



# IBDP Business and Management

## IA Draft Feedback

### A - Research Proposal and Action Plan

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There is no research proposal or action plan.
1	There is a research proposal and action plan. However, elements of the research proposal or action plan are inappropriate.
2	The research proposal and action plan are generally appropriate, but they are not clear and focused.
3	The research proposal and action plan are appropriate, clear and focused. There is some identification of the theoretical framework and methodology to be employed.
4	The research proposal and action plan are appropriate, clear and focused. There is clear identification and explanation of the theoretical framework and methodology to be employed.



### Checklist

<b>Research proposal</b>
It is no more than 500 words.
There is an action plan that identifies possible sources of information.
Anticipated difficulties have been noted.
The research proposal is a working and active document.
The research question looks forward and enables a recommendation to be made.
The project is realistically achievable.
The teacher and student both agree that the research question can be addressed within the word limit.
Issues of confidentiality and ethics have been discussed.
<b>Action plan</b>
Contact individuals within the organization are identified.
There is a clear structure in the action plan.



### B - Use of theoretical concepts, sources and data

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There is no use of theoretical concepts, sources or data.
1	There is a very limited understanding of relevant theoretical concepts, and these concepts have been misused. The sources and data are irrelevant or insufficient.
2	There is a limited understanding of relevant theoretical concepts, but these have not been applied effectively. The sources and data are generally relevant, but insufficient.
3	There is an understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and evidence of some of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient.
4	There is an understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and evidence of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient. There is some evidence of the sources and data being used effectively and related to the theoretical framework.
5	There is an in-depth understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and consistent evidence of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient. There is consistent evidence of the sources and data being used effectively and integrated with the theoretical framework.



## Checklist

There is sufficient primary research.
There is sufficient secondary research.
Sources of data have been clearly identified.
Relevant theory is applied to the organization under investigation.

- Primary research needs to be referenced and a comment on its reliability is needed
- Secondary research needs to come from a range of sources (tutor2u? Business Review? Other textbooks?)
- References – ‘in text’ or footnotes
- Findings too based on own opinions and not enough theory



## Business Tools and Techniques

The purpose of the internal assessment is to apply business tools and techniques learned in the classroom. Below is a list of potential tools that can be used to collate and organise the data for the purpose of analysis:

SWOT analysis  
PEST analysis  
Decision Trees  
‘Fishbone’ analysis  
Ratio analysis  
Budgeting including variance analysis  
Ansoff’s matrix  
Force Field analysis

Break-even analysis  
Critical Path Analysis  
The BCG matrix  
Positioning maps  
Porter’s generic strategies  
Porter’s Five Forces  
Sales Forecasting

Given the maximum word limit of 2,000 words a student should be looking to use **only 3 or 4** of these.

The data gathered can be presented in the **Appendices** and referred to in the report.



## Reliability and Significance

One of the worst mistakes made by students is to **rely on only one source of data** - usually produced by the firm they are investigating. If a single source is used there is likely to be **bias**.

Single sources are often in the form of a questionnaire, which may have a **limited sample size** and a **poor sampling frame**. If the data is taken from an interview or from the firm’s website, it is likely that this data will be **subjective** and little more than **PR for the firm**.

The methodology should include some examination of **sampling techniques**, with the student preferably understanding the difference between a random sample and a convenience sample - the latter being where the student asks the first people who happen to pass them. Unfortunately, **students perceive the latter as random, which it is not**.

The way to achieve valid data is to **back findings from at least one other source**, either primary or secondary. Secondary data is likely to be more reliable if it has been collected by a **professional organisation**.



## Organising the Data

The data should be arranged, presented and sourced.

Students are encouraged to use a range of presentation techniques:

- Graphs
- Photographs
- Maps
- Tables
- Bar charts, pie charts and histograms
- Calculations
- Charts
- Accounts
- Mind and position maps

All data **must be sourced**. This is evidence that the student has undertaken reliable and detailed research and avoids the accusation of plagiarism.

Data used **must** also be relevant. It is not good policy for students to ‘dump’ entire annual reports in the appendices.



## Secondary Sources

- Textbooks
- Magazines/journals (Business Review?)
- Websites (NOT Wikipedia)
- Reports/databases
  - keynote.co.uk, datamonitor.com and mintel.com (for market/industry information)
- Company literature (end-of-year/annual reports, policies, mission statements etc.)



### Checklist for data collection:

	Yes/No?
• Is there sufficient data, and is it balanced?	
• Is there both primary and secondary data?	
• Is there an adequate explanation of methodology e.g. sampling techniques?	
• Has the data been properly sourced?	
• Is the data adequately organised and presented?	
• Is the data relevant to the topic under investigation?	



## C – Analysis and Evaluation

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There is no discussion, analysis or evaluation.
1	Findings are very limited and the discussion is superficial. The report lacks order and coherence.
2	Findings are limited and the discussion tends to be superficial. There is an attempt to sequence ideas and references.
3	There is some analysis of the findings but the discussion may be unnecessarily descriptive. There is some integration of ideas and issues in a logical order.
4	The analysis of the findings is appropriate. There is some integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order.
5	The analysis of the findings is appropriate and there is an attempt at evaluation. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order.
6	The analysis and evaluation of the findings are appropriate. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order, and some evidence of critical thinking.
7	The analysis and evaluation of the findings are appropriate. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order, and consistent evidence of critical, reflective thinking.



