Brief Role Description (given by Module Leader)

You should liaise with the client, project manager and development team to establish and write up the project’s requirements and scope.

Personal skills (given by Module Leader):  
- Ability to understand exactly what customers require  
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal  
- A high level of business acumen  
- Proactive, self-motivated, logical and objective  
- Ability to work well under pressure, as part of a team or alone

Research into Business Analyst Role

Business Analysts are responsible for bridging the gap between IT and the business.

There are 3 key primary responsibilities that a business analyst should follow:

1. Identify the business needs
2. Define solutions
3. Ensure the solutions meet the original requirements

To further understand the Business Analyst role, I found a two case studies:

1. Classic Retail Co to help me understand the role of a business analyst in traditional projects.
2. TechSolve to help me understand the role of a business analyst in an agile environment.

Case Study – Classic Retail Co

Classic Retail Co, a traditional retail company, is planning to expand its operations by opening new stores in several locations. The project involves multiple departments: real estate, construction, IT, marketing, and operations. The goal is to ensure that the new stores are opened on time, within budget, and meet the company's standards for quality and customer experience.

The Business Analyst, chose to go with ***five*** phases:

***Phase 1: Requirement Gathering***

* The business analyst began by conducting interviews and workshops with stakeholders from each department to understand their needs and expectations for the new stores. This included: everything from the desired location, and size of the stores to the IT infrastructure needed to support sales and inventory management.

***Phase 2: Analysis and Documentation***

* Once the requirements were gathered, the business analyst analyses the information to identify any potential conflicts or gaps. They then document the requirements clearly and concisely, creating a blueprint for the project. This document serves as a reference point for all stakeholders and ensures that everyone is on the same page.

***Phase 3: Solution Design***

With the requirements in hand, the business analyst works with architects, IT specialists, and other experts to design solutions that meet the identified needs. For example, they might help design the layout of the new stores to optimize customer flow or work with IT to select a point-of-sale system that supports the company's sales processes.

***Phase 4: Implementation Support***

* As the project moves into the implementation phase, the business analyst continues to play a crucial role. They monitor progress, ensure that the solutions are being implemented according to the plan, and adjust as necessary. They also serve as a valuable connection between the project team and stakeholders, keeping everyone informed and addressing any concerns.

***Phase 5: Evaluation and Feedback***

* Once the new stores are opened, the business analyst evaluates the project's success against the original objectives and requirements. They gather feedback from stakeholders and customers to identify areas for improvement. This feedback is then used to refine processes and solutions for future projects.

***Business Analyst Role in a Traditional Project***

The role of a business analyst in traditional projects is both complex and critical. By serving as the link between business needs and technical solutions, business analysts ensure that projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. Our real-time example of "Classic Retail Co." illustrates just how vital a business analyst can be to the success of traditional projects.

Case Study - TechSolve

TechSolve Inc is a software development company that has recently started a project to develop a new project management tool which is designed to cater towards small businesses. The company chose to go with an agile methodology.

Agile methodology = A project management approach that will involve breaking the project into phases whilst having continuous collaboration and improvement.

The Business Analyst, Alex, chose to go with ***four*** phases:

***Phase 1: Vision and Roadmap Creation***

* Alex started by working closely with the Product Owner and stakeholders to understand the vision for the project management tool. Alex wanted to focus on understanding the core objectives as well as the problems that the product aimed to solve for the users. He employed techniques like user story mapping and created a product roadmap.

***Phase 2: Backlog Grooming and Prioritisation***

* Now the vision and roadmap in place, Alex’s role moved towards backlog grooming and prioritisation. In an agile project, the product backlog must be constantly refined and reprioritised based on feedback and changing needs. Alex then broke down the roadmap into actionable user stories making sure that each story was clear, testable and provided value. By doing this he ensured that the team always worked on the most important features first which maximized value delivery.

***Phase 3: Sprint Planning and Execution***

* The project moved into the sprint planning phase which meant Alex’s role changed to include facilitation and clarification. During the meeting, Alex helped the team to understand the scope and details of the user stories, answering questions and providing clarifications as needed. Throughout the sprint, Alex remained available to the team in case any additional information was needed.

***Phase 4: Review and Adaptation***

* The most critical aspect of Alex's role in the Agile project was during the sprint. After each sprint, Alex had sessions where the team demonstrated the completed work and gathered feedback. This feedback loop was crucial for making sure that the product evolved in the right direction. Additionally, Alex helped the team reflect on their processes and identify areas for improvement, keeping a culture of continuous learning and adaptation.

***Business Analyst Role in an Agile Environment***

The role of a business analyst in agile projects is both challenging and rewarding.

Looking at the case study example, TechSolve. The business analyst must wear multiple hats, from vision setter and backlog manager to facilitator and problem-solver. By embracing these roles, business analysts can drive agile projects to deliver exceptional value to customers, proving themselves to be indispensable members of the agile team.

Conclusion from my research into the Business Analyst Role

Through my research I got to understand that the Business Analyst role is key in both traditional projects and agile environments. The core responsibilities of the business analyst in both circumstances are understanding needs, planning, facilitating implementation and ensuring continuous improvement through feedback and adaptation.

What tips will I be taking into my role during this project?

* Good communication

I will need to have good communication with all team members to ensure that everyone is always being kept informed, so nobody is left out of the loop. This will ensure we can achieve the best possible result as we will keep on top of deadlines and be giving each other constant feedback.

* Requirement Gathering leading to Roadmap Creation

Once marking guidelines are released, I should go through them and dissect all the key information to ensure that we have an idea on what to create as per the marking criteria.

* Evaluation and Review

The work will be split into an MVP and MMP as the final submission. A main part of my role will be to gather feedback on the MVP so we can make the necessary changes to ensure that the MMP will not only hit all the points on the marking criteria but also is the best minimum marketable product.