

Contemporary Developments in Business and Management (SIM337)

Students are required to submit their assignments through JIRA. Only assessments submitted through JIRA will be marked. Any other submission including submission to your study centre in hard copy will be treated as a non-submission

Assessment weighted at 100% assessing all module learning outcomes

Activity:

Prepare a management report of 3,500 to 4,000 words* on an organization within **one** of the following industry-sectors**:

1. Agriculture – perennial crops(A01.2)
2. Manufacture of textiles,(C13)
3. Manufacture of wearing apparel (C14)
4. food and beverage service activities (I56)
5. Civil engineering (F42)

[An organization profile must be included in your submission as “Appendix 1”.]

This report should assess the impact of external business environmental factors on the organization and evaluate the organization’s position and responses. In the case of a large organization it is permissible to confine your report to part of the organization. An organization’s activities may range beyond the designated industrial sector in which case the focus of your report must be on the organization’s activities within the designated sector.

* This word limit does not include the executive summary, organization profile, tables, diagrams, appendices or references. (Include a word count on your title page.)

** Sectors: Refer to the UK standard industrial classification (SIC) system or country equivalent for activities that are included in the identified industrial/sector. See <<<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/standard-industrial-classification/sic2007---explanatory-notes.pdf>>>.

Task 1

Give a brief overview of the primary external influences to which the organization is subject and briefly explain the particular importance of each to the organization. This first task should contribute no more than one third of your overall report.

Task 2

Choose one of the following themes:

- a) International regional integration
- b) Demographic factors
- c) The importance of business law (employment law, consumer law, competition law, etc.)
- d) Research and Development
- e) The increasing global importance of ‘newly-developing countries’ excluding China

In relation to your chosen theme

- i. analyse its relevance to your chosen organization and how it influences policies and decision-making within your chosen organization or industry-sector.
- ii. critically evaluate the effectiveness of the organization's response.
- iii. (if possible and appropriate) demonstrate some areas for improvement in the response of the organization.

Guidance notes:

Whatever organization you choose and whichever theme you chose, you **must** clearly demonstrate knowledge and understanding from research and reading wider than that contained in the module pack and core textbook. This is a REPORT and so **must** be presented in business report format and style. You **must** also structure your report to cover the tasks including points 2.i to 2.iii above. This is an academic piece of work therefore you are expected to link theory and practice. You should take care to ensure that the work you submit has a high standard of presentation. This is an individual assignment. You **must** acknowledge your sources of information and evidence using the Harvard referencing system. All assignments are subject to the University's regulations on collusion and plagiarism and must be submitted in electronic form for checking (if possible a Turnitin report must also be submitted).

Summary Assessment Criteria

1. **Relevance:** Directly relevant to the requirements of the assessment. (10%)
2. **Knowledge:** A substantial knowledge of relevant material, showing a clear grasp of themes, questions and issues therein. (20%)
3. **Analysis:** Good analysis, clear and orderly (20%)
4. **Argument and structure:** Coherent and logically structured, using an appropriate mode of argument and/or theoretical model(s). (20%)
5. **Critical evaluation:** Contains distinctive or independent thinking; may formulate an independent position in relation to theory and/or practice. (10%)
6. **Presentation:** Well written, with standard spelling and grammar, in a readable style with an acceptable format. (10%)
7. **Reference to literature:** Critical appraisal of up-to-date and/or appropriate literature. Recognition of different perspectives. Good use of a range of sources. (10%)

(See marking scheme for more detailed guidance)

SIM337 Marking Scheme and Generic Assessment Criteria These will be interpreted according to the assignment tasks and the module assessment criteria.

