至善館
SHIZENKAN

**Graduate School of Leadership and Innovation
Shizenkan University**

**2025 Academic Year
Non-Degree Program Application Guidelines**

＜**Subject**＞
DX and Platform Strategy

Purpose

Shizenkan University's non-degree program enables professionals who are not enrolled in the Shizenkan MBA Program to participate in select MBA courses on an individual basis and earn academic credit. Each course maintains admission standards, with a limited number of applicants accepted through a screening process. Students who successfully complete their enrolled course will receive official academic credit.

These guidelines outline the application procedures for the "DX and Platform Strategy" course, which is conducted entirely in English. For information regarding other courses available through the non-degree program, please refer to page 6.

Outline of the Course
(Excerpt from Syllabus. For details, please refer to the subject syllabus at the end of this document.)

Digitalization is forcing significant transformations in business models and operational structures across many industries. This course will examine innovations underpinned by digital technologies from the perspective of management leaders, using case discussions as a basis. The course explores these changes through the lenses of value chain shifts, supply chain innovations, and business model transformation.

The first session will focus on the progression of product/service substitution driven by digital innovation (DI), starting with case discussions and moving toward generalization. Sessions 2–4 will explore business innovation within individual companies as influenced by DI. Specifically, the discussions will center on the impact of digital innovation on product design (customer value propositions) and research and development (value creation). Additionally, the course will delve into the role of management in driving successful digital transformation (DX).

Sessions 5–7 will build on the earlier discussions to examine the responses to digitalization in industries such as retail, content, and manufacturing (production) while considering structural changes brought about by DI in these sectors. Furthermore, the course will address the creation, competition, and expansion of platform businesses (PF) that have emerged (or are emerging) in these industries.

Through this course, participants will be expected to prepare to think about their own strategies for responding to digitalization within their companies and to draft such strategies as their final report.

Class Schedule

The dates and times of the classes are as follows (Japan Standard Time). Session 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 will be held in person at the Shizenkan campus. Session 3, 4, and 8 will be held online using Zoom. For Session 8, you will be attending either 8-1 or 8-2. Details will be explained during Session 1.

Session 1: Tuesday, September 2, 2025, 18:30-22:00

Session 2: Tuesday, September 9, 18:30-22:00

Session 3: Tuesday, September 16, 18:30-22:00

Session 4: Tuesday, September 23, 18:30-22:00

Session 5: Tuesday, September 30, 18:30-22:00

Session 6: Tuesday, October 7, 18:30-22:00

Session 7: Tuesday, October 21, 18:30-22:00

Session 8-1: Tuesday, October 28, 18:30-22:00

Session 8-2: Tuesday, October 29, 18:30-22:00

Admission Process

(1) Overview

The admissions process is a two-stage process with document screening and an interview. In the interview, we will examine your motivation and readiness for taking the course, including what you indicate in the application documents. As this course is offered in English, the admissions process is conducted in English. It is not compulsory to submit your GMAT or GRE results to enroll in the program.

(2) Interview

The interviews will be conducted online using the Zoom platform. At the time of application, please select the date and time of the interview from the list of options. Zoom link and other details will be provided at the time of the initial notification of selection results.

Applicant Eligibility

As an applicant, you are required to have a minimum of three years full-time work experience and to fulfill <u>one</u> of the following conditions at the time of application:

(1) Obtain a university or college degree

(2) Obtain a bachelor's degree from the National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education of Japan

(3) Complete 16 years of education in a foreign country

(4) Being designated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan

(5) Are considered to have qualifications in education, knowledge, skills and aspiration to be admitted in the program by the Shizenkan Admissions Committee

Application Process

The application process consists of the following steps.

Step 1: Submitting the application form

· Please submit your application via the application form below. Select your interview time/date as instructed in the form. Note that you are required to fill in the "Your personal statement" section of the application form in English.

https://forms.gle/ZUZiUvBr1T38jhmG9

Step 2: Document screening and confirming interview schedule

· Based on the submitted documents, we will conduct the document screening. Those who pass the document screening will be invited for an interview. The interview schedule and Zoom URL will be sent to the e-mail address provided in the application form.

Step 3: Personal interview

· The interview will be conducted online (via Zoom). It will take approximately 30 minutes.

· The interview will be in English.

Step 4: Admission

· The Admissions Office will inform you of the admissions result after the document screening and interview.

