QUAL11021

Projects in Practice

Coursework Assignment

PROJECT PLANNING AND CONTROL USING THE BUSINESS
PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND SOFTWARE

The coursework for this module is in two parts (there is no exam).

Part A is <u>group</u> work and is worth 40% of the total mark.

Part B is <u>individual</u> work and is worth 60% of the total mark.

This module studies methodologies and technologies for planning and managing a project. The coursework reflects this. The name of the module was changed to "Projects in Practice" in April 2020. You are asked to not only plan a real business project but also carry it out. One of the best ways to achieve these aims is to plan, manage and deliver a project for a charity. This will probably involve finding a suitable charity organisation and agreeing on a project idea with them. Alternatively, especially given the restrictions imposed by the Pandemic, you may opt to undertake a project that can be done in-house, as it were. A project that is more on-line. For example you might like to create a useful video or a website or start a new business / service. Whatever you, and the team you are part of, decide to do you should design, plan and specify a project (**by week 8**) and then implement the project, managing issues and changes and reporting on the outcomes (**by week 13**).

The project should involve the delivery of business products (measureable outcomes) – for example you might organise a fund raising event or awareness raising initiative on a specified date around **week 10, 11 or 12**. Or your team might produce an instructional video, for example on some aspect of Project Management, or design and build a new website for some stated purpose, or put together an on-line (Zoom, Teams or WebEx) conference in which you invite speakers, or arrange something in association with the APM. When you have a particular idea in mind you should mention it to your lecturer or tutor to see if it is appropriate.
The project assignment is divided into two parts.

Part A asks you to plan a project and follow the guidelines set out in the Business Project Management (BPM) methodology to create a BPM Specification (similar to a PMP or PID) for a real project. You should attempt this in groups of 4, 5 or 6; however you can accomplish it on your own if necessary.

Part B invites you (individually) to consider and demonstrate how to manage a project and how to use MS Project or equivalent software to monitor and control a project. At the end of the project you should report on the actual stages, progress, success, problems, outcomes and lessons of the project.

Part A

In the first part of the coursework you should work in small groups to plan and use the BPM approach (discussed in lectures) to organise a project that may involve many different stakeholders and a certain amount of complexity. In the early stages each member of the team may take on specific roles (eg Business Analyst, Planner, Researcher, Publicist, Project Manager) or you may share all the work, to explore and follow the method properly and produce the BPM Specification documentation (BPMS). You may use "Project in a Box" if you like.

The Start of the Project.
Each group decides upon a suitable project and prepares a definition of, and plan to carry out, the project. Each group must select a different project. The various plans, specifications and arrangements should be collected and documented in a BPM Specification (BPMS) (similar to a PMP or Project Initiation Document) and this report should contain all the necessary contents and level of detail explained in lectures and notes for the module.   BPMS content headings are: Terms of Reference, Business Case, Feasibility and Risk Analysis, Plans. A complete list of the items to be included in this document is provided in the table below. Examples and templates of various forms and reports will also be given in the Moodle site for this module. You should create an overview Work Breakdown Structure and include this with this BPMS,

> **Deliverable - by week 8 (at the latest)**:
> * a completed BPMS (a project specification and overview plan)

Part A - Documentation for the First Section

The following outline framework gives an idea of the main headings, contents and structure that you are expected to follow when writing the BPM Specification report and completing the first part of the assignment. You will most likely gather, analyse and record this information progressively over the first weeks and build the document(s) as you work on the project. It is expected, for example, that you will do most of the Terms of Reference in week 3, the Business Case in week 4, the

Feasibility study and Risk analysis in week 5, and the planning aspects in week 6. For project configuration management purposes two columns have been added that may help you to organize and then track updates and changes.

