



FDY3002

Exploring the Business Environment

Case Study

Date for Submission: Please refer to iLearn for date of submission

(The submission portal on iLearn will close at 14:00 UK time on the date of submission)



Assessment Brief

As part of the formal assessment for the module **Exploring the Business Environment**, you are required to submit the assessment as described in this assessment brief.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing the module, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the importance of organisations' understanding of their internal and external environment
2. Demonstrate an understanding of key business functions, with reference to academic sources of information
3. Explain business ethics and state how and why ethical issues may influence how a business operates
4. Graduate Attribute: Professionally knowledgeable in the subject area

All learning outcomes must be met to pass the module.



Guidance

Your assessment should include: a title page containing your student number, the module name, the submission deadline and the exact word count of your submitted document; the appendices if relevant; and a reference list in Harvard referencing style (see referencing section for more information). You should address all the elements of the assessment task listed below. Please note that tutors will use the assessment criteria set out below in assessing your work.

You must not include your name in your submission because Arden University operates anonymous marking, which means that markers should not be aware of the identity of the student. However, please do not forget to include your STU number.

Maximum word count: 2000 words

Please refer to the full word count policy which can be found in the Student Policies section here: [Arden University | Regulatory Framework](#).

Please note the following: Students are required to indicate the exact word count on the title page of the assessment.

*The word count includes everything in the main body of the assessment (including in text citations and references). The word count excludes **numerical data in tables, figures, diagrams, footnotes, reference list and appendices**. **ALL other printed words ARE included in the word count.***

Please note that exceeding the word count by over 10% will result in a 10-percentage point deduction.



Assessment Task (LO 1, 2, 3, 4)

For this assessment, you are required to read and respond to the Case Study below.

The main outcome is to show your understanding of theory and how you apply theory to the case study to arrive at a considered opinion. You should discuss the theories and concepts that you have been introduced to on this module and rely on the sources of information that are available through iLearn.

You are a business consultant.

A small-business owner sends you the following email request for your professional guidance.

Dear Business Consultant,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Miriam, and I am the owner of Bistro Café. My business has been struggling for over a year now, and I really need your expertise and guidance, as I am very close to having to close my business. I have provided some information about it below.

Our Mission: We aim to “connect people through exceptional coffee and culinary experiences, delivering a perfect blend of quality, innovation, and comfort to our valued customers.”

Background: The Bistro Café is a small business located in a bustling town centre, surrounded by busy retail stores, many other cafes, including high-street brands, and several high-rise office blocks. We open 5am-5pm Monday to Friday only. I run the business on a sole-trader basis.

The cafe has been in operation since 2002 and has built a reputation for its delicious food, cheap coffee, and warm atmosphere. Unlike many of the other cafes in the area, we haven’t wanted to lose our charm, so we haven’t changed much since we opened. We believe that cheap coffee and good service is more important than Wi-Fi or plug sockets for customers.

However, I have been facing several challenges that threaten the long-term sustainability of my business.

Costs: Over the last few years our markups have reduced significantly on coffee. At £2 per cup, we used to achieve a 90% markup. Due to substantially increased costs from our supplier, that has now reduced to under 15%. Through rigorous negotiation we have



managed to maintain good margin on food sales, but our coffee supplier is a member of my partner's family who is suffering some health issues, and we have given them our business for many years so don't want to cause any stress for them now. It doesn't feel fair to try and negotiate as we are sure they are offering us their best price.

Customer Demographic: Since the pandemic we have noticed that the times we are busiest, and the type of customers we attract, have changed. Before the pandemic we used to be very busy 7am-9am on weekdays, but now we seem to get most of our customers between 11am-1pm. We are considering staying open later into the evening in the hope of doing some more trade.

