# Assessment Brief

### Portfolio

The assignment for this module is to design and present a portfolio. This portfolio is aimed at bringing an idea for developing your own business or an organisation you are working in. The idea can relate to introducing an innovation, recognising an opportunity, diversifying activities, or developing capabilities for the business considered.

For the portfolio, you are **expected** to combine a variety of items (mindmaps, benchmarks, personal development plans, etc.) that you consider relevant to meet your aims. As the assessment is a portfolio activity this usually consists of approximately 4000 +/- 10% word equivalent. Please note that direct quotes and abstracts are included in the word count. Tables and appendices are outside of the word count. **Your portfolio must be done in PebblePad, no other format will be accepted.**

This means that you can use a variety of formats for this assignment (charts, tables, prose, slides, videos, etc.). This can be discussed with the tutors.

In addition, you are expected to present a "pitch" of your project in class on the last day (This is not assessed). The "pitch" will build on previous class activities. Use it as a chance to get additional feedback from the tutors to help you shaping your portfolio.

As part of the assignment, you should start with a situational analysis of your business context in which you will be implementing your idea. The situational analysis will include considerations of resources available, environment constraints and enablers, finance, people and skills, markets, etc.

**You should ensure that each of the following areas is considered:**

**Introduction**

Provide an introduction to your Portfolio. It needs to be clear, concise and set the scene for the reader.

Use a variety of ways of presenting your information: Video, Audio, Images, Text etc.

*Don't forget to give credit to the original author*

**Idea**

Provide details of your idea. The idea can relate to introducing an innovation, recognising an opportunity, diversifying activities, or developing capabilities for the business considered, for Apprenticeships this should be in your own organisational context.

Use a variety of ways of presenting your information: Video, Audio, Images, Text etc. Apprentices should focus on artefacts, materials and feedback that can support the presentation of evidence in your portfolio, required to pass through the Gateway and pass your End Point Assessment.

*Don't forget to give credit to the original author*

**Situational Analysis**

The situational analysis will include considerations of resources available, environmental constraints and enablers, finance, people, networks and skills, markets, etc.

Use a variety of ways of presenting your information: Video, Audio, Images, Text etc. Apprentices are strongly encouraged to use the STARE approach to reviewing evidence where productive: <https://blog.shu.ac.uk/apprenticeship-resources/succeeding-in-your-off-the-job-training/>

*Don't forget to give credit to the original author*

**Implementation**

What do you need to do to make the idea a reality and are there any barriers?

Use a variety of ways of presenting your information: Video, Audio, Images, Text etc.

*Don't forget to give credit to the original author*

**Reflection**

Reflect on your portfolio and any learnings going forward. Do utilise learning theories and integrate into your work. In your reflection conduct a review of specific knowledge, skills and behaviours and how you have progressed your development as compared to your capability at the start of the (Apprenticeship) course.

Use a variety of ways of presenting your information: Video, Audio, Images, Text etc. and optimise their value for demonstrating development.

*Don't forget to give credit to the original author*

**Conclusion/Recommendations**

From the analysis you have undertaken, what conclusions can be drawn, what recommendations can be made and what barriers need to be overcome. Include reflect on your appended action plan demonstrating how you can use your ongoing development and aspirations to make an impact on these areas of organisational performance in your current job role and future situation beyond the course.

Use a variety of ways of presenting your information: Video, Audio, Images, Text etc.

*Don't forget to give credit to the original author*

**References**

Include all references using APA Edition 6 referencing methodology

*Don't forget to give credit to the original author*

**Appendices**

**-** SMART Action Plan **(See Appendix)**

These actions must relate back to your earlier sections of your portfolio and relate specifically to the Knowledge Skills and Behaviours pertaining to this module (see Appendix). Identify the resources and stakeholder dependencies needed to make these achievable within the timeframe of your apprenticeship

Additional guidance for this assignment:

* Use examples from other industries or organisations to support your claims
* Relate your argument to existing theories and concepts. You are expected to apply theoretical input discussed in class in your report.
* Provide a self-reflection item as part of the portfolio.
* Include a SMART Action Plan in the Appendices (This is not included in the word count).
* Ensure you review the **Assessment Criteria (Section 17)** as you complete your portfolio.

