

PRACTICUM GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS 2007

Introduction

The guidelines hereunder are intended to assist students with the practicum process and product. These guidelines are in keeping with the requirements of the University of the West Indies and the Association of MBAs (AMBA). Both the Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) and the International Master of Business Administration (IMBA) are accredited by the AMBA. These guidelines will be posted on the following GSB website link: <http://www.gsb.tt/academic/myGSB/practicum.html>.

All students reading for Lok Jack GSB's EMBA, IMBA, Master of Marketing, Master of Human Resources Management programmes must submit a Practicum. The successful completion of the Practicum is a criterion for the award of the relevant degree. Undertaking of the Practicum is intended firstly, to test the student's ability in terms of understanding and **evaluating business problems / needs** which can be in several forms - competitive, organizational, financial and operational. Secondly, to test the student's **ability to analyze** by way of seeking a "structured" solution to the identified problem / need. And thirdly, to get the student to **focus on implementation and execution** which is the essence and the real test for the entrepreneur, in demonstrating the ability to develop practical and implementable solutions and ideas.

What is a Practicum?

The Practicum is an integration of learnings of the modules comprising the respective programme into a practical, working document. It should demonstrate the interconnections between 'theory' and 'practice' and translate that into functional practice in the workplace.

The Practicum must display evidence of reading depth and scope, currency of information, analytical, synthesis and evaluation skills, practicality of recommendations and proper research methodology. Additionally, it should attempt to investigate and diagnose a selected business problem or opportunity and make sound actionable recommendations.

Practicum Objectives

The practicum is not patterned after a normal, structured classroom course. Rather, it is project oriented and culminates into a comprehensive written document. Given the nature of the task, the main objectives of the practicum are to ensure that students are able to:

- ❖ investigate and diagnose selected business problems
- ❖ analyse the issues using a structured approach
- ❖ develop and implement innovative and practical responses/solutions
- ❖ use proper research methodology
- ❖ draw sound conclusions or inferences which form the basis of action
- ❖ synthesise and apply concepts learned throughout the programme

Practicum Introduction

The Practicum is introduced at the beginning of the second trimester of the first year of study through the Business Research Methods Workshop and continues throughout the two-year period.

It is launched during the first term of the second year of study. The launch is intended to give students the opportunity to clarify concerns and ask questions with regard to the requirements of the Practicum.

Students are asked to submit ideas for Practicum topics approximately two (2) weeks after the date of the launch. Based on the topic chosen, an appropriate faculty member is assigned as the advisor.

Each student must submit an individual practicum. No group practica will be accepted.

Role of the Practicum Advisor

The Practicum advisor will:

- NOT take responsibility for more than five (5) practica at a time
- Discuss in detail with each student, the nature and scope of the Practicum to be undertaken and the suitability of the proposed methodology
- Approve the Practicum proposal and/or make recommendations for improvement

- Approve 1st draft and/or make recommendations for improvement
- Provide students with a contact telephone number, fax number and e-mail details.
- Maintain contact with the students to ensure that proper guidance and feedback is administered. The level of contact with the students will be determined by the needs of the students and be mutually agreed.
- Ensure that students are aware of the criteria by which the practicum will be assessed
- Sign the Student Diary to indicate all interaction with the student
- Sign off on the final practicum document
- Ensure that the practicum meets the required standards in terms of structure and content; in particular to:
 1. clearly state the relationship between the objectives, the conceptual or theoretical framework used and any literature drawn on;
 2. discuss how and why particular data collection and analysis methods were chosen;
 3. link the analysis and conclusions clearly and explicitly to the research question or objectives posed;
 4. integrate academic knowledge and practical experience;
 5. use proper structure and English;
 6. use proper presentation style
 7. make sound conclusions and recommendations
 8. provide proper referencing and bibliography (Chicago Style of Referencing)
- Recommend a pass or fail grade for the practicum

The Practicum Advisor is NOT responsible for planning students' practicum, analyzing data or writing the report.

Each practicum will be assigned to a 2nd examiner for a second marking. In the case of a disagreement with grade/mark, both examiners MUST meet to reach a mutually agreeable grade.

Practicum Parameters

1. Each student will be assigned an advisor who specialises in the student's area of interest
2. Students not using their own organisations are responsible for finding a host organisation, which would be subject to approval by the advisor.
3. Self-employed students may do the practicum based on their own organisations.

Production of Practicum

1. Manuscripts must be type written or computer produced.
2. Double line spacing must be used.
3. Typeface should be either Times New Roman 12 pitch point or Century Gothic 11 pitch point. The typeface must be consistent throughout the text.
4. Quotations of more than two lines should be set off from the text in a single spacing and indented at least four spaces from the left hand margin.
5. Tables and figures should appear as close as possible to the text where they are discussed. They should be listed by number, title and page numbers in the beginning of the document after the Table of Contents
6. The practicum must be written in British Standard English and must be of satisfactory literary standard suitable for publication.
7. The text and all illustrative material should be clear and error free
8. Paper of good quality should be used
9. Margins on each page should be as specified in the General Regulations for Higher Degrees and this guide
10. Students must ensure that all pages of the practicum are in the correct order. The pages should be numbered in Roman or Arabic numerals at the top right hand corner of the page.

