



Case Studies

Case studies are descriptions of situations which you will likely encounter within your chosen discipline. They may be presented as essays, reports or in specific templates provided to you so you will need to carefully analyse the task you have been given and look at the particular requirements of your assignment.

What is the purpose of a case study?

Case studies provide you with the opportunity to:

- think about the complexities of real-life situations that you may face in the workplace;
- make connections between the theory you have learned to real-life practice, and
- provide realistic, reasonable and practical solutions to real-life problems.

What kind of thinking is needed?

Your lecturer is looking for you to demonstrate an ability to think critically and analytically.

This includes:

- methodically and systematically analysing the situation
- identifying all of the issues
- exploring all aspects of the issues in depth
- analysing potential implications, outcomes or relevant considerations
- making connections between the case and the theory

To do this successfully, you need a step by step process to think about the possibilities connected to each element of the case.

How do you prepare and complete a case study?

Analyse the case

Reading the case and then re-reading it is not sufficient as an analytical process. To really examine in depth all of the possible issues included in the case, you need to read and think at the same time. Constructing a brainstorm of all possibilities at this stage may help you ensure who have not missed some important information. Some things to consider when analysing a case are:

- What are the definite facts? – listing any definite information is a useful starting point;
- What is happening / has happened? – list any definite actions that have occurred;
- Who is involved? – brainstorm all of the people or organisations who could possibly be involved, and
- What is their role? – what do these actors do and how are they affecting the case.



Explore in more detail

Refer to your specific task and be clear about what you are being asked to do. What is the purpose for analysing the case? You may need to:

- make recommendations
- identify solutions
- consider potential actions required
- devise a plan considering all of the issues

These will most likely be connected to real-life work situations. Exploring the case in more detail will help you to:

- find any details which may not be explicitly stated
- identify what extra information is needed to complete the task

Making connections to theory

Understanding the links between the theoretical content in your course and the practical realities of the case is an essential element of any case study. Once you have a detailed analysis of the case, it will be important to:

- interpret the case and solve the issues by creating a plan or recommendations;
- search for literature to support your actions, decisions or choices and justify your plans or solutions, and
- demonstrate how you have developed your ideas by referring to reliable sources.