Experiential Learning Projects (ELP) Handbook

Institute of
Business Administration
Karachi

Leadership and Ideas for Tomorrow

Contents:

The ELP is an integral part of the BBA program offered at the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi.

A group of 4-5 final semester students undertake a management consulting assignment in real life business environment related to managerial and organizational problems that need solutions. The Projects not only enable students to develop interviewing and report writing skills, but also provide an opportunity for them to enhance their managerial and leadership skills, besides their problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Project Areas:

Projects undertaken by the students revolves around the areas where organizations require in-depth analysis of any critical problem at hand, these could be:

- New ventures / Feasibility Studies
- Management Control Systems
- Human Resource Restructuring
- Strategic Analysis & Management
- Marketing Strategy
- Supply Chain Management
- Resource Mobilization strategies
- Financial Management
- Process re-engineering and Change Management

Note: The project scope is not necessarily confined to one of the above mentioned areas; a number of projects are inter-disciplinary in nature. There may be other areas that may come under the purview of ELP.

The projects would be conducted under the close supervision of senior faculty members/Advisors along with organization's coordinator.

Project Benefits for the organization:

There are wide-ranging and numerous benefits of the ELP, some of which are:

- Cost is minimal compared to the cost that will be incurred on engaging a professional consulting firm for delivering innovative solutions. Every group can also utilize the extensive resources available at the IBA including expertise of the faculty members.
- Each group comprises of talented and energetic students with sound academic background, who understand the market dynamics and, under the supervision of industry experienced faculty Advisors, can be trusted to come up with practical and effective solutions.
- Final outcome is the result of months of extensive groundwork by every member of the group actively contributing towards projects realizations. The client organization can thus benefit greatly from the substantial outcome.
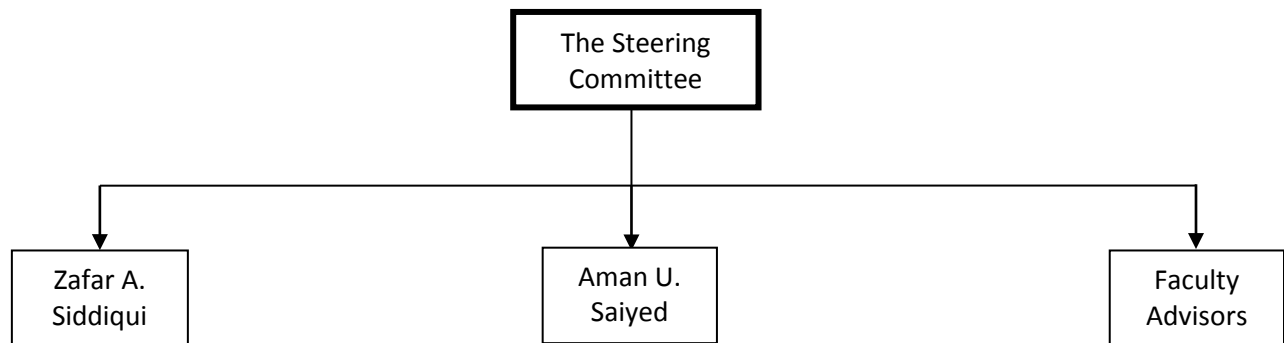
The Activities Involved:

Brief description of the activities involved is as under:

- Initially students group (4-5 students) will prepare a project proposal (terms of reference) based on discussions with the company. A work plan is also prepared listing the main activities to be undertaken and a time table for completion of these activities.
- Students present the proposal and work plan before a faculty Advisors. During the projects an interim progress report (Mid Review) is submitted to the ELP Faculty Advisor and to the organization's coordinator.
- On completion of the project a draft written report is submitted and an oral presentation made to the client and the Faculty Advisors. The presentation is held at the IBA Karachi.
- Based on client and faculty feedback a final written report is submitted to all and for final grading.
- A Faculty Advisor guides and monitors the project through the year. This includes reviewing the terms of reference and work plan, the progress report, and the final presentation and report.
- Final assessment is conducted by both parties; IBA Faculty advisors and Organization's coordinators. The substantial feedback will be considered towards final grading of students.

The Steering Committee

The ELP steering committee comprises of senior faculty members. The purpose of this committee to provide guidance on overall strategic direction and to monitor and govern all other stake holders involved.

