International Business Project (MANM372)

**Project Brief**

**Introductory Points**

The International Business Project module is about writing an analytical report regarding current or possible international strategies or activities of one chosen company from any industry in any region of the world. Alternatively, you can write a critical report regarding attractions or difficulties of a country in terms of international business such as opportunities for or barriers to Foreign Direct Investment. The project is just a long essay, so **the International Business Project is unsupervised**

* The chosen topic for the project must have an international dimension, otherwise it will not be accepted.
* The international dimension of the project can focus on any type of international strategy or activities such as international marketing (**only one aspect** such as international promotion), international HRM (**only one aspect** such as international recruitment), international manufacturing, international investment or any other corporate-level, business-level, or functional-level strategies or activities.
* The project should be about the existing or potential international business activities of a chosen multinational enterprise (MNE); or can focus on a company planning to become international. Alternatively, you may analyse a country from the perspective of international business.
* Students can select any industry, company or country, so long as there is enough publicly available information in English regarding this company, industry or country. The chosen company can be active in one or more than one industry, however, focus of the report should be only on one industry. The size and country of origin of the company does not matter, and it can be well known or unknown.
* The final output can be either a Management Consultancy report or a Market Research report only based on secondary data. The structure is similar, but emphasis on providing practical recommendations for improvement is greater in a Management Consultancy report.

**Recommended Structure for the Project Report**

Marks are awarded for structure. The following are the sections that shape the project report:

**Coversheet**: Use the usual template for the assignment coversheet. This coversheet is available in the Assessment folder on SurreyLearn.

**Table of contents**: Provide the list of headings and their page number in one separate page from the cover sheet and the executive summary.

**1. Executive Summary**

The executive summary is the section that should be written after finishing all other parts of the report because it is simply a summary of the entire report. Use past tense in writing executive summary.

* All five main sections of the report should be summarised here, including ‘*scope, aim and topic of the report*’, ‘*background to chosen MNE/country*’, ‘*data collection sources and analytical methods*’, ‘*findings*’, and ‘*recommendations*’.
* You may allocate one paragraph for a brief description of each of the five sections, so your executive summary would have five paragraphs.
* You might use five sub-headings, one for each of the five parts of your project report.
* The recommended length for the executive summary is 300-500 words.

**2. Scope, Aim and Topic of the Report**

You need to talk about aim, scope and topic of your report here.

* ***Scope of the report***: You can either have a ***Firm-level /Industry-level*** discussion by focusing only on one company in one industry or you may have a ***Country-level*** debate (not necessary to talk about one specific company in that country). In defining the scope of your report, you need to clarify four interrelated issues. The scope-related matters are: **A)** the chosen international strategy or business activity (what international business thematic or issue is the focus of your report? Such as: Entry modes to a foreign country? International promotional mix? International recruitment? Foreign Direct Investment?); **B)** the chosen industry (on which industry are you going to focus on?); You should focus on one industry only. If your selected company is active in more than one industry, you need to concentrate only on one of these industries that you prefer. **C)** the selected company (from which MNE will you collect data?); **D)** intended country/countries/region (s) (in which geographies will you explore and analyse your chosen company’s international business activities?) Any company from this industry can be the focus of your report. Your chosen company may have activities in many countries and on different continents. You need to mention from where precisely your information is derived.
* ***Aim of the report***: Briefly state your intention for writing this report. What do you want to identify/assess by writing this report? The aim should be in the form of a statement, and not a question. The aim statement starts with ‘To…’. For example, ‘to identify appropriate stages of internationalisation in the car industry; the case of BMW’.
* ***Topic of the report***: The topic of your report should be: **A)** in the form of a statement; **B)** directly connected to the ‘aim of the report’; and **C)** preferably start with a word in ‘ing’ format. For instance, ‘identifying appropriate stages of internationalisation in the car industry; the case of BMW’. You also need to justify the rationale for selecting such a topic for your report. Why is it important for managers or other stakeholders to know more about your chosen report topic? You may use a combination of literature review and factual market data to support your decision to write about the topic.

**3. Background to chosen MNE/Country**

You can either have a ***Firm-level /Industry-level*** discussion by focusing only on one company in one industry or you may have a ***Country-level*** debate. In one or two paragraphs, give some short information about the company or country you selected for investigation in your report, and its existing or intended internationalisation activities/opportunities.

If you choose a **company/industry**, try to explain:

* Say what your chosen company does. If your intended company does business in more than one industry, introduce all of these businesses briefly.
* Why did you select this company?
* You may provide some graphs or/and tables to show the company’s market share and position among competitors in the same industry.
* Indicate in how many countries this company does business.
* If you can find them, you might write the company’s vision, mission, and objectives. Do not worry if you cannot find these details.
* Importance of the main industry that your chosen MNE is part of it. How influential is this industry in a typical country? Contribution to the economy of the country? Number of job creation by the industry in the country?

