This unit concentrates on the management of small business and the aspects of coping with survival and growth of small and medium-sized businesses. Topics covered include the role of small business in the economy; starting a small business; management challenges of running a small business; critical stages of growth; alternative modes of growth; the small business conglomerate; advising small businesses; franchising; family businesses; succession problems and small business strategies. Aspects of entrepreneurship and new venture creation are considered only briefly as these are covered in detail in Entrepreneurship and Innovation 608 (455.608). Students relate case studies of Australian small businesses with theory and undertake a substantial practical assignment, which can include interviews with owner-managers, or a consulting assignment.
Contact details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Web Site URL</th>
<th><a href="http://www.gsm.uwa.edu.au">www.gsm.uwa.edu.au</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Joanne Sneddon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jsneddon@student.uwa.edu.au">jsneddon@student.uwa.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>618+ 6488-1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>618+ 6488-1072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation Hours:</td>
<td>Thursday Noon to 5PM or by arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Times:</td>
<td>Myer Case Study 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Venue:</td>
<td>Thursdays, 6-9 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your lecturer

Ms Joanne Sneddon

Joanne Sneddon is a Research Fellow with the Centre for Entrepreneurial Management and Innovation (CEMI), and an Associate Lecturer with the GSM. Joanne holds Master of Commerce in Management with distinction from Curtin University of Technology, and an MBA from the University of Western Australia as well as an Advanced Diploma of Business Administration and Diploma in Management from Durham University, UK. Joanne is currently a doctoral candidate within the Graduate School of Management, UWA. During the past four years Joanne has been engaged with a series of research projects in conjunction with the CSIRO, WA Department of Agriculture and Department of Land Administration. Her research work has focused on the adoption of new technologies in the farming sector, particularly estimating the market take up of satellite-based precision farm management systems. Joanne has consulted to the Department of Agriculture in the adoption and diffusion of new technologies and to Timbercorp Ltd in undertaking market research for the development of the agroforestry industry. In addition to her research work Joanne was employed as a program manager for the Entrepreneurship and Business Development Unit at the Curtin Business School, and was engaged in the design and coordination of a small business improvement program run via Business Enterprise Centres in the cities of Stirling and Swan during 2001-2002. In addition to project work, Joanne’s role at Curtin involved the support and co-ordination of small business mentors and the design and delivery of marketing training sessions for small businesses. She was previously the Operations Manager of M&K Marketing Services a textile point-of-sale manufacturer in the United Kingdom. Joanne has extensive experience in both strategic and operational management with particular emphasis on process design and new product development. Her research interests focus on the impact of change on employee development in Small to Medium Enterprises. Joanne’s doctoral research is examining the factors influencing the adoption of innovations in market and production systems within Australian wool production enterprises.

Introduction

Small firms (e.g. those with less than 200 employees) comprise the majority of all businesses in the economies of most countries. In Australia they comprise around 96 percent of all the non-agricultural firms in existence.¹ The majority of such firms are very small (micro-enterprises) with less than five employees, usually just a single owner-manager. The reality of business management within the small firm is substantially different from that found in the majority of large organizations. Owner-managers, as the name suggests, are both owners – and therefore responsible for all the risks associated with their business venture – and managers. Such individuals must deal with all the functional tasks of business management (e.g. accounting, planning, marketing, human resources, production, information technology) frequently without much assistance and with limited training. The world of the average small business owner-manager is quite different from that of the professional manager within the large organization, or even the successful entrepreneur (e.g. Rupert Murdoch, Richard Branson, Bill Gates).

In Small Business Management 601 the start-up phase is confined to small businesses and we then move on to various issues of relevance to successfully managing the small business. Small Business Management, like some other MBA units, integrates the various disciplines of business and management. We will assume that MBA students already have a background in finance, accounting, marketing, leadership and related skills associated with running a business. We shall focus on how these topics are applied to small business, but will not provide elementary instruction in these topics.

In addition to lectures on theory and case study discussions, the course has a strong practical orientation with relevance to present day real life situations. Students will interview owner-managers of small businesses and report on their findings. We shall also invite a number of owner-managers and other speakers on small business management to class to hear their views. Students will research special topics, test the validity of textbook materials against experience and present their findings to the class.

