

Academic and research skills for business



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AC. 1. 1 Assess your own strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

- English Language Skills

Very good communication and oration skills – Have helped me in conveying my views better than anybody else.

Evidence: The positive feedback that I get whenever I give presentation or seminar from various people around me.

- Academic Skills

Good comprehension skills – They have been helping me to quickly read and understand the academic subjects.

Evidence: The comprehension skills helped me in research that I conducted to complete my assignments. This is the reason why, I score good grades along with positive feedback that I always cover a wide-range of issues while writing any research paper.

- Person Skills

Adoptable to any type of environment – This quality has been helping me to withstand any challenging situation.

Evidence: I had lived along with my papers, friends flat, hostel and several other places till now and I am managed to deal with all kinds of people and situations.

My Weaknesses

- Academic Skills

Poor organization skills– Due to poor organizational skills, I am failing to manage the time.

Evidence: It is evident from the way I miss the deadlines often. I have been missing the deadlines to submit the assignments.

- Academic Skills

Poor analytical skills– I am unable to analyze the numerical and statistical data.

Evidence: I failed to develop statistical reports several a times in last one year.

AC. 1. 2. Using this information, set targets for self-improvement

These targets were developed based on SMART criteria, which emphasizes on principles such as Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Specific– According to this principle, the target should not be ambiguous. It should directly deal with the problem that the individual has been facing.

Measurable– According to this principle, the target should be developed in such a way that it helps in measuring the progress of the individual in acquisition of a particular skill set.

Achievable- According to this principle, the target should be within the reach. Unrealistic targets might push the individual into the anxiety and depression if things are not going in a favorable way.

Relevant- According to this principle, the target should give an opportunity to the individual to grow the skill set in the future.

Time-Bound- According to this principle, the target should clear information about when it is being completed.

Based on the weaknesses indicated in AC. 1. 1, I had come up below mentioned targets for self-improvement.

1. To enhance my numerical and analytical skill sets within one year from now; the target date is 20th November, 2017.
2. To enhance my organizational and leadership capabilities within three years; the target date is 20th November 2019.

AC. 2. 1 Outline the process for carrying out primary research from different sources

The process of primary research is a tedious process as it involves in collection of data from the instruments such as Questionnaires, Focused Group Discussions and Semi-structured Interviews.

Activity	Time	Participants	Resources
Questionnaires: It is one	30	25	Peers, Computer

of the Survey
important Monkey
primary Software,
research Courier,
instruments Emails,
that help Physical
the Questionnai
researcher re, and
in collecting Mentor

the
quantitative
data from
the research Days People
participants.

However,
the
researcher
can also
collect the
qualitative
data by
inserting
open ended
questions in
the
questionnair

e. In a nutshell, the questionnaire should comprise of a right mix of both open-ended and close-ended questions.

The questions should not be leading to situations that can cause anxiety among the research participants.

It is very important to avoid the personal

questions to ensure that the questions don't lead to unwanted situations.

The biasedness of the researcher can result into variances in the final results of the data collected from the questionnaire.

Focused Group Discussions:
This is

1 Day

7 People

Discussion Room,
Mediator,
Notepads,

another
primary
research
instrument
that majorly
helps the
researcher
to collect
the
qualitative
data on the
research
problem.
The
researchers
will make
use of this
method
when they
are in dire
need of in-
depth
information
about a
research
issue.

Pencils,
Computer,
Projector,
Video
Recording
Tools.

According to
this method,
the
researcher
should
gather a
team of
seven to
eight highly
skilled
people for a
group
discussion
and make
them to put
forward
their views
and
contradict
other's
views on a
particular
issue. The
researcher
is expected
to have a

set of questions that help in guiding the discussion. It should be ensured that the discussion should not go more than 90 minutes.

Interview: It is another primary research method that helps the researcher to collect the explorative or descriptive	1 15 Wee k	Discussion Room, Interviewer, Notepads, Pencils, Computer, Projector, Video Recording Tools.
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data from
the research
participants.

