



## **Course Outline 2017**

### **BUSINT 711 Consultancy Project for MIntBus**

#### **Quarter 3 (1176)**

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#### **Course Prescription**

A research-informed consultancy project based on an international business internship with a company or other appropriate organisation with written and oral reports of the findings.

#### **Programme and Course Advice**

Prerequisite: BUSMGT 724,741,761, 751 with at least a B average

Restriction: BUSMKT 703,704

#### **Goals of the Course**

The purpose of this course is to provide students with the opportunity to complete an applied research-informed consultancy project. This will require them to:

1. Demonstrate their understanding of major concepts, tools and trends in current international business theory and practice.
2. Use critical and creative thinking to find and evaluate academic and market sources, and to propose solutions to international business problems via the application of such sources.
3. Use a robust and defensible research methodology to effectively answer a company-specific research problem.
4. Analyse current international business challenges and propose recommendations to address issues.
5. Develop professional skills in practice and gain experience in delivering presentations to both academic and professional audiences.

#### **Learning outcomes**

By the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Analyse issues in current international business practice and apply relevant and appropriate models and frameworks to derive solutions
2. Design and execute a research-based international business project which will provide analytical insights and recommendations catering to a specific research problem
3. Demonstrate proficiency across a range of professional skills, including interpersonal and negotiation skills, time management and business communications skills

4. Communicate insights obtained from applied research using written and oral formats

## **Learning and Teaching**

### **The Course and Consultancy Process**

The consultancy project provides students with an opportunity to develop and apply their academic understanding and research skills within a real company setting. It will enable them to apply their analytical abilities to industry-based problems whilst gaining professional experience and developing their employability.

During the 10-week course, students will be paired with a participating business, and spend 5 weeks in classes and 5 weeks (3 days per week) primarily working within their host company. For the first 3 weeks of the course, students will remain in the University and will undertake intensive preparation and supervision whilst they finalise and scope their consultancy project.

Once they enter their partnered company, they will be expected to gather and analyse data using a variety of methods covered in previous courses. They will also be closely supervised by an academic supervisor and a company supervisor. After their 5 weeks inside the company, students will spend the final 2 weeks of the course focused on finalising a written report and oral presentation.

## **Expectations**

Throughout the course, students are expected to:

1. Work closely with a company supervisor
2. Maintain close contact each week with their academic supervisor
3. Meet the assessment deadlines throughout the course
4. Meet the e-portfolio (see below) requirements each week
5. Plan, develop and execute a research process consistently throughout the 10-week period
6. Attend workshops to improve and advance their skills
7. Maintain professional and respectful behaviour throughout the consultancy process

## **Supervision**

### **Academic Supervisor**

Students will meet with their academic supervisor for one-on-one review sessions throughout the course. This will provide an opportunity for students to discuss any challenges they might be encountering, as well as a chance to review and revise consulting plans, methodologies and/or analytical progress. The content of each meeting will be based on their e-portfolio work.

Students will also be provided with a subject specific advisor with whom they will be encouraged to engage with regularly throughout the Quarter.

A **supervisory schedule** will be provided to students at the beginning of the Quarter, outlining the weeks they are scheduled to see their course supervisor (the course director) and their subject specific supervisor. Each supervisor will be seen on alternating weeks. Additional meetings can also be arranged when needed.

### **Company Supervisor**

Students will also be in contact with a company supervisor. Their company supervisor will act as their main point of contact inside their partnered firm. It will be the student's responsibility to ensure that they meet with this person regularly.

## E-Portfolio

All students will be expected to contribute weekly to a compulsory individual e-portfolio. This will be set up in the first week of the quarter in a Workshop. Contributions to the e-portfolio will be the students' record of their ongoing progress and notes, and will form the basis of the academic supervisory meetings each week. In addition, students will be provided with regular feedback on their e-portfolios throughout the course.

Students will be provided with a structured set of e-portfolio requirements which are to be completed before the academic supervisory meetings each week. These requirements guide students through the research project and will help to structure their time when away from the University.

## Teaching Staff

Dr. Rhiannon Lloyd  
[Rhiannon.lloyd@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:Rhiannon.lloyd@auckland.ac.nz)

## Learning Resources

Your required text is Bryman, A., and Bell, E. (2015). *Business Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup>. Ed. Oxford: University Press.

You will also be expected to refer to your notes from your previous courses, including BUSINT 710.

Lecture and workshop content will be made available on CANVAS, along with additional readings and helpful sources.