If you choose a **country** as the focus of your report, you should briefly mention:

* Economic situation of this country in terms of Gross Domestic Products (GDP), GDP per capita, economic growth, and inflation
* Political situation in terms of political stability, government support for international business and investment
* Anything special about this country such as skilful but affordable labour, high-technology, membership of an important regional economic integration such as EU

**4. Data Collection Sources and Analytical Methods**

The report is based on secondary data, the data that are collected originally by other people or organisations than the student. The source of secondary data should be reliable. It means the data are expected to be generated or collected either by academics, authorised staff in an organisation regarding the organisation, official governmental bodies, professional data collection or market research institutes, or international and unbiased organisations.

In the analysis section of your report these issues should be covered:

* ***The utilised sources of secondary data and their justification***. It is crucial to rely only on reliable sources of data in writing your report because reliability of your report, its findings and recommendations depend on reliability of the sources used in the report. Reliable sources for collecting secondary data are annual company reports, the Office for National Statistics, professional databases, report by international institutions such as UNCTAD, European Union, World Bank, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, or OECD. Do NOT use the CIA’s Factbook because of its biased information about some countries. You can use any reliable databases to collect data about the market or a particular company. Four recommended databases are Mintel, Euromonitor Passport, Orbis, and Statista. All of these databases are available via our online library. You need to justify selection of each of your sources of secondary data. Why do you think your chosen sources of data are appropriate for your selected report topic? You might use a table with two columns one for the utilised sources of secondary data and the other brief rationale for using each of the secondary sources.
* ***The employed analytical technique (s) and its/their justification***. Your analytical technique can be a ***theoretical framework*** or a *non-theoretical framework*. The theoretical technique for analysis can be either a **Firm-level or Industry-level theoretical technique** such as Porter’s five forces, Stakeholder analysis, Dunning’s Eclectic Paradigm, the Uppsala internationalisation process model, or the Institutional approach. Alternatively, the theoretical technique for analysis can be a **Country-level theoretical technique** such as Theory of Absolut Advantage, Theory of Comparative Advantage, Theory of Competitive Advantage (Porter’s Diamond Model), or FDI related frameworks. Mention weaknesses of your chosen theoretical framework (s). In this section, you need only to describe and justify your selected theoretical framework but you should not use the theoretical framework for analysis of the chosen MNE or the country in this part. In the ‘Findings’ section (next section), you are required to collect secondary data to support and apply your chosen theoretical framework. If your topic is about assessing or suggesting strategies, you need to use a framework for analysis of the internal or external environment. Then assess or suggest strategies based on results of this analysis.

You may like to select an analytical technique that is a ***non-theoretical method***, including **statistical formula** (such as multiple regression analysis, correlation, chi-square, or frequency) or **qualitative data analysis methods** (such as systematic literature review, content analysis or thematic analysis). If you choose a 'theoretical framework' for data analysis, you will not be required to use any statistical analysis techniques if you do not want to do so. You should justify selection of your preferred data analysis technique (s). Why do you think your chosen data analysis technique (s) would be a suitable method for your report?

**5. Findings**

This section is dedicated to the results of the analysis and interpretations of the findings.

* ***Results of the analysis***: When using a theoretical framework as your analytical technique, your findings would be mainly in the form of discussions concerning each aspect of the employed theoretical framework. For example, if you chose Porter’s Five Forces as your analytical tool, you are expected to illustrate your findings for each of the five parts of the model. If you relied on statistical formula for analysing your collected data, you need to show outputs of the analysis (e.g. correlation table, frequency, pie-chart, or time series analysis graph) in this section. If some of your findings are in the form of graphs or tables, you are required to give separate number and headings for each of the demonstrated graphs or tables. You should put all relevant graphs and tables in this section. If you put tables or graphs in your appendices section, they will not be considered in the marking your report.
* ***Interpretations of the findings***: Although illustrating your findings is important, it is not enough. You must explain what each finding means and how each finding helps you to understand the phenomena/topic you were examining in your report. You should also say what would be the implications of each of your findings for your chosen company or country. If you had a hypothesis or question in your report, you should debate whether or not your hypothesis was rejected or your findings gave you the satisfactory answer to your question.

**6. Recommendations**

In this part, you need to have some evidence-based suggestions to your chosen company/ industry or country to make some improvements on the chosen area of strategy, activity or policy.

