
Coursework commentary

2018–2019

CO1108 Information Systems: foundations of e-business

Coursework assignment 2

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 should list all references at the end of their work, and they should be properly cited whenever referred to. Note that any answers which consist entirely or mostly of quoted material are unlikely to get high marks even if properly cited and referenced (as you have not demonstrated understanding).

Worryingly, there seemed to be a number of students who copy/pasted materials from other sources. This is not an acceptable way to do the coursework.

Learning how to paraphrase and use sources effectively will be useful for future assignments.

Many students 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.

Students also often assumed that webpages are not cited and referenced in the same way as printed sources; this is false and students are expected to use Harvard for them too.

Most students remembered to submit their work as a single PDF file. That said, 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. Students should therefore make sure they read and follow submission instructions.

The students who achieved a fail mark in this coursework invariably did not attempt large parts of it, or submitted just a few pages.

Most of the submissions showed students working very hard to engage with the concepts.

A pleasing proportion of the submissions were very good indeed, and it was a pleasure to mark them.

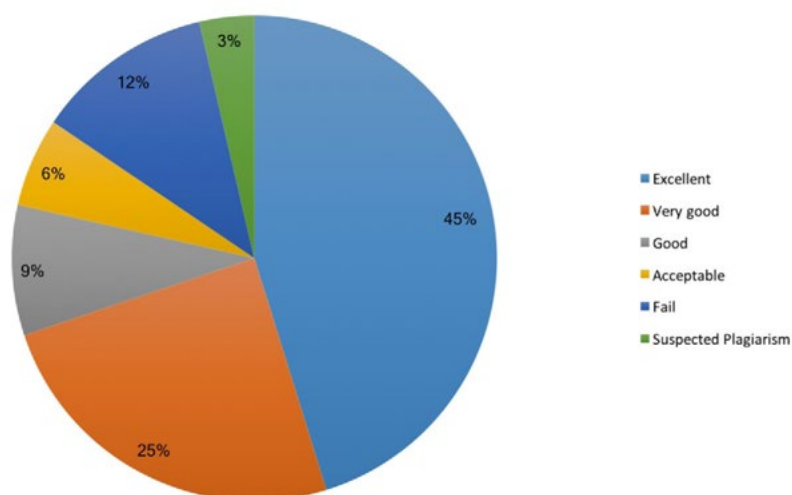
There are also some remarks that are relevant to future coursework assignments and examinations.

- The question should be read carefully. In some cases answers were given to something that was not asked for in the question (which we find hard to award marks for).
- In a coursework situation, the word count and mark distribution is a good indicator of how much (relevant content) you need to write and the level of detail required. In this coursework assignment, few submissions of below 2,500 words got high marks.

- When writing coursework assignments, writing them as notes or a list of points will not work well (though bullet points are useful, such as listing the key points so they are easy to identify).
- Examinations are time limited, so students should adapt their writing style accordingly (e.g. use bullet points more), and start thinking about how they will clearly present their answers to similar questions within the time limitations of an examination.
- Again, in an examination situation students should spend effort on a question that is proportionate to the effort expended (e.g. do not write two pages for a question worth 5 per cent), which leads to the next point.
- Quality and clarity of English is essential. A minority of students handed in texts with poor English and often grammar (usually around tenses, articles and the use of the present participle). Punctuation was sometimes untidy. Students need to get this fixed now. Poor English makes exams and coursework difficult to read and final project reports often impossible to give good marks for.
- 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 above is a good example of in-text citation of textbooks and web links using Harvard.
- The classic *English Grammar in Use* series, e.g. Murphy (2012) and Hewings (2013), is also recommended if students feel weak on a grammatical point.
- Finally, many of the above points about referencing and good academic English apply doubly to the final project. Therefore, getting on top of these issues now will be an excellent investment of students' time.

See cohort mark distribution for 2018–2019 below:

CO1108 CW2 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 assessment 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 of the questions were based on a brief scenario of a Glasgow Haberdashery business, and carried 25 marks each.

Question 1

The first question concerned the way stock is handled in the present scenario.

Good answers typically adopted the pattern of:

- Clearly articulating a good range of possible effects (with usually good answers; main issue was when only a few issues were suggested).
- Making it clear what negative impacts of the current situation could be (most students did this well).
- Discussing what the positive impacts could be (equally important, but often forgotten).

Obviously assessment criteria 1 and 3 will be addressed by this question, as would criterion 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.

Question 2

This question asked students what information systems they would suggest to improve this scenario, and what data should be gathered. Good answers typically adopted the pattern of:

- Describing clearly what system(s) you would introduce and why.
- Illustrating this by giving at least one example (most answers included this).
- Clearly relating the proposed systems to both technical and business impacts (this is where there was some variation of answer quality).

Obviously assessment criteria 1 and 3 will be addressed by this question, as would criterion 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.

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 asked students to discuss how the data collected would impact on the quality of information held.

Good answers typically adopted the pattern of:

- Describing clearly and discussing a number of (not just one or two) relevant criteria (generally done well).
- Illustrating the above by giving at least one real-life example that was clearly linked to the concepts/criteria discussed (some answers included this).
- Some excellent answers also drew upon relevant frameworks in the literature.

Obviously assessment criteria 1, sometimes 2 (see above) and 3 will be addressed by this question, as would criterion 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 concerned potential security risks.

Good answers typically adopted the pattern of:

- Describing clearly and discussing the right number of relevant risks (generally done well).
- Illustrating the above by giving at least one real-life example that was clearly linked to the risks discussed (some answers included this).
- Some excellent answers also drew upon relevant frameworks in the literature.

Obviously assessment criterion 1, sometimes 2 and 3 will be addressed by this question, as would criterion 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.

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.

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.
- Meyers, A. *Longman Academic Writing Series 5: Essays to Research Papers*. (Harlow: Pearson, 2013).
- Murphy, R. *English Grammar in Use: A Self-Study Reference and Practice Book for Intermediate Learners of English*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 4th edition.