



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**
Plymouth Business School

ACF7004 – Analysis of Financial Statements

Individual Coursework - 2023/2024 Academic Year

The Coursework should be submitted via the DLE by the deadline shown below.

Assessment	Due Date	% Of Coursework
Coursework - A Comparison of Two Companies in the Construction Sector	15:00 on Thursday 2nd May 2024 Submit Coursework on the DLE site for ACF7004	100%

Marking Criteria	Weight Allocation
Overview/critical evaluation of key factors affecting the Construction sector	15 %
Analysis and interpretation of the two companies.	40 %
Horizontal and Vertical analysis of the two companies.	20 %
Evaluation of your chosen company's adoption of the UK Corporate Governance Code.	15 %
References & Presentation including structure and grammar.	10 %
Total	100 %

A comparison of two companies in the Construction Sector

You are required to prepare a report to compare two companies based in the UK from the Construction Sector (Primary UK SIC CODE 41100 Development of building projects, 41202 Construction of domestic buildings, 41201 Construction of commercial buildings). One of them should be BARRATT DEVELOPMENTS PLC. The other company should be a company of your choice but must be listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Your report should conform to the following format:

- (i) An overview and critical evaluation of the key factors that influence companies within the industry.
- (ii) An analysis of the financial performance of each company using the ratios which you consider most appropriate. You should analyse and interpret the ratios chosen by giving comments about the performance of the two companies. You should choose at least 10 ratios, while your ratio analysis should cover a 5-year period for each company.
- (iii) A horizontal and Vertical analysis of each company. You should cover a 5-year period for each company.
- (iv) A comparison of the two companies over the 5-year period. You should include here any other information which you think is relevant in addition to the ratio analysis calculated in (ii) above.
- (v) An evaluation of the extent to which the company **of your choice** has complied with the UK Corporate Governance Code.

Note that the maximum word limit is 7,000 (+/-10%) words and you must submit in PDF format.

WORD LIMIT – REFERENCING – APPENDICES

The **word limit** for the report is **7,000 words (+/-10%)** and the word count must be stated clearly on the cover page of the report. Exceeding the word limit will be considered as evidence of low concision (part of the assessment criteria). Given that a number of parameters are incorporated in the respective criterion, the penalty for submissions that exceed the word limit will be treated on a one-to-one basis; so we will not reply to questions such as “how much will I be penalized with if I reach 7,100 words” as this will be decided when we will carefully mark your work. However, as a rule of thumb you should expect that you will be penalized considerably if you either (i) fail to include the word count, or (ii) you exceed the word limit by more than 10% of the word count. The word count for this coursework does not include:

- i. Cover page, list of contents, list of tables and figures.
- ii. List of references (in-text references are included in the word count though)
- iii. Appendices (be careful on their use – see below)
- iv. Executive summary (if you decide to include one)

Referencing should be done according to the Harvard referencing system. This [guide to referencing](#) should aid you. Please make sure that you reference your work appropriately and that you fully understand the consequences of plagiarism (see academic offences section in the last page of this document).

No important/assessed information in appendices.

Content in the appendices will be reviewed but not marked. All key information must be included in the main text of the report. If key information is included in the appendices but not in the main body of the report, this will not be marked. That is, any information, tables, graphs that you put in the appendix will not be considered in the final marking, even if you make appropriate references to the appendix inside the text. Please note that even if you successfully address an assessment criterion in the appendices you may fail this marking criterion if this information is not included in the main text. All relevant information **MUST** be included in-text.

Appendices may be only used to provide some additional information that is not core to the report per se and not feasible to include them in-text due to e.g., including unnecessarily large amount of data/detail. For example, if you have 4 pages of data you could include them in an appendix, but you should provide a succinct summary of this data in-text if they are relevant in addressing an assessment criterion. So please be really careful with the use of appendices, and my personal advice is to avoid using them if you are not confident in using them efficiently.

WRITING STYLE

The submitted coursework is expected to be of a professional standard in terms of presentation and language. We advise you to write in a style as if you were a consultant hired by a firm to perform this study. You will benefit from visiting the [Learning Development](#) team who will be able to assist you in a number of issues including language, report writing, critical thinking and other writing skills necessary to write an excellent report. It is strongly recommended to take up this opportunity even if you feel confident about your skills.

The university also offers English language support for international students. Note that you need to self-enrol for this service and the DLE site, which contains instructions and more information, can be found [here](#). You will find a wealth of resources including one-to-one tutorials, workshops in English for academic purposes, drop-in zones, the Writing Café to name a few.

Academic Offences

The academic community treats plagiarism and all forms of cheating as a very serious matter. Please be very sure that you are familiar with the university's regulations on academic cheating and plagiarism. In particular, beware of

copying other people's work and copying out of books and articles. If you do want to reproduce a quotation from a text or article, make absolutely sure that you have clearly attributed the work. The copying of another person's work will result in you receiving a zero mark for your assignment and could result in expulsion from the university altogether.

Additional considerations apply to group work. Occasionally, an individual student will find material and inadvertently use it without proper or sufficient acknowledgement of the source. This is plagiarism which is detailed clearly as an academic offence under the Plymouth University Assessment Regulations.

Where plagiarism occurs in group work, the whole group will suffer a penalty (usually a zero mark for the work in question). It is, therefore, in the interest of every member of a group to check each other's work as carefully as their own, in order to avoid any possibility of plagiarism. The group, therefore, has a 'corporate responsibility' to ensure that all work is thoroughly and adequately acknowledged and referenced.

Some useful guidance on how to reference correctly and avoid plagiarism can be found here: <http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/referencing/>

PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE TIME FOR SUBMISSION OF THE COURSEWORK IS 15:00 ON Monday 2nd May 2024.

WORK MAY BE SUBMITTED ON ANY DAY PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE. ALL COURSEWORK MUST BE BY E-SUBMISSION.

Sources of information

You are free to use all available information but remember that all sources should be correctly acknowledged. Some sources of information will be:

- Financial websites such as www.Bloomberg.com
- Companies' websites (in particular, most companies' websites have a section "Investors" or "Investor Relations")

A quality newspaper such as the Financial Times etc