Elements:	The BPMS	Date	Authors
Project Intro			
Title of the Project			
Names of Team			
Banner IDs			
Roles and responsibilities	(if assigned)		
Organisation / charity	*Name and address*		
Terms of Reference	*(around 1,000 words)*		
Client	*Main contact(s)*		
Organisation intro	*Background / brief resume*		
Scope	*Type of project, Reasons for this choice*		
Objectives	*What will be produced by the project?*		
Inclusions & deliverables	*The project boundary - What is to be included*		
Exclusions	*Items out with boundary - to be left alone*		
Duration & milestones	*Important dates*		
Other constraints	*Budget, staff, technology, legal& ethical issues*		
Key stakeholders	*Beneficiaries, Users and interested parties*		
Critical success factors	*Criteria, aspects and factors that will make or break the project*		
Business Case	*(around 1,000 words)*		
Overall Purpose	*Why is it worth doing?*		
Products	*What will be produced?*		
Current business	*Overview of current situation / problems / issues to be addressed*		
Strategy	*Strategy to tackle the opportunity or problem*		
Solution	*Description of solution*		
Costs / Issues	*Financial costs – development and support*		
	Non-financial costs, eg disruption		
Benefits	*Financial benefits – revenue and cost reductions*		
	Non-financial benefits – eg improvements to image, satisfaction levels, customer service, efficiencies, organizational culture, …		
Next Steps	*Recommendations*		
Feasibility			
Options	Discuss briefly the 3 options considered, which was selected and why.		
Test results	Brief summary of findings		
Risks			
Threat analysis	List of circumstances and events that might compromise success – the Risk Register		
Plans	(around 500 words)		
Major work packages	Important stages and deliverable targets		
Overview Schedule	WBS (Work Breakdown Structure)		
Risk	How risks and issues will be dealt with		

Quality	The techniques, standards and responsibilities required to manage on-going product quality		
Communications	Methods and frequencies of contact with important stakeholders		
Change control	Procedure for managing changes during the project		
Miscellaneous			
Assumptions	*For example: guesstimates due to lack of information*		
Other related projects	*Mention any other projects that are significant*		
References	*Sources, evidence, …*		
Appendices	*Useful inclusions*		

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Coursework – Part A

<u>Business Project Management Specification / PMP / PID</u>

Name of Project:_____ **Name of marker:**_____

Name of Student: _____**Banner ID:**_____
Name of Student: _____**Banner ID:**_____
Name of Student: _____**Banner ID:**_____
Name of Student: _____**Banner ID:**_____

Products		Mark
Terms of Reference		
Project Definition, Choice and Charity		
Project Scope, Objectives & Deliverables		
Constraints - including duration & budget	30%	
Team Structure & Roles		
Key stakeholders		
Business Case, Feasibility and Risk		
Intended Purpose and Benefits		
Current situation		
Threats and Risk	30%	
Options feasibility		
Plans		
Project Work Packages and Planning		
Project Controls – eg quality, communication	30%	
Gantt Chart (one page Baseline)		
Miscellaneous		
Overall Professionalism		
Document style and structure	10%	
Total		

Comments:

QUAL11021 Coursework Assignment: **Part B**

Project Management and the use of MSProject[1]or Equivalent

Part B invites you **(individually)** to explore and report on **managing** a project and demonstrate how you use technology to help you. Managing involves a lot more than planning. A live project can easily break down into chaos without good management. As a project manager, you will be responsible for managing a large amount of information about the progress of a project. You will be responsible for making a range of complex decisions to make sure a project is completed successfully. You are also responsible for communicating effectively about the progress of the project. Software packages such as MS Project[1] can be very helpful. You should therefore be competent in using project management software.

At the end of the project you should submit a set of Gantt charts, graphs, tables and plans that illustrate and analyse knock-on-effects and new arrangements which should be accompanied by a brief narrative explanation of the progress and outcomes of the project and a critique of the software you employed. The deadline for the submission of this final report is **week 13**. All files should be submitted via Moodle and/or Turnitin. Please email your tutor if you have any questions.

Managing the Project

Having created, established and submitted the BPMS and the project plan, work starts delivering the project's products. Once the project is underway you will need to adjust, amend and re-plan the activities, the resources, the schedule and the risk register to keep everything on track and to cope with unexpected (or anticipated but unwelcome) developments. You must update your MS Project plan continually to reflect the current status, fine-tune the critical path, try to reduce increases in budget or time, monitor quality, evaluate possible implications and predict and control problems.