**You must use APA Edition 6 referencing methodology**

# Assessment Criteria

**Student Name:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Class of Masters | Refer/Fail | Marginal Fail | Pass | Merit | Distinction | Distinction |
| **% Grade** | **20-39** | **40-49** | **50-59** | **60-69** | **70-79** | **80-100** |
| Knowledge and understanding of Enterprise | Limited/poor understanding demonstrated  Any creative input is somewhat off the point. | Descriptive while demonstrating reasonable understanding | Understanding of contemporary academic debate, with some creative input and insight | Demonstrates a well-informed understanding of the topic by showing creativity and insight. | Demonstrates excellent knowledge of the topic by showing creativity, perception and insight into the subject. | Outstanding Command of the topic. High level of creativity, perception and insight into the subject area. |
| Content/Theory/Models/ Frameworks  Shows evidence of reading around the subject & the wider context of Enterprise | Some/minimal relevant sources and limited topic coverage | Relevant but not wide selection from a reasonable range of sources | Relevant selection from a good and relevant range of perspectives and sources | Selection from a wide and relevant range of perspectives and sources | Excellent selection from a wide relevant and innovative range of perspectives and sources | Outstanding selection that shows high level of Innovation from a variety of perspectives |
| Critical Thought & Evaluation  Has ability to engage with information from different sources | Sources only occasionally/not at all integrated into the argument  Some/minimal structure and argument present | Sources sometimes properly integrated into the argument  Some tendencies towards a clear and cogent argument | Sources mostly well-integrated into the overall argument  Mostly clear, cogent and well-structured argument | Sources well-integrated into the overall argument  Clear, cogent and well-structured argument | Sources very well integrated into the overall argument  Clear, well-structured argument that is well crafted and cogent | Outstanding use of source material  Excellent argument that is of the highest academic quality |
| Practical Implications | Very limited practical application for the individual and/or organisation with no SMART Action plan | Limited practical application for the individual and/or organisation with a weak Action plan | Good level of practical application for the individual and/or organisation with an Action plan | A very good level of practical application for the individual and/or organisation with a SMART Action plan | Excellent level of practical application for the individual and/or organisation with a detailed SMART Action plan | Outstanding level of practical application for the individual and/or organisation with a very detailed SMART Action plan |
| Referencing and general postgraduate academic skills | References limited / inappropriate.  Many errors in grammar and spelling, making it difficult or impossible to read. | References adequate but clearer and / or more references needed.  Reasonable grammar and spelling but with several notable errors. | Referencing clear and mostly accurate using appropriate conventions.  Good grammar and spelling with some errors. | Referencing clear and accurate using appropriate conventions.  Near perfect grammar and spelling, with only a few errors. | Referencing clear and accurate using appropriate conventions.  Virtually no errors in grammar or spelling. | Referencing impeccable using appropriate conventions.  No errors in grammar or spelling. |

Mark of 0-19: Non serious attempt e.g. answers irrelevant to set question or completely insufficient, or non-submission

# Academic writing and critical appraisal/evaluation

Here are some general pieces of guidance on some specific aspects of what we expect from students in assignments and exams.

***What is academic writing for?***

Students sometimes seem to think learned articles and their assignments are almost unrelated. Not at all. The purpose is the same, even if the audience is different. Academic writing - and your assignments are examples of this - share one especially important feature: **they are intended to convince the reader by force of argument.** (Or at least to convince the marker you understand the material, which is not so very different in principle.)

This is not the place to try to set out everything which you need to do to mount a credible and convincing argument, but broadly, if you make a significant point in your assignment, you should ***support it with an argument, an example or illustration, and/or a reference.*** It's a matter of judgment which you use in each case, or indeed whether you use one, two or all three.

There are three main "sins" in academic writing which undermine the persuasiveness which is its main goal. If you commit them, you lose marks.

The three sins are:

(1) The unappetisingly named "**regurgitation**". This means quoting or paraphrasing theory out of the literature with *no critical appraisal or application* (example or illustration).

(2) "**Description**". This means *merely reciting facts*, eg like a case study written for class comment, *without using theory to analyse it or make sense of it.*

(3) "**Prescription**". This involves asserting a point - a recommendation, say, or some important conclusion - without *supporting it with argument, example or reference*.

These sins do not stop a piece being interesting in itself or good "journalism" (writing which fails to fully supply the evidence a reader needs), but good *academic* writing aims to be more than just interesting: it aims to convince the sceptic by the force of argument. It is good academic writing which gets the marks.

