

BMT780 – Research Assignment: Sustainability in Canada

Due Dates

June 13th (EE Section)

June 14th (NDD Section)

Submission

Through **BlackBoard**. Please do not email your assignments!

Overall Grade

25%

Assignment Overview

This is an **individual** assignment.

You are required to write a research paper on the sustainability and corporate social responsibility issues that are most important in Canada. More specifically you need to cover the following areas, as well as any other *you* deem important:

1. What is sustainability?
2. What are the **main sustainability issues** that Canada and Ontario in particular are facing today?
3. Which of those sustainability challenges are most **relevant to businesses** in Canada and Ontario? Why are they relevant?
4. What are **Canadian businesses** doing to tackle those challenges? What practices are being implemented?
5. How does current Canadian **business** sustainability/CSR practice compare to other countries?
6. Do you think that Canadian sustainability/CSR practices are adequate? Why? What do you think they could do better?

Through this research assignment you will explore the relevant sustainability literature and become familiar with the specific context and sustainability priorities in Canada. You will also identify the maturity level of Canadian businesses in terms of sustainability and be better prepared for the reality of the Canadian market.

Clarifications

- **Question 1:** When referring to the sustainability challenges you **should** use the Sustainable Development Goals to frame your findings, unless you want to use another sustainability framework (e.g. ISO 26000).

- **Question 4:** When analyzing the current Canadian sustainability practice, you should focus on what **businesses** do (or say they do). You may refer to what other actors such as the government or other organizations do to help businesses in this area, but this is not what is being asked here.

Assignment Structure

Note that it is the contents that counts, rather the length of the assignment. However, a thorough examination of this topic will probably require **5-7 single-spaced pages** to adequately discuss this topic. **Please do not exceed 8 pages.**

You should choose a descriptive title for your paper. The paper should have an abstract followed by the body of the paper followed by an annotated bibliography. The body of the paper should be divided into appropriately numbered sections, sub-sections, sub-sub-sections, etc., each with descriptive titles.

Descriptive Title

The title of your paper should be as informative as possible and should clearly identify both the general field of the paper and the branch of it under consideration.

Abstract

An abstract is a synthesis of your paper and should briefly describe its significance. It is a summary of the paper. It should enable the readers to take in the nature and results of the paper quickly and decide whether they wish to read further. It serves as a brief review of the paper's contents and contributions. Make it clear and concise. Use full sentences and avoid references and technicalities. It should be about half a page in length and separate from the rest of your paper. The abstract is not part of the page count. **At the end of the abstract, you should include 5–6 important keywords and/or phrases**

Introduction

The introductory section should provide a bridge from the abstract to the remaining discussion sections or the body of the paper. The first paragraph should be comprehensible to anyone interested in sustainability and CSR and should pinpoint the location of the subject matter. You should define/describe the questions and/or the topic that you will address. By defining and establishing the objectives of your paper in the introductory section, you clarify the goal and set the direction for the rest of the paper. At the end of this section, it is essential to indicate the scope of your paper, define the audience and describe the organization of your paper so that the readers know what to expect.

Research (Questions 1-5)

This is the main part of your assignment where you present the findings of your research. You may use the research questions (1 through 5) as the basis to structure this part. Your description of your research must be well-documented. Make liberal use of tables, figures, and diagrams, and include literature references appropriately. Be concise and informative.

Your Opinion/Viewpoint (Question 6)

This section should present your opinions and viewpoints on the research that you conducted. Describe any self-learning that took place. This and the earlier section should constitute the bulk of your research paper. This is essentially answering the last research question.

Conclusions

The conclusions section is placed at the end of the document, right before the bibliography. It concludes the paper by pointing out its major contributions and perhaps indicating interesting areas of research related to the paper's topic that have not been addressed by you, but deserve future investigation.

References/Bibliography

The conclusions are followed by a list of references (or bibliography) items. Please use the MLA Style.

It is expected that 5-10 references are adequate for this kind of assignment.

