MNGT 8482
Corporate Strategy

Course Outline
Session 1, 2015
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PART A: COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1 STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Lecturer-in-charge: Dr. Salih Zeki Ozdemir
Room 504
Phone No: 9385 9728
Email: sz.ozdemir@unsw.edu.au
Consultation Times – by appointment

2 COURSE DETAILS

2.1 Teaching Times and Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>24 January 2015</td>
<td>2:00pm – 8:00pm</td>
<td>Cliftons, HK</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>26 January 2015</td>
<td>7:00pm – 10:15pm</td>
<td>Cliftons, HK</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>27 January 2015</td>
<td>7:00pm – 10:15pm</td>
<td>Cliftons, HK</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>29 January 2015</td>
<td>7:00pm – 10:15pm</td>
<td>Cliftons, HK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>30 January 2015</td>
<td>7:00pm – 10:15pm</td>
<td>Cliftons, HK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>31 January 2015</td>
<td>2:00pm – 8:00pm</td>
<td>Cliftons, HK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>1 February 2015</td>
<td>10:00am – 7:00pm</td>
<td>Cliftons, HK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Bad Weather Policy

Classes will be cancelled if a No. 8 or higher tropical cyclone warning signal or black storm warning is raised at any time from 3 hours before the start of the class. In the event of cancellation due to bad weather, make up classes may or may not be held depending on room/lecturer availability.

2.3 Units of Credit

The course is worth 6 units of credit. There is no parallel teaching in this course.

2.4 Summary of Course

This course introduces you to the skills necessary to be a successful general manager. For the general manager, management is less about the day-to-day operations of the firm, and more about positioning the firm, articulating a vision, and designing the firm to achieve competitive advantage.

2.5 Course Aims and Relationship to Other Courses

Throughout the course, examining issues essential for the firm’s long- and short-term competitive position will take the central stage. We will explore a variety of conceptual
frameworks and models to analyze and gain insight into how to achieve or sustain competitive advantage. The first module of the course develops frameworks that are useful in analyzing a firm's competitive environment. We then turn to the development of firm-specific capabilities that contribute to competitive advantage. In addition to our early focus on single business or business unit strategy, we will also explore corporate strategy

2.6 Student Learning Outcomes

This course is designed around five interdependent learning objectives. By the end of this course, you should:

1. Understand what strategy is
2. Be able to analyze the external environment an organization is situated in
3. Be able to analyze the resources and capabilities of the organization
4. Understand the interlinkages between the strategy of the organization and the structure of the organization
5. Be able to devise strategies for the organisation that derive from both the external and internal analyses performed.

ASB Graduate Attributes

This course contributes to your development of the following Australian School of Business Graduate Attributes, which are the qualities, skills and understandings we want you to have by the completion of your degree:

This course contributes to the development of the MBA Program Learning Goals, which are the qualities, skills and understandings we want you to have by the completion of your degree, as indicated below:

1. Critical and analytical thinking
2. Decision-making and problem-solving
3. Team based skills
4. An in-depth engagement with the relevant disciplinary knowledge in its interdisciplinary context
5. An ability to manage change.

3 LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

3.1 Approach to Learning and Teaching in the Course
The course combines an analytical approach to the issues of strategy planning, with an emphasis on the exercise of judgment by senior managers in the strategic management of the organization. The teaching method reflects this, using a combination of lectures, class discussions, and case studies. The cases selected represent a number of companies competing in a wide variety of industries.

You must prepare for class and participate in order for the course to be successful. Practical knowledge of complex subjects cannot be acquired simply by passive
listening. Good strategic thinking is developed by testing your analyses and conclusions against the thinking of others.

The sessions are composed of lectures and case discussions. This course depends heavily on case discussions. Cases expose the ambiguities that are part and parcel of any decision, and the issues involved in going from principles to practices. Case discussions also develop the skills of persuasion, analysis and listening that are key to the success of any general manager.

### 3.2 Learning Activities and Teaching Strategies

You must prepare for class and participate in order for the course to be successful. Preparation for class involves (i) reading the assigned background material and cases thoroughly, thinking on (ii) how the readings help understand the situation described in the case, and (iii) how the readings can be applied in the context of the case. Reviewing and answering the case preparation questions will help you in this regard. If you have not carefully thought about the study questions, you are not prepared for class.