**The goal of the unit**

The principal aim of this unit is to familiarise MBA students with the theory and practice of small business management and challenge assumptions that may be held about the way small business management can or should adopt large business models. For students interested in establishing and managing their own small firm this unit should help to focus thinking on the realities of life as a small business owner-manager – both its challenges and rewards. For MBA students that are keen to 'make a difference' this unit should enable them understand how they might consult to small firms and assist owner-managers establish and grow their ventures.

Students with a range of other interests will also benefit from the course. Managers in large corporations and financial institutions often deal with small businesses as clients or suppliers. Professionals such as accountants, lawyers and consultants provide advice and other services to small businesses. Government Officials devise and implement policies, regulations and support programs that will affect the small business sector. A good understanding of the topic can assist such individuals in their work.

**Broad learning outcomes**

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between the managerial environment facing an owner-manager of a small business and that of a manager working within a large organization;
- Understand the difference between owner-managers and entrepreneurs;
- Understand the new venture creation process as it applies to small businesses and review models of new venture creation;
- Understand the key legal issues facing small businesses and how they impact on operations;
- Recognise the common problems facing small businesses in their early years with particular emphasis on opportunity screening and financial management;
- Understand the strategic planning process as it applies within a small business and apply strategic planning principles to a small business case;
- Examine the financing opportunities for small business owners seeking growth with particular emphasis on bootstrap financing, retained profits, and negotiations with banks;
- Understand the working capital cycle, break-even analysis and the power of gross profit margins;
- Undertake an evaluation of a small business and prepare a growth strategy for this business;
- Understand the importance of delegation, team building and coaching within a small business and develop a human resource strategy for a small business;
- Evaluate franchising as a business model and understand its advantages and disadvantages;
- Understand the nature of family owned and operated businesses and the importance of succession planning;
- Troubleshoot problems within small businesses and prepare a turnaround strategy for a small business;
- Prepare a valuation of a small business including goodwill and the preparation of a small business for sale;
**Prerequisites**

The prerequisites for this unit are:

- Entrepreneurship and Innovation 608 (455:608), or
- Any two Stage 1 units

This unit assumes that students have an operational competency in financial accounting, marketing principles and organisational behaviour. If you are not well prepared in any of the above areas you should make every effort to remedy the situation through undertaking additional refresher courses and/or practice. Do not hesitate for advice from your tutor.

**Software requirements**

This unit will involve online delivery of course materials and assignments using OzEd, interactive internet-based software that uses a Microsoft Class Server system. Students undertaking the unit will need a reliable web browser software program such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, or Netscape Navigator. Students will also need to have Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint software to be able to read some of the documents delivered via this online learning environment. In addition, students should have Adobe Acrobat Reader software to allow them to read PDF files.

**Unit web site and Online Learning Support**

The unit content will be available at: [http://ecs.yourasp.com.au/GSM001](http://ecs.yourasp.com.au/GSM001) (cost $45 ($15 per month))

Technical support for problems in accessing the OzEd website and Microsoft Class Server software is:
Tel: 618+ 9201-0011  
Email: support@yourasp.com.au

**Textbook(s)**

There will be no textbook required for this unit. Instead of a textbook there will be substantial lecture notes, assignments, tests and supplementary readings provided to students online and via the closed reserve. Students will be required to purchase access to the OzEd online learning software from YourASP Pty Ltd (ACN. 095-106-120) a subsidiary of Algar Burns. An application form for access to the Class Server is attached to this unit guide and will need to be completed and returned to YourASP Pty Ltd prior to accessing the course content. The design of this unit requires students to access the online content in conjunction with attendance at weekly lectures.

