

**MBA C727
Pharma/Biotech Business Issues
Fall 2025 Course Outline**

**Health Policy and Management
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

To acquire a working understanding of the nature of the Pharma and Biotech Industries through a review of the Canadian Healthcare system, the strategic issues and challenges facing the industry and current and future business models through the lens of the product lifecycle.

Therefore the objectives for this course are:

1. To understand the nature, issues and trends in the healthcare environment effecting the Pharma and Biotech Industries
2. To gain an understanding of the various stages of the product lifecycle (discovery, development, regulatory, pricing and reimbursement, launch, growth, maturity and decline)
3. To develop an understanding and skill set to create a pharmaceutical strategic and operational (brand) plan
4. To gain an in depth understanding of the fundamentals of Pharma/Biotech sales and marketing practices (brand planning, segmentation, targeting, promotion, pricing, programming, customer value, distribution)
5. To gain an understanding of the ethical, regulatory and internal guidelines affecting the industry

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Monday, 2:30 – 5:30, RJC

Office hours after class or by appointment

**Instructors:
James Hall, B Eng, MBA
JHall1616@gmail.com
Student TA: TBD**

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
Avenue:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	Yes	Written skills:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Experiential:	Yes	Final Exam:	No	Guest speaker(s):	Yes

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will be delivered through a combination of short lectures, guest speakers, case studies and small work group discussions and assignments. Students will work individually to prepare a research paper on their chosen topic related to the Pharma/Biotech industry, to be submitted electronically to the instructor and presented to the class. Students will work in groups to prepare a comprehensive marketing strategy and tactical plan, to be submitted electronically to the instructor at the end of the term.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Understand and discuss issues and challenges facing the Canadian Pharma/Biotech industries
 - Understand the various stages and processes required to successfully introduce a Pharma/Biotech product to the market
 - Understand the various components of the marketing mix required to capture market share, drive revenue and growth
 - Develop a strategic and tactical plan
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REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Avenue registration for course content, readings and case materials

- <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

\$ FREE

EVALUATION

Participation	Due to the nature of this course, participation during lectures and small group working sessions is a critical element for learning and understanding.	20%
Individual Written Research Paper	A review on a Pharma/Biotech topic of the students' choice. To be submitted at mid term.	25%
Presentation of Individual Research Paper	Oral presentation skills are important for understanding and business success.	15%
Group Project	Teams of 4 – 5 students will be required to develop a 5 year strategic business plan and a corresponding 1 year operational (brand) plan.	40%

Grade Conversion

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme:

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A+	90-100	12
A	85-89	11
A-	80-84	10
B+	75-79	9
B	70-74	8
B-	60-69	7
F	00-59	0

Communication and Feedback

Students that are uncomfortable in directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may send a confidential and anonymous email to the respective Area Chair or Associate Dean:

<http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.

Instructors are encouraged to conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery. Instructors should provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

Research Paper

This assignment is worth **25%** of your final grade and will be marked individually. The purpose of this paper is to assess the students' ability to research, study and elucidate a current issue or topic in the Pharma/Biotech industry. Topics choices can range across all aspects of the industry and should be reviewed with the instructor prior to final selection.

The paper must include:

1. A one page executive summary
2. The background to the issue/topic and importance to identified stakeholders
3. Insights and Findings
4. Recommendations, including rationale, implementation considerations and financial implications
5. Implications for the patient, society and other stakeholders

Presentation

The presentation is worth **15%** of the final grade. The purpose of the oral presentation is to assess the students' ability to present the findings of his/her paper in a compelling, concise and engaging manner. Students will present only the highlights of their paper to the class, in electronic slide format (eg. PowerPoint) Presentations will take no more than 15 minutes, including adequate time for questions and answers. Logistics may vary depending on the size of the class.

Group Project

The group project is worth **40%** of the final grade. Groups should ideally be 4 to 5 students in size. The purpose of the group project is to assess the students' ability to synthesize the course material and content to develop a strategic and tactical (brand) plan for a bio/ pharmaceutical product. Students will also be assessed on their ability to work on a real world business challenge in a team environment. Students will be required to choose a product (list provided by the instructor if needed) that is in a specified therapeutic area and a specified point in its lifecycle (i.e. development, launch, growth, maturity, decline).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at:

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Missed Mid-Term Examinations / Tests / Class Participation

Where students miss a regularly scheduled mid-term or class participation for legitimate reasons as determined by the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office, the weight for that test/participation will be distributed across other evaluative components of the course at the discretion of the instructor. Documentation explaining such an absence must be provided to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office within five (5) working days upon returning to school.

To document absences for health related reasons, please provide to Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and the McMaster University Student Health Certificate which can be found on the DeGroote website at <http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-applications/>. Please do not use the online McMaster Student Absence Form as this is for Undergraduate students only. University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) medical certificates per year after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

To document absences for reasons other than health related, please provide Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and documentation supporting the reason for the absence.

Students unable to write a mid-term at the posted exam time due to the following reasons: religious; work-related (for part-time students only); representing university at an academic or varsity athletic event; conflicts between two overlapping scheduled mid-term exams; or other extenuating circumstances, have the option of applying for special exam arrangements. Such requests must be made to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled exam along with acceptable documentation. Instructors cannot themselves allow students to unofficially write make-up exams/tests. Adjudication of the request must be handled by Student Experience – Academic (MBA).

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

POTENTIAL MODIFICATION TO THE COURSE

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA C727 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNMENT
1	Sep 8	Discussion: - Introductions & Student expectations - Class Outline, Schedule, Participation, Assignments - Individual Research Paper Lecture: - Introduction to the Canadian Pharma/Biotech industry Small Group Case Study; Aveo
2	Sep 15	Lecture: - Product Discovery and Development
3	Sep 22	Lecture: - Regulation (Health Canada, Rx&D, PAAB) Small Group Case Study: HDLup Industry Guest Speaker: Preeti Singh. Head of Regulatory Affairs, Biogen <i>Individual Research Paper Topics Due</i>
4	Sep 29	Case Study Assignment
5	Oct 6	Lecture: - Pricing/ PMPRB - Ethics and Compliance Industry Guest Speaker; Anna Apostolakis. IQVIA Pricing
6	Oct 13	Lecture: - Market Access Industry Guest Speakers: Lindy Forte. Sr. VP, Market Access & Pricing, Eversana
7	Oct 20	Lecture: - Strategic Planning & Marketing; Small Group Case Study: Xtandi

		Industry Guest Speakers; Jayson Clement. President NRS
8 9 10	Oct 27 Nov 3 Nov 10	Oral Presentations Students must email TA and Professor their PowerPoint by 5PM on the day of their presentation. <i>Individual Research Papers Due</i>
11	Nov 17	Lecture: - Marketing Industry Guest Speakers: Flavia Cordos Product Manager, Kye Pharma <i>Group Project Topic Submission Due</i>
12	Nov 24	Lecture: - Field Activities Small Group Exercise: Sales force resourcing and deployment - Generics, Biotech Discussion: - Careers in Pharma/Biotech Industry Guest Speaker: Dean Guitard, Sr Director of Sales, Kye Pharma.
13	Dec 1	Lecture - Medical Devices Industry Guest Speaker; Peter Tomashewski, VP Commercial Operations. Contura Orthopaedics Ltd
	Dec 15	Group Projects Due MIDNIGHT Each group email 1 complete project to instructor and TA, including all group members' names