Needless to say, not everything will go according to plan (communication problems, delays in agreements, suppliers late, people off sick, equipment breaking down, costs going up, and the like). Remember, there is an argument that the very best project managers do not get the reward or recognition they deserve. Project managers are doing a good job if everything goes pretty much to plan and also when things go wrong but they successfully negotiate major challenges.

A large part of project management is how you manage the effects of project problems or exceptions. You should consider the impact and repercussions of what could go wrong with your plan, make arrangements to deal with them and put these into action when necessary. You should explore and decide how to bring the project back on track in terms of cost and timescale, agree this with your team and keep careful records of these changes. You should compare possible options (e.g.

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[1] Or equivalent software such as ProjectLibre

working weekends or overtime, employing extra resources) and decide which option is preferable and why. It is possible that there will be disagreements and that everyone in the group may not agree on a course of action, in which case a compromise may be sought. You should note these discussions, agreements and solutions. You will be able to reflect on them at the end. While you do this you should think about what you have learned about project management methodologies, which approaches and techniques do you find most useful and why?

Part B requires the production of:
1) A set of Gantt charts (demonstrating monitoring and controlling progress)
2) A presentation (summarising the objectives and outcomes of the project)
3) A final report (critically reviewing the project)
4) A technology report (evaluating the technology).

This second part of the coursework continues where the first part ended. You have already created and established the project Terms of Reference and baseline plan in your BPMS. You should spend the rest of the semester implementing the project. In other words now you put the plans into action and deliver the project product(s).

You have considered and established the aims and context of this project in the BPMS: you have explained who are the project owners, the stakeholders, their expectations and so on. You will also have considered the project management methodology. The next step is to follow the plans and track developments and changes in these project plans – the tasks, resources, costs, critical path, risks, etc.

1) The Project's Gantt Chart Plans

You have already entered the main tasks for the project and set the project baseline in Part A. This plan confirmed your expected schedule, set milestones and estimated the costs and completion date for the project. From the moment the actual work on the project starts, you must monitor, record and control your and your group's progress and the changes that are made to the baseline.

So in Part A you (each group) submitted the preliminary version of the Gantt chart (using software), containing your baseline plan, by week 8. This established your baseline schedule for the project board and confirmed important milestones, your planned budget and target date.

In Part B you (individually) update and review this original Gantt chart and (as you manage and work on the project and produce the project's deliverables) keep your own individual version up to date as the project progresses. Things seldom go exactly according to plan so changes will need to be made. Problems and issues arise that need to be allowed for. Therefore it is likely that you will create a number of updated versions of this Gantt chart (a copy of the final Gantt chart must be included in you final report). The Gantt charts provide useful material for reflection and lessons learned. These Gantt charts should be easy to read and printed on one or only a few pages. While you must identify the tasks you should try to minimize the space that the dependency table uses so that you can display the differences between planned and actual progress. Use A3 sized sheets if you like. These Gantt charts must be incorporated into the two reports you produce (the plan and the report) and not submitted as separate files.

So, you should each (individually) keep your own copy of the original Gantt chart for the project you are embarking on, before you start work delivering it. As a reminder: your baseline project Gantt chart should have about 20 to 30 tasks or activities. The project should require certain key resources that may be used throughout the project. There should be costs associated with different aspects of this project and with the use of these resources. If your baseline Gantt chart does not already have sufficient details about tasks, schedule, resources and costs please add them. You should have used software such as MSProject to do this. The first Gantt chart is your pre-start estimate, your initial plan.

Once work starts on the project, and at least once per week, you should update this Gantt chart with the latest amendments and developments and track how you are getting on compared to your expectations and your original baseline plan. Log and store these plans so that you can refer to them later and discuss/present them in the final report. It is important that you demonstrate that you know how to manipulate MSProject, or equivalent, to perform what-if analysis, appreciate the implications and consequences of changes and take account of project developments /updates.

> **Deliverable:** The Gantt charts you include in your reports will show
> * the baseline plan - an estimate of what will happen - including: tasks, durations, dependencies, critical path, resources, costs.
> * The actual, delivered, project progress which shows the revised plan and the changes that were made – a Gantt chart of what actually happened including changes to, for example: tasks, durations, resourcing, costs.