### 4 ASSESSMENT

#### 4.1 Formal Requirements

In order to pass this course, you must:

- achieve a composite mark of at least 50; and
- make a satisfactory attempt at all assessment tasks (see below).

#### 4.2 Assessment Details

Assessment plays two roles. Firstly, it provides feedback to students on their progress. Assignments are designed to determine how well you are coming to grips with the concepts and how well you are able to apply the statistical tools to a range of situations. Secondly, assessment is a means of testing and grading performance.

Your performance in this course will depend on how well you do in the exams, exercises and assignments as well as on how effectively you participate in class sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes assessed</th>
<th>ASB Graduate Attributes assessed</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Contribution</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>Individual and Group</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Project</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>23:59 HK time on 15 March, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.1 Class Contribution (15%)  
I will come to each session with a teaching plan that will try to achieve a logical and structured progression through the key issues in a given case. To this end, I have prepared study questions to lead the discussions. However, we must understand that the students in the class are co-producers of the class discussion. As such, you need to listen carefully to one another and to build upon or critique prior comments. The aim of the case discussion is to achieve a conversation in which all of you recognize that all of us have an obligation to advance our understanding of the issue at hand. Your contributions to this learning process will be appraised in addition to the content of what you contribute.

Individually, you can contribute to the class discussion in different ways: through clarifying questions, relevant personal experiences and critical evaluations of the argument and evidence. Your contribution can take many specific forms:

- Being a good listener.
- Making points relevant to the discussion.
- Making comments linked to the comments of others and to the basic subject we are discussing that session.
- Identifying the key issues in the case, drawing on your reading of the case and the supplementary material.
- Concisely explaining and justifying your preferred course of action rather than making safe comments such as repetition of case facts without analysis and/or conclusions.
- Listening to the contributions of your classmates and engaging them in a constructive dialogue.

The quality of your contribution is far more important than the quantity (i.e. you are not contributing to the class if you are talking for the sake of talking).

As a group contribution, we will have opportunities to make short (5-7 mins) presentations (at least twice) regarding the course of action a company we discuss in a case should take. For this purpose, concisely explaining and justifying your preferred course of action rather than making safe comments such as repetition of case facts without analysis and/or conclusions will be a good way to make contribution to the class discussion during case study periods.

Note that repeated absences can have large negative effect on the overall contribution grade.

4.2.2 Group Project (40%)  
You will form a group of three/four and work as a team on the case that will be distributed at the end of the course. Based on your analysis of the case, you should answer the questions that will be supplied. The report, which must be 2500 words or less, should be e-mailed to me at sz.ozdemir@unsw.edu.au and cc’ed to the AGSM Hong Kong MBA office by 11:59pm (HK time) on 11 March 2015.

To prevent the free-rider problem, an optional peer evaluation form will be supplied. If you think that anyone in the group has failed to contribute his/her share to the project, please fill out the form and submit it to the office. The mark for the individual will be adjusted accordingly.
4.2.3 Individual Project (45%)
For the individual project, you should analyze a strategic issue facing one firm, preferably, but not necessarily, the company (or the division) you are currently working for. The focus is on developing a “live case study” which raises one or more key strategic dilemmas facing the organization. The outcome of the project should involve well-thought analyses performed using the frameworks we will be learning in the Corporate Strategy class. Be sure to consider both the internal and external analysis of the firm, its current strategy, performance, and other key factors that might affect the competitive advantage of the firm.

In your project report, assume that top management would like you to develop a recommended medium to long-term strategy to improve the business in a more competitive and changing market. Advise top management on positioning the business for sustainable improvement in performance over the next five years and provide an actionable recommendation as the primary focus. In supporting your recommendation you should refute its negatives, which includes refuting the next best alternative strategy. Consider the organization’s current strategy and evaluate alternative strategies to come up with your proposed strategy. If you conclude that the organization’s current strategy is the best one, explain why it is better than the second best alternative you have developed.

In all of your analyses and discussion, you should make sure that your arguments are coherent and rooted in the frameworks we learn in the Corporate Strategy class. Speculations and/or hypothetical conceptions you might have regarding the firm will not help you for this particular project, unless you support them with sound analyses. Using the strategy formulation process framework or the strategic management process framework as your guide would help you greatly. Remember, however, that you are not writing an academic paper but a strategy recommendation for the organization’s top management. This means that you use the tools for your analysis but not necessarily for your presentation. Your writing should be in non-technical English. Be sure to (re-)read “Thinking and Writing in the Strategic Management Year” document at the end of your course packet as you are working on this assignment.