## Assessments

Assignment	Due	Weighting
Background Research Case Study	<b>Due Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 9am (wk3)</b> <i>Reassessed version due with report</i>	10%
Reflective Essay	<b>Due Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August (wk 8)</b>	10%
Presentation	<b>Due week 9 (Wed-Fri)</b>	20%
Written Report	<b>Due Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August (wk10)</b>	60%

The broad relationship between these assessments and the course learning outcomes is as follows:

LO	Background Research	Reflective essay	Presentation	Written Report
<b>1</b>	X	X	X	X
<b>2</b>		X	X	X
<b>3</b>		X	X	X
<b>4</b>	X		X	X

## Content Outline: Week by Week Guide

Weekly content is split into three different formats which are as follows

- **Lecture.** These are compulsory and will cover students' goals and workload expectations for the week. They will link clearly with the e-portfolio requirements.

- **Workshops** These will provide students with the key skills that they will require for the projects and will often involve guest speakers and lecturers. Workshops are not compulsory but you are highly recommended to attend.
- **Review and Supervision.** These meetings are compulsory. This is where students meet one-on-one with their supervisors to review their progress. Review meetings will be based on e-portfolio work that week.

During the consultancy weeks, there will be workshops and review and supervision meetings only. The dates of these during are dependent on project timetabling and will be announced in week 3.

## Timetable

Please note that extra dates and details will be released once scheduling has been finalised.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Lecture</b> Tuesday 9-10:30	<b>Lecture</b> Thursday 9-11	<b>Workshops</b> Thursday 2-4	<b>Friday Supervision</b> <i>See e-portfolio requirements</i>
1	Introduction	<i>Office hour: project briefs</i>	<i>Client meeting afternoon</i>	
2	EPortfolio and reflective writing	<i>Office hour: project briefs</i>	<b>Workshop</b> Matching theory and practice	
3	Preparing for Placement	<i>Thurs 9am background essay due</i>	<b>Workshop</b> Literature Reviewing Q&A	
4 <u>Consulting</u>				Reviewing research Q and Research Plan
5 <u>Consulting</u>			<b>Workshop</b> Writing Methods up	Research in Practice
6 <u>Consulting</u>			<b>Event:</b> literature reviewing	Data collection & Literature
7 <u>Consulting</u>			Office hours	Analysis & Literature
8 <u>Consulting</u>	<b>reflective essay due 9am</b>		<b>Workshop</b> Professional Presenting and Visual Data	Findings and Communication

9	<i>Presentation Prep (rehearsals)</i>		<b>Oral Presentation Due (Wed-Fri)</b>	Report Writing
10 Mon. 6 <sup>th</sup> Fri. 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Support</b> Office Hours	<b>Support</b> Office Hours		<b>Consultancy Report Due Fri 9am</b>

## Assessments

Students have 4 assessments to deliver over the Quarter.

Assignment	Due	Weighting
Background Research Case Study	<b>Due Wednesday 5th July 9am (wk3)</b> <i>Reassessed version due with report</i>	10%
Reflective Essay	<b>Due Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August (wk 8)</b>	10%
Presentation	<b>Due week 9 (Wed-Fri)</b>	20%
Written Report	<b>Due Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August (wk10)</b>	60%

For more details and the **Marking Rubrics**, please see separate Assignment Briefs Document.

## Background Research

Due **Wednesday 5th July 9am**: 700-1000 words.

After the initial 3 weeks of the course, students will be required to submit a short case study assembled from secondary data research.

The case study should provide background details on the company they will be working with, as well as information on key industry level trends and any other information that they deem relevant to their research problem. The assessment is designed to ensure that students understand the company and industry they will be working in before going into the field.

**This assessment will also form part of your written research report and will be remarked when submitted as part of that report**

## How to Do Well

In order to do well in this assignment, you need to ensure that:

- All sections are written in prose rather than in bullet points
- You write in a concise way to use the word count efficiently
- The data sources are reputable and credible
- The information provided is detailed rather than general/abstract
- That the information is relevant to the company specifically
- Any figures or tables are formatted and referred to in text
- You've looked at the marking rubric...

## Reflective Essay

**Due Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 9am: 700-1000 words**

By the end of week 8 students will have completed many of the significant steps of a consultative process.

In their reflective essay they will be required to reflect on this process and to outline some of their key learning experiences. These reflections will be expected to follow an appropriate reflective model of the student's own choosing, in order that they can evaluate and synthesise the key points of learning their consultancy project experience has given them and the choices and decisions they have made. Students will be expected to reflect on the feedback on their performance given by their company supervisors in order to derive insights about their experiences and how they will use them in their future working life.

