BUSS6000

Semester 2 2019

Simulation Report Writing Guide

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY
—
Business School
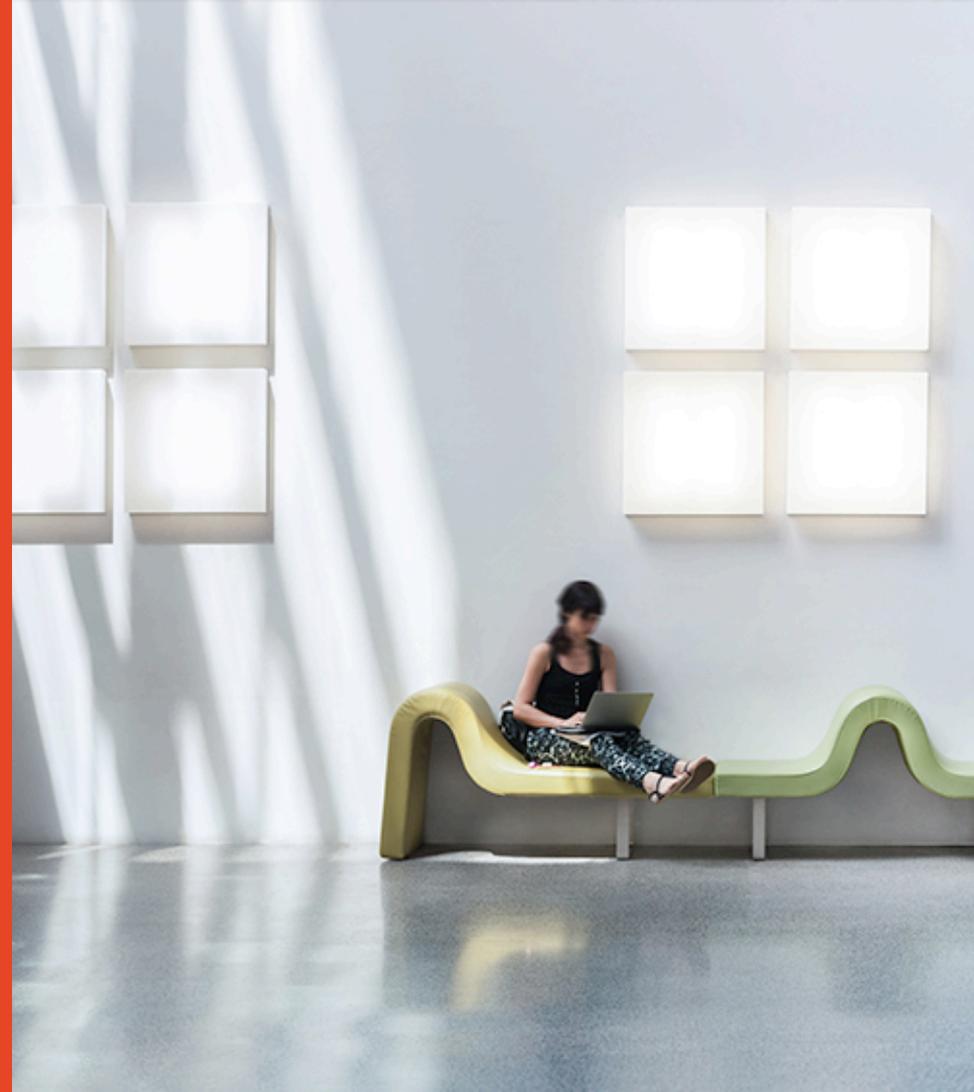
Note:

This writing guide contains important information and advice on how you should write up your experience. There are some mandatory elements (ie questions to be addressed) but it is otherwise a **guide only** and its structural suggestions are not mandatory.

Students may structure and present their reports however they believe best accomplishes the purpose and the assessment criteria in the marking rubric.

