WARWICK BUSINESS SCHOOL
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

MBA & Masters Projects 2027
Frequently Asked Questions

What is a WBS Project?

Dissertation projects (Individual) and Strategic Consulting Projects (Group) are the capstone of each student's studies. They are undertaken between June and September and carry a third of the weighting of marks to their end degree classification. Their final report/dissertation is assessed under academic standards, rather than external 'impact' . These 'academic standards' require the research undertaken as part of the project to be rigorous, reliable and repeatable in nature. It is key that the student has leveraged the existing research to provide a clear appraisal of the organisation or problem.

A dissertation or SCP should have depth, seeking alternative explanations or solutions. It should confront complex problems, systematically breaking the issue down, looking for causal influences and trends.

How should I define a Dissertation Question for an individual MBA or MSc student?

The project aims should allow the student to take a particular perspective that reflects the different domains of knowledge (not too many), whilst drawing upon a broader general management understanding.

A dissertation will be narrower by virtue of it being a sole endeavour - e.g.

1) What are the Supply Chain disruption risks associated to instability in the South China Sea? This is a Supply Chain dissertation, combined with Risk Management. The context is the South China Sea, and the political forces that impact this region. This would then be discussed from the perspective of the Client organization.
2) How has AI impacted the credibility of Social Media marketing? This is a dissertation predominantly focused on Social Media Marketing, intersecting the research on AI.

How should I define a Strategic Consulting Project for a group of 3 MBA students?

An SCP is broader in nature, as it has 3 students working on it. There should be a unifying aim for the students, for example: What are the challenges for a Chinese manufacturer expanding its market into South America. In this case the three sub-aims contained within this project were:

1) What are the barriers to partnership with South American SME manufacturers?
2) How can the financial performance of a South American SME be assessed for consideration of acquisition?
3) Should the company focus on local production or export to South America?

In this case each of the questions is managed by a single student but can take advantage of sharing data collection. The first question is a Strategy question, the second an accounting question and the third a supply chain/operations question. In response to the Client, the three research questions should be reunited to provide an answer to the high-level aim. In conclusion the Client has a comprehensive response to the key considerations of entering the South American market.

How should I construct questions for a successful project?

Research questions that use the question words, 'how' or 'why', will often use inductive methods, they will explain the different forces/ perceptions on an organization or problem. They will often focus on highlighting causality, so that a client can decide on the different influences it can bring to a situation. Research questions that contain the words 'can' or 'does', promote the use of deductive methods, and a narrower response - yes or no/ true or false (with ongoing explanation). Clients are encouraged to consider the wording of the research question, so that their ambitions are more accurately realized.

What should be avoided in any brief?

The types of question that should be avoided for the dissertation or SCP:

1) Create and implement a marketing plan for product X - there is limited theoretical application available to this type of question and relies too heavily on an extensive data set being provided by the client.
2) Devise a strategy for entering the African market for Org Y- this could be a good question, but it is too broad. Students presented this type of question typically innovate and find their particular niche in the question, but it rarely aligns with the Client expectation.

So, Clients are encouraged to think about how they want the project structured and the particular areas of contribution they seek, and define these in the project brief

What are the costs involved?

There are no fees payable to WBS, however all clients are expected to fully reimburse students directly for expenses incurred to undertake the project (usually travel and subsistence).

What is the difference between a group SCP and an individual Dissertation project?

A group SCP consists of 3 students who will present themselves as a self-formed group. One student will lead the group and be the main point of contact, although the client will likely have contact with all 3 students within the group should any questions/queries arise throughout the research process. A group SCP will suit a project that is more complex and multi-faceted.

Individual Projects operate in a similar way but there is only 1 student working on the project and will therefore suit a project that is a narrower in topic that which delves deeper into a specific area.

MBA students can undertake either an SCP or an Individual Project. Masters students can only be offered Individual Projects.

The following Masters courses offer Student Consultancy Projects;

- MSc Management of Information Systems & Digital Innovation (MSISDI)
- MSc Marketing & Strategy (MSMS)

What are the benefits to my organisation in offering a SCP or Individual Project?

- Access to an international talent pool of high-quality experience and expertise.
- Fulfilment and delivery of business projects for which there may be limited internal resource.
- Cutting-edge academically robust management thinking and a fresh perspective.
- Project outcomes can result in cost savings, improved systems or processes, suggestions for subsequent revenue generation or new market entry.
- Projects can be viewed as a 10-12 week interview/trial period for potential new employees.
- Increases your organisation's profile at the University of Warwick.

Is there much documentation to complete?

No. The process is designed to be as easy as possible, with only three key forms to complete and sign:

1. SCP/Individual Project Brief
2. SCP/Individual Project Agreement Form
3. Non-Disclosure Agreement between University of Warwick and your organisation (if required)

How much support do I need to provide?

Clients will need to allocate an employee as a mentor or point of contact for the student(s). Contact time depends on the nature of the project, but **access to data, people and office space (if required) for the student(s) needs to be made a priority** and agreed at the brief submission stage of the project.