Operating costs: The current increase in costs for my business have made things challenging. My electricity costs have quadrupled, and my staffing costs have increased because my staff often quit at short notice, meaning that I have to pay new starters to train, whilst also paying a staff member to train them. I have started offering unpaid 'trial shifts' to new staff, which keeps my costs down as they effectively work for half a day for free. If customers don't hear about this it should be fine, but I need to find more savings, I think. I do pay £2 more per hour than the National Minimum Wage. Wages make up a large amount of my outgoings, and some months I don't earn enough to cover both the wage bill and my own salary, so I take a pay cut myself.

I think that overall operating costs are the biggest challenge, but I also have a plan to help tackle them. I have started keeping 50% of all staff tips paid by debit card to help offset my increase costs. My staff are unhappy about this, but I have checked and it isn't illegal.

Customer attraction and retention: This year, many of our loyal customers have stopped coming into the cafe, and they haven't been replaced by new customers. There are other cafes in the area, but I don't think anybody sells cheaper coffee than us. We have noticed that other cafes in the area have been advertising and offering promotions, but we have never needed to do that before so think it would be a waste of money for us. Some customers ask why we don't sign-up with food delivery services, but we've seen that the commissions for those can be high, so we haven't explored that option as we are already struggling with our finances. We have just launched a Facebook page, but we aren't very tech-savvy, so we haven't done anything with the Facebook page yet.

Kind regards,
Miriam



Your task is to write an email (LO4) to Miriam explaining why her business is failing and to make recommendations on what business improvements she should implement to save the business. Your email should be no longer than 2000 words, not including references.

Your email should help Miriam to understand the following:

The impact of the current internal and external environment on Bistro Café

- What internal and external environmental factors are having a negative impact on her business? Aim to discuss at least 2 internal and 2 external factors.
- What actions can Miriam take to address the internal and external environmental factors you have identified, so that they have less of a negative impact on her business?
- What opportunities could Miriam take advantage of, both internally and externally, of, so that her business recovers and thrives?

Bistro Café's key business functions

- What issues have you identified regarding the effectiveness of the current key business functions (Finances, Operations, Marketing, People?)
- What can Miriam do to make improvements in these functional areas?

Ethical issues

- What ethical issues can you identify in the running of Bistro Café?
- Why are these ethical issues a problem?
- What action should Miriam take so that she runs an ethical business?

You are required to structure your email reply in the following way (sub-headings are available on the assessment template):

- **Introduction (100 words):** Acknowledge Miriam's concerns and outline the key factors and improvement areas on which your email will focus.
- **The impact of the current internal and external environment on Bistro Café (800 words).**
- **Bistro Café's key business functions (800 words).**
- **Ethical issues (200 words).**



- **Concluding remarks (100 words):** End your email with an overview of the key points discussed and emphasise your key recommendations.
- **Reference list (not included in word count).** In your email, you should provide full in-text citations for the theories and concepts to which you have referred, and a corresponding reference list.

Advice for completing this assessment

- *An outstanding/excellent case study response will respond to the sole trader's particular concerns. It will refer to and discuss Bistro Café's specific circumstances and business set up.*
- To help you to understand the case study and write your assessment, you may find it helpful to conduct a PESTEL and SWOT analysis for the business. Please note, however, that you do not need to include a PESTEL and SWOT in your assessment.
- To support your investigation and analysis, refer to the IBIS World Industry Report for Cafés and Coffee Shops in the UK. The Industry Report will give you some useful background information about the café and coffee shop sector – what its challenges and opportunities are.
- You can access the report by visiting the IBIS World database on the library website (<https://library.arden.ac.uk/z-list-databases-0>) and searching for 'Cafés and Coffee Shops in the UK'. There will also be a PDF of the report on iLearn. Don't forget to reference any information from IBIS World that you refer to in your assessment.
- As you are writing an email back to Miriam, you can use second-person pronouns (you, yours).
- Write in your own words, using formal, academic English.
- It is important to reference academic sources within your assessment, to support your review, and to justify your recommendations. A minimum of three references should be included following the AU Harvard style.

This module is marked using the Arden University Categorical Marking Criteria



Final portfolio submission

Assessments submitted late will not be accepted.

Please submit your portfolio as a Word document. A template is provided on the module iLearn site. Please use the template, as it will make sure that you include all the evidence asked for.