I expect the project to be 10 pages maximum, written in Times New Roman (or a comparable font) with 12 point scale and double line spacing. In addition, you can include supporting materials such as the tables, figures and other appendices (not counted towards page limit). The project paper should be e-mailed to me at sz.ozdemir@unsw.edu.au and cc’d to AGSM Hong Kong MBA office by 11:59pm (HK time) on 15 March 2015.

4.2.4 Details on the assessment criteria for individual project:
1. Appropriateness of the recommendation
   Does the report address the organization’s goals, major issues and opportunities? Is the recommendation likely to create sustained competitive advantage? Is the recommendation original?

2. Realistic recommendation
   Is it possible to implement the recommendation? Is the recommendation feasible, given the resource constraints of the entrepreneur or organization?

3. Quality of arguments: logic and integration
   Are the arguments logical? Are the recommendations clearly linked to the analysis? Does the report justify the proposed strategy (e.g. with theory, data, benchmarking, comparison to alternatives)? Do the arguments support a
consistent, coherent overall strategy? Are data sources and explicit concepts referenced?

4. Organization and clarity of expression
Is the report well organized and structured? Can the reader easily understand the recommendation and arguments behind it? Is the report written clearly?

5. Use of conceptual tools and frameworks to support analysis
Does the analysis show that the author has mastered the different tools and frameworks studied in the course? Can the author selectively draw on the most relevant concepts for the strategic problem faced by the entrepreneur or organization? Has the author applied the concepts in a competent, insightful, and compelling way?

4.3 Late Submission
AGSM MBA Program applies a daily penalty of 5% (of the maximum mark) to late assignments. This policy was reviewed in October 2009 in light of the fact that certain schools within the Australian School of Business apply a 10% penalty. The decision of AGSM MBA HK following this review was that current 5% penalty is appropriate to all of our programs and will remain unchanged.

Quality Assurance
The ASB is actively monitoring student learning and quality of the student experience in all its programs. A random selection of completed assessment tasks may be used for quality assurance, such as to determine the extent to which program learning goals are being achieved. The information is required for accreditation purposes, and aggregated findings will be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of ASB programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential and will not be related to course grades.

5 COURSE RESOURCES

5.1 Prescribed Textbooks
Blue binders (course pack) containing the course materials and cases will be couriered to you one month prior to class.

5.2 eLearning information
In addition to your blue binder (course pack), soft copies of your course materials are also available online on eLearning.
To access eLearning@AGSM MBA, go to http://telt.unsw.edu.au and select Login to UNSW Blackboard.
Login to the web Single Sign On (wSSO) using these details:
Username: zNumber
Password: zPass

The website for this course is on UNSW Blackboard at:
http://lms-blackboard.telt.unsw.edu.au/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp
6 COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the School and continual improvements are made based on this feedback. UNSW’s Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) Process is one of the ways in which student evaluative feedback is gathered.

7 COURSE SCHEDULE

Day 1: Saturday, 24 January 2015 (2.00pm – 8.00pm)
Session 1: What is Strategy?
Readings:

Day 2: Sunday, 25 January 2015 (10.00am – 7.00pm)
Session 2: External Analysis
Readings:

Session 3: Internal Analysis – Resource Based View
Readings:

Day 3: Monday, 26 January 2015 (7.00pm – 10:15pm)
Session 4: Generic Strategies
Readings:
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<th>Day 4: Tuesday, 27 January 2015</th>
<th>(7.00pm – 10:15pm)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 5: Strategies for Competition</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Case Discussion:</strong></td>
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<td>Revitalizing Dell (HBS: 9-710-442)</td>
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<td><strong>Session 6: Internal Analysis – Strategy and Structure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<th>Day 7: Saturday, 30 January 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 7: On Parenting and Portfolio Planning</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 8: Corporate Turnaround</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Case Discussion:</strong></td>
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<td>22. Transforming an Organization thru Redesigning its Strategy - II (Differentiation and Focus Differentiation Strategies)</td>
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| Session 9: Wrap-up and Review |
PART B: KEY POLICIES, STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPPORT

PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The Australian School of Business Program Learning Goals reflect what we want all students to BE or HAVE by the time they successfully complete their degree, regardless of their individual majors or specialisations. For example, we want all our graduates to HAVE a high level of business knowledge, and a sound awareness of ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business. As well, we want all our graduates to BE effective problem-solvers, communicators and team participants. These are our overall learning goals for you.

