

Company Case Study

Aims:

- Facilitate in-depth understanding of a range of professional and ethical issues
- Develop the capacity for analytical and critical thinking
- Develop the ability to present and explain an ethical argument
- Develop effective written communication skills

Due Date: Break Week end, Monday, October 1, 11:55 p.m.

Value: 20%

Company Case Study

This assignment involves analysing an existing Information Technology company in the context of the themes discussed in the Professional Issues and Ethics part of the course. Imagine you are a fund manager for an ethical investment company who needs to assess (from an ethical perspective, not a financial perspective) whether or not your fund should invest in a particular IT company. You need to write a "professional issues and ethics" report (1000-1500 words) on a company of your choosing in the Information Technology space and discuss one or two major professional/ethical issues that are relevant to the decision, then provide an overall conclusion about whether the company meets expected standards of ethical behaviour (there is no need to consider the financial prospects of the company).

Some discussion points could include policies and practices on employment, equity/diversity, work culture, intellectual property, privacy, tax, involvement in conflict, discrimination, sustainability and environmental impact. Emphasize the company's actual practices, not what is given in corporate slogans, "mission/vision statements" or marketing campaigns. Depth is more important than breadth, so aim to cover at most two professional/ethical issues in detail – one issue is enough if it allows sufficient discussion. Suitable IT companies to study include Alphabet/Google, Facebook, Twitter, IBM, Apple, Samsung, SnapChat, WhatsApp, Atlassian, Microsoft, Airbnb, Uber, Tinder, etc. (or others, but confirm with your tutor in advance to make sure they are sufficiently IT related).

Your report should include:

- Some background on the issues being discussed, to provide sufficient context, history and evidence.
- In depth ethical discussion. You need to clearly identify the ethical issue(s), and analyse them using ethical reasoning. Identify stakeholders, present the perspectives from both sides of the issue, and analyse the issue in terms of ethical theories (duty and consequence-based) as well as one relevant code of conduct/ethics (e.g. the ACS Code of Conduct for an Australian IT company).
- A series of conclusions comprising judgements of the ethical or unethical nature of the company's activities in relation to the issues discussed, and an overall conclusion.
- Evidence in the form of reported case studies, (verified) media coverage, legal and court proceedings, and the company's own codes of ethics/conduct and policies including social and environmental responsibility statements, that supports your conclusions.

The report should be written in English and in the style of a formal business or industry report, and should

include proper bibliographic references. You may use headings and sub-headings to clearly identify different parts of the report. **Importantly, your report cannot overlap substantially with your student seminar (check with your tutor if in doubt).**

Note: The report should contain structured arguments, not a collection of loosely connected paragraphs. The [UNSW Learning Centre](#) offers a number of academic skills courses, including one specifically on report writing, which you are encouraged to attend, especially if English is not your first language.

Submission

- **Make sure your name, student number and the report title DO APPEAR in the document**
- Then submit one pdf file using the following command:

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give cs4920 report report.pdf
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Assessment

Assessment Criteria

The assignment will be marked based on the following rubric. Note, however, that while the rubric will provide some guidelines, emphasis will be placed on having clear, well-structured arguments that demonstrate critical thinking and an ability to synthesize and apply the ethics content of the course.

	<50	50-64	65-74	75-84	85-100
Content	Some sections of the report are missing	All sections of the report are nominally present but without depth of analysis	All sections of the report are present and covered adequately	All sections of the report are present, including in-depth discussion	All sections of the report are present with exceptional quality discussion
Background	Poorly chosen issue or little background provided	Background to the case study is presented adequately	Sufficient background and evidence	Background provides all the information required on the issue with sufficient supporting evidence	Excellent presentation of the background on the company and the issue(s) being discussed, well supported and referenced
	Ethical dilemma and stakeholders not properly identified. Only one side of the	Main ethical dilemma and stakeholders	Main ethical dilemma and stakeholders are identified. Analysis is balanced and demonstrates	Ethical dilemmas and stakeholders are identified. Analysis is balanced and presents a clear, valid ethical	Ethical dilemmas and stakeholders are identified. Analysis is balanced and presents a clear, novel and

Ethical discussion	argument is presented. Poor reference to ethical theories and existing codes. Inadequate justification for conclusions.	are identified adequately. Some attempt at a balanced discussion.	some ethical reasoning taking into account ethical theories and professional codes. Some supporting evidence provided.	argument taking into account ethical theories and professional codes. The discussion is well supported by evidence. Conclusion is well justified.	insightful ethical argument taking into account ethical theories and professional codes, as well as appropriate evidence from a wide range of other sources. The argument leads to a strongly supported conclusion.
Structure	Report is poorly organised with little logical flow	Adequate document structure. The different sections are identifiable. Connections between ideas are not always clear.	Content is organised logically and flows well. Good attempt to establish connections between ideas.	Content is organised logically and flows well. Connections between ideas are clearly established.	Content is organised logically into a coherent, easy to understand argument. Connections between ideas are clearly established.
Presentation	Writing is difficult to understand. Referencing and bibliography is inadequate. Poor formatting.	Writing, bibliography and formatting are adequate. Report may be a little too short or too long.	Writing and formatting are clear and referencing is coherent. Length of report is appropriate. Minimal grammar and spelling errors.	Excellent writing and referencing, interest of the reader is maintained through the whole report. Length of report is appropriate. Minimal grammar and spelling errors.	Writing is clear and highly engaging, free of typos and grammatical errors. Length of report is appropriate. Faultless formatting and referencing.

Late penalty: Late submissions receive a 0 mark

Plagiarism

- **Remember that ALL work submitted for this assignment must be your own INDIVIDUAL work and no copying or collaboration on assignments is allowed. This includes copying from the Internet. Do not cut-and-paste material from online sources.**
- **All sources must be appropriately cited. Sources such as Wikipedia articles are discouraged when these do not permit attribution of the author. Verbatim**

quotations are permitted in limited circumstances but must be clearly identified as such.

- All submitted assignments will be compared automatically (using turnitin) to those of all other students in the class and to Internet sources for potential plagiarism. See the [UNSW Policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism](#) for more information.
- For a particularly clear example of plagiarism, see [this video](#) and [this blog post on turnitin](#) comparing Melania Trump and Michelle Obama's speeches to their respective National Conventions.