## Academic Culture: what tutors expect

It is very important indeed to note here that in UK academic culture tutors do not expect students to repeat to them in assignments what they have said in class or in articles or books. ***We expect students to develop their own arguments. Students show they have learnt about the subject by how effectively they answer the questions the examiners set.***

We see ourselves as trying to produce post graduates who can think for themselves, who know how to learn and to present an argument without having to be supervised by someone else, who can be trusted to exercise initiative: “autonomous – and lifelong - learners”. This is what employers tell us they want - autonomy is not just a narrow academic requirement. In other words, we academics and employers want students who can themselves deal with new learning in new situations. One way you show that is by learning from the course. Not “just repeat what tutors and books say” – but learn so you understand, internalise and use the material. You may know that SHU is a Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (funded by the government) for Autonomy and for Employability.

What we want ***you*** to do in assignments, then, is for ***you*** to answer the questions we ask – not just to quote out of books or from lecturers, and least of all to cut-and-paste from the web. Of course we also want you to support your arguments with material from the literature because that is based in research - but what we are really trying to establish in assignments is what ***you*** have learnt in terms of how to handle Entrepreneurship & Innovation.

## Critical Appraisal

*"Critical appraisal" or "Critical Evaluation"* is fundamental at level 7 (Masters Degree). It means comparing and contrasting, and *evaluating*, theory, and how it can be applied. The academic literature contains many differing views of how the contemporary world works, and it changes with time (it would be very strange if it did not). The jargon to explain this is that knowledge is “contested”. Students are expected to be able to deal with contested knowledge, i.e. the many different ways of looking at management issues found in the literature: critical appraisal is ***fundamental*** at this level of business and management study.

“Evaluation” means identifying the good and bad points of a theory (or whatever) - and its alternatives. **It is very hard to say how important one thing in a situation is, without comparing it to other things.**  Suppose your favourite team in your favourite sport loses too often. Someone might ask: "*Is the most important reason we lose that the goal keeper is bad*?" If you tried to answer this question you would certainly look at the goal keeper’s performance, but in order to say whether this was the most important reason you would also have to look at all the other factors which might have contributed - poor defence, poor training, a poor manager, bad tactics, a penny-pinching chief executive who won't buy the best players, poor morale due to bad leadership, and so on and so forth. To say that one thing is the most important factor - to evaluate it - is to compare and contrast it with other factors.

So, if we ask a question like “Evaluate the contribution Entrepreneurial firms have made to economic & social development within the local area”, what we are expecting is not only that you will explain the significance of Entrepreneurial firms, but what impact (if any) they have had in the local area. You must provide evidence to support your discussion.

*You must include critical appraisal in your assignments. It is one of the most important assessment criteria.*

There is further support for students around academic writing, critical thinking and much more via [**The Skills Centre**](https://libguides.shu.ac.uk/skills). This is set up for undergraduates and postgraduates and if it has been some time since your studies it could be an excellent refresher!

**Appendix**

**SMART Action Plan**

Use this template as a basis for your 'SMART' Action Plan. It is only a guide; expand to accommodate your own personal.

Consider the targets needed to pass through Gateway.

* Highlight those rows which include a KSB stretch target in support of future career development (green)
* Highlight those rows where the KSB targets include some dependencies where further negotiation might be needed with your employer mentor to adjust your workplace training plan within your allowance for 20% Off The Job Training (amber)
* Highlight KSB targets which have serious obstacles where more intervention might be required before they can be remedied to pass through Gateway to End Point Assessment with sufficient evidence of competence (red)

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| **Area for development** | **S - Specific** | **M - Measurable** | **A - Achievable** | **R - Relevant** | **T - Timebound** |
| ***Example***  **Language Skills** | *- Learn sufficient Mandarin to basic introduction and basic social conversation level*  *- Arrange a language support exchange mentor agreement with a Chinese student on my degree course.* | *- Complete 'Introductory Mandarin' course with successful final assessment* | *- Ensure fit with my other teaching timetable* | *- Increasing business development with China expected during next few years. Potential employers likely to require Mandarin speakers.* | *- Course completion 28th February 2017*  *- Student agreement by 31st Oct 2016* |
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**Notes**