

THE INSTITUTE OF COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT SYLLABUS



Feasibility Study

Unit code: FS-0908

Level: Advanced Diploma

Credits: 20

Unit leader: PY

Pre-requisites:

Main Aims of the Unit:

Students undertaking this unit need to select a specific computer project. This is likely to relate to a particular local organisation or company and will be used to analyse and solve a given problem.

Main Topics of Study:

The Feasibility Study will include areas such as: Terms of reference, Details and problems of the current system, Study methodology, possible solutions & recommendations including a description of the costs and benefits.

Learning Outcomes for the Unit:

At the end of this Unit, students will be able to:

1. Implement techniques learnt in other units to formulate potential solutions
2. Integrate knowledge from a wide range of sources
3. Write a concise report addressing the key issues
4. Analyse a range of solutions to make informed recommendations
5. Manage their own time and resources in the completion of the report

The numbers below show which of the above module learning outcomes are related to particular cognitive and key skills:

Knowledge & Understanding 1, 2, 3, 4
Analysis 4
Synthesis/Creativity 2
Evaluation 3, 4
Interactive & group Skills -
Self-appraisal/Reflection on Practice 5
Planning and Management of Learning 5
Problem Solving 4
Communication & Presentation 3
Other skills (please specify) -

Learning and teaching methods/strategies used to enable the achievement of learning outcomes:

Learning takes place on a number of levels through lectures, class discussion including problem review and analysis. Formal lectures provide a foundation of information on which the student builds through directed learning and self managed learning outside of the class. The students are actively encouraged to form study groups to discuss course material which fosters a greater depth learning experience.

Assessment methods weightings which enable students to demonstrate the learning outcomes of the Unit:

Written report 100%

(Note: 25% of the overall mark may be obtained from presenting the report to a local independent panel.)

Indicative Reading for this Unit:**Main text**

Refer to the ICM website for appropriate learning material

Alternative Texts & Further Reading:

Material relating to the target organisation eg company reports

Guideline for Teaching and Learning Time (10 hours per credit)

Lectures / Seminars / Tutorials / Workshops: 50 hours

Tutorial support includes feedback on project proposals and continuing supervision through the study.

Directed learning: 50 hours

Advance reading and preparation / Class preparation / Background reading / Specific research and development of overall project

Self managed learning: 100 hours

Working through the course text and completing the research methodology. In addition students are expected to engage with the tutor and other students and to ensure that the study is progressing satisfactorily.

Overview

There is no examination for this module. It is tested by

1. Candidate-submitted documentation. (75%)
2. Presentation at the centre of the candidate's findings to an assessment panel of at least two knowledgeable members of staff.
3. FULL report from the assessment panel of the quality of the presentation. (25%)

The candidate is required to perform an in-depth study for a new system and then produce a Feasibility Report. The report is of the type that would be presented to a Board of Directors for them to discuss whether to go ahead with the project, reject it or choose some middle option. The project must be REAL and not generalised such as the introduction of stock control with no reference to any particular organisation.

The new system should be

- EITHER the introduction of a computer system to replace an existing manual system
- OR upgrading an existing system to provide more and better features.

It is intended that the project should be one that a Board would be required to approve. This would therefore eliminate projects such as changing software from one brand to another UNLESS this made SIGNIFICANT improvements in the quantity and quality of new features and made SIGNIFICANT differences to the whole organisation. In this latter case, these improvements must be fully justified.

The report from the assessment panel must be a CRITICAL report of the candidate's performance at the presentation. Some previous reports have been too brief and even incompatible with the candidate's written report: in these cases, the assessment is marked totally on the candidate's documentation.

ALL CANDIDATES AT A CENTRE MUST CHOOSE DIFFERENT PROJECTS.

