

## MBA P715 - Entrepreneurship Winter 2026 Course Outline

### Strategic Management Area DeGroote School of Business McMaster University

#### COURSE OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this course is to explore practical applications of entrepreneurship to small business management. Case studies are used to give practice in analyzing opportunities and implementing entrepreneurial actions. In the first few weeks, the course tries:

- 1) To establish the business plan as one of the key success factors in starting a small business; and
- 2) To provide some basic marketing and financial tools to assess the business environment and help develop a business plan.

Later in the term, different forms of small business ownership will be explored. We will also discuss the differences between start-up for a franchise and an individually generated idea.

#### INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Section 1: Mon. 2:30 to 5:20 pm**  
**Marvin Ryder**  
 Office: DSB 215  
 Associate Professor of Marketing and  
 Entrepreneurship

**Course Prerequisite:** A600, F600, and  
 M600, **OR** Completion of Level 1  
[ryderm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ryderm@mcmaster.ca)  
 Tel: (905) 525-9140 x23997  
 Class Location: RJC/236  
 Teaching Assistant: TBA

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

With three-quarters of the new jobs created in the Canadian economy coming from small business, the particular problems and experiences encountered in starting and developing new enterprises are clearly worth studying. Using case studies, lectures and visits from local entrepreneurs, students will develop an appreciation of the challenges and rewards that come

#### COURSE ELEMENTS

AVENUE:	Yes	Leadership:	No	IT skills:	No	Global view:	No
Participation:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	Yes	Written skills:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Group Work:	Yes	Oral skills:	Yes
Experiential:	Yes	Guest speaker(s):	Yes	Final Exam:	No	Credit Value:	3

from starting a small business. A cornerstone of the course is the development, by a group, of a detailed business plan examining the finance, marketing, production, logistic and strategic implications of starting a potential new business. Ideally, this course is designed for the individual who has a business idea but has not yet had the time or direction to see if there is a true business opportunity behind the idea.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- Write, critique, and refine a business plan;
- Better weigh the risks and rewards of starting a new business venture;
- Personally assess their potential for becoming entrepreneurs;
- Understand the entrepreneurial mindset and how best to work with entrepreneurs; and
- Understand the risks in growing a business from an entrepreneur-run business to one with the entrepreneur as a manager.

## REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

CASE COLLECTION DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION

LEARNING ACTIVITIES	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
Live Case Discussions	Synchronous	Live discussion of case studies assigned by the professor	In-Class
Live Lectures	Synchronous	Live lectures on topics to support either case development or the course project	In-Class
Readings	Asynchronous	Students will read and prepare cases for in-class discussions	Case Collection
Guest Speakers	Synchronous	Two panels of guests – one group who support entrepreneurs and the other group actual entrepreneurs from the community	In-Class
Group Work	Asynchronous	Work in groups to complete two written case analyses, one twenty minute final oral presentation, one ten minute interim presentation (oral), and a final business plan.	At each group's discretion

EVALUATIONS	WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participation and Class Contribution</b>	20%	Determined during case discussions.
<b>Individual Case Analysis</b>	25%	One formal written analysis of assigned case discussion – maximum ten pages of text
<b>Group Business Plan</b>	35%	Formal written document created to launch a new business in the community – understands the risks and rewards of opening the business and may be used to attract needed debt or equity capital
<b>Group Interim Business Plan</b>	10%	First four sections of business plan completed along with possible data to complete the rest of the document submitted halfway through the term
<b>Group Oral Presentation of Final Business Plan</b>	10%	Twenty minute group PowerPoint presentation delivered by all group members – In-class

### GRADE CONVERSION

In this course, your cases may be graded using different marking and reporting techniques. For example, cases may be graded on an index of 10. This does not mean that 5/10 represents 50%. Similarly, when percentages are reported, they should not be interpreted as letter grades. Please note, then, that when your work is returned after grading, you will be informed regarding how your performance should be interpreted for that particular item.

