GUIDELINES

FOR PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF
PROJECT REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
OSMANIA UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD - 500007

PROJECT WORK

1. INTRODUCTION

As a student of Master of Business Administration (MBA) you are required to undertake a major individual piece of research work - the Project or Dissertation. In contrast to the other elements of your programme, where you are guided fairly closely, the aim of the Project is to give you the opportunity to learn independently and show that you can identify, define and analyse problems and issues and integrate knowledge in a business context. It is an important part of the programme that tests your ability to understand and apply the theory, the concepts and the tools of analysis to a specific problem situation. This project handbook has been compiled to clarify the framework of the project and suggest some ways of assuring success.

The only precise rule on what constitutes an acceptable project is that it should be an ordered critical exposition, which affords evidence of reasoning power and knowledge of the relevant literature in an approved field falling **within the subject matter of the programme - Management**. The emphasis should be on applied research and the investigation of some practical problem or issue related to the situation in which an organisation or system operates.

Please note that the project must not be treated as just another assignment. The Project provides the opportunity to judge the student's time and self-management skills and his/her ability to successfully undertake a long and in-depth study. Hence it is not only the product that is important, but also the process itself. Students must therefore ensure that they maintain **regular contact with their supervisor** and also that they provide the supervisor with drafts of their work at regular intervals. Finally, to keep yourself up-to-date and under control as regards your project, it is imperative that you **meet your supervisor regularly.**

2. DEFINITIONS AND OVERIEW OF PROJECT

The project is a practical, in-depth study of a problem, issue, opportunity, technique or procedure – or some combination of these aspects of business. Typically, you will be required to define an area of investigation, carve out research design, assemble relevant data, analyse the data, draw conclusions and make recommendations. Your project should demonstrate organisational, analytical and evaluative skills, and, where appropriate, an ability to design a suitable implementation and review procedure.

The project is the longest **(24,000 words)** and most original piece of work you will undertake in your post-graduate study. It will occupy, with varying degrees of commitment, a period of two semesters.

3. GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROJECT

The purpose of the project is to give students the opportunity to carry out an in-depth study of an applied nature, synthesizing various elements, yet pursing one area of interest in depth. Your project report should make clear what you have attempted and why you have attempted it; the methods that you have used to collect, collate and analyze the information obtained; and how you have evaluated it. Any recommendations made should be supported by the evidence presented and by logical argument using deductive and inductive reasoning. For a Project to be of a high quality it is imperative to avoid detailed description devoid of analytical content. The **assessment criteria for the Project** are shown in the Project Grading Sheet attached as **Appendix B** to this Handbook. You should ensure through the entire period that you work on your project that it meets these requirements.

4. CHOOSING A TOPIC

Choosing your topic is probably the hardest thing you will do. **The choice of topic is up to you, with guidance from your supervisor, but, he/ she is not there to make the decision for you.** To a large extent, your ideas will be influenced by your situation. If you are in employment you may be able to research into a real life problem or, if you are not employed, you may choose a more general business issue. In either case, initial ideas are likely to originate in a vague form and may lack a clear focus. These then need to be developed into something manageable and practical by consideration of available literature/ texts and discussion with your project supervisors once allocated.

4.1. Most Project ideas come from:

- **Personal experience of employment**: this is an obvious starting point for the project because in every organisation there would be some issue that can be researched into. An example of a project originating from this way could be an evaluation of the Training Department of your organisation or an evaluation of the performance appraisal systems used for salesmen in your organisation.

- **Observation of events**: Personal observation of events in the organisation/ environment can serve as a starting point for a project idea. An example of this could be that as an employee you observe that the employee turnover in your organisation is very high and as your project you could research into the reasons for this and make suitable recommendations.

- **Issues of current interest**: Reviewing key issues of broader relevance may be another useful indicator for a project idea. Specific consideration of the aspects of the effect of a government policy or a phenomenon on the performance of an organisation/segment/system may provide suitable ideas for a Project. You need to take care when dealing with issues such as these. It may be necessary to confine yourself to an aspect of the issue or you could find yourself tackling something that is too big to handle effectively and gives you a very wide project area, which inevitably lacks depth of analysis.

