

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of assessment (assignments, examinations, debates, reports and other methods) is to assess your level of knowledge and understanding of a particular subject area. Additionally, it assess, amongst others things, your cognitive skill sets.

This briefing document provides:

1. The details of the assessment for PSBM115CL Strategic Management.
- 2 Advice and guidance for undertaking this assessment. This advice and guidance is the culmination of many years' experience of teaching and assessing at postgraduate level.

As stated both here and in other documents (indicated within this document) it is in your best interest to actively engage with your studies and prepare for the assessment.

PSBM115CL assessment CW2

As stated in the guide How to Succeed on M115LON and in the module's Learning Outcomes you must be able to explore the subject area, critically evaluate, synthesise reliable and validated sources and provide evidence to support conclusions and recommendations.

CW2 – Strategic Review - Individual Management Report

Unless appropriate evidence is provided a non-submission will mean that you have failed the module. Please refer to the module and course handbook for the specific details.

Creating a Planning Schedule



It is vital that you plan your time in order to conduct the research and prepare drafts prior to your submissions. It is suggested that you create a plan with specific dates, for example a Gantt chart.

Do not leave the research and writing until just before submission as this is a high-risk strategy and can significantly reduce your potential for success. Our advice is to start planning both elements of CW1 as soon as you finish reading this briefing document.

[A useful resource is Stella Cottrell's book *The Study Skills Handbook*, published by Palgrave Macmillan. There are copies in the Library.]

Assessment Learning Outcomes

You will see from both the Module Handbook (On the M115LON Moodle site. A sub-set of these is a set of Assessment Outcomes which link to the Rubric as stated below:

- Critical analyse of the organisation's strategic direction, determining which theoretical models have valid applications in different environmental contexts and making practical use of mainstream strategy concepts to assess the organisation strategic direction.
- Account for and critically evaluate the organisation's [strategic](#) decisions within the context of its external and internal environment, using [SWOT](#)/TOWS frameworks to support your analysis.
- Synthesise your understanding and knowledge of critical aspects of the organisation's strategy and the strategic process in your Conclusions and Recommendations.
- Demonstrate an ability to independently research, present, analyse and critically evaluate relevant data and appropriate academic literature to support your analysis, conclusions and recommendations.
- Demonstrate effective communications skills to enable a clear presentation of key findings, results and recommendations. These include:
 1. Clarity of written communication, including accurate spelling and grammar.
 2. Consistency and appropriateness of writing style.
 3. Appropriate use of standard Management Report template.
 4. Correct and consistent use of Harvard Referencing System. [NOTE: There is a guide on Moodle. It is advised that you download this for future reference.]

CW2 BRIEF/INSTRUCTIONS

This assignment represents the culmination of all your work on this module having undertaken an environmental audit in CW1. You have studied the strategic options available to the business.

You are now required to independently evaluate the existing strategy of the business and make recommendations to the Board of Directors as to the future development of the business' strategy.

You are expected to use the same company you analyzed in CW1. Your evaluation and recommendations should be presented as a Management Report.

Submission Date: As shown in assessment section of the PSBM115CL Moodle page via Turnitin. This means that it must be registered on the server before the indicated time. Any submission with a later time stamp will automatically be considered late and awarded zero marks.

It is your responsibility to check the submission date – As shown on the submission link on Moodle.

VERY IMPORTANT!!! (Your management report should include:

- **Anonymous cover sheet:** This must contain the following: Module title and code, Assignment title, Your ID number, Name of your seminar tutor, Word Count (the word count minus the title page, contents page, executive summary, tables/charts, reference list and any appendices) and date of submission.
- **Executive Summary:** This should be no more than one page in length and should present a ‘snapshot’ of the report including your findings from the environmental audit and the strategic direction of the organisation. You should also include an overview of your recommendations with a brief rationale. [Note: This is not counted in the word limit.]
- **Table of contents:** This should be no more than one page in length. [NOTE: This is not counted within the word limit.]
- **Introduction:** An introduction to the company’s operations – in other words ‘setting the scene’. This to include an overview of the organisation’s operations, their proposed strategy, its financial situation, general state of the sector/industry (for example, is it in growth or decline) and its key competitors. It is expected that elsewhere in the report you will apply the models/concepts and frameworks to the organisation. This approach should underpin your knowledge and understanding of the organisation and the environment in which it operates.
- **Analysis of the organisation’s strategic position in its industry-** by using relevant business KPIs in comparing the performance of the organization with that of its main competitors
- **Analysis of the organisation's strategic direction:** This needs to be undertaken with a clear identification of the methods by which the organisation's strategies have been pursued. You must use Ansoff and either BCG or GE/McKinsey.
- **Critical evaluation of the organisation's strategy:** This is in terms of its suitability, acceptability and feasibility (SAF Framework).

