

Summary of Teaching & Learning Context

This integrated assessment for Strategic Management and Marketing Management modules in Year 4 of the BA in Business Studies with Travel & Tourism Management and BA in Business Studies with Event Management programmes was initially designed with the following objectives:

- To incorporate a real-life component into final year of the programmes (following a six-month industry placement in Year 3).
- To minimise the stress reported by learners in the final stage of the programmes caused by over-assessment and multiple concurrent deadlines.
- To afford learners a unique opportunity to apply theory by engaging with a client organisation in their industry sector.

Engagement & Previous Participating Organisations

Since its inception in 2012, student consultancy teams participating in this assessment have delivered over 120 Strategic Marketing Plans to 22 client organisations reflecting the diversity of the tourism and event industry in the region. Previous client organisations include: Kilbane Glamping, Burren Slow Food Festival, St. Mary's Cathedral, Cloncannon BioFarm, Limerick Racecourse, Lough Gur Heritage Centre, Curraghchase Caravan & Campsite, Aillwee Cave & Birds of Prey Centre, Foynes Flying Boat Museum, Jamie Knox Watersports, Terra Nova Fairy Garden, Elite Events, Ennis Book Club Festival and Sharon McMeel Wedding Planner.

Overview of the Assessment Strategy

Extending the industry collaboration approach and regionally focused remit of TUS, learners adopt the role of consultancy teams to produce a focused, persuasive strategic marketing plan to chart the future direction for the participating client organisation. This integrated assignment was developed to extend learners' knowledge of the synergies between the individual modules and their interdependence at a strategic level. The client engagement provides a very rich educative context where learners can apply diagnostic and analytical frameworks at industry and organisational level to develop a detailed action plan to capture external opportunities with clear alignment to internal resource analysis.

Summary Description of Assignment Process

Facilitated by module leaders, learners initially participate in a site visit to their client organisation, where possible, or have a detailed client briefing. The first of three submissions is a situational analysis presentation incorporating key evidential frameworks which forms the foundation for a fully developed strategic marketing plan for the final two submissions, a consultancy report and client presentation. The inclusion of project management protocols, project clinics and workshops, and lecturer feedback throughout the entire assessment process create a very comprehensive simulation of a real-world experience for learners.

Enhancing Student Reflexivity

Reflective practice is embedded within the assessment with continuous critical analysis as well as formal self and peer evaluation. The assessment criteria require student teams to decide the final distribution of marks between all members based on contribution where review meetings (throughout the assignment process) and resolution meetings (where there are discrepancies in allocated marks at the end) are moderated by lecturers. In addition to augmenting module specific knowledge and application, the client engagement and consultancy team focus of the assessment builds key transferable capabilities in communication, collaboration, negotiation, time management, and task prioritisation.

Challenges & Associated Assignment Supports

The support processes that have been incorporated into the assessment design and evaluation criteria are key to addressing some of the challenges of both securing client organisation participation and learner engagement, including:

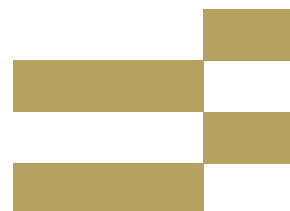
- Management of Client Organisation Expectations
- Student Team Self-Selection & Team Member Allocations
- Incorporation & Interim Review of Project Management Logs
- Team Autonomy & Systematic Approach to address Non-Contributing Team Members
- Balancing practical solutions with theoretical application for client context

Relevant Resources

Event Management Book of Knowledge
<https://www.embok.org/index.php>

The Next Tourism Generation (NTG) Skills Alliance
<https://nexttourismgeneration.eu/>

The 5R Framework for Student Reflection
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/5r-framework>





Kate Harrold (Lough Gur Heritage Centre) – Travel & Tourism Management Site Visit 2018



Dean Niall Sloane (St Mary's Cathedral) – Event Management Site Visit 2019



Innovantage Consultancy presenting strategic marketing report to Sean O' Farrell Cloncannon BioFarm 2020



20/20 Solutions Consultancy presenting strategic marketing report to Jana Mannion (AnnaCarriga) with lecturer Dr Sinéad O'Leary