## Checklist

<u>The ideas are coherent and consistent.</u>
<u>There is evidence of critical, reflective thinking.</u>
<u>Judgments are made.</u>
<u>There is evidence to back up the analysis and evaluation.</u>

- Some ideas/writing were difficult to understand
- Critical and reflective thinking was often lacking
- Judgements made, but not backed up
- Lack of evidence and references, from a range of sources



## Analysis and Evaluation

This is not the place for simple description of what has been found - a very common error in HL projects.

Given the tight word limits, the student needs to:

- synthesise ideas
- be succinct and organised
- integrate the theory with the data to produce supported analysis and evaluation
- think critically by contrasting and balancing data
- identify weaknesses in the research
- avoid unsupported generalisations by using a range of data, sources and theory



## The Report

The 2,000 words does not include supplementary information such as the title page, executive summary, diagrams, figures, tables of data, references and appendices.

### Required format for written report

- Title page
- Acknowledgments
- Contents page
- Executive summary (abstract)
- Introduction
- Research question
- Procedure or method
- Main results and findings
- Analysis and discussion
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Bibliography and references
- Appendices

The executive summary should be a concise, clear and explicit summary (maximum 200 words) of the document, including any recommendations or conclusions. The research question and executive summary should guide the reader to the substance of the report.

To be of practical value to management, the report should be forward-looking and support the decision making process.

The appendices should contain only information/data that is required in support of the text, and should be clearly referred to at relevant points.



## Formatting

### Introduction

The purpose of this example is to show you how an academic document should look. Notice that I am using a normal and professional looking font. I prefer 'Calibri', but you might opt for a more traditional font like 'Times New Roman' or 'Ariel'. Whichever you choose, be consistent!



## D – Conclusions/Recommendations

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There are no conclusions or recommendations.
1	There are conclusions or recommendations, but they are inconsistent with the evidence presented.
2	There are conclusions or recommendations. Some are consistent with the research question, but may not be supported by evidence presented in the main body of the report.
3	There are conclusions and recommendations. These are consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report and with the research question, but are not fully developed.
4	There are conclusions and recommendations. These are consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report and with the research question, and are well developed.
5	There are conclusions and recommendations. These are consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report and with the research question, and are well developed. Future action to address limitations of the research is proposed.



## Checklist

There are both conclusions and recommendations.
They refer to the research question.
They refer to previous discussions.
They refer to findings.
There are no inconsistencies with previous discussions, that is, new ideas not previously discussed.
Recommendations have been substantiated and are realistic.
Unanswered questions have been acknowledged.

- Too brief and sometimes inconsistent with evidence
- Recommendations were just stated and not fully evaluated
- Sometimes no critical ‘warnings’ about weaknesses in the report/data



## Conclusions and Recommendations

The IB moderator will be looking for the following:

- Both conclusions and recommendations
- Conclusions and recommendations that address the research question
- Conclusions and recommendations consistent with evidence presented in the main body of the report
- Future action to address limitations in the research

This section should really be relatively short and the recommendations are best presented in bullet points. Students must:

- try to quantify the costs and consequences of recommendations
- present conclusions that are supported with evidence from the main body and data analysis and answer the research question
- state any future research to address limitations in their project



## E – Value to Management

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The report is of no practical value to management.
1	The report exceeds 2,000 words, or is of limited practical value to management.
2	The report has some practical value to management. There are significant omissions in the presentation of the report. Bibliography and referencing are inappropriate.
3	The report is of practical value to management. There are minor omissions in the presentation of the report. Bibliography and referencing are appropriate.
4	The report is of practical value to management. The report is well presented, forward-looking and follows the required written report format*. Bibliography and referencing are appropriate.



## Checklist

The report is within the word limit.
There is an executive summary.
Subject-specific terminology has been used throughout the report.
There is a bibliography.
The bibliography and references follow a consistent format.
There are appendices that are relevant and have been referred to in the main body of the text.
There is no superfluous material.
The word count is provided on the report.
The research question has been answered.

- Bibliography and references let people down





## Value to Management

- Is of practical value to management
- Well presented
- Forward-looking
- Follows the required report format with appropriate bibliography and referencing

To achieve the higher grades, the student needs to think about an investigation that will help a decision-maker with their decision-making!

If, at the end of the exercise, the student concludes that the present situation is actually fine and there is no need for a change of strategy, this may reflect that there was no issue in the first place and therefore the project is of no practical value.



## What now?

I...

- cannot accept any further 'drafts'
- I can discuss improvements with you, but I can't be too explicit or specific
- I can read and discuss individual sections and but I can't give written feedback

You need to...

- Re-read everything I have ever given you on the IA
- Read and compare samples
- Critically and objectively read your own project and feedback given
- Realise that you may well have A LOT of work to do, some of which might be drastic, to improve your grade



## Finally...

- **Deadline Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February** (my birthday!)
- Feedback meetings...
  - Today 2<sup>nd</sup> break - Nada
  - Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> break - Nour
  - Monday 18<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> break - Shareefaq
  - Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> break - Naira
  - Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> break - Georgina

