**Imperial College
Business School**

MSc Business Analytics 2020/21

BA Report
Module Booklet

Module aims

The BA Report is an individual 5,000 word report on a relevant Business Analytics topic. Students can select their own title with approval from the Academic Director.

Students will carry out their report **unsupervised.**

Key dates

Students must submit their chosen title via online survey by **10am, Monday 28th June**
The deadline for online submission of the report is **Friday 3rd September.**

Objectives

Students will develop the ability to:
- carry out, interpret, evaluate and synthesize existing literature related to a business/managerial theme
- Learn to analyse data and present the results for managerial decisions in the context of the business situation and competitive landscape
- effectively express in writing their opinion and critical evaluation on a business/ managerial theme
- present their ideas to both inform and persuade an audience on a particular topic
- carry out research and other tasks unsupervised, managing time effectively throughout

Students who complete the module successfully will:
- a deeper, critical understanding of theories and frameworks
- a better understanding of how to conduct a research process on a given topic; improve familiarity with the sources and the use of both literature and secondary data
- analytical skills to select and use relevant information for the purpose of producing an extended essay with practical managerial relevance
- to present ideas to a professional standard in a limited time frame without supervision

Purpose

The BA Report should demonstrate that students are able to address a theme by applying the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills acquired from modules within the MSc Business Analytics programme. This will also be an opportunity to demonstrate successful independent working, setting own targets and delivering a report that is professional, insightful, original, articulated, supported, convincing and valuable.

Your report should have both academic and practical relevance. To address the academic aspect you will need to appropriately refer to theoretical models and then reflect on their applicability, usefulness and limitations. The practical aspect will include your conclusions, your interpretation of the real world facts (insight) and your recommendations or proposed view of future developments (foresight).

When choosing your topic the only requirement is that it is within the area of Business Analytics. This does not necessarily mean that your report has to involve data and programming. Other acceptable approaches for the report can be:
- Managerial relevance
- Entrepreneurial topics
- Impact of analytics
- Novel ways analytics are being used
- An interesting analysis of a specific data set.

The aim of the report is that <u>you choose an area and topic</u> that is of interest to you.

It is however vital you keep the following in mind:
- You are not expected to collect primary data. You are only required to refer to secondary data to support your arguments. The report requires that you both describe and analyse the data in some way in order to draw conclusions from it. Your conclusions, or reflections, should normally address both theoretical and practical implications.
- Your report is expected to make appropriate use of some of the concepts, models or principles that you have learned during the MSc.
- An absolute requirement is a full and detailed list of references that will be sufficient to allow any reader to identify and access the sources you have used.

Marking scheme
The marking scheme will take into account the following:
- *Level of difficulty*
- *Use of literature & theory:* Review of existing literature and understanding of theoretical issues.
- *Data analysis:* Use of evidence, analysis and argument. Use of knowledge, tools and skills from the programme.
- *Quality & structure:* Rationale of report structure, quality of references to sources, clarity and elegance of expression.
- *Conclusions and recommendations:* Strength of conclusions and relationship to foregoing content, suggestions for further work.
- *Programme learning objectives:* Achievement of module learning objectives described on page 1 of this document.

Structure
It is recommended that your report be ordered as follows:
1. Title page including your name, CID number, report title and word count
2. Abstract (suggest 150 words)
3. Main text of the report including:
   - Introduction - background to research, overview of topic, aims and objectives
   - Supported arguments
   - Conclusions and recommendations
4. References
5. Appendix or appendices (if applicable)

Length
Your report should be 5,000 words (with 10% discretionary allowance). The word limit applies to the main text area only, as this is where your report is introduced and then carried forward. Your final word count should not include the abstract, references, bibliography or appendices. In-text references are included in the word count. Reports longer than 5,500 or shorter than 4500 words will be penalised. The word count should be included on the title page of your report.

If the report is to contain a considerable number of tables and figures, it may be best to place them in an appendix and use summary tables or charts in the main text only which will assist the reader in following your arguments without necessarily having to go into great detail. This may help to ensure a smooth and uninterrupted presentation.

Appendices

Appendices should be included where necessary to develop a theme or analysis which is not necessary to a first reading of the report and which, if included in the main text, would tend to confuse the general line of argument, or to present data that are useful as background but not essential in detail.

References

It is mandatory that your report contains a full list of references. Although there are many correct ways to reference, the Harvard Referencing System is the prescribed method for Imperial College and you should refer to the Citing & Referencing Guide: Harvard Style that is produced by the Imperial College Library for comprehensive guidance on this style of referencing.

Poor referencing may result in your report being reported to the Plagiarism Committee who may classify it as Minor Infringements or even Plagiarism depending on how badly the referencing has been done.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgement or data as though they were your own, for example:

- not referencing the source of your ideas or arguments where they have derived from your reading
- directly taking the exact words of someone else's work and putting it into your report without using quotation marks and referencing it or paraphrasing it sufficiently
- taking whole chunks out of books, articles, lecture notes, other reports or other students' work, and putting them in your report without citation.

Plagiarism is not acceptable in any form of written work.

When submitting your report you will be required to confirm that you have read the above definition of plagiarism, are fully aware of what it means and to certify that the report is entirely your own work, except where indicated. All reports are scanned electronically to check for plagiarism; this is a university regulation.

Plagiarism is a serious offence. The Exam Board are entitled to penalise you for plagiarism, and serious cases will result in an automatic failure of the report. The Exam Board reserves the right to take further action as it deems appropriate to protect the good name of the Business School and the College, and this may involve expulsion of a student from the course or withdrawal of a degree award.

Submission

Report titles must be submitted via the online form by **10am, Monday 28th June**

The report is to be submitted electronically via The Hub by**, Friday 3rd September**.

Your report should be submitted in **PDF** format and named according to the format below: **Surname-Initial-2021-BAReport.pdf**

Frequently asked questions

Where do I start?
Think of an area where you would like work, or spend your career after the MSc Programme. Complete initial research for a few days before you decide on a topic/title. You should then submit your chosen topic/title, and we recommend not making changes to ensure you can focus and research your topic to a sufficient level of quality.

Can I choose my own title?
Yes. Please email Wolfram if needed to discuss your chosen topic/title before submitting this to the online survey by the deadline 28th June.

Can more than one person work on the same topic?
Yes! You can work on whichever topic you like, however we would strongly recommend not submitting the same title as another student.

Do I need to wait for my title to be approved before starting my report?
Yes, as you are creating your own title, you must get approval from Wolfram before beginning your report. All students will be contacted after the submission deadline in July once Wolfram has reviewed the submitted topic/titles. However, if you would like to get started sooner on your report, then please contact Wolfram directly via email.

Can I change the title of my report once it is approved?
Once your topic and title has been approved via email in July, then we do not recommend making any changes as we want you to have thought carefully about the direction for your report. Should a change be necessary however, then you must email the programme team with the new topic/title and reason for change. This will then be subject to approval by Wolfram on a case-by-case basis.

Do I have to be at Imperial to work on my report?
No. Reports are submitted electronically via The Hub.

Am I allowed to ask an academic for help on my report?
The reports are unsupervised so you cannot ask for guidance on what to put in your report. However, you may ask specific questions relating to their area of expertise.

Where can I get support?
The Library Team will be running a series of supporting sessions relating to the BA report as which will appear in your calendars and on the Hub, so please attend these and refer to the supporting documents which will be posted on The Hub after each session:

The Business Library Team are also available for advice on how to find information and referencing, etc throughout the summer: libbpd@imperial.ac.uk

Do I need to include an Abstract or Executive Summary?
Yes, it is a requirement.

What is included in the word-count?
The word limit applies to the main text area only. Your final word-count should not include the abstract, references, bibliography or appendices. In-text references are included.

What happens if I miss the deadline?
If you miss the deadline, you will fail your report. Please ensure that you leave plenty of time to submit and adjust correctly for any time changes if you are not based in the UK. Technical problems are not a valid reason for late submission. If you cannot upload to The Hub before the submission deadline, please email your report to the programme team before the cut-off time. Late submissions will only be allowed in cases of valid Mitigating Circumstances and will require a Mitigating Circumstances form to be submitted along with documentary evidence.

Can I submit my report early?
Yes of course! The submission area will be open on the Hub from May but please make sure your title is approved before you begin working on your report.

When will I receive the grade and feedback for my report?
We will endeavour to get your grade and feedback to you as soon as possible, which is likely to be after the final Exam Board meets in late October.

What grade do I need to achieve to pass the BA report module?
As with all 100% coursework-assessed modules, the pass mark is 50%. Therefore you will require a mark of 50% or above in the BA Report to achieve a Pass. Please see the MSc marking criteria on page 11 of the MSc Programme Handbook.

What happens if I fail my report?
If you fail your report (either for poor content or plagiarism), you will need to re-submit accordingly.