Purpose

Purpose:

The purpose of the **Simulation** is:

- To provide a practical learning experience in dealing with the complexities of running a business from a general managers perspective. It is designed to equip students who have studied specific areas of business like big data, accounting, finance or marketing with an understanding of how these functions relate to broader organisational activities and decisions. It also provides a setting for students to apply their learnings on leadership, influencing, decision-making, and team dynamics and development.

The purpose of the **Simulation Report** is:

- To reflect on your actual simulation experience – from your perspective. It must include both a critical analysis of the strategic context and company performance outcomes, and an assessment of the group effectiveness, including your individual contribution to the team and your learnings about what makes for effective teamwork.

The Assessment Criteria:

1. Demonstrate an ability to identify, select and use course-related business knowledge to analyse the decisions and outcomes of the simulation (15%),

2. Apply critical thinking to business practice, using materials from unit workshops, lectures and readings (15%),

3. Solve complex problems through appropriate forms of business analysis (15%),

4. Demonstrate effective communications in the form of professional writing skills (15%),

5. Provide evidence of consideration of:
   a) Group effectiveness (20%), and of
   b) Reflection on individual contribution and learnings (20%)

Note: Be careful with the framing questions that you choose (slides 9 & 11) to make sure that you effectively address all the above criteria.

Assessment Criteria Breakdown

Description

- Isolated observations
- Generalised arguments
- Statements / Listing
- Naïve justification

Business Knowledge

- Implications explored – 'so what?'
- Explicit links between arguments
- Specific + evidenced insights
- Integration of data/theory for support
- Tailored to the specific situation/question

Critical Thinking

- Positives and negatives explored
- Explores limitations of 1) insights 2) own arguments 3) frameworks
- Discusses ramifications or consequences
- Critiquing strategy, decisions or arguments, rather than observing or justifying
- Considers priorities or importance

Problem Solving

- Highlights key problems
- Explores hidden problems or unintended consequences
- Suggests and explores solutions
- Evaluates validity or practicality of solutions against each other
- Leverages past problems, examples or lessons
- Explores and assesses future problems

Communication

- Key messages + theme
- Clear written expression
- Thorough + appropriate referencing
- Paragraphed ideas + logical flow
- Paragraphs with topic sentence, examples, reasoning and summary
- Guiding introduction and impactful + thoughtful conclusion
- Meta-level business implications/lessons/approach

Minor Themes / Major Themes

- Judgement
- A skeptical and provisional view
- Simple Originality
- Careful & Sensitive reading of the text
- Rationality
- Adopting an ethical & activist stance
- Self Reflexivity

(Moore, 2013)
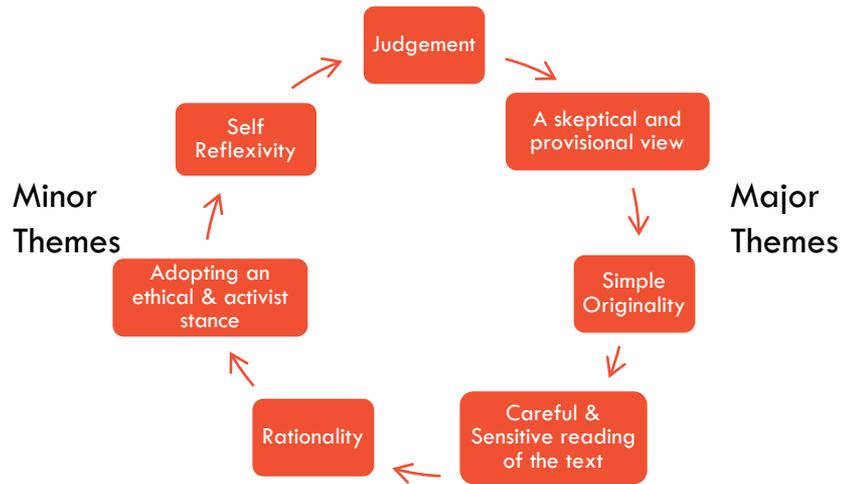
Define	Measure	Analyze	Improve	Control
What is the problem?	What data is available?	What are the root causes of the problem?	Do we have the right solutions?	What do we recommend?
What is the scope?	Is the data accurate?	Have the root causes been verified?	How will we verify the solutions work?	Is there support for our suggestions?
What key metric is important?	How should we stratify the data?	Where should we focus our efforts?	Have the solutions been piloted?	What is our plan to implement?
Who are the stakeholders?	What graphs should we make?	What clues have we uncovered?	Have we reduced variation?	Are results sustainable?

