 Programme pitch

The Strategy & Organization programme trains you to become a professional expert in managing strategic and organizational challenges based on profound skills in analytics, critical thinking and reflexivity and the ability to act responsibly and foresightedly in complex and dynamic market environments.

The programme is about

Area of interest

The Strategy & Organization specialization takes you on a journey that explores the complexities of dynamic and globally integrated market environments in which business firms operate. We will challenge you to look further for new ways how organizations can rethink the way they strategically manage their boundaries, and how they can act responsibly to make a sustainable contribution to society.

After learning about core aspects of strategic management and organizational challenges related to growth, renewal, and entrepreneurship, you can choose to specialize in two modules. Each takes a closer perspective on highly topical issues which represent current megatrends which businesses need to tackle in order to remain competitive: On the one hand, the need for companies to rethink the way they interact with complex and dynamic ecosystems via forming alliances, mergers, participating in business ecosystems and for fostering open innovation. On the other hand, rising stakeholder expectations that urge companies to compete successfully and sustainably by enhancing their corporate social responsibility (CSR) profile.

In all courses in the Strategy & Organization specialization you will explore not only the “content-dimension” of strategy (what is my strategy and how do I design it?), but also the “process-dimension” (how to organize it and bring strategy to action?), thus giving you a holistic perspective on strategy making and strategy execution.

You are in the right programme if you are interested in questions such as: How can companies formulate and implement a strategy that allows them to remain competitive in a dynamic market? How should they strategically engage with other firms, including their direct competitors, with their consumers and critical NGOs? How to develop a strategy that not only allows thriving financially, but also ensures sustainability and social responsibility?

Core methodology

We believe that the complexities and dynamics of global business environments can only be grasped by openness and reflexivity about multiple research philosophies to examine and understand the multiplicity of challenges organizations and managers face in today’s world. We therefore go beyond commonly offered economic approaches to strategic management. You will learn that using both quantitative and qualitative methods is necessary to understand how strategy works in practice and how managerial challenges in organizational life can be solved based on better-informed decisions.

Target group

Students of the MSc Strategy & Organization specialization track are highly international and culturally diverse. They come from a very broad range of intellectual backgrounds that are not necessarily restricted to business studies and economics. As we aim to provide a generalist perspective on strategy & organization, students from bachelor programmes in psychology, sociology, the humanities and even the natural sciences will find it very useful to deepen their knowledge about strategic management and how organizations function, given their ability and willingness to get acquainted with sufficient foundational knowledge about strategy & organization.

Challenge to distinguish

The Strategy & Organization specialization offers multiple possibilities for excellent and ambitious students to distinguish themselves by taking additional courses and participating in tailored activities. We offer the renowned VU honours programme that includes advanced courses in a small-class environment, and provides special opportunities to meet with businesses throughout the programme.

Master’s relevance

Aspirational job (far future)

A top manager you would be responsible for seeing the big picture and develop the overall strategy of the organization to ensure sustainable competitiveness by creating out-of-the-box solutions to emerging business challenges.

Actual placement (near future)

With a Master degree in Strategy & Organization, you can pursue a career in senior management of corporate strategy and development, as a business analyst, project manager or strategy consultant. Popular fields of work are in multinational enterprises, the SME sector, academia, governments and entrepreneurship.

How the programme is designed

Learning goals and how the programme is designed

1. Have the advanced and original academic and research skills to contribute to the body of knowledge

2. Have thorough knowledge of relevant theory and methods

3. Have an academic approach to solving complex (business/economics) problems

4. Have the professional social skills to interact with other professionals

5. Have an horizon beyond the professional area

6. Are self-reflective professionals

The programme is unique because

Academic

Our programme not only introduces you to the state of the art knowledge about strategy and organization, and teaches you how to apply hands-on academic skills. We also show you how practical a good theory can be for finding out-of-the-box solutions to the most pressing strategic and organizational challenges of business firms competing in highly dynamic environments. For us, theories are important tools that allow you to understand and evaluate, not just execute, key strategic decisions of business firms.

Professional

Every course in the Strategy & Organization specialization is based on complex, real-life business cases. We teach you to develop practical but theoretically informed solutions, be able to defend them argumentatively and in doing so enhance your skills as a critically thinking and reflective professional.

Citizen

Our programme embodies the VU core values of being responsible, open and personally engaged by paying attention to societal issues and the personal development of our students. Becoming a professional expert in Strategy & Organization allows you to evaluate the role of businesses in society and enhance your profile as a responsible citizen in today’s labour market and society.

Community

The Strategy & Organization specialization allows you to participate actively in a thriving student community. This is not only a fun activity to join and where to make new friends, but also to advance your academic and professional skills. Together with VU Career Services, we offer several tailor-made career trainings, such as networking skills, preparing your CV, and mastering an assessment day. We strive to optimally support your transition to the labour market. The programme includes other activities such as part of our community as well, such as a LinkedIn group that features alumni and current students, our student organization Aureus that organizes several interesting meetings, and a graduation ceremony at the end of the year during which we celebrate your successes.