You must ensure that the submitted assignment is all your own work and that all sources used are correctly attributed. Penalties apply to assignments which show evidence of academic unfair practice. (See the Student Handbook which is available on the A-Z key information on iLearn.)

Assessment Support

We strongly encourage you to engage with our assessment support options as you work through your assessment task(s):

- View the week 10 iLearn lesson 'General Assessment Advice and Guidance' (for information about resits, extensions and extenuating circumstances)
- Book a tutorial with a Foundation Year lecturer
- [Academic Skills Team - book an appointment with a tutor here](#)
- [Academic Skills Team – book a workshop](#)
- [Academic Skills Team – view resources](#)
- [For support with English Language visit the English Language Hub](#)

Formative Feedback

You can submit a full/partial draft of your work in week 6 for feedback.

Submit a copy of your draft using the Turnitin formative draft link by the given deadline in week 6. You can find the deadline for your draft on iLearn. You can submit your draft on iLearn under the 'My Assessment' tab.

Formative tasks give you the opportunity to check your understanding of key concepts, and therefore help you prepare for the final portfolio submission.

Your lecturer will provide verbal/written feedback to help you improve your assessment, before submitting your final portfolio in week 10.



Referencing Guidance

You **MUST** underpin your analysis and evaluation of the key issues with appropriate and wide-ranging academic research and ensure this is referenced using the AU Harvard system.

Follow this link to find the referencing guides for your subject: [Arden Library](#)

Using AI

An AI language model like ChatGPT can be used as a tool to help you develop writing skills, conceptual models and templates for your writing. For example, ChatGPT can be used effectively to:

- Develop research questions
- Create an outline for an assessment
- Create examples/guidance for different writing styles and forms
- Discover relevant sources (though it is essential to confirm that the source is not falsified by finding and using the original source)
- Brainstorm ideas
- Translate text into English
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However, it is not advisable to use AI-generated texts and they should not be used to replace your own critical analysis and students should carefully verify information obtained from ChatGPT (and other AI software,) with other credible sources.

Students should also check with their lecturer or department about specific requirements of using AI-generated content and how an acknowledgement statement of AI assistance should be presented in your assessment.

Please refer to the referencing guides for guidance on how to reference any use of artificial intelligence in the writing of your assessments. You can access the referencing guides here: [Arden Library](#)



Assessment Criteria for FDY3002 Exploring the Business Environment

Level 3	Level 3 prepares students to function effectively at Level 4. Criteria for assessment at Level 3 reflect the preparatory nature of these modules. Students are expected to demonstrate the acquisition of generic learning skills appropriate for self-managed learning in an HE context. Students are expected to demonstrate that they have acquired the underpinning discipline-specific skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to undertake a programme of higher education.						
	Outstanding 80+ (85 / 90 / 95 / 100)	Excellent 70 – 79 (72 / 75 / 78)	Very Good 60 – 69 (62 / 65 / 68)	Good 50 – 59 (52 / 55 / 58)	Satisfactory 40 – 49 (42 / 45 / 48)	Marginal Fail 30 – 39 (Eligible for consideration for compensation) (32 / 35 / 38)	Fail < 29 (0 / 5 / 15 / 20 / 25)
Arden University assessment criteria (Overall Judgement)	Outstanding performance which demonstrates an outstanding knowledge base, supported with wider reading and the ability to begin to analyse the subject area. The work draws widely on relevant theory and shows awareness of any relevant ethical considerations.	Excellent performance which demonstrates an excellent knowledge base and the ability to begin to analyse the subject. The work draws on relevant theory whilst showing some awareness of any relevant ethical considerations.	Very good performance which demonstrates a sound understanding of the content and some ability to analyse the issues with reference to theory.	A good performance which shows a decent understanding of the content and makes some reference to theory. The work shows a sound level of competence in managing basic sources and materials. Good professional skills (where appropriate).	A satisfactory level of understanding in which there are some gaps in knowledge of the subject, its underpinning theory, and ethical considerations.	A limited level of knowledge in which there are clear omissions in understanding the subject, its underpinning theory, and ethical considerations.	A poor performance in which there are substantial gaps in knowledge and understanding. The work is imitative.

