



STAGE 1

PROJECT

GUIDELINES

Background & Objectives

The Stage 1 project assignment has **three** main objectives:

- Its primary purpose is to enable students to use the ideas and concepts acquired during their studies to better understand marketing/business phenomena that might be observed in the marketplace. In the first year, students are exposed to frameworks and ‘ways of thinking’ which are designed to enhance their ability to understand and explain events that are taking place in business. The project provides students with the opportunity to use these tools to discuss and analyse these issues/events. Typically, this first assignment addresses a topical issue facing organisations. In the past, developments such as the currency crisis, sports marketing, marketing in a booming economy and the introduction of the Euro have featured.
- The project is essentially a practical exercise. Students are invited to select an organisation that they are either interested in or familiar with. The project enables students to apply their knowledge to gain a better understanding of either the organisation they work for or one that they are interested in.
- The Stage 1 project is the first of a series of projects that a student will tackle over the course of the Graduateship. A third objective is to ensure that students develop a sense of good practice in the completion of this type of exercise at the outset.

Examiner’s Expectations

The following are the main expectations of the examiner:

- The format of the project is similar every year. Marks are typically allocated across sections, such as, a description of the background of the chosen organisation, a description of the organisation’s marketing activity/discussion of issues, an assessment of the organization and appropriate presentation and referencing. It is expected that the project be broadly structured along these lines and that each of the sections gets a level of attention that is commensurate with the marks awarded to it.
- It is imperative that students address the core questions raised in the project. You must address the assignment that you are given, not something else that you might have preferred. As mentioned in a previous examiner’s report, the first lesson in marketing is to give the customer what he or she wants.

- It is expected that students will use frameworks and concepts from their first year subjects to address the assignment presented. In essence, you are being asked to use these ideas to describe and explain what is happening in your chosen organisation in the context of the issue you are addressing. Description of the theoretical concepts is unnecessary. Your job is to use the wide range of concepts that are available, appropriately and effectively in your analysis of the assignment presented.
- It is important that you reflect on the research that you have done and draw the appropriate conclusions, viz., what is your assessment of this organisation? what did you learn from the exercise? What recommendations would you make to other firms on foot of your research? etc.
- As this is your first project, it is critical that you develop the habit of presenting your work properly. It should be well structured, clearly laid out, free from spelling errors, properly referenced and include an abstract, table of contents, bibliography, appendices, etc.
- You should not commence writing the project without having read the examiner's reports for the previous three years. A detailed assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of previous work is provided in these reports and will give you useful guidelines on what to do and what not to do.

Grade Categories

The following are the examiner's expectations with respect to each grade category:

- **As:** These are projects which are outstanding in every respect. Submissions falling into this category are generally very well presented, provide a detailed and integrated analysis of theory and practice and usually provide some novel insights, findings or show a particularly strong command of the theoretical concepts.
- **Bs:** Submissions in this class tend to be very good all-round. They will typically provide a balanced examination of all the project's components, show a good command of the theoretical concepts and be well organised and presented.
- **Cs:** Projects falling into this category are typically of the solid but unspectacular variety. They will generally deal with each of the elements of the brief at a fairly rudimentary level, show a knowledge of the basic concepts like the marketing mix and be reasonably well organised and presented.
- **Ds:** Projects in this category tend to be weak in many respects but show that the candidate has a sufficient command of the subject matter to be allowed to progress. Submissions at this level tend to be subjective in their coverage, missing important components of the brief, and usually show only a superficial knowledge of marketing concepts. In many cases at this level, projects tend to be poorly organised and structured and generally reveal many typing/spelling errors.
- **Es & Fs:** Projects that fail outright generally miss the brief entirely and contain information that is of no relevance to the question that was asked. Also falling into this category and the 'compensation' range are projects that are carelessly put together, offer very little in terms of content and show a dangerously weak knowledge of marketing concepts.