• **Conclusions:**

What conclusions have you drawn from analysing this organisation?

- **Recommendations:** These are what you have derived from examining the organisation. These should link back to the material that you have critically reviewed within the previous sections. There must be a clear rationale for the recommendations. Read your recommendations carefully and ask yourself the following questions:
 - o Are your recommendations rational?
 - o What evidence can you provide in support of these recommendations?
 - o How would the various stakeholders react? How would you react if you were a shareholder?
 - o Is it logical that the company would or need to take these specific actions?
 - o Do they make sense?
 - o Would you be prepared to discuss them at a Board meeting?

• **References:**

These must be in the CUL Harvard Format. There must be appropriate in-text citations throughout your submission. [NOTE: You must seek out credible and validated sources of information for your assignments – Please refer to comments elsewhere in this document and

other guides on the M115 Moodle pages.] The references (both in-text and within the reference list) are not included within the overall word count.

• **Appendices:**

If required and no more than four pages. If there are more than the stipulated four pages those additional pages will not be read.) VERY IMPORTANT!!!

Your response to the brief must show evidence of your ability to research independently relevant data, using appropriate sources and databases, as well as relevant academic literature, to support your arguments.

Conducting and applying research is crucial to this module. Additionally there is a mark awarded for the level of research demonstrated (See rubric).

You will be expected to read and apply information (as an absolute minimum) from the core text, the company's most recent Annual Reports & Accounts, two news items (from reliable sources) and four journal articles.

The journal articles can include the two used to support the CW1 assignment and those listed in Moodle (however the key is application of the information within those articles.)

Please note that marks will be deducted for the use of such sources as (though not exclusive to): 'Wikipedia', 'Business balls' 'essays UK' (or any site that states the word 'essay' in its title or introduction), Quick MBA and 'tutor2u'. These are not Level 7 reading and should be avoided.

If you have any doubts regarding the reliability and validity of sources please ask either your seminar tutor or the module leader.

Please refer to the guides on the M115 Moodle site for further information. It is expected that every student will comply with good academic practice. Any suspicion of a breach of good academic practice will be investigated.

When presenting the frameworks do not simply re-create the diagrams. Your role is to apply the frameworks. It is perfectly acceptable to use a series of subheadings to delineate the points that you wish to make.

Presentation of CW2 Assignment

The [Management](#) Report must be professionally presented and appropriately referenced. As stated above we want you to develop the mind-set that this is for the Board of Directors of your chosen company. Even though you are submitting this electronically we want you to follow the format stated below.

Assignments must be presented in the following format:

- Word-processed in Arial font, 12 pitch and double-spaced.
- Margins must be as follows: Top; 1.0 inch (2.5cm), Bottom; 1.0 inch (2.5 cm), Left; 1.25 inches (3.2 cm), Right; 1.25 inches (3.2 cm).
- All pages must be numbered in the top right-hand corner.
- Use only a plain white background – no coloured/Designed backgrounds (including company

logos) as this impedes readability. Please also remember that a report can be enhanced or damaged through layout, for example placing all tables and drawings in Appendices can hamper the flow of discussion. Decisions therefore need to be made about the most appropriate place to use tables and so on to support your case.

Use of Tables

Use tables only where appropriate. Where you do use tables (perhaps to show changes in revenue and profit over a period of time) make sure that there is a clear interpretation of the information within the text. In other words, what are the figures meant to display?

Use sub headings to delineate the text and write in a narrative style. This enhances readability and allows you to add the necessary evidence to support your perspectives.

Equally, do not use generic diagrams of the various models and frameworks: (1) We want you to demonstrate knowledge and understanding through their application and (2) images of ‘cows’ and ‘dogs’ as used in some Internet depictions of the [BCG matrix](#) are not suitable for a management report for a board of directors.

Diagrams

Use diagrams sparingly.

Remember that this is to be a professional management report, as such any illustrations must be suitable to present to a board of directors.

Written English Language Skills

Review both your sentence and paragraph structuring prior to submission. Read and re-read your work to make sure that you are communicating information clearly and effectively. Your written English must be of a professional standard. This includes avoiding ‘journalistic’ words and phrases.

Retaining Your Working Notes & Source Materials

You will need to retain all your working notes. This material will include (but not be limited to):

- Written or typed notes that you have developed from textbooks, journal articles and other sources.
- Rough drafts of your work.
- Any downloads or print outs of journal articles that you have obtained via Locate.
- Material from quality newspapers and business magazines that you have collected together.

This material will be required if you are requested to attend a Viva voce in support of your submission. You can be required to attend a Viva voce especially if there is any concern regarding the authenticity of your work.

When preparing both of your assessments please review in conjunction with the rubric. Make sure that all the criteria (those on the left hand side) are covered in your work. Once you have drafted your assignments, carefully review them in relation to the rubric.