### How to Do Well

Here are some key tips on how to do well with your reflective writing:

- Avoid describing your opinions – instead, analyse your experiences
- Avoid being too informal in your reflection as this often leads to a poor writing style
- Draw examples from various experiences rather than just one
- Be clear about how you will apply your learning to your future career
- Ensure that you provide clear links between reflections and your key learning experiences
- Refer back to your e-portfolio reflections to build your narrative

## The Presentation

**Due week 9, date TBC**

The oral presentation is 15 minutes long and is immediately followed by a 15-minute Q&A session

Students' oral presentations should cover the key features of their consultative project, and will be presented in front of both an academic and professional audience. These oral presentations are the students' opportunity to present their research and findings direct to the company.

### *Academic*

Students will be expected to provide a brief overview of the frameworks they used in their analysis and provide justifications as to why they were appropriate and applicable. A quick and concise review of the research method(s) will also be necessary to illustrate the validity of the research findings.

### *Professional*

The presentation should ultimately focus on important insights, SMART recommendations and possible future strategies. Students should provide their answer to the company's international business problem in a clear and comprehensive manner appropriate to a boardroom presentation.

All elements of the Oral Presentation should be underpinned with academic reasoning, critical thought and a clear and robust research methodology.

## Presentation Guidelines

The presentation will be 15 minutes and should include no more than 15 slides to support what you are saying. The presentation should cover the following elements:

1. An overview of project topic and scope.
2. The broad themes that emerged from your literature review.
3. The methodology that you used to undertake your research.
4. Your conclusions and findings.
5. Your recommendations.
6. A short reflection on what you learnt from this project; what you will be able to use in your future career, what you would do differently next, or anything else that is relevant.

Following your presentation, you will have a Q&A session for around 15 minutes, during which your audience will be able to ask questions.

## How to Do Well

Here are some key tips on how to do well with your presentation:

- Maintain methodological transparency: reference figures and findings
- Be professional in your delivery and handling of questions in the Q&A
- Think carefully about what you include and don't include; you can't say everything in your report in 15 minutes, so don't try
- Practice your presentation but avoid rote learning. Anticipate and prepare for likely questions
- Most importantly – trust yourself and be confident that no-one else knows what you did better than you!

## The Written Report

**Due Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August 9am: 7,500-8,000 words**

Students' written reports provide a comprehensive insight into their consultative process and deliver well considered and actionable recommendations to address company problems. The report is both academic and professional. As such, it should illustrate a solid understanding of International Business theories and research methodology, whilst also outlining practical solutions to real business concerns.

### *Academic*

Students will be expected to have chosen relevant and appropriate theories/frameworks to apply to their research, analysis and findings. These theories should be reviewed in the literature review and should be clearly applied in the analysis and the findings.

The report should also provide a detailed account of the research methodology, and show engagement with methodological theory. Students' research should be defensible and show strong justifications along with a clear understanding of the methods used.

### *Professional*

Reports should be professional and of practical use to participating companies. As such, they should provide well-considered findings and SMART recommendations. To this end, the Written Report should be accessible and applicable to a non-academic audience.

All elements of the Written Report should be underpinned with academic reasoning, critical thought and analysis, and a clear and robust research methodology.

## How to Do Well

Here are some key tips on how to do well with your report:

- Keep notes (in your e-portfolio) and start filling out the structure early
- Be ANALYTICAL. Never just describe something– always follow up with an analysis which gives the implications (answer the 'so what?' question)
- Consider the report as one whole piece of work
- Justify your decisions and methodological choices
- Ensure that the frameworks outlined in your literature review are truly relevant to your research topic, and inform your findings and analysis
- Link the findings to the conclusions and link the conclusions to the SMART recommendations
- Use Grammarly and the draft checking process to ensure quality

## E-Portfolio Requirements

The **compulsory** entries are not assessed but they will form the basis for supervisory meetings with your academic supervisor. They are specifically designed to guide you through the research process at a manageable pace and as such it is highly recommended that you complete them.

The **optional** entries relate to both the 'reflection' and 'notes' sections in your e-portfolio. Any entries you make in these areas are for your own use. It is up to you whether you adhere to the optional suggestions below, although it is advised.