Interview
emphasizes
on face-to-
face
meeting of
the
researcher
and
research
participant.

In order to
conduct an
effective
interview,
the
researcher
should
develop a
questionnaire
that
comprises of
several
open-ended

questions.

However,

the

researcher

can get the

opportunity

to ask

follow-up

questions

during the

process.

Interviews

or Semi-

structured

interview

are chosen

as research

method

when

sample sizes

on smaller.

AC. 2. 2 Outline the process for carrying out secondary research from different sources

Activity

Tim Resources

e

Desk Research – It

refers to an activity

wherein the individual

collects the important

secondary data on a

research problem from

the place where he or

she sits.

5
Day
s
Secondary
Sources
available on
Internet

Note Making – In this

step, the focus of the

researcher would be

on noting down the

important points that

arise from the

research. The

researcher can make

use of MS Word to

note down the points.

5
Day
s
Notepad,
Microsoft
Word
Software
and
Researcher.

Recording Sources –

This is the step where

the researcher records

the important

information about the

1
Day
Internet

sources that he or she has used to collect the data. To carry out the secondary research, the sources such as magazines, books, newspapers and old research papers are used.

Collation of Data –

Collation is a process of comparing the data which has been

collected from various 5 Internet secondary sources. Day and

The collation helps the s Computer researcher to come up with concrete ideas related to the research problem.

Evaluation of Sources – 2 Internet

This step emphasizes Day and on evaluating the s Computer strengths and

weaknesses of the sources used for secondary research.

The process of evaluation should focus on checking whether the author is reputed and experienced and the publisher is credible or not.

Reference List – The secondary research study would be referenced according to the formats such as APA, MLA and Harvard. Internet, 1 Computer Day and M S Word.

AC. 3. 1 Noted key points of information from a variety of sources using active listening skills and reading strategies

Note Making Techniques for Active Listening

The techniques such as usage of the symbols, shorthand and acronyms had helped me in taking notes without losing the focus on listening.

Acronym- Acronym refers to the shortened form of a phrase or a sentence. Normally, an acronym is formed from the initial letters of the phrase. For example, the acronym for Masters in Business Administration is MBA.

Symbols- Symbols are the customized and pictorial representations that could be used to replace the words or phrases. The symbols help in making notes quickly. For example, the symbol ‘***’ would be used to indicate the importance of the concept or topic.

Shorthand- People use shorthand extensively while making notes without losing focus on the listening. The shorthand emphasizes on making use of the symbols and acronyms extensively to write the content.

Note Making Techniques for Reading Loud

Reading Aloud- Reading louder gives an opportunity for the reader to understand the content better. If the reader does not understand the content, he is expected to read twice or thrice to understand it better.

Paraphrase- Paraphrasing is a process of rewriting the content in such a way that it does not lose its originality in meaning.

Summary- Summarizing, as the name indicates, is the process of writing the summary for a large content. While summarizing, the writer should try to convey the entire meaning that the research report or essay conveys.

Synthesis- Synthesizing refers to the collation of the information which is collected from various secondary sources. The synthesis technique would be

helped when the individual plans to derive conclusions from the secondary data.

Active Listening Skills Employed while Making Notes

Acknowledging– Acknowledge is a term used while describing an activity of accepting a truth. By acknowledging, the listener accepts that he has understood the content given by speaker.

Eye contact–This is a process of looking into ones' eyes closely during the discussion. The eye contact helps the listener to follow the speaker and his emotions.

Body language– Body language of the listener clearly indicates his interest levels towards the speaker and the content he has been speaking. By showcasing appropriate body language such as sitting stiffly and nodding head, the listener can motivate the speaker to do his job in better manner.

Concentrating and understanding what is being said– The listener can display his active listening by concentrating and trying to understand what is being said. Asking doubts is one of the important aspects in attempting to understand what is being said.