Whatever the source of your project idea, familiarity with the area is imperative for the successful completion of the project.

5. SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

An acceptable project will normally fall into one of the following categories:

- **Exploratory**- a study that involves carrying out original research in order to meet the organization's continual need for new information for forward decision-making. The main issues may be human, economical, functional etc, but the construction and/or application of some kind of research instrument are the focus of the study. The analysis of the research findings (*e.g.* client's responses to questionnaire about changing product specifications) should take place, resulting in proposals about how to manage relevant aspects of the organisation's future.

- **Explanatory**- a study, which would involve studying relationships between different variables like a cause & effect relationship study.

- **Descriptive**- a study that would need an in-depth portrayal of an accurate profile of events or situations from the business environment.

6. ORGANISATION OF PROJECT REPORT

This section presents some of the norms associated with a project. It is strongly recommended that you **follow these guidelines**. The final report should be presented in the following sequence:

- ❖ Title page
- ❖ Student's Declaration (Annexure-I)
- ❖ Supervisor's Certificate (Annexure-II)
- ❖ Abstract
- ❖ Acknowledgements
- ❖ Table of Contents:
    - ▪ List of Tables
    - ▪ List of figures
    - ▪ List of Appendices

- ❖ *Chapter 1*. **Introduction**: This chapter includes the research problem, need for study/significance of the project, objectives, hypotheses, methodology – scope, sample design, sources of information, tools and techniques of analysis, structure of the study with sound justifications/explanations.

- ❖ *Chapter 2*. **Literature Review**: This chapter should reflect the student's understanding of the relevant theoretical and empirical background of the problem. Focus should be more on the logical presentation of the empirical evolution of conceptual and methodological issues pertaining to research problem. Also highlight the methodological clues drawn through this review for your project.

- ❖ *Chapter 3*. **The company/Organisation/System:** This chapter should contain a brief historical retrospect about the entity of your study.

- ❖ *Chapter 4 & 5:* Present your data analysis and inferences

- ❖ *Chapter 6*. **Summary and Conclusions**: Gives an overview of the project, conclusions, implications and recommendations. Also specify the limitations of your study. You may indicate the scope for further research.

- ❖ **Bibliography**: List the books, articles, websites that are referred and useful for research on the topic of your specific project. Follow Harvard style of referencing.

❖ **Appendices**

Your documents should be appropriately numbered. It is usual for Page 1 to start with the Introduction. The sections prior to the Introduction are usually numbered with small Romans, i.e. i, ii, iii. It is easier if appendices are numbered in a separate sequence (suggest A, B, C) rather than as a continuation of the main report.

While presentation follows this sequence, it may be actually written in a very different order. For example, the introduction is often the last major section to be completed.

6.1. Title Page (example)

Keep it very simple. Do not describe the contents. Have a working title and then decide a final title when you have finished the Project. This is the standard format of the Title Page that every student is expected to use.

Effectiveness of Liquidity Risk Management Policies, Procedures and Strategies of ICICI Bank

(Name of Student)

(Student hall ticket number)

Project submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
by
Osmania University, Hyderabad -500007

6.2. Abstract

This is a summary of about **300 words** (not more than **one side of double-spaced A4**) that describes the topic; explains the aims and methods of the study and gives a brief resume of the main conclusions and recommendations.

6.3. Acknowledgements

Here you have the opportunity to thank the various people who have helped in the development of the project. It might include specific individuals who have given information, offered insights, or generally been supportive. Gratitude may be expressed to groups of people, like those who were studied, or fellow students. Try not to be too flippant or too "soppy"!

6.4. Table of Contents

The contents page gives the reader the first view of how the project is structured and how the author attempted to develop the topic. It lists sequentially the sections and major sub-divisions of the sections; each identified by a heading and located by a page number. The following box gives an example.

Your precise structure will have to be tailored to the needs of your own projects. If in doubt, discuss with your project supervisor at an early stage.