· Successful applicants are required to pay the registration fee and tuition fees by bank transfer. Upon completion of the enrolment fee and tuition fee transfer, the student will be officially accepted as a non-degree student.

Application Deadline

● Monday, August 18th, 2025 by 12:00pm

Interview Schedule (tentative)

Based on the preferences entered in the application form, the applicant will be scheduled for 30 minutes on one of the following dates.

Thursday, August 21st, 2025, 18:30-22:00

Friday, August 22nd, 2025, 18:30-22:00

Notification of Admissions Result (tentative)

Shizenkan will send the results to the e-mail address provided in the application form.

Friday, August 22nd, 2025

Enrollment and Registration Procedures

Please follow the instructions provided with the notification of acceptance.

The deadline for completing the procedures is Monday, September 1st, 2025.

Application Forms

Please fill out the following information when submitting your application. Your application will be officially accepted when all items are completed. If all items are not submitted by the deadline, your application will not be accepted.

1. Full name

2. Gender

3. Nationality

4. Date of birth

5. Address

6. Telephone number

7. E-mail address

8. Current employer

9. Education history

10. Your personal statement: Interests and motivation towards the topic; commitment to coursework. (Please write in English)

11. Interview schedule preference

12. Copy of passport (for non-Japanese nationals)

13. Copy of residence card (for non-Japanese nationals)

Application Fee

No application fee is required for the academic year 2025.

Academic Fees

The following table shows the academic fees required for enrollment in the program.

Non-Degree Program registration fee	JPY30,000
Tuition fee	JPY200,000
Total	JPY230,000

(1) The tuition fees include costs for case materials used in the course; however, they do not include costs of textbooks and other optional academic materials.

(2) If you have already paid the registration fee for a course taken in the current or previous academic year, you are exempted from paying the registration fee for subsequent courses.

Protection of Personal Information

All personal information that Shizenkan obtains from the applicant will be used solely for the purpose of admissions screening and the student registration subsequent to admissions. For more information on our personal information policy, please kindly refer to our website. By applying, you are considered to have agreed to the policy.

Notes

(1) Credit will be awarded to those who meet the credit requirements for the courses taken, and a certificate of credit will be issued upon request.

(2) Neither a commuter certificate (for commuter passes) nor a student discount certificate will be issued to non-degree course students.

(3) Being a student in a non-degree program does not qualify you for student residency status.

(4) Please note that if for any reason the course is not offered, permission to enroll may be revoked.

(5) If a non-degree program student enrolls in a master's programme at Shizenkan within five years of earning credits, it is possible for up to four credits to be accepted as earned credit under certain conditions (subject to change without notice). In this case, the amount of tuition fee paid for the non-degree study to earn the credits will be deducted from the tuition fee for the master's program.

Other Non-degree Courses Offerings

In addition to this course, Shizenkan plans to also accept non-degree course students for other courses. The following list indicates eligible courses for the period from September 2025 to March 2026. We will announce the start of the application as shown in the table. Please note that some courses are offered in two languages (English and Japanese).

Course Name	Language	Course Period	Announcement Timing
DXとプラットフォーム戦略	Japanese	Sept-Oct. 2025	July 2025
アントレプレナーシップと事業創造 Entrepreneurship and Business Start-up	Japanese	Nov.-Dec.	Sept.
	English	Nov.-Dec.	Sept.
ソーシャル・インパクトの創出	Japanese	Nov.-Dec.	Sept.
Leadership and Negotiation リーダーシップと交渉学	English	Nov.-Dec.	Sept.
	Japanese	Jan.-Feb.2026	Nov.
Global Management: Strategy, Organization and Leadership	English	Jan.-Mar.	Nov.

至善館 Graduate School of
Leadership and Innovation,
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Course Title:	DX and Platform Strategy
Year / Semester:	2nd year / 1st semester
Credit:	2 credits (elective course)
Faculty:	Specially Appointed Prof. Tatsuyuki Negoro,
	Adjunct Associate Prof. Sari Shimizu
Duration:	Tuesday, September 2nd, 2025 – Wednesday, October 29th, 2025
Class Format:	On campus (in person) and online

OBJECTIVE:

Digitalization is forcing significant transformations in business models and operational structures across many industries. This course will examine innovations underpinned by digital technologies from the perspective of management leaders, using case discussions as a basis. The course explores these changes through the lenses of value chain shifts, supply chain innovations, and business model transformation.

