

What is a 'case'?

A case is a scenario that gives you the opportunity to identify problems, apply theory and recommend a course of action in a business situation. The case may be real or fictional, but will usually represent a complex situation with no ready solutions.

What is your role as an analyst?

In analysing a case your task is to

- identify the problem(s) in the situation presented in the scenario
- analyse the key issues within the context of theory/ies presented in your course
- develop and compare alternative solutions to the problems
- consider the advantages and disadvantages of various possible solutions
- select the best solution and make recommendations for action
- write up your case analysis in appropriate case analysis report format.

Why are you asked to write case analyses?

You are asked to write case analyses in some of your courses to enable you to demonstrate that you can apply conceptual frameworks from your course to real situations and integrate topics in your analysis.

Case analyses also enable you to improve your critical thinking and analytical abilities, your ability to evaluate sources of information and your written communication skills.

Case analyses are often used in employment interviews to assess:

- how you think
- how you structure problems
- your ability to *conceptualise, *draw clarity from ambiguity, *form views, *make recommendations.

What are the steps in analysing the issues?

As you identify the core problem(s) you will begin to analyse the issues underlying these problems. The following steps assist with this.

- Identify any bias in the way the case is described.
- Classify the factors that influence the problem as internal or external to the organisation.
- Reflect on theoretical principles from your course that might explain aspects of the case.
- Apply analytical models from your course to further illuminate the situation.
- Identify the decisions that need to be made.
- Identify strategic issues.
- Identify risk factors.
- Identify historical precedents.

What are the steps in exploring alternative solutions?

As you are analysing the issues you will begin to think about alternative solutions. You should:

- consider individual and organisational levels
- consider the long and the short term
- define the alternative possible solutions
- compare the alternative solutions in regard to *theoretical grounding, *strengths and weaknesses, *risk factors.

How do you choose the best solution?

As you explore the alternative solutions you will begin to decide on the best solution for the organisation in solving its problems. It is important at this stage to provide a justification for the solution you choose.

What are the steps in making a recommendation?

When you have decided on the best solution you will be able to make a recommendation or recommendations.

At this stage you should do the following:

- Express your recommendation(s) precisely.
- Ensure that your recommendations are complementary.
- Ensure that it is feasible to implement the recommendations.

How do you present your case analysis?

A case analysis is presented as a report. Refer to the EDU handout on reports for guidance on how to format a report. The following is a suggested structure for a case analysis report:



Introduction:	Describe the situation and identify the main problem.
Body:	Analyse the problem and the issues underlying the problem. Present and analyse alternative solutions to the problem.
Conclusion:	Identify the best solution.
Recommendations:	Identify the courses of action needed to implement the best solution.

