

CSR600 – Research Assignment: Sustainability/CSR in Canada

Due Dates

February 12th

Submission

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

Overall Grade

25% (Late Submission Policy: 5% per 24hr)

Assignment Overview

This is an **individual** assignment.

The Scenario

You are working for a Canadian company from **a sector of your choice** (agriculture, manufacturing, services, telecommunications etc.) based in Ontario. Jackie, who is the owner and CEO of the company was recently invited at a conference and heard a very inspiring talk on sustainability and how it was becoming the “new normal” for businesses in the 21st century. She would like her company to do more about it, but she is not entirely convinced that there is a business case and she is also afraid that this could be something very difficult.

Jackie remembered that you had some training on CSR and assigned you to research the matter further. She asked you to prepare a short research report on what sustainability is and how it relates to your company, so that she can decide whether to further pursue the matter.

The Content

After some thought you decide that your research report should answer the following questions so that Jackie can make an informed decision:

1. What is sustainability and CSR?
2. What are the **main sustainability issues** that Canada and Ontario in particular are facing today? Use the UN SDGs to structure these issues.
3. Which of those sustainability challenges are most **relevant to businesses in your sector** in Canada and Ontario? Why are they relevant?
4. What are **Canadian businesses in your sector** doing to manage those challenges? What are some **best practice examples** that are being implemented?
5. Based on the above, would you recommend that the company in your sector do something about sustainability? Why?

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

- **Company:** You should choose a **specific real or fictional company** from the sector of your choice.
- **Audience:** Remember that your audience is Jackie from the scenario. Not the professor. You should explicitly address it to her as if you are working in the company of your choice.
- **Question 1:** When referring to the sustainability challenges **you should use the UN Sustainable Development Goals to frame your findings**, unless you want to use another sustainability framework (e.g. ISO 26000).
- **Question 4:** When mentioning best practice examples, you should focus on what **specific 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 **4-5 single-spaced pages** to adequately discuss this topic. **Please do not exceed 5 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 [1/2 page]

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.

Keywords

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 1-4)

This is the main part of your assignment where you present the findings of your research. You may use the research questions (1 through 4) 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 Recommendation (Question 5)

This section should present your opinions and viewpoints on the research that you conducted. This and the earlier section should constitute the bulk of your research paper. This is essentially answering the last research question.

References/Bibliography

The conclusions are followed by a list of references (or bibliography) items.

You should use:

- The **MLA Style** to format your references **AND** in-text citations.
- At least **1 peer-reviewed research article** in your research.

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 & Keywords: 5 marks
2. Description of Sustainability/CSR: 15 marks
3. Main sustainability issues in Canada and Ontario and relation to SDGs: 20 marks

4. Relevant sustainability and CSR issues in Canada and Ontario: 15 marks
5. Canadian sustainability/CSR best practices: 25 marks
6. Recommendations: 20 marks
7. (Potential Deductions) Presentation – Maximum 5 marks