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	LETTER GRADE	PERCENT
A+	90 to 100	B+	75 to 79
A	85 to 89	B	70 to 74
A-	80 to 84	B-	60 to 69
F	0 to 59		

### PARTICIPATION AND CLASS CONTRIBUTION

This refers to the spoken comments that you make in class **during the case discussions**. It is my belief that highly interactive environments are the breeding grounds for excellence in stimulating idea generation, enhancing communication skills, improving analytical processes, fostering collaborative networks, and testing assumptions. This is also the time and place to develop the assertiveness and communication skills that are necessary for success in business. Consequently, I value and reward contribution. It is imperative that you prepare for every case. Class participation marks are determined based on actual verbal contribution to the discussion. In general, verbal contributions are evaluated on a three point scale: 1) no significant contribution; 2) some contribution; and 3) good contribution. The contribution is a combination of the quality as well as the quantity of participation. Debate and challenge are important activities that help in

the learning process and the willingness of individuals to engage in such activities with their classmates is critical. **There are no participation marks awarded for attendance.**

During the term students should consult the professor about their level and quality of participation. Interim contribution marks will be posted about half way through the course. Contact me **then** if your mark is low, or well before if you are concerned that it **will** be low. There are ways I can help you to participate more effectively.

## **GROUP WORK**

You will form groups of **three or four** people. Each group is responsible for completing an interim and final Business Plan and for making an in-class presentation of the final plan.

For in-class presentations, all group members will take a turn at speaking to the class. Use of PowerPoint is mandatory. Choose your fellow group members wisely. **All group members will be assigned identical grades for group work.**

## **GUIDE TO WRITTEN CASE REPORT – 25% – DUE FEBRUARY 9, 2026**

**Title Page:** Identify the case, the course, the person submitting the analysis, and their student number.

**Table of Contents:** Provide a detailed listing of section titles, tables, exhibits and appendices.

**Problem:** State the main issues of the case, omitting descriptive details. Distinguish between the issues as seen by the actors in the case and additional theoretical or practical issues perceived by you.

**Context:** Subdivide into sections and subsections as appropriate.

*Internal Analysis:* This is a listing of the company's (or potential company's) key strengths and weaknesses. They are internal to the company and directly controllable by the entrepreneur. Each strength or weakness should consist of a statement and then the implication. This answers the question – “So what?” – and gives the characteristic meaning in terms of the company or the problem.

Use one sub-heading for “Strengths” and one for “Weaknesses.” You may also find that several characteristics can be grouped. For instance you might want to suggest that a firm is innovative because: 1) it launches one new product per year; 2) it invests in new technology to streamline operations; and 3) invests heavily in research and development. These are not three separate strengths but three aspects of one strength. **Be sure to conclude this section with a summary statement (include justification) telling the reader if you see the company as stronger or weaker.**

*External Analysis:* This is a listing of the key opportunities and threats in the environment. They are external to the company or potential company and are not completely controllable. They may be trends to be embraced or exploited but they may also be trends which could hurt the company or its products/services. Use the same

format here as you used for the Internal Analysis (i.e., one sub-heading for “Opportunities” and one for “Threats). Remember to both identify the opportunity or threat and then the implication of this fact for the firm or problem. NOTE: If you find yourself writing, “The company has the opportunity to ....”, you have identified an alternative not an opportunity. If the company can control the characteristic, it is not part of the external analysis.

**Be sure to conclude this section with a summary statement (include justification) telling the reader if you see the environment as more threatening or opportunistic.**

Alternatives: Use one subsection for each alternative presented. The correct number of alternatives might be suggested by the case. Other cases are more open-ended and the group could generate a near infinite list of alternatives. As a rule of thumb consider no less than three alternative courses of action for the company or potential company and certainly no more than five.

Analysis should consist of stating a prospective strategy and an analysis of its pros and cons. The analysis should focus on the strategy’s ability to repair weaknesses, mitigate threats, build on strengths, or exploit opportunities facing the company. Be clear and concise. Where possible consider the financial implications of the strategy. You are writing a business report – not an essay.