	Grade	Relevance (10%)	Knowledge (20%)	Analysis (20%)	Argument and Structure (20%)	Critical Evaluation (10%)	Presentation (10%)	Reference to Literature (10%)
Pass	86 – 100%	The work examined is exemplary and provides clear evidence of a complete grasp of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to SIM337. There is also unequivocal evidence showing that all the learning outcomes of SIM337 have been fully satisfied. At this level it is expected that the work will be exemplary in all the categories cited above. It will demonstrate a particularly compelling evaluation, originality, and elegance of argument, interpretation or discourse.						
	76-85%	The work examined is excellent and demonstrates comprehensive knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to SIM337. There is also excellent evidence showing that all the learning outcomes of SIM337 have been fully satisfied. At this level it is expected that the work will be excellent in the majority of the categories cited above or by demonstrating particularly compelling evaluation and elegance of argument, interpretation or discourse.						
	70 – 75%	The work examined is of a high standard and there is evidence of comprehensive knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to SIM337. There is clearly articulated evidence demonstrating that all the learning outcomes of SIM337 have been satisfied. At this level it is expected that the standard of the work will be high in the majority of the categories cited above or by demonstrating particularly compelling evaluation and elegance of argument, interpretation or discourse.						
	60 – 69%	Directly relevant to the requirements of the assessment (6 – 7)	A substantial knowledge of relevant material, showing a clear grasp of themes, questions and issues therein. (12 – 14)	Good analysis, clear and orderly (12 – 14)	Generally coherent and logically structured, using an appropriate mode of argument and/or theoretical model(s) (12 – 14)	(May) contain some distinctive or independent thinking; (may) begin to formulate an independent position in relation to theory and/or practice. (6 – 7)	Well written, with standard spelling and grammar, in a readable style with acceptable format (6 – 7)	Critical appraisal of up-to-date and/or appropriate literature. Recognition of different perspectives. Very good use of source material. Uses a range of sources. (6 – 7)
	50 – 59%	Some attempt to address the requirements of the assessment: (may drift away from this in less focused passages) (5 – 6)	Adequate knowledge of a fair range of relevant material, with intermittent evidence of an appreciation of its significance. (10 – 12)	Some analytical treatment, but (may be) prone to description, or to narrative, which lacks clear analytical purpose. (10 – 12)	Some attempt to construct a coherent argument, but (may) lose focus and consistency, with issues at stake stated only vaguely, or theoretical model(s) couched in simplistic terms. (10 – 12)	Sound work which expresses a coherent position and evaluation only in broad terms and in uncritical conformity to one or more standard views of the topic. (5 – 6)	Competently written, with only minor lapses from standard grammar, with acceptable format (5 – 6)	Uses a variety of literature which includes some recent texts and/or appropriate literature, though not necessarily including a substantive amount beyond library texts. Competent use of source material. (5 – 6)
40 – 49%	Some correlation with the requirements of	Basic understanding of the subject but	Largely descriptive or narrative, with	A basic argument is evident, but mainly supported by	Some evidence of a view and a very basic	A simple basic style but with significant	Some up-to-date and/or appropriate literature used. Goes	

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		the assessment but there are instances of irrelevance. (4 – 5)	addressing a limited range of material (8 – 10)	little evidence of analysis (8 – 10)	assertion and (there may be) a lack of clarity and coherence (8 – 10)	evaluation starting to be formed but mainly derivative. (4 – 5)	deficiencies in expression or format that (may) pose obstacles for the reader. (4 – 5)	beyond the material tutor has provided/main text. Limited use of sources to support a point. (4 – 5)	
Fail	35 – 39%	Relevance to the requirements of the assessment (may be) very intermittent, and/or (may be) reduced to its vaguest and least challenging terms. (3.5 – 4)	A limited understanding of a narrow range of material (7 – 8)	Heavy dependence on description, and/or on paraphrase (7 – 8)	Little evidence of coherent argument: lacks development and (may be) repetitive or thin (7 – 8)	Almost wholly derivative: the writer’s contribution rarely goes beyond simplifying paraphrase (3.5 – 4)	Numerous deficiencies in expression and presentation; the writer (may) achieve clarity (if at all) only by using a simplistic or repetitious style. (3.5 – 4)	Barely adequate use of literature. Over reliance on material provided by the tutor/main text. (3.5 – 4)	
	The evidence provided shows that the majority of the learning outcomes of SIM337 have been satisfied - For Compensation consideration								
	30 – 34%	The work examined provides insufficient evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to SIM337. The evidence provided shows that some of the learning outcomes of SIM337 have been satisfied.							
	15-29%	The work examined is unacceptable and provides little evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to SIM337. The evidence provided shows that few of the learning outcomes of SIM337 have been satisfied.							
	0-14%	The work examined is unacceptable and provides almost no evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to SIM337. The evidence provided fails to show that any of the learning outcomes of SIM337 have been satisfied.							

Please note that all work must to be referenced correctly according to the Harvard system. Marks will be subtracted for poor referencing and more serious cases of plagiarism or collusion will be reported to the University of Sunderland Faculty of Business and Law Infringement Panel.