Techniques used for Reviewing Notes

Re-reading– Reading multiple times help the reader to review the content and make effective notes. Rereading helps in shortlisting what should be noted down and what not very easily.

Checking understanding- Every time after reading, the reader should check his understanding levels. If he did not understand anything in the first attempt, he should follow the rereading technique. The process of checking the understanding levels should go on till he grasps the entire gist of the content.

Clarifying/expanding- Clarifying and expanding are possible only when the reader identifies the areas that he did not understand and get them clarified. The process of clarifying the doubts should go on till he reaches saturation on the topic.

Examples where I have noted key points of information from a variety of sources using active listening skills

Note taking has been one of the mundane activities for me. Since I am attending the Business Administration Course, I got the opportunity to take notes on several occasions. The foremost occasion was the time when I was attending the classroom sessions. During the classroom session, I took the notes on important concepts related to Management. Some of the topics I covered while taking notes are scientific management, management styles, marketing planning and business planning etc. My college arranges seminars very frequently. These seminars are given by the external industry experts. They speak about practical applications of the management concepts and career opportunities in the management field. Since I am very curious to know about the career opportunities, I did never miss taking notes of seminars.

In addition to the management course, I have been undergoing training that helps me in improving the personal and functional skill sets. During these training and development sessions, I have taken notes regarding the steps that could help in enhancing my communication skills and comprehension skills. These notes have significantly helped me to enhance my communication and comprehension skill sets. My listening in a day continues till I sleep. I have purchased several audio files that offer me information about how to enhance my motivation levels and interpersonal skills. I take notes when I was listening to these audio files.

Examples of where I have noted key points of information from a variety of sources using reading strategies

Management is a vast subject and needs a comprehensive reading. To get all-round knowledge on the management concepts, I have been reading several books, journals, magazines, classroom materials, case studies, literature reviews and practical application guides. Every time I read any of the above mentioned sources, I never forget to take notes of important concepts. For example, in my classroom, the material would be distributed immediately after the class. The material sometimes is not included with the speaker notes. At this point in time, I just go through the slides and write down the speaker notes for them. This practice has significantly helped me in the past and has been helping me during my management course too.

Another example where I have taken notes is case study analysis. Every week, our teachers distribute the case studies and ask us to analyze and give practical solutions. At this point in time, we go through a wide-range of

e-books, online journals and magazines to gain knowledge on the case study problem and take notes of the important points that help in coming-up with appropriate solutions for case study. In addition to that, I have subscribed numerous of the online libraries to read journals and magazines whenever I have the free time. While accessing these online libraries, I never forget to take notes.

AC. 3. 2 Example Where I have Paraphrased and summarized information.

While I am writing the class room assignments, essays, term papers, research reports, research proposals and dissertations, paraphrasing and summarizing are two important things that I always remember. Since I know that using others work without acknowledging them is equal to crime, I ensure that the paper that I write is properly paraphrased and summarized. Every time I am writing an assignment, I go through several books, magazines, journals and newspapers to gain knowledge on the subject area. Until I gain complete knowledge on the subject area, I don't start writing the assignments. Only upon gaining the knowledge, I write the papers in my own words. If the concepts are too complex in nature, I opt for paraphrasing. On the other hand, I summarize the lesser complex subject areas.

4. 1 Create a plan for research on a chosen topic in business

The research plan refers to the procedural structure that emphasizes on drawing table or a flowchart that discloses information about activities involved in the research process and duration for each activity and resources required for each activity.

Activity	Resources	Duratio
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Required n

Secondary

Research Topic sources of data and mentor 7 Days

Research

Objectives:

Guides the researcher to go in right direction during the process of research.

Secondary sources of data, internet and mentor 5 Days

Literature Review: In the first step, the secondary data is collected about the research problem. The secondary sources used to collect data are books and

Computer, M. 25 S Office, Days Secondary sources of data and mentor

journals.