You can demonstrate your achievement of these goals by the specific outcomes you achieve by the end of your degree (e.g. be able to analyse and research business problems and propose well-justified solutions). Each course contributes to your development of two or more program learning goals/outcomes by providing opportunities for you to practise these skills and to be assessed and receive feedback.

Program Learning Goals for undergraduate and postgraduate students cover the same key areas (application of business knowledge, critical thinking, communication and teamwork, ethical, social and environmental responsibility), which are key goals for all ASB students and essential for success in a globalised world. However, the specific outcomes reflect different expectations for these levels of study.

We strongly advise you to choose a range of courses which assist your development of these skills, e.g., courses assessing written and oral communication skills, and to keep a record of your achievements against the Program Learning Goals as part of your portfolio.

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MBA Program Learning Goals and Outcomes

Learning Goal 1: Business Management Knowledge
Students should be able to identify and apply current knowledge of disciplinary and interdisciplinary theory and professional practice to general management and business within diverse situations

Learning Goal 2: Critical Thinking
Students should understand and be able to identify, research and analyse complex issues and problems in business and develop appropriate solutions

Learning Goal 3: Communication
Students should be able to produce written documents and oral presentations that communicate effectively complex disciplinary ideas and information for the intended audience and purpose

Learning Goal 4: Teamwork
Students should be able to participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams and to reflect upon their own contribution to the team and on the necessary processes and knowledge within the team to achieve specified outcomes

Learning Goal 5: Responsible Business
Students should be able to appraise ethical, environmental and sustainability considerations in decision
Students should be able to consider the social and cultural implications of management practices and of business activities

**Learning Goal 6: Leadership**

Students should be able to reflect upon their own personal leadership style and the leadership needs of business and of teams

**Learning Goal 7: International Perspective**

Students should understand the needs of undertaking business within a global context

Students should be able to apply business management knowledge to business situations within global markets with due recognition for differences in cultural, legal, commercial and other issues

**Learning Goal 8: Risk Management**

Students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the limits in precision and the risks associated with business models

Students should be able to appraise risk and to develop risk mitigation strategies applicable to business undertaken within uncertain and volatile environments

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### 1 ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

The University regards plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct, and has very strict rules regarding plagiarism. For UNSW policies, penalties, and information to help you avoid plagiarism see: [http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html) as well as the guidelines in the online ELISE and ELISE Plus tutorials for all new UNSW students: [http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/skills/tutorials/InfoSkills/index.htm](http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/skills/tutorials/InfoSkills/index.htm).

To see if you understand plagiarism, do this short quiz: [http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/plagquiz.html](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/plagquiz.html)

For information on how to acknowledge your sources and reference correctly, see: [http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html)

For the *ASB Harvard Referencing Guide*, see ASB Referencing and Plagiarism webpage (ASB > Learning and Teaching > Student services > Referencing and plagiarism)

### 2 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to university policies in relation to class attendance and general conduct and behaviour, including maintaining a safe, respectful environment; and to understand their obligations in relation to workload, assessment and keeping informed.

Information and policies on these topics can be found in the ‘A-Z Student Guide’: [https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/A.html](https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/A.html). See, especially, information on ‘Attendance and Absence’, ‘Academic Misconduct’, ‘Assessment Information’, ...
‘Examinations’, ‘Student Responsibilities’, ‘Workload’ and policies such as ‘Occupational Health and Safety’.

2.1 Workload

It is expected that you will spend at least ten hours per week studying this course. This time should be made up of reading, research, working on exercises and problems, and attending classes. In periods where you need to complete assignments or prepare for examinations, the workload may be greater.

Over-commitment has been a cause of failure for many students. You should take the required workload into account when planning how to balance study with employment and other activities.

2.2 Attendance

Your regular and punctual attendance at lectures and seminars is expected in this course. University regulations indicate that if students attend less than 80% of scheduled classes they may be refused final assessment.

