

Unit 6: Managing a Successful Business Project

Unit code	D/508/0491
Unit type	Core
Unit level	4
Credit value	15

Introduction

This unit is assessed by a Pearson-set assignment. The project brief will be set by the centre, based on a theme provided by Pearson (this will change annually). The theme and chosen project within the theme will enable students to explore and examine a relevant and current topical aspect of business in the context of the business environment.

The aim of this unit is to offer students an opportunity to demonstrate the skills required for managing and implementing a project. They will undertake independent research and investigation for carrying out and executing a business project which meets appropriate business aims and objectives.

On successful completion of this unit students will have the confidence to engage in decision-making, problem-solving and research activities using project management skills. They will have the fundamental knowledge and skills to enable them to investigate and examine relevant business concepts within a work-related context, determine appropriate outcomes, decisions or solutions and present evidence to various stakeholders in an acceptable and understandable format.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit a student will be able to:

- 1 Establish project aims, objectives and timeframes based on the chosen theme.
- 2 Conduct small-scale research, information gathering and data collection to generate knowledge to support the project.
- 3 Present the project and communicate appropriate recommendations based on meaningful conclusions drawn from the evidence findings and/or analysis.
- 4 Reflect on the value gained from conducting the project and its usefulness to support sustainable organisational performance.

Essential Content

L01 **Establish project aims, objectives and timeframes based on the chosen theme**

Project management:

What is project management and what does it involve?

The key stages of project management.

The advantages of using project management and why it is important.

Initiation of the project and project planning phase:

Scoping a project – defining objectives, scope, purpose and deliverables to be produced.

Steps and documentation required in the initiation phase.

Developing the project plan, including planning for timescales and time management, cost, quality, change, risk and issues.

The work breakdown structure.

Use of Bar and Gantt Charts for effective planning.

L02 **Conduct small-scale research, information gathering and data collection to generate knowledge to support the project**

Project execution phase:

Selecting appropriate methods of information gathering, data collection and material resourcing.

The distinct phases which support a coherent and logical argument.

Use of secondary research to inform a primary empirical study.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Field work:

Selecting a sample of the consumer market, businesses or individuals (those who meet certain characteristics relevant to the research theme) is used to gather data (qualitative or quantitative).

Sampling approaches and techniques, including probability and non-probability sampling.

Ethics, reliability and validity:

All research should be conducted ethically – how is this achieved and reported?

Research should also be reliable (similar results achieved from a similar sample) and valid (the research should measure what it aimed to measure).

Analysing information and data:

Using data collection tools such as interviews and questionnaires.

Using analytical techniques such as trend analysis, coding or typologies.

L03 Present the project and communicate appropriate recommendations based on meaningful conclusions drawn from the evidence findings and/or analysis

Communicating outcomes:

Consider the method (e.g. written, verbal) and the medium (e.g. report, online, presentation).

Both method and medium will be influenced by the project research and its intended audience.

Convincing arguments:

All findings/outcomes should be convincing and presented logically where the assumption is that the audience has little or no knowledge of the project process.

Developing evaluative conclusions.

Critical and objective analysis and evaluation:

Secondary and primary data should be critiqued and considered with an objective mindset.

Objectivity results in more robust evaluations where an analysis justifies a judgement.

L04 Reflect on the value gained from conducting the project and its usefulness to support sustainable organisational performance

Reflection for learning and practice:

The difference between reflecting on performance and evaluating a project – the former considers the research process, information gathering and data collection, the latter the quality of the research argument and use of evidence.

The cycle of reflection:

To include reflection in action and reflection on action.

How to use reflection to inform future behaviour, particularly directed towards sustainable performance.

Reflective writing:

Avoiding generalisation and focusing on personal development and the research journey in a critical and objective way.

Generalisation:

Many studies result in generalised findings. Research which has its basis in a specific field such as Human Resource Management (HRM) and in a specific context should avoid generalised conclusions.

Outcomes should be specific and actionable.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Pass	Merit	Distinction
LO1 Establish project aims, objectives and timeframes based on the chosen theme		LO1 & 2 D1 Critically evaluate the project management process and appropriate research methodologies applied.
P1 Devise project aims and objectives for a chosen scenario. P2 Produce a project management plan that covers aspects of cost, scope, time, quality, communication, risk and resources. P3 Produce a work breakdown structure and a Gantt Chart to provide timeframes and stages for completion.	M1 Produce a comprehensive project management plan, milestone schedule and project schedule for monitoring and completing the aims and objectives of the project.	
LO2 Conduct small-scale research, information gathering and data collection to generate knowledge to support the project		
P4 Carry out small-scale research by applying qualitative and quantitative research methods appropriate for meeting project aims and objectives.	M2 Evaluate the accuracy and reliability of different research methods applied.	
LO3 Present the project and communicate appropriate recommendations based on meaningful conclusions drawn from the evidence findings and/or analysis		LO3 & 4 D2 Critically evaluate and reflect on the project outcomes, the decision-making process and changes or developments of the initial project management plan to support justification of recommendations and learning during the project.
P5 Analyse research and data using appropriate tools and techniques. P6 Communicate appropriate recommendations as a result of research and data analysis to draw valid and meaningful conclusions.	M3 Evaluate the selection of appropriate tools and techniques for accuracy and authenticity to support and justify recommendations.	

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>LO4 Reflect on the value gained from conducting the project and its usefulness to support sustainable organisational performance</p>		
<p>P7 Reflect on the value of undertaking the research to meet stated objectives and own learning and performance.</p>	<p>M4 Evaluate the value of the project management process and use of quality research to meet stated objectives and support own learning and performance.</p>	

Additional Evidence Requirements

In addition to the above assessment criteria students will also be required to complete a project logbook to record ideas, changes and developments as they progress and complete the project.

Recommended Resources

COSTLEY, C., ELLIOT, G. and GIBBS, P. (2010) *Doing Work Based Research: Approaches to Enquiry for Insider-researchers*. London: SAGE.

FLICK, U. (2011) *Introducing Research Methodology: A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. London: SAGE.

GRAY, D. (2009) *Doing Research in the Real World*. 2nd Ed. London: SAGE.

SAUNDERS, M., LEWIS, P. and THORNHILL, A. (2012) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 6th Ed. Harlow: Pearson.

Journals

International Journal of Quantitative and Qualitative Research. Qualitative Research Journal.

Links

This unit links to the following related units:

Unit 8: Innovation and Commercialisation Unit

11: Research Project

Unit 16: Operations and Project Management