



Lincoln University

BA 399 - MBA Research Project Preparation and Defense Guidelines

April 2018

A primary research-oriented study of some chosen business problem or practice, or development of an original theoretical concept, under the close supervision of an instructor. The student regularly confers with the selected faculty advisor who recommends the report for its oral presentation to a committee. Taken during the last term of the program. 3 units

General Notes:

1. To be qualified for registration of BA 399 “MBA Research Project”, a student should
 - Have completed BA 380 “Business Research Methodology” and to complete or be enrolled in BA 390 “Business Strategy and Decision Making” at the time of registration.
 - Have GPA 3.2 or above. It is recommended that the research topic be related to the student's area of concentration.
2. The student has to choose an academic advisor for the research project report preparation from the faculty members of Lincoln University and obtain his/her acceptance. It is not mandatory for a faculty member to accept your request.
3. The report topic and the academic advisor must be approved by the Lincoln University Dean/ Provost/ President.
4. The report should not contain plagiarism. Authenticity of the report will be checked by “Turn-It-In” via submission by the university library and approved by the student’s academic advisor. The maximum accepted level of matching from other sources is determined by the advisor on a case-by case basis (on average matching should be no greater than 10%). Plagiarism will result in report failure.
5. Course BA 399 can be extended for one term. Given in two terms the course can be assigned as 3+1 or 1+3 units if the research starts in a summer session or late in a semester.
6. It may take time longer than even two semesters to complete a good research project. For this reason, it is advisable to find an academic advisor and start doing your research in advance before formally registering for it.

The Goal and Content of Research Projects:

In the BA 399 research projects, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to formulate original business questions; design experiments for collecting of proper data; conduct analysis of the data; and prepare meaningful practical business conclusions.

The Report Structure:

There could be two types of the MBA research projects

- Research in business, economics, or finances, or business aspects of MIS. The project guidance and a suggested report structure are presented below in Appendix B.
- A business plan for a new or an expansion of a company. The project guidance and a suggested report structure are presented in below in Appendix C.

Students may vary the report structure to better meet the goal and focus of their report.

Report Layout and Formatting:

1. The Report must have a title page. A sample title page is shown below in Appendix A.
2. The report Summary should follow the title page.

3. Table of Contents follows the summary page (or pages).
4. All pages in the report except the title page must be numbered.
5. The report should be written with size 12 with 1.5 intervals between lines for easy reading.
6. Print the report on both sides of the page (double-side printing options) if possible. This requirement is intended for saving paper. The other side of the title page must be left blank.
7. The Report should be well bound.
8. All figures and tables in the report must be numbered and have captions. All figures and tables must be cited and described in the report text.
9. Each entry in the bibliography should be cited and described in the report text using in-text citations.
10. The bibliography and citations should be written with APA style. Students are strongly recommended to attend the LU Library training workshops on APA style.
11. Students are strongly recommended to attend the LU Library training workshops on mastering MS Word. This workshops help significantly reduce writing time and improve formatting quality of this and your future reports.

Report Submission:

1. The report must be preliminarily approved by the academic advisor.
2. Upon preliminary approval by the academic advisor, a soft copy of the report should be sent to LU library for submission to “Turn-It-In”. The results will be sent back to the student and to the academic advisor. The advisor may request the student revise the report if the level of matching from other sources exceeds 10%.
3. The academic advisor gives the final approval for submission of the report.
4. Upon the final approval of the report by the academic advisor, the student should print and bind five copies of the report and submit them to the Registrar Office at least two weeks before the presentation date.

Preparation for the Presentation:

1. The student should develop MS PowerPoint slides for the presentation. The total number of slides should be about 10-12, but may vary.
2. All slides, except the title slide, must be numbered. It is recommended to show the slide number out of the total number of slides (e.g. 5/12 means slide number 5 out of a total of 12 slides).
3. Slides should not use fonts lower than 20, as they should be clearly readable for the audience.

