

Exam and Coursework preparation

INF6320 IS in Organisations

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**The
University
Of
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Outline

- Open book exam preparation;
- Tips to develop your argument;
- The specificity and value of case analysis;
- Guidance for Learning Diary writing

Open book exam structure and process

28th January 2019, 13:30 – 16:30

Exam duration: 3 hours

[CHECK STUDENT EXAMINATION TIMETABLE FOR DETAILS](#)

Module	Title	Start	Finish	Day	Date	Venue
INF6320(A-K)	Information Systems in Organisations (MOLE) Surnames A-K	13:30	16:30	Monday	28 January 2019	Diamond Computer Room 1
INF6320(L-T)	Information Systems in Organisations (MOLE) Surnames L-T	13:30	16:30	Monday	28 January 2019	Diamond Computer Room 3
INF6320(U-X)	Information Systems in Organisations (MOLE) Surnames U-X	13:30	16:30	Monday	28 January 2019	Diamond Computer Room 2
INF6320(Y-Z)	Information Systems in Organisations (MOLE) Surnames Y-Z	13:30	16:30	Monday	28 January 2019	North Campus Computer Room

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The open book exam is not designed to assess memory and recall. It requires you to **understand, apply, analyse and evaluate information** you have learnt throughout the module. It will test whether you understand the “big picture” of the module and how the various concepts presented work together, as well as in relation to the case study ‘Vodafone: Managing Advanced Technologies and Artificial Intelligence’;

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You will be presented with three sets of two questions. Each set corresponds to the three major themes taught in the module:

- Organisational analysis/ information driven organisations
- Business process and supply chain management/ IS sourcing
- Big data, the Internet of Things (IoT) and Cognitive Computing

From each set you must compulsorily answer one question. **In total you will answer three questions**, which will be marked out of 100 and will bear equal weighting.

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An open book exam means that you will be allowed to bring notes, texts, and/or other resources into the exam room. You will also be allowed to consult online materials such as journal articles and e-book chapters. The Open Book Exam will be computer-based and submitted online via Mole (you will submit a Word document with your answers to the three questions).

Exam Questions

- Present a topic;
- Discuss literature;
- Evaluate case study and select examples;
- Adopt a particular point of view;
- Present some conclusions.

Theme 1

- “organisational perspective” (Detlor, 2010) of information management and its focus on organisational information processing;
- The implications of advanced technology adoption for business operations and value creation.

Theme 1

- centralisation vs decentralisation and mechanistic vs organic organisational structure as fundamental challenges of organisational design;
- How advanced information technologies shape and are shaped by organisational culture.

Theme 2

- What is value chain?
- What technologies can be used to support each business functions and what added value can be created by the technologies?
- Why and how does good value chain management with appropriate technology supports can create value for customers?

Theme 2

- External market versus internal provision
- What is IT outsourcing?
- What is the transaction cost theory? How has the transaction theory been used to explain IT outsourcing decision?
- How can the argument of core competence be used to explain IT outsourcing decision?

Theme 3

- Difference between data, information and knowledge
- The increasing need for knowledge management for businesses
- Knowledge management systems
- Intelligent systems
 - Different types and examples (expert system & fuzzy logic, knowledge discovery, optimisation, simulation)

Theme 3

- Opportunities for businesses
 - New data driven business models
 - Existing business models
 - Automation, decision making, customisation (see examples)
- Challenges for businesses
 - Data, algorithm, security and privacy (see examples)
- Implications on societies
 - How the general society will benefit as an effect of businesses taking up these opportunities? And what are the challenges?

What markers look at

- Understanding: the topic, the point of view;
- Selection and coverage: the key references, the targeted use of case study examples;
- Structure: the organisation (and flow) of the argument.

Understanding

- Authoritative, independent, critical evaluation of full range of theories with originality in analysis

VS

- No significant evidence of originality, lack of understanding and focus, limited insight into the problem or topic

Selection and coverage

- Complex concepts presented, key texts used effectively. Good range of sources used selectively to support argument

VS

- Primary knowledge base, limited/ irrelevant/ out of date sources

Structure

- Coherent and compelling argument. Fluent and well presented

VS

- Arguments not developed, confused and incoherent

Overall appraisal

- Insightful, displaying originality and independent thought, outstanding ability to make informed judgement, professional standards of writing and presentation

VS

- Narrow argument, contains inaccuracies, patchy overall knowledge, presentational weakness, limited evidence of independent thought

Make your answers stand out

- Critical thinking/analysis
- Cogent argument
- Quality of written style
- Clarity of layout and argument
- Component parts well linked together
- Explore further than the obvious – push boundaries
- Focus on what is really important (selectivity)
- Personal touch (e.g. reflection, link with experience)

Finding information

- Reading books and articles, taking notes (reading list is a good starting point);
- Searching catalogues in library;
- Google scholar;
- Skimming sources for information - enables you to cover a lot of ground
 - Make your reading effective;
 - Look in tables of contents, abstracts, titles of chapters, subtitles, tables, etc.

Manage your time well

- Keep the 3-hour limit in mind!
- Allocate preparation time for reading and collecting materials and notes, writing notes;
- Remember that the writing process during the exam is time consuming. You need to consider:
 - Concise writing
 - What is central to your argument?
 - What can be omitted?

Planning your answers

- Read the exam questions and make sure you understand them;
- Clear structure:
- Divide into sections:
 - Enhances clarity and readability
 - Make the direction clear from start;
- Leave space for conclusions;
- Pay attention to language
- Think, plan, write, review.

