



Management Control Systems: An International Perspective

1. Initial remarks

The purpose of this course description for *Management Control Systems: An International Perspective* is to clarify any questions that may arise regarding the course and organization of the course and examination as comprehensively as possible. We therefore kindly ask you to study this description carefully in advance.

2. Target audience and prerequisites

The course is aimed at students who wish to specialize further in the field of Management Accounting and Control (German “Controlling”). It is of particular interest to those who wish to strengthen their understanding of management control systems from an international perspective and thus intentionally take a “non-German” perspective. The course is also suitable as the first course in the specialization or for students with a specialization other than “Controlling”, as it does not require any special knowledge from other specialization courses. However, students should be knowledgeable about basic concepts of cost accounting and financial accounting.

The course can be included as module V 12-3 (Ausgewählte Kapitel des Controlling) in the specialization area of program “Betriebswirtschaftslehre (M. Sc.)” both in the specialization (kleine Vertiefung Controlling) and in the FACT and Management specializations (große Vertiefungen FACT und Management). It is also possible to include it in the supplementary module area (Ergänzungsmodulbereich) via module V 12-5 (E) (Ergänzende Aspekte im Controlling) – irrespective of the chosen specialization. Module V 12 5 (E) can be taken as often as desired if the content differs.

3. Course schedule

The course is offered irregularly and alternates with other forms courses for modules V 12-3 and V 12-5 (E). Below you will find an overview of the dates of the course in the summer semester 2025. As class discussion is essential to achieve the learning objectives, students are required to attend class throughout the whole course. However, two sessions of 90 minutes can be skipped without further notice. If more classes are missed, there will be no admission to the final exam which takes place on the 27th June 2025.

The course is a mix of lectures, case studies, and a workshop. The course take place face-to-face (“Präsenzkurs”) that will neither be broadcasted nor recorded. The dates are 23 June 2025 to 27 June 2025, each day from 9 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. (with breaks).

4. Learning objectives and content

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course develops students’ ability to participate in a professional debate and solution to decision problems. This involves analytical thinking and structured problem-solving.

The following learning objectives are central to this course:

- Describe theories and models taught in the course
- Apply theories and models of the course in case study settings
- Identify and analyze management accounting and control issues
- Evaluate management control systems and management control practices
- Recommend courses of action for management with respect to their management control practices and control systems

CONTENT

The course covers the following topics:

- Introduction to management and control
- Management control alternatives
- Control system tightness and costs
- Financial result control systems
- Performance measurement and management issues
- Financial result controls in the presence of uncontrollable factors
- Stakeholder welfare maximization & CSR
- Corporate governance
- Control-related roles
- Management control-related ethical Issues
- Management control in not-for-profit organizations

5. Form and scope of learning

The course is very interactive and focuses on 1) facilitating a theoretical understanding of management control systems and management control practices and 2) developing problem-solving skills. Theories and models taught are applied in case studies and a workshop to learn to present solutions in a comprehensive way. In addition, students will learn to provide, receive, and use constructive feedback. Students will work in groups and both a) solve and present case studies and b) discuss and challenge case study solutions of peers. All case study solutions and created material will be shared with all students.

After case presentations and discussions, students receive both group and individual feedback (optional) to improve the content of their solutions and/or their individual presentation style.

During the workshop, students will design a performance management system, present their solution, and receive comments from discussants. The workshop is closely related to the oral exam of this course.

6. Teaching and learning materials

Textbook

- Merchant, K. A.; Van der Stede, W. A. (2023): Management Control Systems. Performance Measurement, Evaluation and Incentives. 5th edition, Prentice Hall, Harlow.

Articles

- Abernethy, M. A. (1996). Physicians and resource management: The role of accounting and non-accounting controls. *Financial Accountability & Management*, 12(2): 141–156.
- Bellora-Bienengräber, L.; Radtke, R.R.; Widener, S. K. (2022), Counterproductive work behaviors and work climate: The role of an ethically focused management control system and peers' self-focused behavior. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 96, 101275.
- Dechow, P.M. (2023). Understanding the sustainability reporting landscape and research opportunities in accounting. *The Accounting Review* 98 (5): 481-493.
- Maas, V. S., and M. Matejka. (2009). Balancing the dual responsibilities of business unit controllers: Field and survey evidence. *The Accounting Review* 84 (4): 1233–53.
- Kaplan, R.; Norton, D. P. (2001): Transforming the balanced scorecard from performance measurement to strategic management: Part I. *Accounting Horizons* 15 (1): 87-104.
- Kaplan, R. S.; Norton, D. P. (2008): Mastering the Management System. *Harvard Business Review*, January: 1- 16.

7. Exam mode

Students in the program “Betriebswirtschaftslehre (M. Sc.)” can earn 6 ECTS credit points in V 12-3 or V 12-5 (E), subject to the respective examination regulations (“Prüfungsordnung”).

Each student will be assigned to a group consisting of a maximum of 5 students. An individually graded course certificate will be awarded based on oral presentations taking place on the 27th June 2025, which tests all learning objectives of the course (see 4.).

8. Application

To participate in the event, a binding registration at the chair is required. Please note the corresponding notice in the news section of the homepage of the Chair of Management Accounting and Control (BWL XII: Controlling). Participation is limited to 25 students.

9. Course instructor

This course will be taught by Professor Dr. Melanie Feldhues from Copenhagen Business School.