Recommendation and Implementation: Always conclude a case report with specific recommendations for the future. Conceivably, you might recommend a combination of alternatives to cover shorter and longer planning horizons. Justify your choice by saying why you rejected the other alternatives. Do not name a strategy here that was not described and evaluated in the previous section. Implementation is the action plan (when and what) that puts the recommended strategy into effect. It flows directly from the chosen strategy but should overlap it very little. This is not a restatement of your recommended strategy. It probably will help to create a timeline with defined steps/stages.

Bibliography: Necessary only if sources other than the case text or your own analysis are used.

Appendices: Place for long tables, complicated calculations, less important graphs, etc.

Length : Maximum length of ten double-spaced pages (not including the Title Page, Table of Contents, Bibliography and Appendices).

Timing: Case assignments will be accepted for grading only on or before the assigned due date.

<b>TEMPLATE FOR COURSE PROJECT: THE BUSINESS PLAN</b>
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Each group of students will develop a plan to launch a new business that creates, **at a minimum, fulltime employment for one person.** While sometimes I have one or two entrepreneurs who would like to work with a group to complete a business plan, almost all groups will develop an

internally generated idea into a business plan. Pure service-based businesses (such as a consulting firm) should not be the subject of a business plan. Another constraint is that the business must not be a “non-profit organization.” I know that these groups need plans completed but their unique character makes evaluating and developing a plan for a non-profit organization much more difficult. To be clear, you are NOT creating a business plan for a “side hustle” – something to make a supplementary income while pursuing full-time employment. If you need further clarification, please see me.

By **Monday, January 26**, you should have a tentative business description (and contact if applicable). By completing the last page of this outline and submitting it to me, I will approve the project. By no later than **Monday, March 2**, I want an Interim Business Plan. The completed, bound business plan is due on **Monday, April 13, 2026** by the close of business (5:30 p.m.).

### **Writing a Business Plan**

The Business Plan is a written summary of the overall activities of the business enterprise. Its creation forces management to separate achievable objectives from “pie-in-the-sky” conjecture. Detail is important here. Typically, entrepreneurs create business plans in which some sections are very detailed (i.e., the entrepreneur had given the material a lot of thought) while other, equally important, sections have little detail. You must not fall into this trap. The audience for a business plan is either a banker or a venture capitalist. These people thrive on details - who specifically is the competition? where specifically will the business operate? specifically how many staff will be employed? what specifically are the products? how specifically will the cash required be used?

A well prepared business plan:

- \* Exposes management to the whole planning, budgeting, forecasting and reporting process, its method and its merits;
- \* Induces realism in the founders. When they are forced to sit down and really study and quantify the cost-volume-profit relationship, they frequently discover their own optimism;
- \* Identifies customers, competitors, marketing strategy, and conditions needed for success;
- \* Provides the budget and break-even point which will be a useful barometer for an assessment of project feasibility and attainment;
- \* Allows investigations of deviations from plan before conditions become irreparable;
- \* Discloses timing and the amount of sources and uses of funds (especially the timing of capital expenditures and the need for working capital) and the need for short-term bank borrowing; and
- \* Provides a measure of anticipated return on investment.

**General Structure** - While your actual structure will depend on type of business to be started, use this as the required outline for your business plan.

*Executive Summary* - one to two pages

*Table of Contents* - with page numbers and contents of appendices identified

*Service/Market Description (Product/Market Description)* - one page

For the Product or Service description make sure it is thorough and complete. It sometimes helps to define the offering by talking about products or services not being offered. For the market, describe customers in demographic, geographic and psychographic terms - Why do people want these products or services? Include a map of the trading area of the business. For an e-business one might add why customers want to acquire these products or services in this manner rather than from another traditional delivery medium.

*Entrepreneur Profile* - half page

Begin by describing the form of ownership (sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation), percentage ownerships, and the initial cash investment (equity) planned. The key here is to explain how the entrepreneur brings value to the venture. Build both their general business credibility and credibility specific to this venture. For example, the entrepreneur might imagine a web site selling cheese to the world but if s/he doesn't make cheese, what value is s/he bringing to the venture?

