

# MBA 700: Strategic Analysis Final Project Guidelines and Grading Guide

## Overview

The final project for this course requires students to use concepts from each module, answer questions about their chosen company, and complete a strategic analysis of that company in a variety of areas. Milestone drafts of your answers are assigned in several modules leading to the strategic analysis final project submitted in Module Nine.

You have been hired as a consultant at the company you have been researching. This final report is an in-depth look at the strategy and corporate management based on your detailed research completed throughout the semester. This paper is designed as a full report with recommendations that the executive team will use to enhance the existing strategic management. This project is divided into five milestones, submitted in Modules One, Four, Five, Seven, and Nine (final deliverable).

## Main Elements

Your report should include, as a minimum, the following **11 components**:

### 1. **Strategy and the Strategic Management Process at your Chosen Company**

Describe the industry you are investigating. Identify the company you are researching along with the mission, vision, values, and strategic plan. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- Describe the industry in which the company operates.
- What is the company's stated strategy? Is it a winning strategy?
- How does the company's mission statement compare to those of its competitors?
- How do the mission, vision, and values support strategic objectives or performance targets of your company?
- What do the mission, vision, and value statements say about the company and its leadership?

### 2. **External Environment and Competitive Position**

Complete an industry analysis and a five forces model analysis including an assessment of the company's closest rival. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- What are the driving forces of change in the industry in which your company competes? How has your company changed its strategy to address driving forces?
- Where does the company stand within the industry based on the five forces model of competition analysis?
- Which of the five forces exert the most pressure on the company? What has the company done to relieve this pressure?
- What are your recommendations to further reducing pressure from these forces?

**3. Internal Environment and Competitive Position**

Complete a SWOT analysis and a value chain analysis of the company you have chosen. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- How well has the company performed to stated strategic objectives or performance targets? Support your assessment with factual data.
- Compare the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the company to those of its competitors. How do the vision and values affect how the company will respond to each?
- What is the core competency of the company? How does this affect its standing within the industry?
- How has the company used its value chain activities to improve its competitive position?
- What are your recommendations in regard to the company's competitive position and value chain activities?

**4. Competitive Strategy**

Summarize the generic strategy employed by the company and how it helps the company achieve sustained competitive advantage.

- Which of the generic competitive strategy options is your company pursuing?
- Explain how your company is pursuing this generic strategy. How does it fit value chain activities specifically to support its generic strategy?
- How does pursuit of this strategy help your company achieve sustained competitive advantage?
- What are your recommendations in regard to the company's pursuit of a generic strategy or how it uses its value chain in this pursuit?

**5. Strengthening Competitive Position**

Summarize how the company strengthens its generic strategy through complementary strategic moves. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- Outline what the company has done to fit its strategy to the industry and company situation.
- Has your company responded offensively or defensively, or both, to improve its strategic position? How?
- Has your company pursued complementary strategic options? Explain your answer.
- What are your recommendations for your company to pursue future complementary strategic options to strengthen its competitive position?

**6. The Global Marketplace**

Summarize company operations in foreign markets and competitive advantage possibilities. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- Describe which method(s) has been used to enter foreign markets.
- How has the company gained competitive advantage through competing internationally?
- What are additional actions that the company could take to gain a competitive advantage in foreign markets?

**7. Corporate Strategy: Business Diversification**

Summarize the company's methods to diversify into related or unrelated businesses. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- Which diversification strategy is used—diversification into related or unrelated businesses, a mix of both or none, and/or divestiture and retrenchment?
- How has this helped or hurt the company?
- Offer a future proposal for business diversification and describe how it will help the company's strategic position.

**8. Ethics, Social Responsibility, and Environmental Sustainability**

Summarize the corporate ethics statement, statement about social responsibility, and sustainability statement. If none exist, report what you believe are these unwritten statements or code of conduct based on what the company says about itself. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- Does company practice conform to its ethics statement or code of conduct? Where does practice diverge from the statement?
- Does the company have a comprehensive, proactive social responsibility statement? Does company practice support this statement?
- Does the company follow environmentally sustainable business practices? Does this help or hurt the company? How?
- Offer suggestions for improvement in the above areas.

**9. Strategy Execution: Building the Capability to Execute Strategy**

Summarize the company's strategic plan based on its internal resources, capabilities, and structure. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- How do the company's hiring and training practices support its strategy?
- How is the company structured?
- Would a different structure work to better implement the strategic plan? Why? If not, why does the current structure work?
- Offer any additional changes that may help the company to deliver its strategic objectives.

