

UNIVERSITY OF BOLTON

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND CREATIVE
TECHNOLOGIES**

MSc BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS

**SEMESTER TWO
EXAMINATION 2009/2010**

BUSINESS MODELING AND SIMULATION

MODULE NO: EBU4004

Date: Thursday 3rd June 2010

Time: 10.00 – 12.00 pm

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:

There are six questions.

Answer four questions.

All questions carry equal marks.

Marks for questions are shown in brackets.

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Questions

1. Howarth Limited is a fast-growing clothing manufacturer in the southeast of England. Most of Howarth's data-processing applications are computer based. However, none of them are installed on a data-base management system. Each application stands alone, although some are linked. Traditionally, central data processing and its system development staff have done all the application development within the company. Most staff members have a computer background, with very little experience on user areas. The management at Howarth is considering a decision-support system. Would you advise Howarth to invest resources in a decision-support system at this time? Provide a critical analysis to support your answer.

(25 marks)

2. You have been commissioned to conduct a third-party investigation into the decision support system used in Oxfam Limited. This has revealed that many departments are developing their own applications independently and without the knowledge of the computer centre. The computer centre has traditionally taken a very strong line against end-user computing and has been unwilling to provide support for end-user applications development. In the current situation the proliferation of end-user decision support systems involves duplication of resources, data and applications. The management culture of senior management is one of centralised control. Critically discuss how you would advise the company to proceed.

(25 marks)

3. HSBC, an insurance company, is thinking of investing in a Group Decision Support Systems as most of its decision making processes are done in groups. However, top management is not sure as to whether or not this would be a good investment for the organisation. Provide a critical review of how such a system would facilitate efficient decision making.

(25 marks)

4. You are a manager looking for a systems developer. You placed an advertisement in a newspaper and receive 400 resumes. Discuss the decision making process you would use to when deciding whom to hire. Assume that 300 of the 400 meet all objective criteria you can think of such as systems development experience and education.

(25 marks)

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5. Smith Limited a manufacturing organisation has recently installed a complete management information system on its mainframe. The next item in Smith's strategic plan for computing is to install a decision support system. Several analysts have already been assigned to a project team to evaluate decision-support software. Their first task is to interview various user managers to determine what type of decisions the managers make from the data already in the new MIS system. Next, the analysts must document their findings and evaluate vendor literature on decision-support software. In addition to being able to answer questions posed by the user managers, critically discuss other specific features that should be in a good decision-support package and why?

(25 marks)

6. Although executives are typically described as people who work on long-term, strategic issues, the discussion of Executive Support Systems (ESS) emphasizes the use of these systems to monitor recent organisational performance. Assuming you were an executive concerned with long-term issues, explain why you would or would not find this type of system useful. Provide an analysis of the things an ESS would have to do if it were to focus specifically on long-term strategic issues.

(25 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS