

MBA530

Case Preparation Guidelines

General Guidelines:

During this course you will select and analyze **three** cases. The first case is due in Module 3, the second case is due in Module 5, and the third case is due in Module 7. Choose one of the two cases listed below under each module for your assignment:

For Module 3 (choose one):

Case 1, Chapter 2: Netflix: Push and Pushback in Streaming Video

Case 2, Chapter 5: Compensation Controversies at AIG

For Module 5 (choose one):

Case 1, Chapter 9: Achieving Success in Virtual Teams

Case 2, Chapter 13: Customer Service at Nordstrom: A Way to Mitigate Potential Conflict

For Module 7 (choose one):

Case 1, Chapter 11: Oracle's Larry Ellison: A Profile of Power, Influence, and Dominance

Case 2, Chapter 14: Alternative Work Arrangements: What Does the Future Hold?

The case study assignment is intended to be completed as an individual effort. Thus, collaboration with anyone else on these case assignments is considered a violation of the academic honor code. Each case analysis is due at the end of the module in which it is assigned and must be turned into the course room Dropbox before Sunday night at 11:59 PM EST/EDT).

Be certain to pay close attention to the case studies since together they represent the largest point contribution toward your final grade. In addition, keep in mind that since you are graduate students your instructor's expectations are high. Before you begin each case study, make sure that you have worked through all the module materials and have read the assigned reading along with any relevant instructor notes or announcements that may have been posted. After you have submitted each case, be sure to read the instructor's feedback so that you can improve subsequent case submissions.

Per Saint Leo University standard practice, all case papers are submitted to Turnitin where they will be automatically evaluated for percentage of original work and potential plagiarism. When you submit the case paper to the Dropbox, it will automatically be submitted to Turnitin. Hence, there is no additional work required on your part for the assignments to be graded by Turnitin.

You must use either Microsoft Word (*.docx) or Rich Text Format (*.rtf) to submit your assignments. RTF files can be created by all major word processors and will allow you to see changes made by using the "track changes" feature. Please keep in mind that Plain Text (*.txt) format is not acceptable for any assignment. Note that Turnitin may assign this extension if it does not understand what file type has been submitted. Throughout the course you are responsible for making sure that your assignment uploaded successfully and that the assignment has been received as a *.docx, or *.rtf file.

It is critical to remember that you are training to be a management scientist and not a casual observer. These cases are your opportunity to practice being analytical and comprehensive as you construct evidence-based arguments. To accomplish this objective, an average question in a case often requires several well-organized paragraphs (double-spaced), creating a finished document of two to four pages in length or a minimum of 1,000 words for each case study submission. Most of the answers to the case questions contain a number of applicable theories and you are expected to address each theory in your analysis in addition to illustrating how these theories apply in the real world.

Content Guidelines:

In your case analysis content remember that thoroughly answering the case questions is a requirement, but thoroughness is not always sufficient to earn a passing grade on a case analysis. The minimum scope your case analysis must contain a minimum of 1,000 words. However, the analysis must be of sufficient depth that you are able to demonstrate significant knowledge and analytical skills in the process. The best way to demonstrate these critical thinking skills is to begin with a clear explanation of the relevant theories, ideally in your own words. Using some quotes from the textbook in proper APA Style can help, but can also leave the instructor wondering if you understand the material enough to explain it to someone else. Hence, use more of your own individual work and no more than 15% - 18% direct quotations.

After explaining all relevant concepts to the reader, you may begin to answer the questions accurately and thoroughly. While addressing the case questions you must demonstrate the ability to apply the theory to a real situation. Sometimes it helps to envision the answer as a matrix of points to comment on. For example if there are three sub-points to a theory being applied, and four elements (people, situations, etc.) presented in the case, then there are 12 possible points of discussion in that one answer alone. If you just include a sample of these possible areas of comment, you will not earn an "A" grade. Cases are intended to be mechanisms for you to demonstrate mastery of chapter concepts by methodically describing all the applicable theoretical concepts in the correct terminology. In addition, the cases study provide a detailed framework of real-world situational issues for you to thoroughly analyze and provide a detailed assessment of how all the issues are explained within the theoretical framework you are currently studying. The result of this case analysis endeavor is that both the author and the reader attain a better understanding of the applicable theories and how they apply in the real world.