**10. Strategy Execution: Managing Internal Operations**

Summarize an employee's experience within the company and its leadership. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- What best practices can you derive from the company?
- How has the company used information systems to better execute its strategy?
- How does management motivate their teams?
- Review the compensation packages of the executive team of the company.
  - What are the monetary and non-monetary elements of the top three executives?
  - Rate the company within the industry based upon its compensation packages.
- What future changes in these areas do you see for the company? Offer any suggestions for change in the above areas.

#### 11. **Strategy Execution: Leadership**

Summarize your recommendations to the CEO and board of directors on how to improve strategy for your chosen company. Be sure to answer the following questions:

- What will this company be doing differently in three to five years to become more competitive based on your recommendations in previous components? (“no change” is not an option)
- What do you recommend the company's leadership focus on to achieve this strategic position?

Write the paper in your own words. Include your own critical analysis and remarks in the paper. If you copy and paste any quotes from the search results, make sure to put those in quotation marks and provide a citation and reference for the source.

Following are general format guidelines:

- Cover Page
- Abstract (Executive Summary)
- Table of Contents
- Components (11)
- References
- Appendices

## Milestones

Milestone One: *Company Identification and Component 1*

In **task 1-2**, you will identify the company you are researching along with answers to the Component 1 assignment questions. **This milestone is graded using the Final Product Rubric (below), and you will receive formative feedback from the instructor.**

Milestone Two: *Components 2, 3, and 4*

In **task 4-2**, you will provide answers to the Components 2, 3, and 4 assignment questions. **This milestone is graded using the Final Product Rubric (below), and you will receive formative feedback from the instructor.**

Milestone Three: *Components 5 and 6*

In **task 5-3**, you will provide answers to the Components 5 and 6 assignment questions. **This milestone is graded using the Final Product Rubric (below), and you will receive formative feedback from the instructor.**

Milestone Four: *Components 7 and 8*

In **task 7-2**, you will provide answers to the Components 7 and 8 assignment questions. **This milestone is graded using the Final Product Rubric (below), and you will receive formative feedback from the instructor.**

Milestone Five: Final Strategic Analysis

In **task 9-2**, you will submit your strategic analysis final project. It should be a complete, polished artifact containing **all** of the components of the final product. It should reflect the incorporation of feedback gained throughout the course. **This milestone will be graded using the Final Project Rubric (below).**

**Deliverable Milestones**

Milestone	Deliverables	Module Due	Grading
1	Company Identification and Component 1	One	Graded separately; Final Product Rubric
2	Components 2, 3, and 4	Four	Graded separately; Final Product Rubric
3	Components 5 and 6	Five	Graded separately; Final Product Rubric
4	Components 7 and 8	Seven	Graded separately; Final Product Rubric
5	Final Strategic Analysis	Nine	Graded separately; Final Product Rubric



### Final Product Rubric

**Requirements of submission:** Written components of project must follow these formatting guidelines when applicable: double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, and discipline-appropriate citations. The main body of the term paper (excluding cover page, executive summary, table of contents, appendices, and references) should be between 14 and 16 pages.

**Instructor Feedback:** This activity uses an integrated rubric in Blackboard. Students can view instructor feedback in the Grade Center. For more information, review [these instructions](#).

Critical Elements	Exemplary (100%)	Proficient (90%)	Needs Improvement (70%)	Not Evident (0%)	Value
<b>Main Elements</b>	Includes all of the components and requirements and cites multiple examples to illustrate each element	Includes most of the main elements and requirements and cites many examples to illustrate each element	Includes some of the main elements and requirements	Does not include any of the main elements and requirements	25
<b>Inquiry and Analysis</b>	Provides in-depth analysis that demonstrates complete understanding of multiple concepts	Provides in-depth analysis that demonstrates complete understanding of some concepts	Provides in-depth analysis that demonstrates complete understanding of minimal concepts	Does not provide in-depth analysis	20
<b>Milestone Submission and Incorporation of Feedback</b>	Meets each milestone's requirements and addresses all instructor feedback through incorporation or clarifying questions/dialogue with instructor	Meets each milestone's requirements and incorporates some of the instructor's feedback throughout the progression of the project	Student completes and submits all milestones by the due date	Student submits incomplete milestones or does not submit by the due date	10
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Draws insightful conclusions that are thoroughly defended with evidence and examples	Draws informed conclusions that are justified with evidence	Draws logical conclusions, but does not defend with evidence	Does not draw logical conclusions	20
<b>Research</b>	Incorporates many scholarly resources effectively that reflect depth and breadth of research	Incorporates some scholarly resources effectively that reflect depth and breadth of research	Incorporates very few scholarly resources that reflect depth and breadth of research	Does not incorporate scholarly resources that reflect depth and breadth of research	15
<b>Writing (Mechanics/ Citations)</b>	No errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations	Minor errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations	Some errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations	Major errors related to organization, grammar and style, and citations	10
<b>Total</b>					<b>100%</b>