**Recommended Reading**

Although students will not be required to purchase a textbook several texts are suggested as being of value and worthwhile supplementary reading. A number of books have been placed in closed reserve in the Business Library.
## Seminar topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Commencing</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 31 January</strong></td>
<td>The Role of Small Firms in the Economy and Policy Responses to the Small Business Sector</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Objectives:**
- Define the term small business
- Understand the role of the small business owner-manager
- Overview the nature and structure of the small business sector
- Understand the growth cycle of small businesses and the characteristics of firms at different stages of development
- Review government policy toward the small business sector

**Readings:**
- Lecture notes for Topic 1

**Activities:**
- Exercise 1 “The Character of Small Business”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2 7 February</strong></th>
<th>Entrepreneurs versus Owner-Managers – Theories of New Venture Creation</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Objectives:**
- Define the terms enterprise and entrepreneur
- Understand the difference between entrepreneurs and owner-managers
- Review models of new venture creation
- Understand the barriers and triggers to new venture creation
- Examine the process required to assist start up firms

**Readings:**
- Lecture notes for Topic 2

**Activities:**
- Exercise 2 – Small Business Start Ups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</table>
| 3 14 February | Surviving the Early Years – Screening the Business Opportunity | **Objectives:**  
- Examine the concepts of opportunity recognition  
- Understand the key factors leading to new venture failure  
- Understand the new venture screening process  
- Review the new venture screening approaches and apply them to the early stage small firm  
**Readings:**  
Lecture notes for Topic 3  
**Activities:**  
Exercise 3 – Assisting the survival firm “Sporting Chance Case Study” |
| 4 21 February | The Process of Planning and Strategy in the Small Firm | **Objectives:**  
- Understand the role of planning in the small business  
- Examine the key factors for small business success  
- Recognize the importance of strategy formation  
- Consider the major management skills required for small business creation and development  
**Readings:**  
Lecture notes for Topic 4  
**Activities:**  
Exercise 4 – Strategy and Planning in the Small Firm |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7 March</td>
<td>Financing the Small Firm Part 2 – Cash Flows, Credit and Working Capital</td>
<td><strong>Objectives:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Understand the importance of the working capital cycle within the small firm&lt;br&gt;• Understand and calculate the break-even point&lt;br&gt;• Understand and apply the power of gross profit margin&lt;br&gt;• Recognise the importance of pricing for profit&lt;br&gt;• Review credit policy issues and relate these to cash flow management and profitability</td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lecture notes for Topic 6&lt;br&gt;Camico Mutual Insurance (2001). “A Practitioner's Guide to Managing Cash Flow.” Journal of Accountancy March: 20.&lt;br&gt;Cunningham, F. (1998). “How to Avoid Going Bust.” Management Today August: 70-71.</td>
<td><strong>Activities:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Exercise 6 – Financial Dynamics&lt;br&gt;Group Assignment 1 due – Interview Report</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>14 March</td>
<td>Assisting the Small Firm to Grow</td>
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<td>• Understand how to analyse small business problems and opportunities</td>
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<td>• Understand the nature of small firm growth and its challenges</td>
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<td>• Examine a growth firm and consider its options and structure</td>
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<td>• Prepare a growth strategy for a small firm</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>Lecture notes for Topic 7</td>
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<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
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<td>Exercise 7 – Growing Pains</td>
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<th>8</th>
<th>21 March</th>
<th>Small Firms and Human Resources – Coaching and Building Teams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Examine the Entrepreneurial Process Model</td>
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<td>• Understand the importance of delegation and team building</td>
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<td>• Compare Human Resource Management in small and large firms</td>
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<td>• Consider case studies of team building in small firms</td>
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<td>• Understand the importance of coaching and how to apply a coaching model</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture notes for Topic 8</td>
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<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise 8 – Coaching for success</td>
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<td>28 March</td>
<td>4 April</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week Free for the Easter Break</strong></td>
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</table>

### Week 9: Franchising – An Alternative to Going Solo? & Legal Issues Facing Small Business

**Objectives:**
- Define the term “franchise”
- Understand the difference between franchising a product or service and an entire business operation
- Recognize the importance of franchising as a business model
- Consider the advantages and disadvantages of franchising
- Understand the process of franchising
- Understand the key legal issues facing small businesses and how they impact on operations;

**Readings:**
Lecture notes for Topic 9


**Activities:**
Exercise 9 – Franchising Systems & Legal Entities

### Week 10: Small Firms and Family Business

**Objectives:**
- Understand the nature of family ownership in small firms
- Examine the challenges of family owned small firms
- Understand the role of corporate governance and family ownership
- Review the development process for succession planning in family owned firms

**Readings:**
Lecture notes for Topic 10


**Activities:**
Exercise 10 – Succession Planning in the Family Firm
### Week 11: 18 April
**The Owner-Manager and the Troubled Company – Crisis Management**

**Objectives:**
- Understand the causes of small business failure
- Examine causes and danger signals of impending trouble
- Understand the characteristics of poorly performing firms
- Review turnaround strategies for small firms and apply the principles to a case study

**Readings:**
- Lecture notes for Topic 11

**Activities:**
- Exercise 11 – Case Study in Crisis Management

### Week 12: 25 April
**Buying, Selling and Valuing the Business**

**Objectives:**
- Understand the concept of business valuation
- Overview and assess different business valuation measures
- Understand the nature of goodwill and how to measure it
- Examine the advantages and disadvantages of buying an established small firm
- Understand the process of preparing a business for sale

**Readings:**
- Lecture notes for Topic 12

**Activities:**
- Exercise 12 – Valuing a business for sale

**Exam Week** 2 May **Major Group Assignments Due (2 May)**

---

(i) Friday 25th March is Good Friday, no classes will be held on this day.
(ii) Week commencing 28th March in trimester A is a week free for the Easter Break. Classes will be held on Friday 1st April.
Attendance

Participation in class, whether it be listening to a lecture or getting involved in other activities, is an important part of the learning process. For this reason the GSM has decided not to move to on-line teaching. It is, therefore, important that you attend classes (and be on time).

More formally, the University regulations state that ‘to complete a course or unit a students shall attend prescribed classes, lectures, seminar and tutorials’. Students whose attendance at MBA units has been unsatisfactory will not be granted a pass grade. More than two missed classes without prior permission from the lecturer is classified as unsatisfactory. Students should not expect to obtain approval to miss more than two classes per unit, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignment – part one Interviews</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignment – part two Benchmarking Study</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Week 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual weekly assignments and exercises 1-6</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual weekly assignments and exercises 7-12</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Week 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of assessment

There are a number of reasons for having assessable tasks as part of an academic program. The assessable tasks are designed to encourage you to explore and understand the subject more fully. The fact that we grade your work then give you an indication of how much you have achieved. Providing feedback on your work also serves as part of the learning process.

The assignments allocated for this unit seek to provide a blend of individual and group work some of which will involve dealing directly with small business owner-managers, while others are more theoretically focused. Students should be prepared to read outside the material provided by the lecturers. The first group assignment is designed to place students in direct contact with small business owner-managers and explore first hand their management environment. It is also designed to provide a platform for the second group assignment.

The group assignment is designed to build a comprehensive picture of best practice within small business in a particular industry sector. This assignment should provide students with a good appreciation of the major marketing, financial and operational management issues facing small firms. By benchmarking performance against best practice examples, students will develop understanding of the key ingredients of successful small business management.

The individual assignments and exercises are designed to measure understandings and skills acquisition against specific topics. Each assignment task seeks to integrate various elements covered within the weekly topics, both written material, lectures, guest speakers and case study assessments.
The standard of assessment

The Graduate School must ensure that the processes of assessment are fair and are designed to maintain the standards of the School and its students. The School follows the University of Western Australia’s grading system:

- **HD (Higher Distinction)** 80-100%
- **D (Distinction)** 70-79%
- **CR (Credit Pass)** 60-69%
- **P (Pass)** 50-59%
- **N+ (Fail)** 45-49%
- **N (Fail)** 0-44%

The School awards marks leading to these grades by using the following general criteria which are presented here as an indication of the School’s expectations. These general criteria may be supplemented by specific standards provided with regard to a particular assignment.

- **HD** The student has a clear understanding of theory, concepts and issues relating to the subject and is able to adopt a critical perspective. The student is able to clearly identify the most critical aspects of the task and is able to offer a logically consistent and well articulated analysis within the analytic framework presented in the course. The student is able to draw widely from the academic literature and elsewhere but maintains relevance.