Project Presentation, Defense, and Evaluation:

1. The project is presented to the Graduate Committee, which consists of two faculty members different from the student’s academic advisor who should be also present at the presentation.
2. The entire project defense lasts 45 minutes including the presentation, questions and answers, discussion, and evaluation. The presentation itself should not be longer than 15 minutes.
3. The student is expected to present the material and answer the questions asked by the members of the Graduate Committee and others attending the presentation.
4. In the final stage of the project defense, the student is asked to leave the room for a short time for the Graduate Committee to discuss and evaluate the project and the student performance.
5. Then the student is called back and the Committee announces the evaluation decision.
6. The committee can give grades CR (passing), IP (in progress, requesting to answer some additional questions or to write additional parts or correct some parts of the report), or NC (no credit, the course should be retaken with a different adviser and/or topic).
7. If the report requires corrections, a final copy of the corrected report should be provided to the library.

Lincoln University

Project Title

BA399 MBA Research Project
Title

by
Student Name

Advisor: LU Advisor's Name

Date

The Goal and Content of a Research Project (Not a Business Plan):

In a research project BA 399 the student is expected to demonstrate the ability to:

1. Formulate an original and viable research problem;
2. Formulate the research purpose;
3. Develop and/or adopt the appropriate methodology for a design of experiment and data collection or theory;
4. Collect, organize, and process data;
5. Interpret and analyze the results;
6. Derive conclusions to answer the questions phrased in the problem statement;
7. Make recommendation based on the conclusions if any.

The Report Structure:

A sample research report outline is provided below. Students may significantly change the report structure to better meet the goals, objectives, methods, and focus of the research project.

Summary

This section includes formulation of the main questions or hypothesis and the summary of the entire report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Area of the Research and Related Problems
- 1.2 The Research Purpose and Delimitations (not “limitations”)
- 1.3 Definition of Terms

2 Literature Review (analysis of related published results in the area of study)

3 The Problem Statement

- 3.1 The Main Problem or Hypothesis Formulation
- 3.2 Subproblems
- 3.3 Research Objectives and Expected Results

4 Research Process

- 4.1 Logic
- 4.2 Methodology
- 4.3 Experiment Design and Data Collection
- 4.4 Data Analysis

5 Results and Analysis

- 5.1 Major Results: Report of Findings
- 5.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

6 Conclusions

Bibliography

Appendices

If needed

The suggested report structure is just a sample. The student may significantly change the suggested report structure, particularly, the main content part, or develop their own report structure to better fit the research goals, purpose, methods, objectives, and focus.

The Goal and Content of a Business Plan:

In the business plan project BA 399, the student is expected to demonstrate the ability to

1. Analyze the market and identify business opportunities related to the proposed plan;
2. Develop business model and business strategy for a start up or for expansion of the existing company;
3. Analyze the competition and develop the competitive positioning of the company;
4. Develop the financial projection, business initiation funds (if applicable), and investment needs and opportunities;
5. Analyze risk and success factors;
6. Suggest exit strategy for the business plan.

The Business Plan Structure:

A suggested business plan outline is provided below. Students may vary the business plan structure to better meet the goal, purpose, and focus of the business plan.

Executive Summary

This section provides the main goal of the business and the summary of the entire business plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Goal of the Business Plan
- 1.2. Definition of Terms

2. Products or Services Description

- 2.1. Business Idea, Vision, Mission, and Objectives
- 2.2. The Product or Services
- 2.3. Business Model and Company Description

3. Research (includes experiment design, data collection, and processing)

- 3.1. Market Research and Analysis (demonstrating the need of new product or service)
- 3.2. Economics Research (selecting proper pricing scale)

4. Competitive Analysis

- 4.1. Company Competitions
- 4.2. Business Strategy by Stages
- 4.3. Marketing Strategy
- 4.4. Sales Strategy

5. The Company

- 5.1. Management Team
- 5.2. Strategic Alliances

If applicable

6. Financial Strategy

- 6.1. Financial Projections
- 6.2. Startup Funds
- 6.3. Investment Requirements and Selection of the Funding Strategy

7. Key Risk and Success Factors

8. Exit Strategy

Bibliography

Appendices (if needed)

The suggested business plan structure is just a sample. The student may change the structure to better fit goal and focus of the business plan