In a case analysis you must assume that the reader (your audience or the instructor) knows nothing about the case or the relevant theories.

Hence, if you make a premise that is not explained and/or supported with case evidence, the instructor will assume that you don't know enough about the premise to elaborate the point. Similarly, if you make a short generalized statement, the instructor will assume that you only possess a superficial understanding of the concept and that you are unaware of the details and the specific issues. Your answers should be clear, concise, and thorough enough for anyone to understand. Also, your premise must be persuasive enough to convince a stubborn adversary. Treat these cases with the same rigor and approach as research papers and be certain that the papers are thoroughly documented with scholarly evidence for each assertion or premise that you make. Imagine that the case responses are arguments in a court of law and it is your job to back up everything you say with previous case evidence and/or facts.

Each case analysis assignment must be supported by research of the concepts being presented that is beyond what is covered in the course textbook. This research should assist you in improving your ability to understand course concepts or case details and assist you in constructing detailed and well-reasoned answers to the case questions. Your needs will depend on your own experience and comprehension relative to the specific case. Choose sources that are credible and directly relevant to the case and do not rely on quoting other people's opinions without your own explanation. When any theory or evidence comes from an outside source (e.g., course textbook, research article, etc.), you must give credit by using a formal references section with properly formatted citations and quotations. Thus, each case assignment will always contain a reference section which also includes the course textbook as a source in addition to any other journals or books used as a source. All case documents must strictly adhere to APA formatting and style which is explained more thoroughly in the following section.

APA Requirements:

Make sure to follow the basic APA page format for your cases. Basic APA requirements require the use of:

1. One-inch margins all around the document
2. Times New Roman Font that is 12-point size
3. Consistent double-spacing throughout the document between all items including headings and paragraphs. There is no extra white space in an APA document
4. A "Reference" section (*do not use "Works Cited", "Bibliography", "Sources", or any other heading titles*)
5. Standard essay type formatting with indented first line in paragraphs
6. Headings and sub-headings to break up your case analysis such as Introduction or Background, Current Issues or Analysis, Recommendations or Conclusion, and Reference section (*use one or the other of the aforementioned headings...not both; case analyses are not presented in question and answer layout*)
7. A minimum of **five** citations in the case analysis assignment with a minimum of one direct quote
8. A minimum of **three** sources in the Reference section (one is the textbook) and **be sure to list your sources in the Reference section**

You are expected to use proper writing techniques and correct course terminology in your answers. This standard is essential in order for you to be clear and accurate in your comments.

As a part of this precision, you should avoid grandiose statements, exaggerations, and statements that generalize certain case conditions to other situations. Even if a cause-and-effect relationship seems to be true in one case situation, you cannot make the general statement that, for example, happy employees are more productive, unless you cite data to support your position. Common sense can be wrong, and every situation is different; an effective set of policies for the given situation may or may not work elsewhere. Every factual assertion will be inspected for validity in light of the relevant academic research and case facts.

Although there is no maximum limit to the number of sources that may be referenced, each case analysis should be supported by at least three relevant and credible sources. Additionally, there are approximate limits on quotations for this course which means that you should not use more than 15% - 20% direct quotes. When more than 20% of a paper is not original, it often indicates a problem, even after noting that the Turnitin scores include an accumulation of random matches. Even when sources are properly cited and some of the words are changed, it raises the question as to how much original thinking was used for the paper.

There is a big difference (in learning and difficulty) between starting with a blank page and writing your thoughts, and building the paper around quotes, paraphrased sources, and the altered wording of another author. As an author, you only have two choices when using someone else's work: include it entirely in your own words and cite the source, or include it as a direct quotation (with exact wording and punctuation) using quotation marks and a citation with a page number to cite the source. When simply changing someone else's words, you can end up somewhere between these two choices. Thus, in addition to plagiarism, high scores in turnitin.com can result from incorrect quotation/citation methodology, or from using rearranged words similar to your sources, causing it to look much like other papers. Unfortunately, these are not characteristics of graduate-level writing; when an argument relies largely on a collection of words or thoughts from elsewhere, it loses uniqueness, professionalism, and impact.