Notes on Plagiarism & Style

Please note that just listing the references at the end of the assignment is not adequate!

You should also provide proper (MLA style) and frequent **citations** throughout your text. Failing to do so will result in missing marks and possibly a plagiarism case. Also, please note that through Safe Assign it is extremely easy to see whether you have copied text (without proper citation) from web sources or from other students.

More information and help: <https://seneca.libguides.com/mla>

The following are examples of phrases that are signs of writing styles that are not appropriate for a research assignment:

1. *"I believe..."*: when used in any part other than the "Your Opinion/Viewpoints" part. A research assignment is based on your research findings rather than your beliefs.
2. *"Research shows..."*: when used without citations. What research? This is what a research assignment is all about!
3. *"CSR in Canada is adequate/non adequate..."*: when this is not supported by your research findings but only on your intuition or prior knowledge on the subject.

Grading Criteria

1. Abstract: 5 marks
2. Description of Sustainability: 10 marks
3. Main sustainability issues in Canada and Ontario: 10 marks
4. Relevant sustainability and CSR issues in Canada and Ontario: 15 marks
5. Canadian sustainability/CSR practice: 20 marks
6. Comparison of Canadian sustainability/CSR Practice with International Practice: 20 marks
7. Adequacy of Canadian sustainability/CSR Practice: 20 marks
8. (Potential Deductions) Presentation – Maximum 5 marks

This assignment is a total of 100 marks worth **25%** of your overall grade.

Late Submission Policy: 5% per 24hrs

Evaluation Rubric

	1 – Substandard	2 – Poor	3 – Fair	4 – Good	5 – Exceptional
Abstract (5 Marks)	Summary is incomplete and does not reflect content in body of report	Summary excludes key descriptive content and/or points of view from report	Summary is adequately reflective of report's content and is articulated well	Summary reflects reports descriptive and analytical content in a precise and concise manner	Summary reflects reports descriptive and analytical content precisely and concisely and stimulates reader to read full report
Description of Sustainability (10 marks)	Incomplete	Limited understanding of concepts	Complete, demonstrates basic understanding of concepts	Complete, thorough and from time to time, demonstrates depth of understanding	Complete, thorough and clearly demonstrates depth of understanding
Main sustainability issues in Canada and Ontario (10 Marks)	Analysis is limited. Demonstrates a very limited understanding of the issue.	Analysis is not convincing. Demonstrates a weak understanding of the issue.	Analysis is sufficiently reflective. Demonstrates an adequate understanding of the issue.	Analysis is clearly articulated and from time to time, persuasive with examples and evidence. Demonstrates a clear understanding of the issue.	Analysis is clearly articulated and expertly persuades with multiple examples and evidence in mind. Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the issue.
Relevant sustainability and CSR issues in Canada and Ontario (15 Marks)					
Canadian Sustainability/ CSR practice (20 Marks)					
Comparison of Canadian Sustainability/CSR Practice with International Practice					

(20 Marks)					
Adequacy of Canadian Sustainability/CSR Practice (20 Marks)	Analysis is limited and provides no improvement recommendations	Analysis is general, not providing clear evidence, and provides limited improvement recommendations	Analysis is sufficient, with some evidence, builds on some of the previous findings and provides improvement recommendations	Analysis is supported by clear evidence, builds on previous findings and provides specific improvement recommendations.	Analysis is very thorough with clear evidence that extensively build on previous findings, and provides multiple specific recommendations.
Subtotal					
Deductions: Presentation (5 marks)	Frequent spelling, grammar, punctuation or formatting errors that severely interfere with meaning/flow of ideas; no MLA citations	Multiple spelling, grammar, punctuation errors or formatting that interfere with meaning/flow in places; inappropriate or missing MLA citations.	Occasional spelling, grammar, punctuation or formatting errors; missing MLA citations	One or two typos, grammar, or punctuation errors; MLA citations appropriate.	No spelling, grammar or punctuation errors, MLA citations appropriate.
					Total Marks (100)