Module LO1: Discuss the importance of organisations' understanding of their internal and external environment	<p>An outstanding discussion, with close reference to highly relevant internal and external environmental factors that are affecting the case study business.</p> <p>Recommendations made show an outstanding insight into the business environment and would have a highly positive impact on the case study business.</p>	<p>An excellent discussion, with close reference to highly relevant internal and external environmental factors that are affecting the case study business.</p> <p>Recommendations made show excellent insight into the business environment and would have a highly positive impact on the case study business.</p>	<p>A very good discussion, with good reference to relevant internal and external environmental factors that are affecting the case study business.</p> <p>Recommendations made show very good insight into the business environment and would have a positive impact on the case study business.</p>	<p>A good discussion, with good reference to relevant internal and external environmental factors that are affecting the case study business.</p> <p>Recommendations made show good insight into the business environment and would have a positive impact on the case study business.</p>	<p>A satisfactory discussion, with some reference to relevant internal and external environmental factors that are affecting the case study business.</p> <p>Recommendations made show satisfactory insight into the business environment and would have some positive impact on the case study business.</p>	<p>A limited discussion, with little reference to relevant internal and external environmental factors that are affecting the case study business.</p> <p>Recommendations made show limited insight into the business environment and would have a limited positive impact on the case study business.</p>	<p>A poor discussion, with very limited or no reference to relevant internal and external environmental factors that are affecting the case study business.</p> <p>No recommendations made, or very limited recommendations that show little insight into the business environment and would have little impact on the case study business.</p>
Module LO2: Demonstrate an understanding of key business functions, with reference to academic sources of information	<p>An outstanding understanding of key business functions, with highly specific reference to the case study business details.</p> <p>Excellent quality academic sources of information are used to support discussion.</p>	<p>An excellent understanding of key business functions, with highly specific reference to the case study business details.</p> <p>Excellent quality academic sources of information are used to support discussion.</p>	<p>A very good understanding of key business functions, with specific reference to the case study business details.</p> <p>Very good quality academic sources of information are used to support discussion.</p>	<p>A good understanding of key business functions, with specific reference to the case study business details.</p> <p>Good quality academic sources of information are used to support discussion.</p>	<p>A satisfactory understanding of key business functions, with some reference to the case study business details.</p> <p>Satisfactory academic sources of information are used to support discussion.</p>	<p>A limited understanding of key business functions, with minimal reference to the case study business details.</p> <p>Limited academic sources of information are used to support discussion.</p>	<p>A very limited or no understanding of key business functions, with minimal or no reference to the case study business details.</p> <p>Very limited or no academic sources of information are used to support discussion.</p>



Module LO3: Explain business ethics and state how and why ethical issues may influence how a business operates	Outstanding explanation of the ethical issues presented by the case study business.	Excellent explanation of the ethical issues presented by the case study business.	Very good explanation of the ethical issues presented by the case study business.	Good explanation of the ethical issues presented by the case study business.	Satisfactory explanation of the ethical issues presented by the case study business.	Limited or inaccurate explanation of the ethical issues presented by the case study business.	Very limited or no explanation given of the ethical issues presented by the case study business.
Graduate attribute LO4: Professionally knowledgeable in the subject area.	Assessment shows student has an outstanding knowledge about key topics, core skills, concepts discussed in the module.	Assessment shows student has an excellent knowledge about key topics, core skills, concepts discussed in the module.	Assessment shows student has a very good knowledge about key topics, core skills, concepts discussed in the module.	Assessment shows student has a good knowledge about key topics, core skills, concepts discussed in the module.	Assessment shows student has a satisfactory knowledge about key topics, core skills, concepts discussed in the module.	Assessment shows student has a limited knowledge about key topics, core skills, concepts discussed in the module.	Assessment shows student has a limited or no knowledge about key topics, core skills, concepts discussed in the module.
Arden University assessment criteria Academic writing, academic skills	Excellent academic writing skills and professional skills (where appropriate).	Excellent academic writing skills and professional skills (where appropriate).	Academic writing skills are very good, and expression remains accurate overall. Very good professional skills (where appropriate).	Academic writing skills are generally good, and expression remains accurate overall although the piece may lack structure.	Academic writing skills are limited and there are some errors in expression and the work may lack structure overall. There are some difficulties in developing professional skills (where appropriate).	Academic writing skills are weak and there are errors in expression and the work may lack structure overall. There are difficulties in developing professional skills (where appropriate).	Academic writing skills are very weak and there are numerous errors in expression. The work lacks structure overall. Professional skills (where appropriate) are not developed.