6.5. List of Tables and Figures

Throughout the project, it is likely that you will want to present material in tabulated or diagrammatic form. Some such presentations will bear only indirectly or partially on your arguments, and in such cases you will need to decide about their proper location. Additional or less relevant information may be better placed in an appendix.

Whether you decide to locate your tables/figures in the main body of the report or the appendices, it is conventional to provide special "contents pages" so that readers can easily find the information. Tables and figures should be listed on a separate page as shown below.

Examples of List of Tables

Examples of List of Figures

6.6. Introduction

The introduction is crucial, since it sets the tone and context for the rest of the project. In the introduction, it is important to outline the reasons behind the study – your motives or rationale for conducting the study. You must give a broad introduction to the topic under review and types of issues it raises.

Central to this part of the project is the setting of clear objectives, which you intend to achieve by the end of the study. Your statement of objectives should be concise and precise, and should be carefully considered in the light of your original aims and what you have been able to achieve in your study.

Finally, you should include a summary of how you are going to treat the chosen topic, running briefly through the sections to show how the structure of the project allows you to explore the topic in your selected way.

6.7. The Main Body of the Project

The structuring of the project will reflect your preferences, so there is no one best way to do it. However, there are predictable issues that need covering and your structure should permit you to deal with them in an orderly fashion. For example, a project will include a literature review; most will involve the reporting of primary research; all will need to draw conclusions and consider recommendations. Additionally, all projects will include a section outlining, and justifying, the methodology you have adopted and should link research methods to the objectives and literature review.

The main body of the project must take the reader logically through a variety of linked arguments, relating theory and practice, concepts and concrete observations, so that the reader can understand and identify with the conclusions and recommendations of the author. Your arguments need to be drawn demonstrably from your own observations and grounded in an authoritative set of ideas. They should not be anecdotal. Although the arguments should be presented in a tight structured form – using headings at regular intervals to achieve this – they should also have an essential discursive character, *i.e.* you should fully explore the implications and ramifications of the topic by developing the arguments in a relevant way.

You should ensure that you have covered all the major issues pertinent to the topic by the end of the main body of the project.

Depending on the nature of your project, it might be appropriate to include a summary of your findings before embarking on your conclusions.

6.8 Summary and Conclusion

Your Conclusion should include a summary of your main arguments, drawing together the various themes and issues so that they can be brought to bear on the defined objectives of the study. As with all reports, there should be no new information introduced in this section. Your Recommendations should be feasible, practical and must place your conclusions within a concrete and practical framework. You need to consider your recommendations in the context of their possible human, financial, political, managerial, etc, implications. Your recommendations should be justified.

6.9 Appendices

You should locate in the appendices all that information which gives an additional, quasi-relevant support to the arguments you are constructing. It is important that you put all the information you require the reader to attend to, in the main body of the text. Appendices should be consistently signified by letter (APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B) or by number (Roman) and give titles that indicate their contents. Do remember to source information in appendices appropriately.

6.10 Bibliography and Referencing

Referencing is necessary to avoid plagiarism, to verify quotations and to enable readers to follow-up and read more fully the cited author's arguments. Reference is given within the text of the project as well as at the end of the project. The basic difference between citation and a reference list (bibliography) is that the latter contains full details of all the in-text citations.

- **Citation** provides brief details of the author and date of publication for referencing the work in the body of the text.
- **Reference List** is given at the end of the text and is a list of all references used with additional details provided to help identify each source.

References should be made to sources of material throughout the report. Various conventions are used for referencing but you must use **Harvard Referencing**, as shown in **Appendix A**, throughout your report.

Proper referencing is a crucial aspect of your project. You are therefore strongly advised to talk to your supervisor about this, in order to make sure that your project report follows the appropriate referencing system.

7. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS OF THE PROJECT

- ❖ The project should be typed on **A4 white paper**, and be **double-line spaced.**

- ❖ The left margin should not be less than **40 mm** and the right margin not less than **20 mm**.

- ❖ All pages should be **numbered**, and numbers should be placed at the centre of the bottom of the page, not less than 10 mm above the edge.