- **D** The student has a clear understanding of theory, concepts and issues relating to the subject. The student is able to develop an analysis of an issue using the analytic framework presented in the course and is able to identify and evaluate the critical issues. The student is able to draw upon relevant academic and other material.

- **CR** The student demonstrates an understanding of the analytic framework developed in the course and a partial understanding of concepts and issues. The student is able to identify some key issues and is able to present a logical discussion, but with some conceptual errors or gaps between analysis and conclusions. The student is able to draw upon an adequate range of references and other materials.

- **P** The student generally takes a descriptive rather than analytic approach to the subject. The student is able to demonstrate some understanding of the issues involved but does not demonstrate the ability to apply the analytical framework which had been developed in the course. Draws primarily upon course materials for referencing.

- **N+** The student is unable to demonstrate that he or she understands the core elements of the subject matter. The student is able to provide some insight into issues but misapplies analytic framework developed in course, omitting key factors and, for example, drawing conclusions which are not related to the preceding discussion.

- **N** The student is unable to demonstrate any understanding of the subject matter. Material presented for assessment is unrelated to course framework and shows no effort to identify or address critical aspects of the topic.

The scaling of marks to ensure comparability between classes in an acceptable academic practice. The GSM and Board of Examiners has the right to scale marks where it is considered necessary to maintain consistency and fairness.
Group Assignment Part 1 – Small Firm Interviews (10%)

The focus of this assignment will be to gain a better understanding of the nature of small business owner-managers and their managerial environment. It will also investigate the practices of small business owner-managers in targeted industries. Students will work in teams of up to five and will select a target industry (e.g. printing firms, retailers, furniture manufacturers, software engineering firms, boat builders). You may also wish to focus on special interest groups (e.g. incubator firms, home-based businesses, female owner-managed firms).

Description

Each team member will conduct semi-structured interviews with two owner-managers of small businesses. These interviews should follow a common interview protocol predetermined within the group before commencing. The interviews should cover aspects of the business as well as personal attributes, circumstances and motivations of the founder and, if different, the current owner-manager. Particular attention should be given to the motivations for establishing this business and the challenges the owner-manager has faced or is facing. We shall discuss questions in class, but teams should coordinate their questions in advance to ensure that they are able to compare and contrast the responses from the owner-managers.

It is important that the interviews devote sufficient time to both understand the personal side of the business owner-manager (e.g. personal and family background, motivations for becoming a small business owner-manager) and how the business is actually performing (e.g. profitability, growth, human resource issues, products or services, and plans for future growth). Students should anticipate interviews lasting around 1-2 hours at least with some opportunity to tour the business site(s). It is important for the student to develop a level of trust with the owner-manager to ensure that they gather reliable information. You should also keep open the opportunity to return again to ask the owner additional questions.

A key focus for the interviews is to compare performance of the interviewed owner-managers and their firms to identify ‘best practice’ in the targeted industry. This may require each group to consider in advance which firms appear to be exemplars of good performance and which are not. It is not always easy to tell from the outside but relatively high profile firms tend to be good performers. You can look for such possible firms among the list of winners of Small Business Awards issued each year by the Small Business Development Corporation.

Ensure that the business has sufficient substance and interest to warrant the effort involved in the survey and report preparation. Some self-employed consulting activities for example might provide an excellent income for the person involved, but might provide very little scope for learning in an interview. Be aware also that persons who derive their main income from time-based activities (for example lawyers, accountants and consultants) are often reluctant to spend the time with an interviewer.

Each Team will prepare a report on the interviews (length approximately 2,500 words) and a short presentation to the class. A Team mark will be based mainly on the written report. The presentation to class will not be marked separately but will be taken into account in determining the group mark. Due Week 6.
Assessment criteria

The assignment will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Choice of industry and business/owner-managers** – specifically what justification is there for the selection of the target industry and the individual owners that where interviewed. You should provide reasons for selecting a particular individual other than sheer convenience or availability. Did they appear to represent a ‘best practice’ small business, or the opposite?

- **Report and data of interviews (owner-managers)** – you will need to provide a concise account of the interviews undertaken and evidence of using a well-considered discussion protocol to guide the interview. The report should provide comparisons of the various small business owners interviewed by the group, and quotations from these owners provided where possible. The report should provide the reader with a good appreciation and understanding of the character and mindset of these individuals with respect to their businesses.