Research

Methodology: Internet,
 This emphasizes Peers and
 on choosing Mentors,
 research method, Secondary 10
 sampling sources of Days
 technique, and data and
 data collection mentor
 methods.

Questionnaire Peers,
 Preparation: Computer
 Based on the Survey
 knowledge Monkey
 acquired from the Software, 5 Days
 secondary data, Secondary
 the questionnaire sources of
 would be data and
 developed. Mentor

Collection of Courier, 35
 Data: Surveying Emails, Days
 the research Physical
 participants. Questionnaire

Data Analysis:
 Microsoft Excel
 Software
 Application or
 SPSS has been
 used to analyze
 and present the
 collected data.

SPSS,
 Microsoft
 Excel,
 Microsoft
 Word,
 Internet and
 Computer

15
 Days

Documentation

Microsoft
 Excel,
 Microsoft
 Word,
 Internet and
 Computer

15
 Days

4. 2 Draft a piece of research work using appropriate reference techniques

Amdam, R. P. (1996). Management Education and Competitiveness: Europe, Japan and the United States. Routledge, London and New York

It has been chosen because it compared the quality of education between Europe, Japan and the United States. According to Amdam (1996), education accessibility, which includes limitations of education visa and migration issues, would also influence the decisions of students while choosing

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Business Schools. Though there are numerous of universities of The United States provide quality education, which is equivalent to the quality education provided by most of the top Business Schools of the United Kingdom, it is very difficult for students to get visa for the United States.

Craig, R. J., Clarke, F. L. & Amernic, A. H. (1999). Scholarship in University Business Schools. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, 12(5), 510-524.

Affordability factors such as cost of living and tuition fees play a major role in decision making process of students while selecting a Business School.

Moreover, UK universities are known for offering good scholarships when compared to universities in other countries. Employment Prospects is one of the very few attractiveness factors of Business Schools. The factor relates to the outcome of the education. The employment prospect is nothing but value of the education provided by the Business School in the labor market.

The draft of my research consists of the questionnaire that I have sent to the students and data collected from them.

Questionnaire

1. What is your country of origin?

1. Asia b. America c. Europe d. Africa e. Others

Europe 7

Africa 3

Asia 9

Americ
a 5

Others 2

2. What attributes related to Education has influenced you to choose the UK Business School over Business Schools of other countries?

1. Diverse courses in the business administration,
2. Reputation
3. Academic support and scholarship
4. Availability of Resources
5. Quality of the Infrastructure

Diverse courses in the business
administration. 9

Reputation 7

Academic support and scholarship 4

Availability of Resources 5

Quality of the Infrastructure 7

3. Employment Prospects influenced my decision to

1. Yes b. No

Yes 19

No 11

4. Affordability such as living cost and tuition fees are reasons for choosing UK as an education destination to study business administration

1. Yes b. No

Yes 5

No 17

5. Personal Security is an important reason for choosing UK for Business Administration

1. Yes b. No

Yes 19

No 7

6. Good education accessibility programs of the UK influenced my decision of choosing UK as an education destination.

1. Yes b. No

Yes 20

No 9

AC. 5. 1 Final draft, produced to a professional standard

Title: Investigation on why students choose to study in Business Schools of the United Kingdom

Chapter-1: Introduction

The United Kingdom has been one of the highly successful countries that attract international students for its Business Schools. The United Kingdom has focused on areas such as internationalization of UK institutions, adoption of innovative technologies for delivering education and elimination of resource constraints to meet the demands of domestic as well as international students to attract the students from various countries. There are several reasons behind students choose business schools of the United Kingdom over other business schools located in other European Countries and American Countries. By emphasizing on this trend, this small research paper investigates why students choose to study in Business Schools of the United Kingdom.

Research Aim: The primary aim of the research study is to understand major reasons behind students choosing Business Schools of the United Kingdom over Business Schools located in other Countries.

