the end of your fourth year at the latest.

Optional further year of study (postdoc)

Good research requires you to take risks, to explore avenues and tackle issues that are new and original. Research may therefore not unfold as planned and your work may require substantial revision. In fact, many of the most influential research projects ended up taking considerably longer than anticipated. We encourage students to be aspirational and take risks – and we work with them to manage these risks.

To accommodate early "wrong turns" and unforeseen delays, we sometimes recommend that a student delays entering the job market by a year and spend an additional year at Cambridge Judge Business School (and possibly another university) to work on paper revisions with faculty and strengthen their portfolio of research paper before applying for a junior faculty position.

An optional further year at Cambridge Judge Business School would be typically funded by:

- a Cambridge Judge Business School post-doctoral grant (2 grants available by competition each year)
- paid teaching opportunities, which further strengthen a student's job market prospects