- **Report and data of interviews (the business)** – in addition to the focus on the owner-managers, the report should provide a well considered comparison and assessment of the small firms operated by these owners. The report should briefly describe each case study firm (e.g. how long in operation, location, description of premises, staffing levels and turnover).

- **Analysis and Discussion** – this is one of the most important sections. Your report will need to compare and contrast the different small businesses interviewed with a view to making a judgement as to how typical or not these case studies are of their respective industry sector. Can you identify examples of good practice and what do these interviews tell you about small businesses generally?

- **Comparison with literature** – as part of the analysis and discussion the report should draw upon the available literature to assist in determining how typical or atypical the case study firms are, and whether they represent any examples of practices or theories that have been suggested in other studies. Evidence of wide reading of the literature will be important to assessing this aspect of the assignment.

- **Conclusions, observations and lessons learnt** – in concluding the report your group should seek to draw together all the available information into a general view of the state of play in your targeted industry sector and the small business community overall. Do these interviews provide you with evidence that small business owner-managers are somehow different to managers in large firms? Are small business owner-managers also ‘entrepreneurs’? Can you identify common problems facing small business owner-managers?

- **Team Report** – each group will be tasked to provide a short oral report to the rest of the class on their findings during Week 6 of the Trimester. This will not be a formal presentation but will be taken into consideration when making the final assessment of the assignment.

Group Assignment Part 2 - Benchmarking Study (30%)

This assignment builds on the first group project and the two projects should be considered together as a continuous process rather than as separate activities.

Description

This project seeks to develop a series of ‘best practice’ benchmarking studies within the targeted industries selected. The report should review the case studies examined within the group and develop a critical analysis designed to assist these same firms to improve their performance, as well as assisting any other owner-managers operating within that industry or seeking to establish a new venture in the sector.

Key issues that should be considered within the report and its analysis are:
• Overall size of the industry and general outlook for its future
• Ease of entry into the industry and start up costs
• The pros and cons of setting up a ‘green fields’ business or buying an established one or franchising
• Market side considerations – size of market, growth opportunities, benchmarks of current marketing and product performance within the industry and generic customer/market needs analysis
• Identification of common problems facing firms in the targeted industry
• Key performance indicators for best practice – drawing on case study material what are the key factors likely to enhance performance within the selected industry for small firms, are there lessons for how to overcome common problems and successfully develop the business
• Compliance costs – the generic issues associated with running a business in the targeted industry relating to federal, state and local government compliance (e.g. GST, planning and zoning regulations, health and safety, licensing and approvals).
• Useful lists of contacts and information sources or ‘check lists’ that a small business owner-manager may wish to refer to.

The length of this assignment is around 4,500 words. Quality is preferable to quantity. This document should be submitted in both written and soft-copy. A copy of the report is to be provided to the participating small business owner-managers who participated in the first assignment interviews, but you should take care to make any case study material anonymous so as to protect the identity of participants. Due Week 12.

Assessment criteria

The assignment will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Analysis of the industry (market size & potential)** – what is the future outlook for this industry sector for small firms? How much growth is there and how does the market segment to allow small firms the opportunity to niche? You will need to draw on secondary sources to provide an overview of the industry structure and potential
- **Assessment of entry barriers and start up costs** – how easy is it to set up a new business venture in this industry sector? What natural or artificial entry barriers exist to reducing the entry of substitutes or competitors? If someone was to try to enter this industry and establish their small business what are the anticipated establishment costs?
- **Assessment of green fields versus buying existing business or franchising options** – would it be better to start up a totally new business in this sector or purchase an established one? You will need to provide an analysis of the pros and cons of these options. Would the industry benefit from use of franchising as a business model? Consider this issue with reference to the pros and cons of franchising.
- **Specific marketing analysis and assessment of competition** – with respect to how small firms in this sector attract and retain new customers, you should provide an analysis of the most effective marketing techniques identified from your case studies and other research. How does a small business in this industry get ahead of the competition?
- **Identification of specific problems facing sector** – are there problems facing this industry sector that are unique to it? This might include government regulation, technology impact or market trends.
- **Identification of key performance indicators for best practice** – what are the lessons learnt from your analysis that provide a guide to small business operators in this sector about what constitutes ‘best practice’? If you can identify such performance benchmarks these should be outlined as possible key performance indicators (KPIs) with suggestions of how owner-managers might emulate these examples.
- **Identification of compliance costs** – what are the key regulatory issues and compliance costs that small businesses in this sector must deal with? These should be outlined and discussed.
- **Checklists for start up or growth** – assuming that the report is to be read by those seeking to start up their own small business in this sector, or expand an established firm, what are the key things that they must consider or do to ensure success?
Lists of useful contacts and reference sources – the report should also contain a list of useful contacts or sources of information ranging from government agencies, industry associations or reference materials. The reader of the report should be able to use this list as an initial resource for getting started.