Weeks	Requirements
2	<p><b>Research Plan</b></p> <p><b>Compulsory</b> Draft up a research plan based on your current knowledge of the project. This should include a brief overview of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Any methods you are thinking of using</li><li>- Notes on how these methods might interlink</li><li>- A draft timeline</li><li>- If possible, any databases you think you might use (covered in the workshop this week)</li></ul> <p><b>Optional</b> You could include reflections on the Company Scope Meeting from Monday, how the brief has evolved over the past few weeks and how you see it developing in the future.</p> <p>In your notes you may want to write down any other methodological options you have been considering. Also now would be a good time to start exploring theories you might want to use in more detail, in preparation for next week.</p>
3	<p><b>Literature Review</b></p> <p><b>Compulsory</b></p>



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A very brief outline of the theoretical frameworks you think you will be applying given your current knowledge of the project.</li> <li>2. The initial development of a systematic approach to literature reviewing (such as a table for an annotated bibliography) and roughly 3 entries. It is up to you how you format this, but essentially you should show that you have started a list of readings which you will use in your literature review. This list could include details such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Author(s)</li> <li>○ Date</li> <li>○ Title</li> <li>○ Journal/database reference</li> <li>○ Key findings</li> <li>○ Applicable contributions (those elements which you will draw on in your literature review)</li> <li>○ Relevant quotes (and page number)</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Optional</b>  You could include reflections on anything relating to the research process so far and how you are feeling about entering the company next week. Also, you might want to talk about the literature review process and any challenges you are facing.</p> <p>In your notes you may want to develop previous notes in preparation for entering the company. You might also want to use this section to draft out a structure for your literature review using headings and knowledge from your initial readings.  Note down any areas in which you feel you are lacking readings.</p>
4	<p><b>Reviewing Research Q and Plan</b></p> <p><b>Compulsory</b>  Provide some brief answers to the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does your scope need to be reconsidered?</li> <li>2. Are there any changes you need to make to your research question and/or research plan?</li> <li>3. Are your theoretical frameworks still relevant? Are there any other frameworks that you now think might be (more) appropriate?</li> <li>4. Do you think there will be any barriers to you carrying out your research plan? (<i>Consider resources, ethics, risks etc.</i>)</li> <li>5. Is there anything else you want to discuss?</li> </ol> <p><b>Optional</b>  You could include reflections on your first week in your organisation – is it what you expected? What have you learnt after your first week? Also you might want to reflect on the realities of <i>doing</i> field work.</p> <p>In your notes you may want to start drafting out a more in-depth research plan which includes details about key people you might want to talk to or what data you might need to collect. You can also use this notes page to record any initial findings.</p>
5	<p><b>Research in Practice</b></p> <p><b>Compulsory</b></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a research plan with an accompanying timetable for weeks 6, 7 and 8.</li> <li>2. Reflect on whether you are answering your research question</li> <li>3. Write down any problems you are facing currently.</li> </ol> <p><b>Optional</b>  You could include reflections on your experiences in the company; what are you finding challenging? What have you learnt this week? Are there any problems which you have overcome, and if so, how?</p> <p>In your notes you will want to be recording any findings and analytical thoughts you might be having as you undertake your research. You will also want to be developing your literature review as you progress through the research process.</p> <p>Keep developing previous notes.</p>
6	<p><b>Data collection and literature</b></p> <p><b>Compulsory</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide an overview (in bullet points) of the data sources you have used in the past 3 weeks (i.e. databases, company documents etc)</li> <li>2. Provide a short evaluation of your data; is it valid? Is it good quality?</li> <li>3. Briefly describe any additional data you need to collect and how you aim to collect it</li> </ol> <p><b>Optional</b>  You could include reflections on your ongoing experiences in the company, as well as the research process and whether/how it has evolved over time. Are you finding it difficult or easy to get data which directly answers your RQs?</p> <p>In your notes you will want to be recording any findings and analytical thoughts you are having and thinking about how they apply to the concepts discussed in your literature review.</p>
7	<p><b>Analysis and literature</b></p> <p><b>Compulsory</b>  For each theoretical framework you have chosen to apply, write 1-2 paragraphs which explain how the framework can be used to help you understand your data and findings so far.</p> <p><b>Optional</b>  You could include reflections on your ongoing experiences in your company, as well as how you are finding the process of applying theory. Was there anything in Maureen's workshop which made you rethink your analysis?</p> <p>In your notes you will want to continue to capture and develop your analytical thoughts. You may also want to start thinking about how the whole report may look and develop a report structure to fill in during the next 3 weeks (if you haven't already)</p>
8	<p><b>Findings and communication</b></p>