- ❖ **All tables, figures and appendices** should be consecutively numbered or lettered, and suitably labelled.

- ❖ **3 bound copies** & **a soft-copy** should be handed in to the **Principal/Director of your College/Institute** at the time of submission.

NOTE: College in turn would submit **Two** bound copies of all the projects to the Controller of Examinations along with a consolidated CD containing the soft copy of the projects and the list of project titles sorted on the HT Numbers with linkages to the respective project file. The columns in the list should include HTNO., Name of the Student, Major Elective and the Project Title. College name and the year should be mentioned on the CD.

8. PLAGIARISM

Any attempt to copy from another (present or previous) student or to copy large chunks from academic or other sources without appropriately referencing those sources will trigger the full weight of plagiarism procedures. **If there is any doubt concerning the authenticity of your work, the university reserves the right to demand an individual presentation before a panel at which you will be required to reply to spontaneous questions.**

All the material that relates to your project, including completed questionnaires or tapes from interviews, should be shown to your supervisor and be kept until the examination board has confirmed your results. Do not throw this material away once your project is submitted, as you might be asked to present it as part of the viva voce, before your project results are confirmed.

9. YOU AND YOUR SUPERVISOR

The supervisor's role is one of guidance - providing advice and pointing out possible problems that may arise. **The supervisor's role is to appraise your ideas and work.** You must take overall responsibility for both the content of your project and its management. This includes **selection of an appropriate subject area (with the approval of the supervisor)**, setting up meetings with the supervisor, devising and keeping to a work schedule (to include contingency planning), and providing the supervisor with samples of your work.

It is **your responsibility to make contact with your supervisor** and arrange meetings at appropriate times. You should use the time with the supervisors wisely. The students must meet their supervisors for **a minimum of four meetings per semester, over the span of the entire project.**

You should spread your workload over the entire time available for carrying out your project. Draw up a realistic work schedule with in-built slack to allow for problems. Be sure you are aware of your specific hand-in dates.

You must exchange contact details with your supervisor, and make sure that he or she has your relevant contact information. Your supervisor will keep a log of meetings with you. After each meeting with your supervisor, you will both sign a student contact and progression form. **Note that if the records show that your contact with your supervisor is not good; your project may not be marked.**

Be sure you are clear about the assessment criteria for the project. Note that a significant proportion of the grade is allocated to presentation and style. A high level of communication skills is expected. However, **it is not within the role or the duties of your supervisor to correct your grammar and syntax.**

Your supervisor will comment upon samples of your work but **will not pre-mark** the whole document, or substantial portions of it. If asked, you must present a sample of your written work prior to a meeting with your supervisor, at an agreed time. **Under no circumstances will your supervisor give you an indication of your expected final grade.**

You must keep hard copies of each version of your work, and save copies of the current version on a main and a backup disk (preferably kept apart from each other). Disks should regularly be virus-checked. Also, make sure to keep printed copies of working documents, and the raw data from any questionnaires or other data collection.

10. A FEW TIPS....

Choose a topic, or an issue, in which you are interested.

Get organised, give yourself time to think about your project. Look at the information available - is there enough information available for you to be able to produce a good project? Be wary if you are relying upon organisations to provide you with information. They will not give you confidential or sensitive information and you must not expect them to respond as promptly as you would like.

Visit the Library and spend some time looking at previous projects.

With the help of your project supervisor agree on the aims and objectives and the structure of the project as soon as possible.

It is worthwhile investing in some reliable storage devices for storing your project - related documents. Keep at least two copies (updated). Remember to virus check your storage devices.

The final printing and binding of your project can be the most frustrating time. Allow five working days. Numbering pages, re-arranging pagination and putting together the Contents page takes a deal of time – do not underestimate this part of your task. By this time you will have been working on your project for some months - you will be bored with it; you just want to hand it in and move on to the next assignment. So, to save your time and frustration, allow yourself five working days for this part of the task.

Do not underestimate the enormity of the task ahead of you. The key points are to organise your time; make and maintain contact with your supervisor, decide upon your topic and when you have formulated your aims, objectives and structure - get on with it!