* Recommendations must be based on the findings of the analysis. One of the possible ways to show direct connectivity between your findings and your recommendations is through using a table. It could be a table with two or more columns, where in one column you put each of your main findings in a separate row of that column, and in the other column for each of the mentioned findings, you recommend one or more improvement in the company’s (or country’s) internal strategies, actions, processes, management or leadership roles and decisions.
* In addition to the findings you can utilise the relevant literature to support your suggested improvements.
* Your proposed enhancements should not be solely based on literature.
* Try to have at least three relevant recommendations. Having more evidence-based recommendations would increase your mark.

**Reference List:** It is mandatory to have a full list of all sources you used directly in your work. Please do not mention the sources that you did not use directly in your work. Referencing should follow the Harvard Referencing system only.

**Appendices**: It is better not to have any appendices. All necessary information and discussion should be provided within the main text between the executive summary and the recommendations sections. If you really need to have an appendix, remember that the contents in appendix do not have any assigned marks.

**Formatting Issues**

1. It is recommended to use one of the readable and academic fonts such as Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman.
2. It is suggested to use fond size 11 for the general body of the text.
3. You might use font size 13 or 14 in **bold** for main headings.
4. Font size 11 in **bold** would be suitable for sub-headings.
5. Any default page margins (e.g. 2.54 for all sides or 2 for all sides) would be acceptable.
6. Try to have headings for every tables or graphs in your report. Put the heading above the table or the graph.
7. It is recommended to number all table or graph headings.
8. Mention the source of your tables or graphs under the table or graph. If you developed the table or graph just write ‘Source: Developed by the Author for this work’.
9. The recommended line spacing is either 1.2 or 1.5.
10. Submit your report in PDF format.

**Other Important Points**

1. Only the electronic version of the project report should be submitted via SurreyLearn. There is no need for a hardcopy of the project.
2. You should **avoid plagiarism**. Plagiarism is the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own. You must acknowledge sources of any information you take from anywhere, even if you took just a few words or numbers. If you paraphrase (rewrite with your own words) the definitions, claims, or information you borrowed from other sources, you are still required to mention these sources. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence that can lead to the expulsion of the student who plagiarised from the university.
3. **The length of the report is 5000 words**. You are not allowed to write even one word more than 5000 words. The written words in the coversheet, table of contents, references, tables/ figures and appendices would not be considered as part of the 5000 word limit.
4. Try to have at least one citation in every paragraph on average. For example: According to Porter (1990) or the report by the World Bank (2019) indicates …
5. Having more than one citation in each paragraph would increase your mark.
6. Having relevant multiple citations would improve your mark because it is the indication of your wide range of readings and knowledge. You can have multiple citations if only one opinion or finding is supported or mentioned by more than one scholar (or co-scholars in one publication). For example, if scholars of three separate publications agree on internalisation strategies are being forms of the corporate-level strategies, you can write something like this: Internationalisation can be considered as a corporate-level strategy (Lynch, 2016; Smith, 2018; Zhong, 2013).
7. You are expected to use at least 20 different sources in writing your report. These sources can be annual reports of the company, reports by international institutes or any other academic or professional sources. To receive a top mark, you should use at least 30 different sources.
8. Try to have citations from relevant papers from top academic journals such as ***Journal of International Business Studies***, ***Journal of Word Business***, ***Strategic Management Journal***, ***Global Strategy Journal***, or ***Long Range Planning***.
9. Use graphs and tables in your discussions. Tables are great tools to help you compare two or more perspectives.
10. As the name of the module indicate, this is not a dissertation or business plan module so you cannot submit a dissertation or a business plan as your final project.
11. The student can use the chosen topic and many of the discussions and the collected data for their Business Reporting Techniques report for their final International Business Project, **as long as less than 50% of Business Reporting Techniques report (less than 1500 words) are used in the final International Business Project comes**. It means you can take up to 1500 words directly (word-by-word) from your Business Reporting Techniques report and use them in your International Business Project report.
12. You have to use only Secondary data (the data or reports that published by organisations, governments or other researchers). You will receive a FAIL grade if you collect and use Primary data by using interview, questionnaire or observation.
13. This is not a dissertation, so there is not an exclusive section for comprehensive literature review. However, it is expected that you will use a brief literature review as part of three sections in your report: topic of the report, data analysis section and recommendation section. A literature review is a great way to support the rationale for choosing a particular topic for the report. In the data analysis section, literature can be used to justify selection of a particular analytical technique and help interpret the findings. Literature also can help to support the proposed recommendations to the chosen company/industry or country regarding the selected topic.
14. Use the Harvard Referencing System correctly.