*Basis of Competitive Advantage* - half page

Answer the question - why are people buying from this business rather than a competitor? Most likely an organization only has one or two true competitive advantages which it can use to defeat the competition. A person reading the plan will try to determine whether these advantages truly are significant and sustainable.

*Business and Personal Objectives* - Quantitative

- Qualitative - half page for both

Probably no more than five major objectives. All objectives should be connected to a time frame and most should be measurable. While some can be qualitative, I recommend starting with **specific and measurable sales and profit objectives for the first three years**. These allow the entrepreneur to determine if the business can truly be successful. The personal objectives may tell a funder something about the commitment of the owner (for instance, the goal might be to do an IPO in five years – that is different than starting the business and keeping it small).

*Market Analysis*

*Customers* - Justify potential demand using secondary (historical) data. This is a major section of the plan and allows the writers to present their major evidence. This could include results of published marketing research, general trends identified through secondary data, reports from industry insiders, etc. You will estimate demand using a “top-down” approach. You start with a target population and then reduce that number based on market statistics to show that there are *X* number of consumers who want this product or service (with *X* normally being a very large number). An implication is that there are so many consumers this business cannot fail. For instance, start with the population of Canada and then reduce that number for adults between 21 and 65, and then reduce it for the number with access to computers, and then

reduce it for people with the target income, and then reduce it for the percentage engaged in a specific activity, etc.

One might also present environmental trends in the top-down analysis. Is anything going on in the environment (technology, political/legal, social/cultural, and economic) which affects customers or, more importantly, is affecting their buying habits? If so, what impact will this have on the business?

At the end of this section, a reader should be convinced that a big market exists for the product or service and that this venture is the logical victor in any battle for customers.

*Competition* - Primary Competitors and Secondary Competitors (no more than four of each with a half page to discuss each one)  
- In addition provide a summary table/chart  
- Identify location, number of employees, age of business, annual revenue, its target market, any key marketing tactics, brands of products/services offered, competitive advantage

Who specifically are the most likely competitors? What is happening in these companies? Are they growing or shrinking? Getting more aggressive or less? What is each primary competitor's competitive advantage?

This is another major section. The reader will evaluate whether any key competitors were overlooked. The detail presented is also critical. One cannot simply acknowledge a competitor but one must demonstrate strategic knowledge of its action. At the end of reading this section, the reader should be convinced that the new company has a sustainable competitive advantage that will lead to success over its competition.

### *Marketing Strategy*

Distribution - hours of service, physical location, layout of space, rent, etc.

Pricing and Profit Margins – how can people pay for products/services, typical mark-ups and average Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) percentage

Promotion, Advertising and Selling Tactics - **specific** details for the first three years. Include social media and website. End with three-year promotional budget.

This section addresses some specific tactics to meet objectives. How will consumers become aware of the new business? How will they be convinced to try the services or products offered? What pricing strategies will be followed? How will products or services be distributed?

### *Manufacturing Analysis or Supplier Analysis (if applicable)* - one to two pages

This is an optional section if the company is selling physical goods. How will inventory be generated? If production is being sub-contracted, explain the deals in place and



back-up plans in case of failure. If one is retailing goods, talk about major suppliers, their quality assurances, billing practices, the order cycle, etc. Why has a certain supplier been chosen? What is the history of the supplier? Should some of this involve international trade, here is a good place to talk about currency challenges as well as customs barriers.

*Information Technology Analysis (if applicable)* - one to two pages

This is an optional section most applicable for an e-business. There should be a description of the technology being installed. This shouldn't be too detailed but it should assure the reader about processes for hot back-ups in case of failure, handling of peak demand (say at Christmas time), what a web site will or won't do, key technology partners, etc.