Use of case study material to support analysis – you should make use of the information you gathered in the first group assignment to assist in your analysis for this. Carefully selected the case study firms interviewed in the first assignment will provide a valuable source of data to assist this benchmarking report.

Use of literature review and research – the report should demonstrate good use of the small business literature to assist in evaluating best practice and use of available data sources to guide your industry and market analysis. The Harvard system of referencing should be used.

Presentation and quality of writing – the report should be well-presented and well-written making use of tables, diagrams and graphs where appropriate to aid interpretation of findings.

Individual Weekly Assignments and Exercises (60%)

Each week students will be tasked to read and review the course notes and associated readings, participate in the class and complete an assignment task associated with each topic. Students will be asked to complete these assignments each week using the online learning environment, and submit their work via the OzEd system.

Assignments will vary from week to week depending on the nature of the topic, however, most will require you to complete a short answer or essay-style task addressing questions associated with content or case study material provided in the course notes located on the OzEd system. Students may either complete each topic and its associated assignment before moving onto the next week’s content or advance through the topics at their own pace.

Submission of assignments

Individual weekly assignments will be completed and submitted online via the OzEd website and Microsoft Class Server system. Individual exercises from weeks 1 to 6 will be submitted in week 7 and exercises from weeks 7 to 12 will be submitted in week 13. The group assignments can be submitted in class on the due date or online via OzEd or email directly to the lecturer. If handed into the office; a standard cover sheet should be used and a receipt issued.

Late assignments will attract a penalty of 5% per day. Only in exceptional circumstances will the lecturer waive this penalty. No marks will be awarded to assignments submitted after other students in the class have had their assignments returned.

Assignments will be returned to students drop files.

It is the intention that the marked assignments will be returned within two weeks of submission.

Appeals against assessment marks

In the first instance, students are strongly advised to talk informally to the lecturer about the grade awarded.

The University provides the opportunity for students to lodge an appeal against any mark which he or she feels is unfair. Any student making an appeal is under an obligation to establish a prima facie case by providing particular and substantial reasons for the appeal.

There is a 10 day time limit for making any such appeal. An appeal against academic assessment may result, as appropriate, in an increase or decrease in the mark originally awarded. The University regulations relating to appeals and the form on which the appeal should be lodged can be found in the GSM website.
Acknowledgements and plagiarism

In the course of your individual and group work assignments, you will encounter ideas from many sources. These will include journal and newspaper articles, commentaries, books, websites and other electronic sources, original case sources, lecture materials. All MBA assignments that you submit must acknowledge all the different sources you have used. Not to acknowledge your sources is plagiarism, a form of dishonesty. Plagiarism is the misappropriation of the work or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. This is reprehensible from both an ethical and legal viewpoint. Neither the School nor the University accepts ignorance or the fact that a student’s previous acts of plagiarism had been undetected as a defence.

In order to avoid engaging in plagiarism it is your responsibility to acknowledge all of your sources in any work submitted for assessment and it is essential that you reference the work of others correctly. Where you quote directly from a source, you must ensure that any direct quotations are placed in quotation marks and are fully referenced. Even when you do not quote directly and are just referring to or expanding on the work of others, you must still acknowledge the sources of your information and ideas. Close paraphrasing in which you change a few phrases around, leave a clause out of a long sentence or put the original sentences in a different order is still plagiarism. To mark words as a quotation the entire text that has been copied should be enclosed within quotation marks. If the copied text is four or more lines in length, it may be more appropriate to set it as a separate and indented paragraph. Each time that text is copied, the source must be acknowledged with a reference citation, including the page number.