2.3 General Conduct and Behaviour

You are expected to conduct yourself with consideration and respect for the needs of your fellow students and teaching staff. Conduct which unduly disrupts or interferes with a class, such as ringing or talking on mobile phones, is not acceptable and students may be asked to leave the class. More information on student conduct is available at: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/BehaviourOfStudents.html

2.4 Occupational Health and Safety

UNSW Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. For more information, see http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/

2.5 Keeping Informed

You should take note of all announcements made in lectures, tutorials or on the course web site. From time to time, the University will send important announcements to your university e-mail address without providing you with a paper copy. You will be deemed to have received this information. It is also your responsibility to keep the University informed of all changes to your contact details.
3 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS

You must submit all assignments and attend all examinations scheduled for your course. You should seek assistance early if you suffer illness or misadventure which affects your course progress.

General Information on Special Consideration:
1. All applications for special consideration must be lodged online through myUNSW within 3 working days of the assessment (Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration). Please contact the AGSM Hong Kong Office to make formal application for Special Consideration for the course/s affected as soon as practicable after the problem occurs. You will need to submit the originals or certified copies of your completed Professional Authority form (pdf - download here) and other supporting documentation
2. Please note that documentation may be checked for authenticity and the submission of false documentation will be treated as academic misconduct. The School may ask to see the original or certified copy.
3. Applications will not be accepted by teaching staff. The lecturer-in-charge will be automatically notified when you lodge an online application for special consideration.
4. Applying for special consideration does not automatically mean that you will be granted a supplementary exam or other concession.
5. Special consideration requests do not allow lecturers-in-charge to award students additional marks.

4 STUDENT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

The University and the ASB provide a wide range of support services for students:
- **AGSM MBA Hong Kong Office**
  Hong Kong students please contact the office directly for immediate support:
  **Address:**
  Unit 2006, 20/F., Kinwick Centre
  32 Hollywood Road, Central, HONG KONG
  T: +852 2841 2802 / 2841 2800
  F: +852 2588 1724
  E: contact@agsm.com.hk
  **Office Hours:**
  Mon-Wed, Fri 9:00am – 6:00pm
  Thursday(s) 9:00am – 7:30pm
- **Blackboard eLearning Support:** For online help using Blackboard, follow the links from www.elearning.unsw.edu.au to UNSW Blackboard Support / Support for Students.
  **Business hours help**
  9am - 5pm Monday to Friday (Sydney Time)
  Contact the AGSM Elearning Coordinator:
Email: elearning@agsm.edu.au
Ph: +61 2 9931 9541

**After hours help**
8am - 9am Monday to Friday (Sydney Time)
5pm - 8pm Monday to Friday (Sydney Time)
11am - 2pm Saturday to Sunday (Sydney Time)

Contact the **UNSW IT Service Centre**:
Website: https://www.it.unsw.edu.au/students/support/index.html
Email: servicedesk@unsw.edu.au
Ph: +61 2 9385 1333

- **ASB Education Development Unit (EDU)**
  Academic writing, study skills and maths support specifically for ASB students. Services include workshops, online and printed resources, and individual consultations. EDU Office: Room GO7, Ground Floor, ASB Building (opposite Student Centre); Ph: +61 2 9385 5584; Email: edu@unsw.edu.au

- **UNSW Learning Centre** [www.lc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au)
  Academic skills support services, including workshops and resources, for all UNSW students. See website for details.

- **Library training and search support services**: [http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html](http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html)

- **IT Service Centre**: Technical support for problems logging in to websites, downloading documents etc. [https://www.it.unsw.edu.au/students/index.html](https://www.it.unsw.edu.au/students/index.html)
  UNSW Library Annexe (Ground floor)

- **UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services**
  [http://www.counselling.unsw.edu.au](http://www.counselling.unsw.edu.au)
  Free, confidential service for problems of a personal or academic nature; and workshops on study issues such as ‘Coping With Stress’ and ‘Procrastination’. Office: Level 2, Quadrangle East Wing; Ph: +61 2 9385 5418

- **Student Equity & Disabilities Unit** [http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au](http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au)
  Advice regarding equity and diversity issues, and support for students who have a disability or disadvantage that interferes with their learning. Office: Ground Floor, John Goodsell Building; Ph: +61 2 9385 4734