Guidance on the Assessment Criteria and Marking Scheme

Relevance (weighting: 10%)

“Directly relevant to the requirements of the assessment”

You need to do what the assignment requires. Read the question or task carefully and do what it asks rather than what you would prefer to do. Keep focused on the task and avoid irrelevant material. **In particular, you must base your report on an appropriate company and on one of the designated themes.**

Task one is to *“Give a brief overview of the primary external influences to which the organization is subject and explain the particular importance of each to the organization.”*

Task two is in relation to a chosen theme to:

- i. *“analyse its relevance to your chosen organization how it influences policies and decision-making within your chosen organization or industry-sector.”*
- ii. *“critically evaluate the effectiveness of the organization’s response.”*
- iii. *“(if possible and appropriate) demonstrate some areas for improvement in the response of the organization.”*

In task one you need to cover a range of external business environment factors but emphasis should vary according to the degree of relevance. In task two more in-depth analysis and evaluation are required and, if possible and appropriate, recommendations.

Knowledge (weighting 20%)

“A substantial knowledge of relevant material, showing a clear grasp of themes, questions and issues..”

You need to demonstrate your knowledge of the relevant material. Demonstrate to your reader that you really understand the material and that you are not merely paraphrasing. A good use of applications and examples will be essential in doing this.

*“Under this criterion we are looking to see that you understand what is meant by the range of external business environmental factors and understand in some depth the relevance of the chosen theme. ‘There will be a tendency to give facts and definitions either as direct quotations or paraphrased but students need to demonstrate a real understanding by **applying** and **illustrating** the concepts. For example.....”*

All of this must be relevant to an appropriate choice of company and theme!

Analysis (weighting 20%)

“Good analysis, clear and orderly.”

You need to give a good analysis (explanation) and avoid too much description.

Description is relatively superficial whereas analysis gives a deeper explanation.

“Students will tend to describe what is meant byand so on. What is needed here is analysis (explanation).For example, if considering the potential impact of food-safety regulations it is not sufficient to merely say that the regulations will impact on a firm’s operations we need some explanation of how they could impact on such a firm.” This applies to task one but even more so to task two.

All of this must be relevant to an appropriate choice of company and theme!

Argument and Structure (weighting: 20%)

“Generally coherent and logically structured, using an appropriate mode of argument and/or theoretical model(s)”

Your argument needs to be clear, coherent and logical and you should use relevant theoretical models and evidence in support of your argument. Avoid mere assertion. Make sure that you understand what your argument is and avoid merely stringing together a series of points.

“Assertions need to be substantiated either by reference to authoritative sources or by evidence and logical argument. For example, a statement about a firm’s competitive advantage would need to be substantiated by a reference to an authoritative source or evidence and argument, e.g. “This could give it a competitive advantage over rivals

because.....”

Weaknesses in this area would be indicated by marking comments such as ‘Substantiate!’, ‘Why?’, ‘How? and so on..”

All of this must be relevant to an appropriate choice of company and theme!

Critical Evaluation (weighting 10%)

“Should contain some distinctive or independent thinking; should begin to formulate an independent position in relation to theory and/or practice.”

This is particularly relevant to task two where any recommendations should be based on and should flow from the analysis and evaluation.

To gain these marks you need to be demonstrating your own **judgement** rather than just relying on the judgements of others. For example, “‘A’ considers that..... ‘B’ considers that..... On balance this report reaches the following conclusion.....”

The requirement of this assignment cannot be completed relying on the work of others so a good paper must have a fairly high level of originality.

All of this must be relevant to an appropriate choice of company and theme!

Presentation (weighting 10%)

“Well written, with standard spelling and grammar, in a readable style with acceptable format.”

An “acceptable format” for a report will be relatively formal in style with headings and sub-headings

(See “A Simple Guide to Report Writing”.)

Reference to Literature (weighting: 10%)

“Critical appraisal of up-to-date and/or appropriate literature. Recognition of different perspectives. Very good use of source material. Uses a range of sources.” You need to demonstrate a good use of a range and quality of up-to-date materials. Literature use limited to the main text and/or superficial or out-of-date sources will score badly.

All of this must be relevant to an appropriate choice of company and theme!

In addition, all work must be referenced correctly using the Harvard style. Marks will be subtracted for poor referencing and more serious cases of plagiarism or collusion will be reported to the University of Sunderland Faculty of Business and Law Infringement Panel. (See a guide to Harvard referencing.)