✅ Structure

Analysis

Part 1 – Strategic Analysis (~900 words)

> A strategic analysis, framed around two (2) of the questions below

Part 2 – Personal & Team Reflection (~900 words)

> A personal reflection on your group effectiveness and individual learnings, framed around two (2) of the questions below

References

> Reference list – using the APA 6th ed **(~200 words)**

This writing guide contains important information and advice on how you should write up your experience. There are some mandatory elements (ie questions to be addressed) but it is otherwise a **guide only** and its structural suggestions are not mandatory.

The word count *distribution* above is **a guide** as well – only the *overall* word count is enforceable.

Word count: Approximately 900 words

Explore the key strategic issues that your company encountered along the simulation journey. Frame your response around two (2) questions, chosen from the options on slide 9.

Make sure that you use relevant strategy-related concepts in your analysis, <u>including the related readings</u>, ie:

    Topic 1: Tools for Success

    Topic 2: Strategy Development

    Topic 3: Strategy Execution, and/or

    Topic 4: Strategic Change & Growth

Your Strategic Analysis <u>MUST</u> be framed around two (2) of the below critical questions:

1. Porter (1996) notes that strategy is mostly about effective positioning. How did you go about positioning your business for success? And how did this change as the simulation context grew - and became more complex?

2. Some would argue that after Round 1, the simulation is mostly about effective execution. How well do you feel that you executed on your initial strategy? What would you do differently if you had your time again?

3. Neilson, Martin and Powers (2008) note that strategy execution is the result of decisions made according to various information flows. What sort of information best assisted you in managing your initial strategy, and how did it help you to make good strategic decisions?

4. Critique your business model, and explain how it enabled you (or didn't) to create & deliver value in your venture.

5. Business is always faced with change, some of which is the result of internal decisions, and others imposed on the business by external forces. What aspects of change did you encounter, and how did you effectively manage them?

6. Using the DMAIC framework: define your biggest strategic challenge, comment on what evidence you had of it being a problem, analyse the potential root causes of it, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions considered and implemented.

7. Assuming you were running this as an ongoing consulting business venture (ie in the "real" world), what key challenges would you be likely to face going forward, and what might you then do to achieve sustainable competitive advantage?

<u>Note:</u> Please make it clear to the marker which questions you are using to frame your analysis.

Word count: Approximately 900 words

This section MUST address two (2) themes (broadly equally), using two (2) of the framing questions:

a) **Group Effectiveness:** How well the team managed the process and outcomes, and

b) **Individual Learning:** How well you personally contributed to, and learnt from the simulation experience.

This section is typically more personal and thus normally written in the first person. See the marking rubric for a breakdown of the criterion (and %'s) which relate to each of the above themes.

Make sure that you use related course concepts & readings to inform your reflection, using two (2) of the framing questions (slide 11):

- Topic 1: Tools for Success
- Topic 5: Teamwork Capabilities
- Topic 6: Decision Making Capabilities
- Topic 7: Leadership Capabilities
- Topic 8: Communications Capabilities

Your Reflections MUST be framed around two (2) of the below critical questions:

1. How did the individual values (both yours and the other members of your team) effect the team's decision-making as the simulation progressed? What other personal attributes might also have been influential?

2. Was there a positive journey towards success over the 6 rounds? Explore your management team's development journey, and comment on how you personally dealt with some of the challenges along the way.

3. Teams (especially student teams) typically deal with some aspects of team dysfunction (Lencioni, 2002). What were some of these for you, and how did you go about building trust and a performance culture.

4. Did you have an effective team structure and team roles? Use team styles and leadership concepts to explore your team's management effectiveness.