2) Presentation

Imagine you are presenting a presentation to project board. When preparing the presentation, think about its purpose – what do the project board want to hear? (Remember, the project board may be monitoring the progress of a number of different projects.) The project board will be eager to hear about the project and what progress you have made. What were the objectives and what is the current status of the project? Is it on track in terms of time and cost?

When preparing the presentation, you should consider the clarity of the explanations given. This will probably include amended Gantt and other generated charts. You may mention the plans and deliverables and certain parameters. You should explain what has caused the project to deviate from the plan and what you did to correct it. You should also consider the clarity of the presentation; choose the outputs and reports from your software carefully to make it as clear as possible.

> **Deliverable:**
> * A presentation (such as PowerPoint slides) which provides a discussion and explanation of the above. You can include these with your final report.

3) Final Report

Your project should be completed by week 13. Individually, you should summarize in a concise way, your view of the status and success of your project. Was it

completed successfully, did you achieve the objectives within time, budget and other constraints? Did you produce the products to the expected level of quality? Or would you consider it to have challenged outputs, outcomes and benefits? You should have had measures in place so that you can judge the outcomes of your project. This might include key performance indicators (KPIs) and feedback from some of the key stakeholders.

You should use this brief report as a chance to review and reflect on the outcome of your project. What are the lessons learned? What are your general reflections on the methodology and process? When reflecting on the methodology, you should consider the nature of this particular project - a relatively small project. How would things be different for a larger, more complex project? What about the overall group process; how effectively do you think your team worked together on the project?

Deliverable
- a brief business report (approximately 500 - 1000 words) describing the project outcomes, the usefulness (or otherwise) of the techniques and methods you used, your reflections and any lessons learned

4)   Technology Report
You need to reflect on the usefulness (or otherwise) of the software you used. Do you think it helped or hindered you? How would you get on without any software? Entering, and updating all the project data accurately takes a lot of time and effort. Is it worth the effort? Does the software help you to manage the project effectively? Are there any features which particularly impressed you? Any which you feel could be improved? If you had an opportunity to add new features, what would they be? There are hundreds of different packages and applications you could have used, would you be tempted to try different software next time?

Deliverable
- A brief discussion and critical evaluation of the software and technology you used.

Assessment Guidelines:
Please make sure you are aware of UWS's assessment rules and regulations. For example, you will be penalized for late submissions. The penalties for plagiarism can be very serious. You should also be aware of the mitigation progress if you do encounter problems such as health issues.

As with all coursework – the sooner you make a start, the sooner you will discover the challenges. Do ask for help if you are not sure about something. This exercise involves the use of different software including: MSP / ProjectLibre, Word, PowerPoint, Moodle, Turnitin etc., don't leave things till the last minute.

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Coursework Part B - Marking Scheme

Student Name / Banner ID:

Project:

Section	Out of	Mark
An MSP[1] file and print out shows the baseline Gantt chart File contains the baseline plan, (main tasks, dependencies, durations, resources, costs), free of obvious errors (hanging tasks, overloaded resources etc).	10	
A number of properly labelled MSP[1] files and printout(s) showing actual stages, progress, changes and status There are remedial actions and changes which correspond to presentation description current status date and progress set.	20	
Presentation - progress and changes explained Outline and structure OK - intro etc.; baseline plan described - time & cost; current status described - time & cost; problem(s) described; options proposed and evaluated - time & cost; use of MSP outputs to illustrate presentation clear, relevant diagrams and tables with minimal clutter; summary & general comments	20	
Final Report (around 500 to 1,000 words) Evaluation of project success. Outputs, outcomes and benefits? Met objectives? Reflections on risk analysis, problems, setbacks and solutions. Critical review of methodology and approach. Assessment of team performance and leadership. Lessons learned	40	
Technology report There should be a brief description (around 100 to 200 words) of the software actually used (MSP, ProjectLibre, other) and a discussion about whether this was useful or not and whether it was the most suitable software.	10	
	100	

Comments: