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# Coursework commentary

## 2018–2019

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### CO1108 Information Systems: foundations of e-business

#### Coursework assignment 1

##### General remarks

Some students avoidably lost marks by failing to follow the guidance given in the coursework assignment or in previous years' coursework commentaries. Students who received a fail mark in this coursework invariably did not attempt large parts of it, or submitted just a few pages. Most submissions showed students working very hard to engage with the concepts, while a pleasing proportion were very good indeed and it was a pleasure to mark them.

Students should list all references at the end of their work, and they should be properly cited whenever referred to. Web resources need to be properly referenced, giving the URL and date visited as well as the title, author and organisation where available. Many candidates confused citing sources (in the text) with providing a reference list at the end – both are needed. Note that the required referencing format is Harvard – there is guidance available on the VLE. See the list of references below for examples.

Any answers which consist entirely or mostly of quoted material are unlikely to get high marks even if properly cited and referenced, as such answers do not demonstrate understanding. Copy/pasting materials from other sources is not an acceptable way to do the coursework: you are advised to learn how to paraphrase and use sources effectively when working on future assignments.

Most students remembered to submit their work as a single PDF file as required, but some did not. Examiners may be more lenient in the early stages of your degree, but in later stages you may lose marks if you fail to follow submission instructions.

The following remarks are relevant to future coursework assignments (and examinations). This advice will be generally applicable.

- Read the questions carefully. In some cases, answers were given to something that was not asked, making it difficult to award marks.
- With coursework, the word count and mark distribution make a good guide to how much you need to write and the level of detail required. In this particular coursework, few submissions below 2,500 words were given high marks.
- When writing coursework submissions, writing them as notes or a list of points will not generally work well (though bullet points can be useful, e.g., listing the key points so they are easy to identify).
- Examinations are time limited, so you should adapt your writing style accordingly (e.g., use bullet points more). You should therefore start thinking about how you will clearly present your answers to similar questions within the time limitations of an examination.
- A minority of students submitted texts with poor English and/or grammatical errors (mistakes usually involved tenses, articles or the use

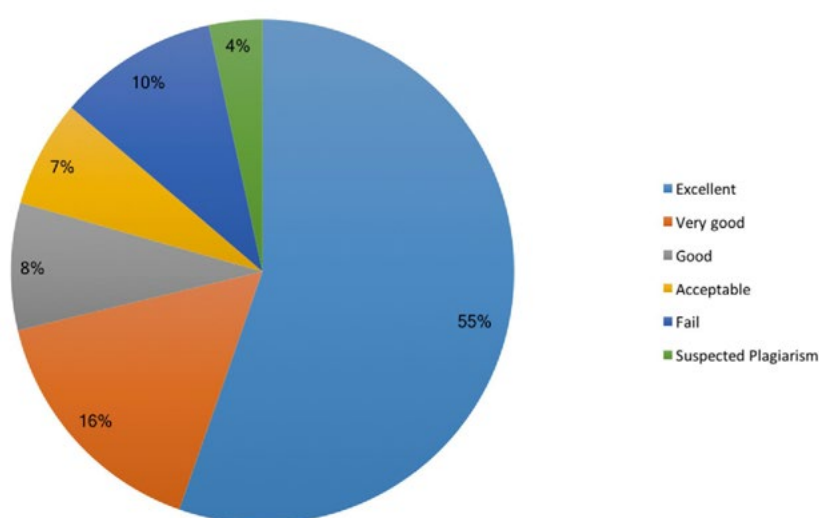
of the present participle). Punctuation was sometimes untidy. It is worth working on this as it will help your studies.

- You need to be able to handle the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) content at CEFR C1/Advanced to do well on this course.
  - EAP resources can be found on the internet, e.g. (Gillett, 2018).
  - There are also good texts on this topic (De Chazel and Moore, 2013; Meyers, 2013).
  - The classic *English Grammar in Use* series, e.g. Murphy (2012) and Hewings (2013), is also recommended if candidates feel weak on a grammatical point.

Finally, many of the above points about referencing and good academic English apply to all your academic work, culminating in the extended report required as part of the Final Project. Getting on top of these issues now will be an excellent investment of your time.