5. How important is diversity to the success of a team? Use your team and your own personal background (and related course concepts) to frame your response.

6. Decision-making is at the heart of effective management, but most related theory is about individual decision-making practices and capabilities. How did you reconcile and manage this in your team?

7. How did communication processes and techniques affect your overall experience? How could you have improved these processes and techniques?

Note: Please make it clear to the marker which questions you are using to frame your analysis.

Remember that reflective writing …

Is…

- Your response to experiences, opinions, events, and/or new information

- Your response to thoughts and feelings (yours and others)

- A way of thinking to explore your learning from activity (learning-by-doing)

- An opportunity to gain self-knowledge

- A way to achieve clarity & to better understand what you are actually learning

- A chance to develop and reinforce your analytical writing skills

- A way of making meaning out of what you study

- A chance to leverage past learnings in order to shape future opportunities and experiences

Is Not……..

- Just conveying information, theory or argument

- Pure description, though there may be descriptive elements

- Straightforward decision or judgement (e.g. about whether something is right or wrong, good or bad)

- Simple problem-solving (ie we want to know what actually happened between a current and future states - how did you get from A to B)

- A summary of the course notes

- A standard university academic essay (this is business-focussed report)

- A day-to-day log of what happened in your team

Formatting:

Your SID number should appear on the top right corner in each page of your report (DO NOT put your name or Unikey as this is anonymous marking).

The 2000 word limit includes all words in the reference list. Words in <u>ALL</u> pictures, graphs, tables, charts, appendices etc are included in the overall word count. There is a +10% word count leeway regarding penalties, so the word count is only penalised above 2200 words.

Submitting either a PDF or a Word document is equally acceptable. You may wish to convert to PDF for submission as Turnitin's software sometimes displays formatting incorrectly from a Word document.

✅ References

Approximately 10 references (~200 words)

<u>**Important:**</u> All academic material must be appropriately referenced using the **APA 6th Standard** for your referencing style: http://libguides.library.usyd.edu.au/c.php?g=508212&p=3476096

BUSS6000 frameworks from the lectures and readings **MUST** be used in the first instance and referenced appropriately. Frameworks from outside the course may be used, but only where a student has explicitly justified a shortcoming, limitation or gap in core course frameworks.

Thorough and regular referencing adds academic weight to your arguments. Statements not backed up by data and/or appropriate business theory/frameworks carry less weight and will be assigned fewer marks. Referencing adds rigour, integrity and believability to your arguments – doing this as often as possible will enhance your paper by demonstrating your business knowledge with credible sources.

The referencing penalty is 1% for each missing or incorrect reference up to a maximum penalty of 5%.

Indicate the author, year and page number wherever possible as specified in the APA standard so your reader can investigate the veracity of your arguments if necessary.

References (GoVentureCEO)

- GoVentureCEO is not a usual academic reference and is not covered clearly by the APA 6th Standard, students are encouraged to be as clear as consistent as possible when referencing the simulation.

- A Reference List entry like the following will suffice, and only <u>one</u> Reference List entry for all simulation data is needed: **GoVenture. (2019). Retrieved from https://goventureceo.com**

- The in-text reference for sim data could simply be (GoVenture, 2019), however, you may wish to refer to different months of reports specifically such as (GoVenture, January) or to a specific report (Product Competitiveness, February).

- As there are 6 months in the simulation, students can refer to Month 1 as January, through to Month 6 as June, and write their report based in the '6th month' as June 2019 to assist with the professional use of language.

- When creating graphs/tables/charts from the simulation or altering data, you should also make use of the 'adapted from' feature, eg: **Figure 1: Company revenue and profit (Adapted from GoVenture January – August Performance Report)**

- Regular academic references like textbooks, journal articles, lecture/workshop material, have a much clearer process and should follow the APA 6th Standard strictly to avoid penalties.

Due Date & Time

11:59pm (not 5pm as per the UoS Outline) on Friday 27th September (Week 8)!

via Canvas