Sequence of events

1. **Start of Course.** Select a suitable project to solve. All students at a given centre MUST choose DIFFERENT projects. Ideally, the centre could give each candidate a brief which outlines the requirements for the study as a systems analyst would be given in business.
2. **Read the documentation.** The candidate must be given a full copy of these notes so that he/she knows precisely what is required.
3. **In the first weeks of the course.** Complete an ICM approval form and submit it to the Institute. Explain as fully as possible, the remit of this study. The ICM examiner cannot be expected to know about local conditions. ICM will return this form quickly with comments. The aim of this is to ensure that the project is appropriate - neither TOO simple nor TOO difficult. If ICM considers it too difficult and would involve too much time and effort, it will either advise changing or suggest that only a part of the project is completed. Some previous projects have been so trivial they could not pass however good the documentation.
4. **During the course.** Perform the investigation. Record your findings AS YOU GO ALONG – it will be very difficult to remember detail later on. Record details on any interviews you conduct with prospective users. Be sure to investigate the SCALE OF EVENTS. For instance for a mail order company -how many customers the company has, the number of orders received every month, the number of products it sells, the number of current staff currently involved with this application, the number of computer terminals required for the new scheme,..etc.
5. **End of course.** Check that you have documented ALL elements from the attached list. Prepare a presentation for the "Board" of about 20-30 minutes which you should deliver to a panel of assessors at the examination centre. Be prepared to answer questions about your project. At the presentation, hand in your project work to the panel including the original approval form on which all marks will be recorded. DO NOT INCLUDE DISKETTES. The panel will assess your performance and write a report to send with your work to ICM.

FEASIBILITY STUDY REPORT

This should include:

1. A clear statement of the terms of reference for the study including the boundaries/limits.
2. Details of the current system.
3. Problems with the current system.
4. Details of the study undertaken – interviews, scale of the old and new systems.....etc
5. Possible solutions.
6. Recommendations. You could recommend a full system AND a cheaper partial system to allow the Board to decide which to implement.
7. Costs and benefits of the solutions you have provided in 5 above.

This report will be marked out of 75 by examiners at the Institute and will take into account the quality of your report, how well it is set out and how realistic are your solutions. Do not leave the examiner guessing about any aspect of the feasibility study.

PRESENTATION TO THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

1. The panel should consist of at least two people with experience of computer systems.
2. The presentation should be as VISUAL and FACTUAL as possible and last for about 20-30 minutes. Summary notes can be given to each member of the panel – a copy of these should be included with your report and suitably labelled. The panel may ask you to explain some aspects in more detail.
3. The panel will make notes about your presentation, discuss these afterwards between themselves and then write a report that you will NOT see and which will go to the Institute with your documentation. The report will consider:
 - i Critical assessment of the overall quality of the presentation.
 - ii How confidently you delivered your presentation.
 - iii How detailed were your findings.
 - iv How realistic were your recommendations.
 - v How accurate were your figures.
 - vi An assessment of your conclusions.
 - vii An assessment of your cost/benefit findings.

The report will include brief details of EACH MEMBER OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL including status in the organisation and past experiences.

NOTE: The assessment panel's report is to be marked out of 25. However, if it is too brief or inconsistent with the candidate's report, this centre mark will be ignored and the work will be assessed entirely by the Institute examiners on the candidate's written report.

Overall Comments:

1. The candidate should be given a copy of these notes.
2. An honest report will score more highly than one that tries to hide problems or shortcomings in the investigations. These problems WILL be obvious to the examiner. Omissions will be taken to mean that part of the study was NOT undertaken or completed. Insufficient numbers will show that the scale of the problem was not considered - a real Board of Directors would quickly want more answers.
3. It is suggested that the presentation is marked as a percentage and the final mark divided by 4.

FEASIBILITY STUDY APPROVAL FORM

CENTRE NAME.....

CANDIDATE NAME.....CANDIDATE NUMBER.....

PROJECT TITLE.....

.....

NAME OF THE ORGANISATION FOR WHICH THIS STUDY APPLIES

SUMMARY OF THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY (use additional sheet if necessary):
Supply sufficient information that the examiner will be able to judge to the depth and scope of study involved.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE.....DATE.....

Submit this form for approval AND also as the FRONT sheet of the final documentation.

EXAMINER COMMENTS and SUGGESTED ALTERATIONS:

Examiner..... Date.....

MARKS AWARDED:

By Centre for the presentation: out of 25
 Detailed allocation shown in assessment panel report

ICM marking

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Assessment panel report full and realistic | Assessment panel not acceptable |
|--|---------------------------------|

| ITEM | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded | Maximum Mark | Mark Awarded |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Terms of reference / Overview | 10 | | 10 | |
| Description of existing system | 10 | | 15 | |
| Problems with the existing system | 5 | | 10 | |
| Investigation report – interviews etc | 10 | | 15 | |
| Possible solutions | 10 | | 15 | |
| Benefits of new system | 5 | | 10 | |
| Costing for new system | 10 | | 10 | |
| Recommendations | 10 | | 10 | |
| Overall presentation of the work | 5 | | 5 | |
| TOTAL | 75 | | 100 | |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| ICM MARK | |
| CENTRE MARK | |
| TOTAL | |
| GRADE | |