Developing your argument

- Use source material
- Compare and contrast
- Show awareness of complexities
- Show line of reasoning
 - Identify a central guiding line
 - Establish linking points
- Draw your conclusions - based on evidence

Structuring your argument

- Identify reasons for and evidence/Reasons against and evidence;
- Compare and contrast (easier when you think in terms of similarities and differences);
- Outline the significance

The use of references

- To credit sources of information and ideas;
- So that the reader can locate for further information if required (also for better understanding of the standpoint from which you are coming from);
- No need for a formal reference list at the end of exam answer, just reference author & date in-text.

The use of references

- Direct quotes
- Paraphrasing
- Statistics, raw data, facts that you place in context and/ or provide an interpretation for
- Theories
- Interpretations

Unfair means and plagiarism

- The use of someone's words or ideas presented as your own;
- Inappropriate use of ideas from books, articles, the web, or other students' work

Why do we have case studies?

- Business cases offer a detailed description of a challenging situation faced by an organisation, usually including a chronology of events and support materials
- Case analysis/ interpretation – a method of learning complex management concepts by placing students in the middle of an actual situation and challenging them to figure out what is happening

Why do we have a case study?

- Promotes engagement with real-world experience
- Complements other learning methods;
- Improves analytical skills;
- Develops the ability to differentiate, integrate but also speculate

Using the case to differentiate

- Evaluate different elements of a situation;
- Differentiate between the factors that influence a situation (e.g. enablers vs barriers; advantages vs disadvantages);
- Understand that problems in the business context are complex and multi-layered;
- Dig deep (go beyond the surface, establish cause/consequence relationships, relate the case to theory).

Using the case to integrate

- Consider the big picture;
- Have an organisation-wide perspective;
- Integrate the impact of various decisions and environmental influences into a holistic appreciation

Using the case to speculate

- Envision explanations for what is happening that might not readily be apparent (but you have the benefit of strong theoretical foundations);
- Contemplate the outcome of decisions made in the case;
- Reason about details and consequences of actions/decisions undertaken in the case.

Putting yourself inside the case

- Take the perspective of actual participants (e.g. strategic decision maker, board of directors, outside consultants)

Digesting the cases

- Become familiar with the content:
 - Read through the case
 - Assess possible links to strategic concepts
 - Read the case again, making notes
 - Evaluate application of strategic concepts
- Identify issues (in association with exam questions):
 - Clear problem statements give you a reference point when you move on with case analysis. They allow you better links with theoretical frameworks.

Getting the most from the case

- Be selective (we don't want you to restate the cases), concise and to the point;
- Avoid restating the obvious;
- Organise your thoughts
- Emphasise strategic analysis;
- Be logical and consistent;
- Defend your position (combine it with a strong theoretical backbone);
- Draw on your own personal/ professional experience if it strengthens argument.

Learning Diaries

- A tool of reflection;
- Helps you assess what you have learned: summarise, analyse and comment on seminars and industry speaker sessions lectures;
- Speak with your own voice. A diary is a subjective view, and a learning diary should reflect what you have heard and learnt. It's your own analysis and insights that count.

Learning Diaries

- Reflection is an integral part of a learning diary.

Reflection is something we do every day: thinking about what went well and what didn't, and why, and what are our feelings about it.

Guided reflection:

- **What did I learn?** What was new and interesting to me and why? Did I change my mind about a specific topic? What themes are important to me and why?
- **Placing myself in the role of IS manager, how can the content of the sessions help me perform that role?**

Learning Diaries

The learning diary reveals...

Evidence of self-questioning, deep learning and deliberation between different views and motives. Use of judgments for explaining and proposing hypothesis. The reflection is analytical, linking factors and perspectives.

Wide learning and reflection beyond personal frames of reference. Awareness of relationships between topics and contexts of application.

Willingness to be critical, with use of personal perspective and reflection. Analysis and use of external ideas and information.

Some learning of the topics, with emphasis on description. Limited incorporation of personal perspectives and reflection. Concepts are taken on without in-depth questioning.

Absence of reflection. Descriptive report and summary of events, with misunderstanding of key concepts.

Serious misunderstanding of the topic; no effort put into the work.

An excellent example

Listening to an IS project manager gave me a valuable insight to how different systems are implemented and how they are supported throughout the stages of post-implementation. Understanding how to put this theory into practise is something I've not had to think about until now, having very little work experience in a professional environment. It was interesting to see how he overcame the challenges he faced on a daily basis and I'm hoping these solutions will prove to be useful knowledge, should I find myself in similar predicaments during my professional career. After his second lecture, I appreciated the guest speaker's advice on how to become a Project Manager. This made me aware of the different specific qualifications that might be necessary for pursuing a job in IS. Furthermore, whilst I have experience within the business sector, this advice made it clear that I will need to gain further professional experience in IT before launching my career.

A poor example

In the first seminar, it discussed the knowledge management in the US based organizations. It is said that only 30% of the information system projects are deemed a success, then it covers the competitive intelligence(CI) analysts and the KnowMor system. It is true that the system can support their knowledge work, but after it is being implemented and used, there occurs some disadvantages like they don't know who they should turn to about their work. It involves the Theory of Practice, which is a circle of structure, habitus and practice. Every staff in the organization should know their position, their work and better understand their work, and it should be included in the system too. To a certain extent, it is always difficult for the technical staff to participate the project very well, because the insufficient communication between them and the common staff. They can't know what the others do and completely understand it which means the circle of the Theory of Practice doesn't go so well. In a word, when implement an information system, it should not only solve the information problem but also should also consider the Theory of Practice and make it better used by the organizations.