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│Zafar A. │   │Aman U.   │      │Faculty   │
│Siddiqui │   │Saiyed    │      │Advisors  │
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Role of the Steering Committee:

Scope of the steering committee revolves around:

- Ensuring quality assurance in all activities
- Designing and implementation of effective policies, regarding:
    - Workload distribution
    - Marketing of the ELP initiative
    - The ELP scope
    - Conflict resolution mechanism (this mechanism provides for an escalation system for resolving any conflicts arising between students and their respective advisor)
- Administering quarterly meetings with stake holders

The Faculty Advisors

Role of the Faculty Advisors:

- Help students conceptualize problem and focus on objectives and deliverables
- Keep track of each project progress
- Help students focus and maintain high quality relationship with client
- Help students solve logistic/operational related problems
- Help students solve interpersonal / team issues
- Quality and professionalism in all deliverables and client conducts
- Provide students with access to data/library/specialist faculty

The Client Organization

Responsibilities:

- Provide IBA with a brief description of their requirements and scope of the project.
- Provide name and contact details of the individual in the organization who can be contacted by the group involved in the Project including to facilitate access, where necessary, to the relevant company material and information.
- Meet the financial costs incurred on the project including travel and accommodation cost, if any.

*The IBA does not charge for the Project conducted by its students.

One of the most crucial milestones in the ELP lifecycle is the design of Terms of Reference (TOR) document which will serve as a main kick-off component for the ELP.

Terms of Reference (TOR)

During the initial contacts with the client and the subsequent preliminary problem diagnosis, the student should have collected and evaluated enough information to be able to plan the assignment. This is what the client expects at this stage: A TOR (Terms of Reference).
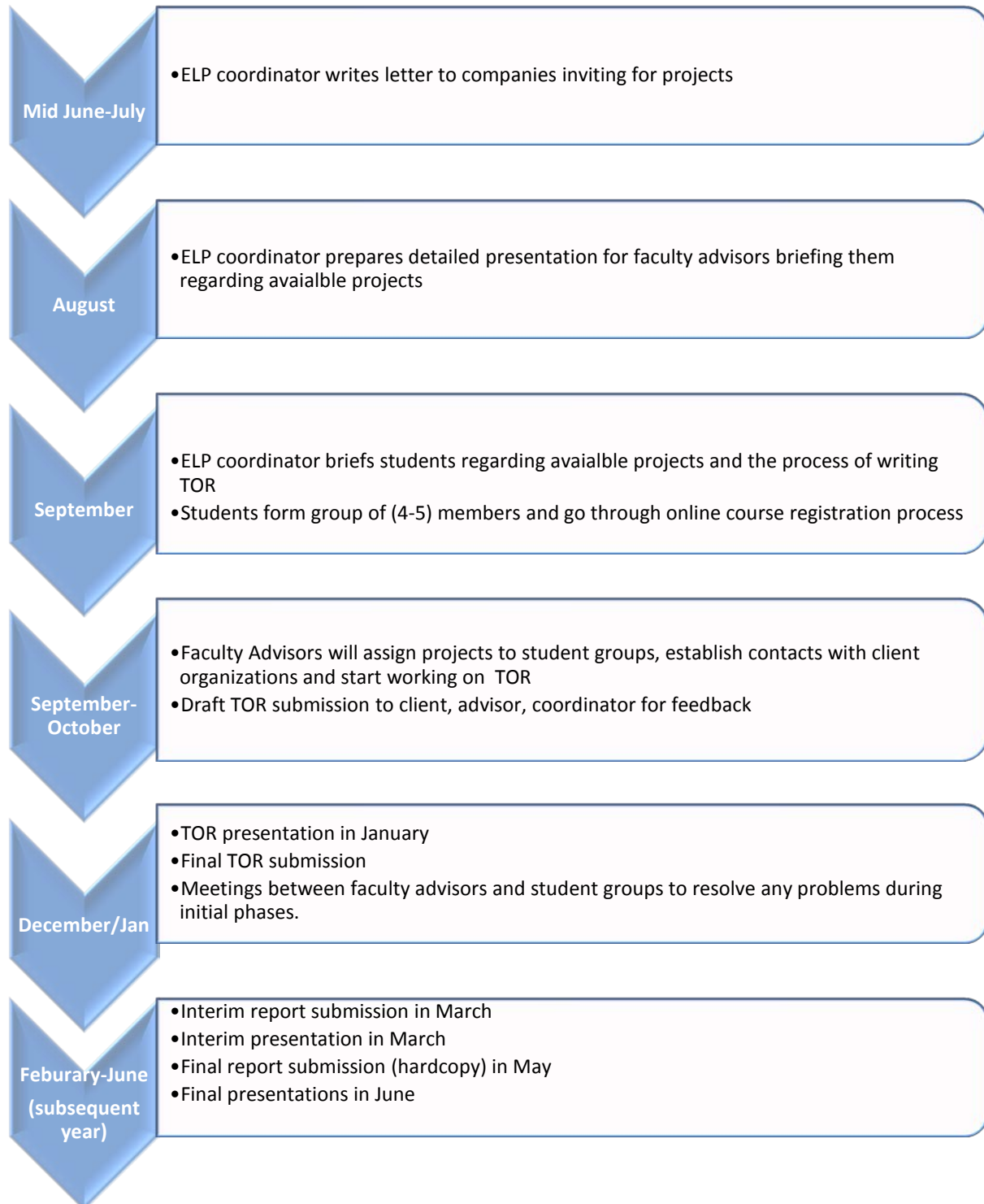
During this initial phase of the project, students should be able to determine not only the key objectives / problems but also the methodology or the implementation strategy of the project. It must be determined that what and how the data must be collected and what resources are needed from the client? What are the benefits of the successful outcome of the project?