*Organization Structure and Personnel Requirements* - include a chart and brief job descriptions - one page

What staff are needed? Who has committed to the project and what openings remain to be filled? In the entrepreneur's mind, what positions are critical for success? For each box in the organizational chart, define the responsibilities, qualifications, and pay rate for that person. If a position is to be added after start-up but within a three year time horizon, use a dotted or dashed outline for the box. The reader will look to see that appropriate skill sets are present and levels of compensation appear appropriate. The reader will also look for a match with the entrepreneur's skills/talents.

*Present Situation and Start-Up Requirements* - half page

Right now, where is the business - glint in the eye or a month from launch? Clearly the closer to reality, the greater the likelihood of funding. To write this section, start by defining a target opening date. Work backward to define three to five steps to get from now to then. If a step has costs, list them and how they will be financed. Start-up requirements address the question of what is needed to get the business from where it is now to being open in the manner envisioned by the entrepreneur.

*Financial Projections*

- Assumptions
- Three Year Income Statements (Most Likely Scenario) Showing Return on Investment
- Quarterly Cash Flow Projections for Year 1
- Proforma Balance Sheet at end of Year 1
- Break-even Analysis
- Sensitivity Analysis on Three Year Income Statements - Pessimistic and Optimistic Scenarios - state any new/altered assumptions

Placing this last does not mean this is unimportant. Many readers won't even bother looking at financial projections if they aren't convinced that the business is likely offering quality products to a group of consumers who can't wait to buy. The reason for this is simple - projections can be made to show anything. A look at the business plan of an unsuccessful business does not show financial projections awash in red ink!

Normally this section begins with a list of key assumptions affecting the projections. This is followed by a three year income statement reflecting what the entrepreneur thinks is the most likely operating scenario for the business. This is followed by quarterly cash flow projections. A common mistake of many entrepreneurs is not being able to distinguish between cash flows and profits. Many profitable businesses are strangled by poor cash flows (especially if they are growing quickly).

Typically, this is followed by a pro forma balance sheet (usually created for the year end of the first operating year projected in the income statements). This is then followed by a break-even analysis for the first year. Finally, there is some sensitivity analysis on the income statements usually demonstrating a pessimistic and optimistic scenario. Not only do these serve to paint the best and worst case that the entrepreneur can foresee but they also show the reader the effect of key variables on the business.

### **Interim Business Plan**

On **Monday, March 2, 2026**, I will be receiving your interim business plan. The first four sections (i.e., Product (Service)/Market Description, Entrepreneur Profile, Basis of Competitive Advantage, and Business/Personal Objectives) should be complete. You should list the headings for the remaining sections and highlight the types of information you have gathered and have yet to gather. For instance, identify the names and addresses of key competitors. Show secondary data in support of your business model. You should list the titles of the two optional sections and tell me whether you think they apply to your plan. At this point, I am not expecting any financial analysis. This plan gives me a chance to add input about missing information and additional sources to be contacted.

### **Thoughts for the Final Business Plan Submission**

A major problem of business plans has been a lack of “specifics.” For instance, in analyzing competition, some people merely mention a company name and store location. A full discussion of the competition includes their strategies, product lines, whether they are growing or declining, and how they will have an impact upon the entrepreneur’s business. To give a second example, one entrepreneur intended to develop a new product. While she had a name for it, she did not list its features. She mentioned that its construction would be sub-contracted but never indicated what company would do the manufacturing for her and why this company was chosen.

The best business plans are not a simple academic exercise but read as if a real business would be started from this blueprint. *I will be keeping your submitted business plan for my records. You may wish to save extra copies for each group member but you should keep in mind that these copies must be kept confidential so that no harm can come to the entrepreneur.*