Chapter-2: Literature Review

According to Amdam (1996), education accessibility, which includes limitations of education visa and migration issues, would also influence the decisions of students while choosing Business Schools. Though there are numerous of universities of The United States provide quality education,

which is equivalent to the quality education provided by most of the top Business Schools of the United Kingdom, it is very difficult for students to get visa for the United States. Affordability factors such as cost of living and tuition fees play a major role in decision making process of students while selecting a Business School. Moreover, UK universities are known for offering good scholarships when compared to universities in other countries.

Employment Prospects is one of the very few attractiveness factors of Business Schools. The factor relates to the outcome of the education. The employment prospect is nothing but value of the education provided by the Business School in the labor market.

Chapter-3: Methodology

Data Collection Sources and Research methods: The data for this research study will be collected by using both primary and secondary sources.

Secondary sources used for this study are books, magazines, journals and old research papers. Primary instruments used for this research study are questionnaires. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used to analyze and present the data.

Sampling: With the help of the non-probability convenience sampling, desired research participants for this research study have been selected.

Non-probability convenience sampling has been used as a sampling technique because it gives an opportunity to choose the participants based on the accessibility and convenience of reaching (Cooper, and Schindler, 2008). The sample size of the research study is 22 international students who have been studying in various business schools of the United Kingdom.

Data Collection Process: Online survey method has been used to collect the data from the selected target research participants.

Statistical Tool: The data is analyzed and presented with the help of Microsoft Excel.

Chapter-4: Discussion on Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

44% of the international students who have been studying in UK business schools have said that they chose UK because it offers diverse business courses than any other countries. 89% of students have also said that the higher number of employment prospects is the major reason for choosing UK as a destination for business administration course. However, the same does not hold true for affordability. When asked about affordability as a reason for their preference of UK business school, more than 70 percent of students have negated with the statement, indicating that affordability is not a real reason for their preference towards UK business schools. Nearly 70 percent of the students have also said that personal security offered by the government of the United Kingdom has also influenced their decisions to study in the United Kingdom.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Some of the important factors influencing the international students choosing business schools of the United Kingdom over other countries are personal security given by the government, ability of the universities to offer diverse business courses and higher number of employment prospects shown by the universities. The other factors such as affordability an easy

access to education are not really influencing their decision in choosing UK as an educational destination.

It is recommended for the top managements of colleges in the United Kingdom and other countries to focus majorly on the providing higher employment prospects, offering diverse range of the educational courses and provision of personal security in order to attract more international students.

AC. 6. 1 Write up your findings on your Personal Development Plan

After following the PDP for six months, I could able to achieve moderate success in in controlling my aggression. The activities, processes and techniques that I followed throughout the year have ensured that slowly control my aggressive behavior. I have used the techniques such as meditation and relaxation techniques to control my aggressive behavior. However, I am still not confident of their effectiveness in practical environment. The recent group discussions have indicated that I am still aggressive while interacting with others. This is the reason why, I again kept the aggression under the areas of development in the skills audit. During the last six months, I did not really focus on increasing my analytical and leadership skills. However, I tried to gain basic knowledge about the statistics, leadership and management approaches by reading a wide-range of books.

AC. 6. 2 Develop your action plan, making notes of further actions required for improvement.

Objectives of Personal Development Plan.

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1. To enhance my numerical and analytical skill sets within one year from now; the target date is 20th November, 2017.
2. To enhance my organizational and leadership capabilities within three years; the target date is 20th November 2019.

ActionPlan

1. I should become familiar with numbers, multiplications, fractions and divisions.
2. I should learn fundamental formulas that help me in solving complex problems.
3. I will undergo practice tests on regular basis.
4. I will approach a mathematical or statistical tutor who can personally assist me during the process of improvement.
5. I should get trained on the statistical tools such as SPSS and SAS
6. I'll collect the feedback from my peers and tutor on regular basis to check the progress.
7. I should read a wide-range of books and journals that give me knowledge about the management and leadership styles.
8. I should undergo online training programs to learn more about management and leadership skills.
9. I should work in a team to observe peers and business managers how they implement var