Arden University assessment criteria Use of sources, referencing of sources	The work shows an outstanding level of competence and confidence in managing appropriate sources and materials and initiative. The work is accurately and consistently referenced throughout.	The work shows a high level of competence in managing sources and materials and initiative. The work is consistently referenced throughout.	The work shows a very good level of competence in managing sources and materials and some initiative. The work is referenced throughout.	There is some attempt to reference the work.	The work shows a basic use of sources and materials.	The work shows a limited use of sources and materials.	The work shows little evidence in the use of appropriate sources and materials.
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Level 3 prepares students to function effectively at Level 4. Criteria for assessment at Level 3 reflect the preparatory nature of these modules. Students are expected to demonstrate the acquisition of generic learning skills appropriate for self-managed learning in an HE context. Students are expected to demonstrate that they have acquired the underpinning discipline-specific skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to undertake a programme of higher education.		
Grade	Mark Bands	Generic Assessment Criteria
First (1)	80%+	Outstanding performance which demonstrates an outstanding knowledge base, supported with wider reading and the ability to begin to analyse the subject area. The work draws widely on relevant theory and shows awareness of any relevant ethical considerations. The work shows an outstanding level of competence and confidence in managing appropriate sources and materials, initiative and excellent academic writing skills and professional skills (where appropriate). The work is accurately and consistently referenced throughout.
	70-79%	Excellent performance which demonstrates an excellent knowledge base the ability to begin to analyse the subject. The work draws on relevant theory whilst showing some awareness of any relevant ethical considerations. The work shows a high level of competence in managing sources and materials, initiative and excellent academic writing skills and professional skills (where appropriate). The work is consistently referenced throughout.
Upper second (2:1)	60-69%	Very good performance which demonstrates a sound understanding of the content and some ability to analyse the issues with reference to theory. The work shows a very good level of competence in managing sources and materials and some initiative. Academic writing skills are very good, and expression remains accurate overall. Very good professional skills (where appropriate). The work is referenced throughout.
Lower second (2:2)	50-59%	A good performance which shows a decent understanding of the content and makes some reference to theory. The work shows a sound level of competence in managing basic sources and materials. Academic writing skills are generally good, and expression remains accurate overall although the piece may lack structure. Good professional skills (where appropriate). There is some attempt to reference the work.
Third (3)	40-49%	A satisfactory level of understanding in which there are some gaps in knowledge of the subject, its underpinning theory, and ethical considerations. The work shows a basic use of sources and materials. Academic writing skills are limited and there are some errors in expression and the work may lack structure overall. There are some difficulties in developing professional skills (where appropriate).
Marginal Fail	30-39%	A limited level of knowledge in which there are clear omissions in understanding the subject, its underpinning theory, and ethical considerations. The work shows a limited use of sources and materials. Academic writing skills are weak and there are errors in expression and the work may lack structure overall. There are difficulties in developing professional skills (where appropriate).
Clear fail	29% and Below	A poor performance in which there are substantial gaps in knowledge and understanding. The work shows little evidence in the use of appropriate sources and materials. Academic writing skills are very weak and there are numerous errors in expression. The work lacks structure overall. Professional skills (where appropriate) are not developed. The work is imitative.