<b>COURSE SCHEDULE</b>
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WEEK	DATE	MATERIAL COVERED
1	Mon. Jan. 5	Course Introduction Defining Entrepreneurship
2	Mon. Jan. 12	Entrepreneurial Traits Case: <i>Jane Smith (A)</i>
3	Mon. Jan. 19	The Business Plan Case: <i>Dorothy's Little Women</i>
4	Mon. Jan. 26	Developing the Nuts and Bolts Case: <i>Kolapore Inc.</i> <b>DUE: Project Description Sheet</b>
5	Mon. Feb. 2	Marketing for Small Business Case: <i>The Fit Stop</i>
6	Mon. Feb. 9	<i>Support for Small Business Forum</i> Guest Lecture: Government, Lawyer, Banker Case: <i>Strategic Adventure Park</i> – <b>Hand-in Case – DUE: In-class</b>
		<b>Study Break – February 16 to 20, 2026</b>
7	Mon. Feb. 23	Financial Ratios and Valuation of a Business Case: <i>Industrial Equipment Inc.</i>
8	Mon. Mar. 2	Franchising or Growing the Small Business Case: <i>Beano's Ice Cream Shoppe</i> <b>DUE: Interim Business Plan</b>
9	Mon. Mar. 9	<i>Entrepreneur's Forum</i> Guest Lecture: <i>Three Entrepreneurs from the Community</i> Case: <i>Black Water Rafting</i>
10	Mon. Mar. 16	Entrepreneurial Ethics Case: <i>Johannson and Associates</i>
11	Mon. Mar. 23	Thoughts on Business Failure Case: <i>MacDonald Flooring Co.</i>
12	Mon. Mar. 30	Group Presentations – Business Plans
13	Mon. Apr. 6	Group Presentations – Business Plans

***Business Plans Due: Monday, April 13, 2026***

## **SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR CASES**

### Jane Smith (A)

1. Is Jane Smith an entrepreneur? Can she become an entrepreneur?
2. What more should Jane do to determine her entrepreneurial potential?
3. Try to use the same evaluation process on yourself? Are you an entrepreneur?

### Dorothy's Little Women

1. Make an annual sales estimate of the women's petite clothing market for Hamilton. What might Dorothy's market share be?
2. What non-quantitative considerations should enter this analysis?
3. Prepare a quick income statement and calculate R.O.I. for the first year of operation.
4. What would you recommend to Dorothy?

### Kolapore Inc.

1. What are the problems facing Kolapore?
2. Does the company have any value?
3. What strategy has been followed and are there viable alternatives to this strategy?
4. Could you make a profit with this business on a part-time or a full-time basis?
5. As Adrian Demmers, what is your decision regarding Kolapore?

### The Fit Stop

1. Assess Karim's success as an entrepreneur.
2. What are the most pressing issues faced by the health club?
3. Should the club grow and, if so, how? Assess the options facing Karim and make a recommendation.
- 4.

### Strategic Adventure Park

1. What went wrong? What was unrealistic about the original plan?
2. What are the chances of a second season being sufficiently profitable to justify continuing to operate the company?
3. Outline a plan for the upcoming season should the owners decide to continue in business.

### Industrial Equipment Inc.

1. Should Jim Costello again attempt to purchase Hines Equipment from his father-in-law?
2. What should he offer for the business? Specifically, what is the maximum price he should be willing to pay?
3. What changes to the business would you make following acquisition?

### Beano's Ice Cream Shoppe

1. What are the operating characteristics of this business? Why is a franchise attractive?
2. Should Smith and Harris become partners in this venture?
3. Should Smith give up a secure job paying \$60,000 per year for a Beano's franchise? Are there other opportunities available to him?

Black Water Rafting

1. Why has Black Water Rafting been successful?
2. What issues could impact on future operations of the business?
3. What should Ash and Chandler do?

Johannson and Associates

1. Imagine one could “pause” the interview half way through. Any problems with what you have heard? Would you walk out?
2. Imagine the interview is complete. Any problems with the marketing research being proposed to you? Would you do the work?
3. If you chose to not take the project, would you alert any colleagues about the project?

MacDonald Flooring Company – Assume you are acting from George London’s position

1. Use ratio analysis to identify problems. What is your assessment of the company’s risks?
2. Assess the quality of the company’s inventory and receivables as security for the bank.
3. Assess the alternatives set out in the case.

<b>COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK</b>
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Students who are uncomfortable directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may choose to send a confidential and anonymous e-mail to the Area Chair Dr. Nick Bontis (nbontis@mcmaster.ca) or the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies and Research).