See cohort mark distribution for 2018–2019 below:

**CO1108 CW1 Cohort mark distribution 2018-19**



## Comments on specific questions

The context of the four questions was given in the coursework instructions:

*In this course, you have been learning the skills required to understand information systems from the viewpoint of a business professional. This assignment gives you the opportunity to explore and apply your understanding of the role and potential impact of Information Systems for business.*

Reference will be made to the assignment objectives stated in the coursework instructions.

1. *Demonstrate an understanding of the opportunities associated with introducing information systems.*
2. *Apply appropriate frameworks and techniques learnt on the course.*
3. *Demonstrate your understanding of the impact of Information Systems on organisational internal and external relationships.*
4. *Demonstrate your ability to undertake research to support your findings.*

For each question, the characteristics of high-scoring answers will be given as well as areas where marks were lost needlessly.

All questions concerned aspects of collaboration between people and organisations, from the perspective of an information systems manager.

### Question 1

This question asked students to discuss relevant changes in the business environment. Good answers typically adopted the pattern of:

- Clearly articulating what collaboration is and explaining its key principles (this was sometimes forgotten).
- Discussing collaboration in the context of changes in the business environment (which is what the question asked) rather than collaboration in general.
- Discussing some examples of the above (with sources).

Obviously assignment objectives 1 and 3 will be addressed by this question, as would objectives 2 and 4 if candidates were able to find and cite relevant supporting literature.

Most students gave thoughtful answers showing a good understanding of the issues, while other answers were too brief and unfocused with little discussion of key concepts. That said, failing to address one or more of the points on the list above was the most common way marks were lost.

### Question 2

This question asked students to discuss the role of Information Systems.

Good answers typically adopted the pattern of:

- Describing clearly a number of (not just one or two) roles that collaborative information systems play.
- Illustrating the above by giving (at least one) example that was clearly linked to the concepts/roles discussed.

Obviously assignment objectives 1 and 3 will be addressed by this question, as would objectives 2 and 4 if candidates were able to find and cite relevant supporting literature.

Most students gave thoughtful answers which showed a good understanding of the issues, while other answers were too brief and unfocused with little discussion of key concepts. That said, failing to address one or more of the points on the list above was the most common way marks were lost.

There was also an expectation that case studies/examples should cite a source; this was not always done.

A small number of students failed to attempt this question.

### Question 3

This question required students to focus on one particular collaboration tool.

Good answers typically adopted the pattern of:

- Selection and justification of a suitable collaboration tool (this was done well in most cases).
- Discussion of a case study that used the tool (sometimes done well).
- Some excellent answers found a framework (or a set of criteria) in the literature to evaluate the tool against.

Obviously assignment objectives 1, 2 and 3 will be addressed by this question, as would objective 4 if students were able to find and cite relevant supporting literature.

Most students gave thoughtful answers showing a good understanding of the issues, while other answers were too brief and unfocused, with little discussion

of key concepts. That said, failing to address one or more of the points on the list above was the most common way marks were lost. A small number of students failed to attempt this question.

#### Question 4

The final question asked students to discuss some of the challenges that an information systems manager would face.

Good answers typically adopted the pattern of:

- Actually giving five challenges, preferably with sources (this was usually done).
- Demonstrating that issues were understood (usually done well).
- Clearly describing at least one example/case study to illustrate the points (often not given).

Obviously assignment objectives 1 and 3 will be addressed by this question, as would objectives 2 and 4 if students were able to find and cite relevant supporting literature.

Most students gave thoughtful answers showing a good understanding of the issues, while other answers were too brief and unfocused with little discussion of key concepts. That said, failing to address one or more of the points on the list above was the most common way marks were lost.

A small number of students failed to attempt this question.

#### References

- De Chazel, E. and J. Moore. *Oxford EAP: A Course in English for Academic Purposes (Advanced C1)*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- Gillett, A. 'Using English for Academic Purposes For Students in Higher Education' (2018) <http://www.uefap.net> accessed 23 September 2019.
- Hewings, M. *Advanced Grammar in Use: A Self-Study Reference and Practice Book for Advanced Learners of English*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 3rd edition.
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