Practicum Format

The following sequence for the arrangement of the text is recommended:

- ❑ Title Page (specimen is given on page 9 of these guidelines)
- ❑ Acknowledgements (if any)
- ❑ Table of Contents (including appendices)*
- ❑ List of figures, tables, charts, illustrations etc...
- ❑ Preface
- ❑ Executive Summary
- ❑ Background or Introduction
- ❑ Statement of Problem or Opportunity
- ❑ Conceptual framework
- ❑ Research Strategy
- ❑ Actual Intervention
- ❑ Analysis of Intervention
- ❑ Findings
- ❑ Conclusion

- ❑ Recommendations
- ❑ Lessons Learnt
- ❑ References (including endnotes and/or bibliography using the **Chicago Manual of Style**¹)
- ❑ Appendices (if any)

** The Table of Contents can follow a similar format as that listed above.*

Length of Practicum

Consistent with the Faculty of Social Sciences' thesis requirements, the practicum is not to exceed **twenty thousand (20,000) words**, excluding appendices, footnotes, endnotes, references, tables and figures.

Practicum Submission

Two (2) hard cover bound copies and one (1) electronic copy (CD) of the practicum are to be submitted.

Final practicum must be submitted on or before the deadline date (*which is six (6) months from being assigned an advisor*) to the attention of the Practicum Administrator who will forward to the relevant advisor. Students are issued receipts for collection.

If the practicum is submitted after the deadline date, it will not be considered a first attempt but rather a second attempt. If a student attains a fail grade in the first attempt, only one (1) submission will be subsequently allowed. A second attempt of the practicum will attain only a passing grade of 50% (in accordance with the University's regulations).

Assessment Guidelines

The practicum is graded as a normal examinable course. Students must attain over fifty percent (50%) before a passing grade is awarded.

¹ See link on GSB's website

Recommended assessment criteria are:

Area of focus	Explanation
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ An outline of the area, statement of problem or issue studied. ❑ The scope of the work, its aims and objectives
Conceptual Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ How the problem/issues is currently conceptualized ❑ A critical account of existing studies outlining and defining key concepts and establishing the relationships between them, and deciding how these concepts might be measured.
Research strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Description of the research process, tools and techniques ❑ A indication of data collection and analysis timetable.
Analysis and Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Application of concepts and principles to the analysis of options and their feasibility. The use of relevant data as a basis for deriving the final solution. ❑ Strong evidence of data analysis including statistics ❑ Trans-disciplinary analysis or the bringing together of learning from all respective subject areas exposed to during the course of study
Practicality and acceptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The practicality and feasibility of the proposed solution/intervention from the point of view of achievement of objectives as outlined in the study, cost-benefit analysis, sustainability, achievement of financial and strategic objectives and compatibility with the organization culture.
Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ These must be concise, relevant and based on reported results and supported by the research data
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Issues identified for specific action from intervention and analysis must be specific, achievable and realistic; they must also be solution - orientation. They must directly or indirectly address the identified problem or need.
References	A complete list of all works referred to in the practicum and a standard format for referencing

Grading Scheme

Each practicum will be graded by the advisor and second marked by a 2nd examiner. The practicum will be graded as follows:

Marks	Grade
70-100	A
60 – 69	B+
50 – 59	B
49 & under	Fail

Practicum Extensions

Requests for extensions must be submitted by the student to and approved by the Assistant Registrar, School of Graduate Studies & Research. The advisor and programme administrator must be copied on the request. A maximum of one (1) extension request will be allowed. Extension requests are to be made at least one (1) month in advance of the established deadline. The 'Procedure for applying for a practicum extension' can be located at the following website link: <http://www.gsb.tt/academic/myGSB/practicum.html>.

Pressure of work or difficulties associated with printing and binding are NOT valid reasons for an extension.

If students cannot submit a practicum by the established deadline they will be adjudged as having failed the Practicum. The practicum will have to be re-submitted as a second attempt in a subsequent trimester.

Feedback to Students

Advisors are required to provide comprehensive feedback to students on prescribed practicum feedback forms, which are intended to provide guidance for assessment. However, the criteria may be adjusted at the discretion of the advisor depending on the nature of the Practicum.

In a case where the student is dissatisfied with the practicum grade, a formal grade inquiry must be made through the Post graduate section of the University.

Where a student fails the practicum, the Board of Examiners will examine the case and appropriate recommendations will be made in consultation with the practicum advisor.

As indicated on pg 16 of the UWI Thesis Guide, Faculty regulations specify that, examiners can and may request an oral examination for Masters level degrees.

Academic Dishonesty

As stated in the University's *"Regulations for Graduate Degrees and Diplomas"* (refer to pg.25) booklet, any act of academic dishonesty including plagiarism, will be reported in writing to the Campus Registrar who shall refer the matter to the Board for Graduate Studies and Research.

If a student is found to be guilty of plagiarism, the student will fail the assignment and, subject to the candidate's right of appeal to Senate, may be excluded from all further examinations of the University.

The examiner must produce evidence of plagiarism.

SPECIMEN TITLE PAGE FOR LOK JACK GSB'S PRACTICUM DOCUMENT

PRACTICUM TITLE

A Practicum
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
International Masters in Business Administration
(Your relevant programme)

Of
The University of the West Indies

John Doe *(Your name)*
2006 *(Year practicum is being submitted)*

The Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business
Faculty of Social Sciences
St. Augustine campus