Finally, remember to print and keep a copy of the project report for your own use, as no copy of the report submitted will be returned to you.

APPENDIX A: Harvard Style Referencing

Referencing is a standardised method of acknowledging sources of information and ideas that you have used in your report in a way that uniquely identifies their source. Direct quotations and figures, as well as ideas and theories, both from published and unpublished works must be referenced.

This appendix provides a brief guide to the Harvard Referencing style.

For Textbooks:

- In the references and bibliography sections of the Project report, the referencing to material used from text should appear as follows:

The author, year of publication followed by the title of the textbook (in italics), publisher, location of the publisher.

e.g.

Saunders, M. et al (2003), *Research Methods for Business Students* (3rd edition), Pearson Education, Harlow.

- In the text of the Project report the reference would appear as follows:

………………being identified by Saunders (2003) ……………………

- If a direct quote is included in the text the page number where it can be found should also be included while referencing.

e.g.

"When drafting your literature review you therefore need to focus on your research question(s) and objectives." (Saunders 2003, p47)

For journal articles:

- In the references and bibliography sections of the Project report, the referencing to material used from journals should appear as follows:

The author's name, followed by the title article, journal name in italics, volume number.

e.g.

Storey, J, Cressy, P, Morris, T and Wilkinson, A (1997) ' Changing employment practices in UK banking; case studies', Personnel Review, 26:1, pp24-42.

- In the text of the project report the same reference would appear as follows:

………………being identified by Storey et al (1997) and ………….

For websites:

- In the references and bibliography sections of the Project report, the referencing to material used from websites should appear as follows:

If you are referring to a specific article, it should be detailed as for journal articles as mentioned above, but with the additional information as to where it is available on the Internet.

e.g.

Jones A and Smith A (eds) 2001 'What exactly is the Labour Force Survey?' (online) (cited 20 December 2001). Available from URL: http//www.statistics.gov.uk/nbase/downloads.theme_labour/what_exactly_isLFS1.pdf

A typical BIBLIOGRAPHY is given hereunder for a better understanding:

Board, J L G and Sutcliffe, C M C (1988). "The Weekend Effect in UK Stock Market Returns," *Journal of Business Finance and Accounting,* 15(2), 199-213.

Broca, D (1992). "Day of the Week Patterns of the Indian Stock Market," *Decision,* 19(2), 57-64.

Choudhury, S K (1991). "Seasonality in Share Returns: Preliminary Evidence on the Day of the Week Effect," *Chartered Accountant,* November, 407-409.

Fama, E (1995). "The Behaviour of Stock Market Prices," *Journal of Business,* 38(1), 34-105.

French, K (1980). "Stock Returns and the Weekend Effect," *Journal of Financial Economics,* 8(1), 55-70.

Gibbons, M R and Hess, P (1981). "Day of the Week Effects and Asset Returns," *Journal of Business,* 54(4), 579-596.

Gultekin, M N and Gultekin, N B (1983). "Stock Market Seasonality: International Evidence," *Journal of Financial Economics,* 12(4), 469-482.

Jaffe, J and Westerfield, R (1985). "Patterns in Japanese Common Stock Returns: Day of the Week and Turn of the Year Effects," *Jounal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis,* 20(2), 261-272.

Please note that all sources referenced in the main text should also be fully detailed in the reference and bibliography section.

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ANNEXURE – I

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Project Report titled
_____ submitted by me

to the Department of Business Management, O.U., Hyderabad, is a

bonafide work undertaken by me and it is not submitted to any other

University or Institution for the award of any degree diploma /

certificate or published any time before.

Name and Address of the Student   Signature of the Student

ANNEXURE – II

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the Project Report title

_____

submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of MBA

Programme of Department of Business Management,

O.U.   Hyderabad,   was   carried   out   by

_____   under   my

guidance.   This has not been submitted to any other

University   or   Institution   for   the   award   of   any

degree/diploma/certificate.

Name and address of the Guide   Signature of the Guide