	<p><b>Compulsory</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide an outline of what you consider to be your key findings at this point in time. Try and relate them to some tentative recommendations.</li> <li>2. Write at least 3 questions which relate to your research process, your analysis and/or your presentation &amp; written report.</li> </ol> <p><b>Optional</b></p> <p>You could reflect on your ongoing experiences in the company, as well as the presentation workshop this week and how it relates to your presentation next week.</p> <p>In your notes you may want to jot down ideas for making your presentation as effective as possible. Additionally you will want to be developing your findings and relating them to SMART recommendations. This is a good time to build your initial ideas before you start to write them up properly in your report.</p>
9	<p><b>Report Writing</b></p> <p>In week 9 you will be expected to provide a draft outline or plan of your report for discussion at your supervisory meeting</p> <p><b>It is recommended that you send this to both your supervisors one or two days before so they have a chance to read it. Please attach the draft report to your e-portfolio.</b></p> <p><b>There will be no e-portfolio requirement for Week 10.</b></p>

### **Inclusive Learning**

Students are urged to discuss privately any impairment-related requirements face- to-face and/or in written form with the course convenor/lecturer and/or tutor.

### **Student Feedback**

Students will be asked to provide formative feedback throughout the course.

Feedback is necessary to improve the course and ensure that it meets students' expectations.

### **Academic Integrity**

The University of Auckland will not tolerate cheating, or assisting others to cheat, and views cheating in coursework as a serious academic offence. The work that a student submits for grading must be the student's own work, reflecting his or her learning. Where work from other sources is used, it must be properly acknowledged and referenced. This requirement also applies to sources on the world-wide web. A student's assessed work may be reviewed against electronic source material using computerised detection mechanisms. Upon reasonable request, students may be required to provide an electronic version of their work for computerised review.

## **In the event of an unexpected disruption**

We undertake to maintain the continuity and standard of teaching and learning in all your courses throughout the year. If there are unexpected disruptions, the University has contingency plans to ensure that access to your course continues and your assessment is fair, and not compromised. Some adjustments may need to be made in emergencies. In the event of a disruption, the University and your course coordinators will make every effort to provide you with up-to-date information via Canvas and the university website.

## **Cheating and Plagiarism**

The University of Auckland regards cheating as a serious academic offence.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. In coursework assignments submitted for marking, plagiarism can occur if you use the work and ideas of others without explicit acknowledgment. Work can be plagiarised from many sources, including books, journal articles, the internet, and other students' assignments. A student's assessed work may be reviewed against electronic source material using computerised detection mechanisms. Upon reasonable request, students may be required to provide an electronic version of their work for computerised review.

The way of avoiding plagiarism is to reference your work properly. If you are in doubt about how to reference properly, ask someone – your lecturers, tutors and the Student Learning Centre are good places to start. Please refer to the following website for further information about academic referencing: [www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/](http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/)

The document Guidelines: Conduct of Coursework provides further advice on how to avoid plagiarism. It can be found at: [www.business.auckland.ac.nz/conductcoursework](http://www.business.auckland.ac.nz/conductcoursework)

The penalties for plagiarism can be severe, including losing some or all of the marks for the assignment. Major offences can be sent to the University's Discipline Committee, where further penalties can be imposed.

## **Third Party Assistance with Coursework**

While you are encouraged to improve your coursework writing skills and are permitted to seek assistance from third parties, you are advised that there are important limits on the amount and type of assistance that can be given to you in completing your assignments,

including group work. Third parties include fellow students, reading groups, friends, parents, SLC tutors, and paid-for professional editing services.

There is a set of guidelines which clearly indicates the type of advice and assistance that can be given. If you are seeking the assistance of any third party, you are required to give a copy of the guidelines to the person prior to them helping or assisting you.

You are also required to only seek and accept help using a printed version of your work, not an electronic version. You must keep a copy of this printed version and produce it if required.

A copy of the guidelines is available

at: [www.business.auckland.ac.nz/thirdpartyassistance](http://www.business.auckland.ac.nz/thirdpartyassistance)

## **Help with Academic Referencing**

Acknowledgement of sources is an important aspect of academic writing. The University's Referen@ite website [www.cite.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz) provides students with a one-stop online resource for academic referencing needs. Referen@ite explains the essentials of referencing and how to avoid plagiarism. It also includes practical tools to help students reference correctly, use references effectively in writing, and gives fast access to some major reference formats with examples.