Terms of Reference set out the scope and purpose of the study or the project. In this phase the clients specify their ideas and requirements, which are then used to formulate a TOR. It includes following elements:

• Background of the project

• The main objectives / tasks

• Specific technical inputs or areas of in-depth investigation

• Methodology to execute project

• Geographic scope and location

• Timeline of activities

• Project outputs or key deliverables (in the form of a report)

• Resources required, both human and financial

TOR must also provide a brief framework of diagnosis phase, design and analysis phase and implementation phase of the project. So the client organization contact person knows exactly what the students intend to do in their organization in the coming weeks. Moreover, each phase of the project requires different set of information and activities etc. When students have prepared the TOR, it must be presented to the client to have a consensus on TOR and client feedback is incorporated.

ELP Activity Timeline

Mid June-July
- ELP coordinator writes letter to companies inviting for projects

August
- ELP coordinator prepares detailed presentation for faculty advisors briefing them regarding avaialble projects

September
- ELP coordinator briefs students regarding avaialble projects and the process of writing TOR
- Students form group of (4-5) members and go through online course registration process

September-October
- Faculty Advisors will assign projects to student groups, establish contacts with client organizations and start working on TOR
- Draft TOR submission to client, advisor, coordinator for feedback

December/Jan
- TOR presentation in January
- Final TOR submission
- Meetings between faculty advisors and student groups to resolve any problems during initial phases.

Feburary-June (subsequent year)
- Interim report submission in March
- Interim presentation in March
- Final report submission (hardcopy) in May
- Final presentations in June

ELP Assessment

Successful project includes:

- Identification and conceptualization of problem by students
- Excellent guiding and mentoring by faculty advisor
- Well-structured project plan. Phase-wise deadlines/ deliverables / resources needed list etc.
- Project methodology and tools/data collection technologies
- Efficient/effective team work and healthy cooperation and team dynamics. Good client-student relationship
- Top quality reports and deliverables
- Open communication and feedback between students – advisor and students - client.

Grading Criteria Checklist:

The following checklist is designed to highlight the importance of different project attributes which contribute towards the final grade secured by the students.

✓	Clarity of TOR
✓	Rigor exhibited in qualitative research
✓	Accuracy of facts, figures and graphs quoted in the report
✓	Analysis of facts and figures
✓	Application of qualitative and quantitative tools
✓	Methodology adopted by students for solution implementation
✓	Commercial relevance and financial implications of the proposed solution
✓	Structure of the interim and final report
✓	Quality and relevance of the recommendations made
✓	Final conclusion of the report
✓	Client feedback

Contact Details

For further queries, please feel free to contact:

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