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Through this course, participants will be expected to prepare to think about their own strategies for responding to digitalization within their companies and to draft such strategies as their final report.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
1. Understand what is required of management leaders in the face of industrial transformation driven by the advancement of digital technology.
2. Understand that digital strategy creates new added value and/or new markets.
3. Understand that the progression of digitalization can lead to significant innovations in operational structures and structural shifts in the value chain (VC).
4. Understand the unique nature of platform businesses that have emerged through digitalization.
5. Understand the key points for addressing platformers as disruptors from the viewpoint of existing companies.
6. Draft a preliminary digital strategy for your own company.

LEARNING APPROACH:

The course will progress through group discussions, whole-class case debates, and theoretical lectures following these discussions. Theories are positioned as tools for generalization and are introduced after case discussions, rather than being explained in advance for direct application to cases. However, the final report is positioned as an opportunity for participants to internalize what they have learned, including theories, by applying them to your own specific circumstances and company conditions.

CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORKS TO BE USED (TENTATIVE):

[Key Concepts to Be Studied (Deepen theoretical understanding throughout the course)]

Digital Innovation (DI), Complete Substitution and Partial Substitution, Digital Transformation (DX), Customer Value Transformation Driven by Digitalization, Digital Disruptors, Platform Products/Services (PF), Network Effects, Aggregation, Data Flywheel Model

[Frameworks to Be Studied (Understand and try practical application throughout the course)]
Product Substitution Through Innovation, Constraints on Transformation for Established Companies, Ambidextrous Management in the Context of Digitalization, Development Stages of Digitalization and Barriers to Stage Transitions, Second-Wave Challenges of Digitalization

[Supplementary Concepts Introduced to Understand the Cases (Not the primary focus of learning)]
Modularization, Openness, Cyber-Physical Systems, Machine Learning, Positive Feedback Loops,

Note: A deep understanding of the above supplementary concepts is not required in advance.

[Supplementary Frameworks Introduced for Analysis and Discussion (Not the primary focus of learning)]
Value Proposition Canvas (Customer Value Design Framework), Cascade Choice (Strategy Consideration Framework),

Note: A deep understanding of the above supplementary frameworks is not required in advance.

CASE PREPARATION:

Preliminary questions are set as a reference axis to guide deeper consideration of the case and other preliminary materials. We believe that reflecting on the preliminary questions will deepen your understanding of the case. As a general rule, you are requested to prepare a preliminary report by answering the preliminary questions. The preliminary report should focus on objective analysis. On the other hand, during classroom discussions, you are expected to always assume the role of the business leader responsible for the case in question.

We ask you to participate in discussions with a sense of commitment and ownership, as if you were directly involved. Analysis requires the exclusion of personal values to ensure objectivity, while decision-making, though based on facts, is inherently subjective. The future is uncertain, and the legitimacy or appropriateness of actions may vary depending on one's values.

The preliminary questions are designed to help you prepare for the case, but the class discussion will not necessarily be based on the same questions. Assuming that students have considered the case beforehand, the instructor will pose questions as appropriate to introduce new perspectives and deepen the exploration of the resolution of the issues facing the case study company, from the perspective of the parties involved.

NATURE OF THE CASES IN THIS COURSE (ON-GOING CASES):

This course will primarily focus on case discussions in each session. The distributed cases adhere to the classic rules of the case method, describing the situation and challenges of a company at a specific point in time. However, the cases used will generally reflect the most recent situations of the companies in question. For companies whose circumstances have evolved since the described point in time, additional materials will be provided to reflect their current situation (or students may be asked to conduct their own research on the current state of affairs).

The reason for prioritizing discussions based on the present situation is as follows: The pace of digitalization is rapid, and older cases often become technologically outdated. Moreover, with the increasing ease of conducting research using AI agents (such as Deep Research tools), it has become simpler to engage in discussions based on the "current state" of affairs. This approach is also intended to make discussions more engaging and tangible, as focusing on recent developments provides a greater sense of immediacy and relevance.

PRE-ASSIGNMENT (PRE-ASSIGNMENT REPORT):

Submit a pre-session report on the designated questions at least 3 days prior to each session (e.g., by 11:59 PM on Monday for sessions held on Thursday).
Format: PowerPoint (PPT) file (Word files are not acceptable).
There is no strict limit on the number of slides; however, as a general rule, the report should be summarized in 5 slides (PPT) or fewer per session.
We encourage you to actively use charts and graphs where appropriate. Text may be presented in bullet points.
A cover page is not required, but please make sure to include your student ID number and name in the file name and on each page of the document.

You may use generative AI tools to assist in creating the pre-assignment report. However, please explicitly note the use of such tools in your submission.
The reason we ask for submissions in PPT format is to facilitate the integration of files when presenting sample answers during class (PDF format is acceptable under certain circumstances).

Pre-session reports will be graded on a three-tier scale: "Excellent," "Standard," and "Needs Improvement."

Individual feedback will not be provided on pre-session reports, but outstanding reports will be introduced during class. Students are encouraged to compare their own work with the excellent reports shared in class and reflect on areas for improvement based on the content and discussions.

GENERATIVE AI AND PC USE ON THE DAY OF EACH CLASS:
You may use generative AI tools to assist in creating your pre-assignment (pre-assignment report). The use of generative AI is intended to be auxiliary to understanding and should be combined with one's thinking, rather than simply pasting in mechanical output. However, if you use AI-generated outputs, you must clearly indicate which parts of your report were generated using AI, for what purpose, and which parts reflect your own analysis. Pre-assignments are intended to deepen your understanding of the class, so please remain mindful of this purpose when using generative AI.

During classroom discussions, the use of generative AI tools or search tools is strictly prohibited in order to focus on understanding each other's contributions and actively engaging in discussions.

Case materials and supplementary case documents will primarily be shared via SOS.

TEXTBOOK:
This course uses the latest cases and theoretical developments; therefore, traditional textbooks, which may contain outdated information, are not assigned. Please refer to the materials distributed in class.

REFERENCE BOOK:
You do not need to read them before the sessions. After the sessions, you can review the parts that interest you.

- Michael A. Cusumano (2019), "The Business of Platforms: Strategy in the Age of Digital Competition, Innovation, and Power," Harper Business

- Laure Claire Reillier and Benoit Reillier, 2017, Platform Strategy: How to Unlock the Power of Communities and Networks to Grow Your Business, Routledge

- Michael Wade et al.,(2016), "Digital Vortex: How Today's Market Leaders Can Beat Disruptive Competitors at Their Own Game," Dbt Center Press

- Deloitte Center for the Edge（2017）Approaching disruption

https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/2724_Responses-to-disruption/ER_2724_Responses-to-disruption.pdf

- Deloitte Center for the Edge（2017）Patterns of disruption

https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/3520_Patterns-of-disruption_Wholesale-banking/DUP_Patterns-of-disruption_Wholesale-banking.pdf

- The following book can be referred to if you can read Japanese.

根来龍之『プラットフォームの教科書』日経BP社（2017）

EVALUATION:

Grading for this course will be as follows.

In addition to the attendance requirement (at least 5 sessions or more), submitting at least 5 pre-session reports and a final report are mandatory requirements to earn credit. Failure to fulfill the above requirements will result in the loss of credit.

-       Active participation in each class session (30%)

-       Submission of pre-session reports (30%)

-       Final report (40%)

PLAGIARISM:

In preparation for pre-assignments and final report, please respect Shizenkan policy on plagiarism. Any student who is caught cheating, such as cut-copy-pasting without properly referencing sources, having one's report written by someone else, or engaging in any other form of plagiarism, shall receive a failing (F) grade. A student who is caught cheating for a second time, regardless of the content, shall be expelled.

Late report submissions:

Please be aware that reports submitted after the deadline will be subject to point deduction and may not be evaluated in some cases.

SESSION OVERVIEW:

Session 1 : The Disruptive Power of Digital Innovation [3 hours 15 min.]

Session 2 : Enhancing Customer Value through Digital Innovation (DI) [3 hours 15 min.]

Session 3 : Digitalization of R&D (Value Creation) [3 hours 15 min.]

Session 4 : Management Approaches for Successful Digital Transformation (DX) [3 hours 15 min.]

Session 5 : Retailers' response to Digitalization [3 hours 15 min.]

Session 6 : Content companies' response to digitalization [3 hours 15 min.]

Session 7 : (LA) Expansion of existing companies into the platform business [3 hours 15 min.]

Session 8-1 :Final report presentation (1) [3 hours 15 min.]

Session 8-2 :Final report presentation (2) [3 hours 15 min.]

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