It is imperative that the student has access to data to inform both their project and dissertation. When you complete the brief submission form, please state the data sources you will make available to them prior to the project start date, and whether they are in the private or public domain.

It is expected the students will have access to Internal Reports, Public Databases, Customer Data, and contacts inside and outside of the company. The project should not entail the students cold calling and networking with external contacts to gain information required for project completion

What is the duration of a SCP or Individual project?

Projects typically last between 10 to 12 weeks, dependent on the students' availability after their final modules. Typically, this should be no later than 1st June for Masters Students and 1st July for MBA students as the written element must be submitted to be marked by the first week of September

Where is the student(s) expected to be based?

Students can be based either at the client's site, on campus or a combination of both. Location, working hours and expected attendance pattern should be discussed, agreed and documented in the Project Agreement Form to ensure expectations are clear for both the student and the client. Please note that if you expect a student to relocate, this may incur additional costs/expenses for you as the client.

What are the key dates in the projects process?

	MSc Projects	MBA Projects
Final date for submissions (including NDA)	8th February 2027	28th March 2027
Deadline for shortlisting	10th March 2027	16th May 2027
Interviews (virtual or on campus)	22nd – 24th March 2027	3rd & 4th June 2027
Student ranking after interviews deadline	30th March 2027	11th June 2027
Introduction email between Client and Student	23rd April 2027	20th June 2027
Student start dates	June 2027	June/ July 2027

Can I specify certain skills or experience?

Yes. As with a job advert, you can request that a student(s) has experience in a certain area, define skills required to successfully complete the project or you could also request that students have covered an academic module directly relevant to your project area.

What can I expect at the end of a SCP or Individual Project?

Depending on the nature of the project, you are welcome to define a deliverable as part of the Project Agreement (e.g. a formal presentation for your staff, management report etc). ***This will need to be agreed at the very beginning of the project, so all parties are aware of the final deliverable.***

Is the student required to share their Academic Report with me?

Any rights to the Academic Report and Dissertation lie with the creator, therefore you would need to gain written permission (a license) from the student to view or use any part of their Academic Report. We recommend you discuss what data and references to your company can and cannot be used with the student(s) at the beginning of the project. These agreed terms can then be included in the SCP agreement form.

How do I select a student/group of students?

Student selection operates in the same way as a recruitment process. WBS will manage the process (advertising projects, collecting applications, scheduling interviews) but we will not recommend students for projects. Clients are welcome to hold interviews on campus or virtually although we do recommend the former as, in our experience, this enables you to build stronger relationships with the students. Do note that groups will be pre-formed by the students so for an SCP you would interview as a group rather than individuals.

Is there a limit to how many student projects we can offer?
There is no limit to the number of 'Individual Projects' briefs you submit but we do advise that you have the time to commit to making these projects successful. We advise that you allocate an hour a week to check with the project progress. For FTMBA SCPs, we ask for no more than 2 SCP group projects from each organisation.

How will confidentiality be maintained?
Data you provide can be anonymised, and we can also sign a standard Non-Disclosure Agreement between the University of Warwick and your organisation to give you peace of mind regarding the handling of proprietary data. Students must complete a course on information security and GDPR prior to the start of their project.

Academic Reports produced by students are marked by 2 WBS academics, and a sample of Academic Reports are also reviewed by an external examiner, all of whom are under NDA.

Is the student adequately insured when on company premises?
As the student is undertaking a project and not officially employed by you, they should be covered in the same way as any other visitor or consultant on your premises. Please ensure you have adequate Employers' Liability Insurance.

If I am interested how do I proceed?
Please fill out the Project Brief if you have a specific project already in mind, this will then be submitted for academic approval.

If you would like to organise an exploratory discussion please contact WBS CareersPlus & Employer Relations (EmployerRelations@wbs.ac.uk) who will take you through the next steps.

Thank you for your interest in WBS Projects. We look forward to working with you.

MBA & MSc Modules:

Full-Time MBA (FTMBA)

- Leadership
- Accounting and financial management
- Global business
- Marketing
- Management of behaviour in organisations
- Strategy and insights
- Embedding creativity to foster innovation
- Operations management in a manufacturing or service organisation

MSc Business Analytics & AI

- Processes for data mining
- Spreadsheet modelling
- Analysis and presentation of quantitative data
- Operational research techniques
- Pricing and revenue management
- Supply chain optimisation
- Strategic planning and analytics
- Quantitative forecasting methods
- Text analytics in conjunction with the SAS Institute
- Advanced analytics applications across a range of business areas such as social media, fraud detection and healthcare
- Statistical analysis such as cluster or factor analysis
- Forecasting and demand modelling

MSc Marketing & Strategy

- Strategic management, leadership and ethics
- Marketing management
- Using strategy in practice
- Digital disruption and transformation for marketing and strategy
- Global issues faced in marketing and strategy
- Branding, communications and design
- Problem solving

MSc Management of Information Systems & Digital Innovation

- Programming
- Data analytics
- Artificial intelligence
- Strategic role of data in business
- Strategy design
- Digital marketing
- Cyber security