

Unit 6: Managing a Successful Business Project (Pearson Set)

Unit code	D/618/5039
Unit type	Core
Unit level	4
Credit value	15

Introduction

This unit is a ***Pearson-set unit***. The project brief will be set by the centre, based on a theme provided by Pearson (this will change annually). The theme and chosen project within the theme will enable students to explore and examine a relevant and current topical aspect of business in the context of the business environment.

The skills of project management are highly sought after by employers in all areas of business, as the ability to plan, procure and execute a business project efficiently requires a range of specific skills in leadership, time management, problem solving, budgeting and communication.

The aim of this unit is to offer students an opportunity to demonstrate the skills required for managing and implementing a ***small-scale business project***. They will undertake independent research and investigation for carrying out and executing a business project that meets appropriate business aims and objectives.

On successful completion of this unit, students will have the confidence to engage in decision making, problem solving and research activities using project-management skills. They will have the fundamental knowledge and skills to enable them to investigate and examine relevant business concepts in a work-related context, determine appropriate outcomes, decisions or solutions and present evidence to various stakeholders in an acceptable and understandable format.

***Please refer to the accompanying *Pearson-set Assignment Guide and Theme and Topic Release* document on HN Global for further support and guidance on the delivery of the Pearson-set unit**

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit a student will be able to:

- LO1 Explain the key stages of the project lifecycle that should be considered when project managing
- LO2 Produce a Project Management Plan (PMP) for a business project using primary and secondary research methods
- LO3 Implement the Project Management Plan (PMP) to communicate results from the research and make conclusions from the evidence of findings
- LO4 Reflect on value gained from implementing the project and the project management process.

Essential Content

LO1 **Explain the key stages of the project lifecycle that should be considered when project managing**

Project management:

Defining project management.

The project lifecycle and the stages of the project lifecycle, e.g. initiation, planning, execution and closure.

The advantages of using project management and why it is important.

Roles in project managing, e.g. assistant project manager, junior project manager, project team leader and responsibilities to drive through the project and achieve required outcomes.

Project management skills, including good planning, organising, leadership and communication skills, budget accountability and decisions on spending, and flexibility in meeting the needs of the organisation.

Project leadership styles, qualities and attributes e.g flexible, agile, adaptable.

Importance of motivation to team performance.

Delegation of work and responsibility.

Skills and techniques for dealing with conflict, resolution and mediation, negotiation, chairing meetings.

Project process management (e.g. process identification, specification, documentation, governance and operation) and how that applies at each stage of the project.

Contribution of process management to meeting project objectives.

Different project methodologies and frameworks e.g. waterfall, agile, hybrid, critical path, critical chain, scrum, kanban.

Project management plans:

Scoping a project – defining objectives, scope, purpose and deliverables to be produced.

Developing the project plan, including planning for timescales and time management, cost, quality, change, risk, stakeholder communication.

Project management tools:

Different types of software and application used to support project management, e.g. Microsoft Project for tracking, managing and analysing projects and Asana for holistic project management and integration of workload, inbox, calendars and tasks.

Use of project-planning tasks and tracking tools, e.g. Trello, Smartsheet and Excel spreadsheets.

Tools and techniques used to create activity plans, work breakdown structure (WBS) and Gantt charts for effective planning.

Project progress measurement and reporting techniques e.g. staff hours, earned value (EV) and progress, s-curves, critical path analysis and reporting, milestone trending.

Problem-solving tools e.g. brainstorming, cause and effect diagrams, fishbone diagrams, force field analysis.

LO2 Produce a Project Management Plan (PMP) for a business project using primary and secondary research methods

Factors to consider in a project management plan:

Scheduling techniques estimating for project activities and Quality Assurance of project activities.

Relationship between schedules.

Progress monitoring and metrics to assess work performed against the schedule e.g. organisational breakdown structure (OBS) and work breakdown structure (WBS); bar charts; milestone schedules.

Cost breakdown structure: resources needed e.g. funding, estimating, overheads, direct costs, indirect costs, fixed costs, variable costs and overall budget for a project.

Tracking systems for actual costs, accruals and committed costs.

Alternative cost breakdowns to provide for graphical representations and performance management.

Project stakeholder management: their perspectives, different interests and levels of influence on project outcomes.

Stakeholder engagement e.g. challenges, complexities, limitations.

Human resources (HR) and requirements: calculation, specification and optimisation of HR requirements; job descriptions.

Formation of project teams.

Project initiation and start-up procedures.

Procurement strategies for outsourcing, external contracting and resource planning.

Project risk and issue management: need for and implementation of a risk management plan; risk management methods and techniques to identify and prioritise threats or opportunities; mitigation actions to minimise risk impacts.

Optimise benefits by managing opportunities.

Post-project appraisals: comparison of project outputs/outcomes with business objectives; process of self-reflection on project process and outputs/outcomes.

Research methods and strategies for a business project:

Purpose of research in a business project e.g. understanding the market research for a business plan; for the forecasting of early and future business opportunities; using research to reduce costs; creating solutions or innovative products that are targeted to the demand in the market.

Primary and secondary research and data collection.

Defining qualitative and quantitative methods.

Selecting an appropriate strategy for the research e.g. questionnaires, interviews, observation.

Selecting appropriate sample population (e.g. consumer market, businesses or individuals) and methods for information-gathering, data collection and material resourcing.

Sampling approaches and techniques, including probability and non-probability sampling.

Use of monitoring tools, including WBS and Gantt charts.

L03 Implement the Project Management Plan (PMP) to communicate results from the research and make conclusions from the evidence of findings

Analysis and evaluation of findings and data gathered:

Digital techniques and tools to analyse and evaluate the secondary and primary data gathered, e.g. online surveys (SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, Zoho Survey) and spreadsheets (Excel templates).

Techniques for data analysis, e.g. coding, charts and graphs, trend analysis.

Techniques to create pictograms, pie charts, bar charts, frequency curves, histograms, line graphs, scattergrams.

Use of scatter (XY) graphs and linear trend lines for forecasting (reliability).

Techniques for creating tables to simplify and rationalise the presentation of data to aid understanding of the information within data.

The benefits of data validity and maintaining objective mindset to provide objective results.

Communicating results:

Types of communication methods, e.g. written, verbal and the medium, e.g. different report formats, online, presentation.

Multi-media presentation tools: PowerPoint, Prezi, Google Slides, Microsoft Sway, Adobe Spark.

Video conferencing e.g. Zoom, Adobe Connect, Google Hangouts, Slack video calls.

Communicating skills:

Verbal and non-verbal communication skills required to meet audience requirements, e.g. eye contact, pitch, pace.

Communicating and persuading internal/external stakeholders, e.g. negotiation and sales skills.

Presentation, behaviour and conduct of presenter, e.g. attire, attitude, professionalism, suitable for audience, well prepared and organised.

Different communication formats to address different audience needs and expectations and appropriateness for meeting cultural diversity of an audience.

Convincing arguments:

Presenting logical and convincing findings and outcomes as part of the project process.

Developing evaluative conclusions.

LO4 Reflect on value gained from implementing the project and the project management process.

Reflection for learning and practice:

Differences between reflecting on performance and evaluating a project – the former considers the research process, information gathering and data collection, the latter the quality of the research argument and use of evidence.

The cycle of reflection and using reflection to inform future behaviour.

The value of reflection for adaptability, responding to feedback and generating new ideas and ways of working.

Reflective writing:

Writing to avoid generalisation, focusing on personal development and the research journey in a critical and objective way.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Pass	Merit	Distinction
LO1 Explain the key stages of the project lifecycle that should be considered when project managing		D1 Critically evaluate the project-management process.
P1 Explain the stages of the project lifecycle (PLC) and their importance to the success of a project. P2 Examine the factors to be considered when compiling a project management plan (PMP).	M1 Evaluate the stages of the PLC and the factors, (deliverables, quality, risk, communication and resources) to be considered in a PMP.	
LO2 Produce a Project Management Plan (PMP) for a business project using primary and secondary research methods		D2 Justify the choices made in the design of the PMP for completing the aims and objectives of the project.
P3 Examine a range of research methods and strategies and their importance for gathering information and data collection. P4 Produce a PMP that covers, aim, objectives, deliverables, quality, risk, communication resources and research methods. P5 Produce a work breakdown structure and a schedule to provide timeframes and stages for completion.	M2 Evaluate a range of research methods and strategies for gathering information and data collection M3 Produce a detailed PMP, and schedule for monitoring and completing the aims and objectives of the project.	

Pass	Merit	Distinction
LO3 Implement the Project Management Plan (PMP) to communicate results from the research and make conclusions from the evidence of findings		LO3 and LO4 D3 Critically reflect on the findings from the research and the project management process in supporting stated objectives and own learning.
P6 Conduct a business project as stated within the PMP and communicate findings. P7 Present data to draw valid and meaningful conclusions and recommendations from data analysis.	M4 Justify conclusions and recommendations drawn from data analysis and findings to meet the stated project objectives.	
LO4 Reflect on value gained from implementing the project and the project management process.		
P8 Reflect on the value of undertaking the business project to meet stated objectives and own learning and performance.	M5 Evaluate the project management process to meet stated objectives and support own learning and performance.	

Recommended Resources

Textbooks

DINSMORE, P. and CABANIS-BREWIN, J. (2018). *The AMA Handbook of Project Management*. 5th Ed. AMACON.

FLICK, U. (2020) *Introducing Research Methodology: A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. 3rd Ed. London: SAGE.

GRAY, D. (2017) *Doing Research in the Real World*. 4th Ed. London: SAGE.

MAYLOR, H. (2021) *Project Management*. 5th Ed. Harlow: Pearson.

SAUNDERS, M., LEWIS, P. and THORNHILL, A. (2019) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 8th Ed. Harlow: Pearson.

Websites

www.asana.com	Asana Free project-management tools (General reference)
www.projectmanagement.com	Project management (General reference)
www.projectsmart.co.uk	Project Smart Articles Tools Glossary (General reference)
www.trello.com	Trello Free project-management tools

Links

This unit links to the following related unit:

Unit 19: Research Project