Advice on proper referencing is given below. If you have any doubts concerning appropriate referencing formats or how to acknowledge the work of others correctly, you should seek the advise of your lecturer.

It is GSM policy that no student will profit from plagiarism. Generally, a mark of ‘Fail’ will be recorded for the assignment in which this has occurred, regardless of its other merits or qualities. Serious cases shall be referred to the University’s Board of Discipline. All students should note that cases of copying are automatically reported to the Sub-Dean and documentary evidence along with associated correspondence is placed on the student’s permanent record.

Taping of Lectures

The Graduate School does not provide tape recordings of lectures, however if you do wish to tape record a lecture then as a matter of courtesy, you should obtain the permission of the lecturer first.

Referencing

It is important that the referencing of any sources used in your written work is done properly, if only to substantiate the points you are making in your assignment or project. The Harvard style is the preferred and there are some notes for guidance which have been prepared by the library staff: ‘Citing your sources Harvard Style’ http://www.library.uwa.edu.au/guides/citingsources/harvard.html

Endnote is a really good system for building up a database of references. Not everyone will want to invest the time in using this system but you should consider it if you intend to build up resource materials or plan to undertake extensive research in a particular area. The library staff have also developed a tutoring package: ‘A quick Guide to Using EndNote’ which provides the basics for using EndNote with an essay http://www.library.uwa.edu.au/guides/endnote/quick_endnote.pdf

This is linked to from the how to Use EndNote page www.library.uwa.edu.au/guides/endnote/ which provides more comprehensive information.
Reference list:


**Journals:**

The following periodicals may also be of assistance:

*American Journal of Small Business*
*Asia Pacific International Management Forum*
*Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*
*Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*
*International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*
*International Small Business Journal*
*Journal of Business Venturing*
*Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*
*Journal of Small Business Management*
*Small Enterprise Research: The Journal of SEAANZ*

**Other Useful Reading Sources:**

These are a number of non-academic publications that can also help keep students abreast of current practical issues in the field:

*Business Review Weekly*
  *Inside Business Success*
  *“The Australian” newspaper (Monday small business page)*

**Websites**

The Internet can serve as a useful reference tool for your studies. However, it must always be remembered that whilst the web may serve as a starting point, it should augment, not substitute, other sources of scholarly and business research.

The Small Business Development Corporation of Western Australia:
http://www.sbdc.com.au

Australia's Business Entry Point provides a wide range of practical information about running a small business:
YourASP Pty Ltd
'Class Server' Application Form
Page 1 of 1

Head Office: Suite 5, 88 Walters Drive, Herdsman Lake, 6017, Western Australia. Tel 61 (08) 9201 5369 Fax 61 (08) 9201 0091
Email info@yourasp.com.au  Web www.yourasp.com.au  ACN 095 106 120  ABN 61 095 106 120

Class Server Access Request

### Account Details

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Home Phone</th>
<th>Home Fax</th>
<th>Mobile</th>
<th>Work Phone</th>
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<th>Email</th>
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### User Name

This is your login identity to the service. Please select a User Name of between 5 & 16 letters and/or numbers. **User Names are always lowercase.**

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### Password

Your Password protects your information and stops other users from accessing your account. Please enter a Password between 8 and 16 letters/numbers long. Please refrain from using your name, surname or DOB as your password. Any alpha character A to Z or numeric 0 to 9 is acceptable. **Please note that passwords are case sensitive.**

<table>
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### Payment Details

#### Method

- Check Attached
  - Credit Card

#### Credit Card Type

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### General Conditions

Unless otherwise arranged full payment to be received before access is enabled. Account holders must be over 18 years of age and agree to the YourASP Acceptable Use Policy. Furthermore, Account holders are to accept sole responsibility for use of the account. This agreement is bound by The Acceptable Use, General Terms & Conditions Policy as published at www.yourasp.com.au or available on request.

### Please sign in acceptance.

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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