<http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/contact-anonymous/>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TA’s directly via e-mail must send messages that **originate from their official McMaster University e-mail account**. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. **E-mails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.**

The instructor will conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery. The instructor will provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

<b>ACADEMIC INTEGRITY</b>
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You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results in or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the *Academic Integrity Policy* located at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained;
2. Improper collaboration in group work; and
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Students are responsible for being aware of and demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work. Such behaviour includes:

- Following the expectations articulated by instructors for referencing sources of information and for group work;
- Asking for clarification of expectations as necessary;
- Identifying testing situations that may allow copying;
- Preventing their work from being used by others (e.g., protecting access to computer files); and
- Adhering to the principles of academic integrity when conducting and reporting research.

## **MISSED ACADEMIC WORK**

### *Missed Mid-Term Examinations / Tests / Class Participation*

Please do not use the online McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) as this is for Undergraduate students only. The MBA program will not accept an MSAF.

When students miss regularly scheduled term work which contributes 10% or more to the final grade, for legitimate reasons as determined by the DSB Student Services – Academic Office (DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office)), the activity necessary to compensate for the missed work will be determined by the course instructor. The compensatory activities assigned will vary with the nature of the course and the missed requirement. They include, but are not restricted to, an alternative assignment, a rescheduled midterm exam, or re-weighting the marks for the missed component to other mark components. Documentation explaining such missed work must be provided to the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) within five (5) working days of the scheduled date for completion of the work.

Acceptable reasons for missed work, along with the [Petition for Missed Term Work](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#), can be found on the DeGroote MBA Student website ([mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca](http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca)). Please direct any questions about acceptable documentation to the MBA Academic Advisors ([askmba@mcmaster.ca](mailto:askmba@mcmaster.ca)).

University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) Petition for Missed Term Work per academic year, after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

If term work is missed without an approved reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

### **Missed Final Examinations**

Students must be available for the duration of the posted exam period regardless of their personal exam schedule. This is to ensure student availability throughout the entire exam period in the event that an exam must be rescheduled due to unforeseen circumstances (university closure, power outage, storm policy, etc.). A student who misses a final examination without valid reason will receive a mark of 0 on the examination.

Students who have missed a final exam for a valid reason can apply to the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) to write a deferred examination by submitting an [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) with supporting documentation. The application must be made within five days of the scheduled exam.

The [Application for Deferring a Final Exam](#) and the [MBA Student McMaster University Student Health Certificate](#) can be found on the DeGroote MBA Current Student website ([mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca](http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca))

Deferred examination privileges, if granted, are normally satisfied during the examination period at the end of the following semester. In select cases, the deferred examination may be written at a time facilitated by the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) (DSB Student Services Academic Office) and agreed to by the course instructor.

Requests for a second deferral or rescheduling of a deferred examination will not be considered.

### **COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT**

This course may use on-line elements (e.g., e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), web pages, Zoom, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **EXPECTATIONS ON STUDENT CONDUCT**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions with all of our living, learning, and working communities. These expectations are described in the [\*\*Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities\*\*](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, *whether in person or online*.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect,

disrupt, or interfere with University functions on online platforms (e.g., use of Avenue to Learn, Zoom, etc.) will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

## ATTENDANCE

Arriving late or missing class disrupts the learning experience for both you and your peers. Punctuality and attendance are crucial to maintaining a respectful, professional, and productive environment for everyone, including the faculty.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS, OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

A student who requires academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous, or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the **RISO** policy. A student should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of the term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation **OR** to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. A student should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests. A student who requires accommodations to meet a religious obligation or to celebrate an important religious holiday must make their requests **as early as possible**. If you need **scheduled health care** (e.g., rehabilitation after an accident or wisdom teeth removed), do not schedule it opposite a class and then seek accommodation. A student should not design their class schedule to **create a conflict between two courses**. If they do, an instructor is not obligated to provide any accommodation.

## COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, discussions, presentations, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary and analytical work, **including** lectures and discussions by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, discussions, presentations, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## COURSE EVALUATIONS

About the eleventh week of the course, a formal evaluation of the instructor and the course will be conducted by the Michael G. DeGroote School of Business. All students are expected to participate in this evaluation as your answers will be used to help change the course structure and your evaluation of the instructor will be used in permanence, promotion and merit pay decisions.



## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

### *Use of Test Accommodations at McMaster University Burlington Campus Ron Joyce Centre*

Whereas Student Accessibility Services (SAS), on Main Campus, determines all MBA student accommodations, the MBA Faculty Office manages the coordination of accommodations for tests, midterms, and exams at the Ron Joyce Centre in Burlington.

### **Process for Students**

- SAS will now be using our online system, MySAS Portal, for graduate students to share accommodation letters with their Instructors and their Faculty/Program. Students will be responsible to activate their accommodations on a term-by-term basis and the approved accommodation letter will be directly sent to the Instructor.
- Students must engage the DSSAO (DSB Student Services Academic Office) to implement their accommodation(s) (e.g., extra-time, memory aid, etc.) for each upcoming test, midterm, or exam, at least two weeks in advance. Students can do this by emailing DeGroote MBA SAS scheduling office at DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca. If a student cannot meet this deadline, they should contact DSBSAS@mcmaster.ca to discuss alternative arrangements. The program is committed to exploring flexibilities where possible to support students.
- All tests, midterms, and exams are booked synchronously with the class's start time. Any deviations from the start time (e.g. start earlier than the class to enable completion at the same end time) requires a discussion with their instructor on protocol at the time of accommodation activation.
- Students will leverage the accommodation (e.g., extra-time, memory aid, etc.), in a designated testing room. Rooms will be booked according to the student's SAS accommodation. Unless the accommodation states otherwise, students should expect that they will be writing in a room with other students. One or more invigilators will always be in the room.
- Following the request to implement the accommodation(s), dsbsas@mcmaster.ca will reach out to the student with their test, midterm, or exam details, including the date, time,

and room number. As there may be other students writing tests in the room, we ask that students enter the room quietly and leave all personal items at the front of the room.

All policies and procedures, including restroom access, how extra-time is allocated for assessments under Universal Design, and the submission of memory aids in advance, are consistent with those of SAS on Main Campus. The only variance in procedure is communication around, and physical location of, assessment. There is not a dedicated testing space at RJC. Existing classrooms and lecture halls will be used for most testing. All SAS-approved accommodations will be honoured by our staff; however, core testing elements are not eliminated in alternative testing formats. Students should expect and plan for invigilation, incidental noise, and other potential distractions.

### **EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES**

The instructor and university reserve the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Reasonable notice will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn, and/or McMaster e-mail. It is the responsibility of the student to check these channels regularly during the term and to note any changes.

### **USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (LIKE CHATGPT)**

Students are not permitted to use Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this course. In alignment with [McMaster academic integrity policy](#), it “shall be an offence knowingly to ... submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source.” This includes work created by generative AI tools. Also stated in the policy is the following, “Contract Cheating is the act of “outsourcing of student work to third parties” (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016, p. 639) with or without payment.” Using Generative AI tools is a form of contract cheating. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward to the Office of Academic Integrity.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES**

Your registration and continuous participation in the various learning activities of MBA P715 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during classes. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

**MBA P715 - ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

GROUP #:

(To be assigned by Instructor)

(Please complete by **no later than** Monday, January 26, 2026)

**GROUP LEADER:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**GROUP MEMBER**

**E-MAIL ADDRESS**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. \_\_\_\_\_

- A) Briefly describe the product or service at the heart of the proposed business. Please note that your business cannot operate in either the “not-for-profit” sector or “pure service” sector.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- B) Briefly describe the market for the product or service (size, types of competition, etc.).

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- C) Please list the name, phone number, & e-mail address of your project client – if external.

\_\_\_\_\_