

**X-CULTURE
Student Instructions
October-November 2013**

Pre-Project Training and Readiness Test

Three days before the project start, you will receive an email with your personalized link to the X-Culture Readiness Test, which you must successfully pass to participate in X-Culture. To prepare for the test, please start with this short [Video Introduction](#) to X-Culture and then review the [Pre-Project Training Module](#).

Only students who successfully pass the Readiness Test will be allowed to participate in the project (100% questions answered, minimum 80% correct).

Team: You will be working with students from other countries in a global virtual team (GVT) over the period of two months. The names and contacts of your team members will be emailed to you on the day of the project start upon your successful completion of the readiness test. The teams are formed on a random basis and students cannot select their teammates.

Task: Your team will be developing an economically viable international business proposal for a company of your team's choice. The details of the proposal must be provided in a team report following the outline provided below.

X-Culture Business Partners: Please note, several companies have partnered with X-Culture and submitted their real-life challenges that they need help with. As an alternative to the generic task described here, your team can choose a real-life challenge described by one of our business partners. Follow [this link to the list of real-life challenges](#) presented by X-Culture partner companies. There are advantages to choosing a real-life challenge. First, your ideas will be reviewed and possibly implemented by our corporate partners. Second, if you impress them, in addition to the X-Culture certificate you may get an additional reward from the company. If you choose to work on a real-life challenge, please keep in mind that once the reports are submitted, all ideas presented in the reports become property of the company.

Report Outline for the Generic Task (see [this link for real-life challenges report instructions](#)):

1. **Title page:** Please use [this template for your title page](#).
2. **Executive Summary:** Provide a short summary of the key points of your report. (0.5-1 page)
Please make certain to include a brief summary of the following:
 - organization (1-3 lines)
 - product/service (2-4 lines)
 - key market characteristics needed for the product/service to be successful (2-5 lines)
 - suggested market and its basic characteristics (3-7 lines)
 - market entry mode (1-3 lines)
 - staffing strategy (1-4 lines)
 - marketing strategy (1-5 lines)The Executive Summary can be provided as a bullet list or plain text.
3. **Organization:** Choose an organization that your team will be writing the report for. It can be any existing organization, big or small, as long as all team members agree on the choice. Ideally, it should be a company that may eventually be interested in pursuing your international business proposal. Your team doesn't have to inform the organization about your project, but if you have a way to contact the organization, feel free to do so. Also remember, you can choose to work on [real-life business challenges](#) presented by our corporate partners.
In your team report, describe the organization, provide a short overview of its history, products/services, key competitors, and strengths and weaknesses of your firm. Include a note on your organization's international operations, such as where the organization was founded, first foreign markets entered and current international presence (if applicable). (1-3 pages)
4. **Product/Service:** Describe your proposed new or existing product/service that has the potential to bring extra profits for your client. The proposed product/service can be something radically new or it can be an existing product that can be profitable in a new market. (1-3 pages)
5. **Market Opportunity Analysis:** Identify three or more key market success factors that are necessary in order for the proposed product/service to be successful (e.g., consumer income level, political stability, climate, availability of natural resources, Internet penetration, product distribution network, etc.). Identify three countries/regions that meet the identified success criteria. Compare the three countries/regions with respect to the product success criteria and select one country/region where the product is likely to be most profitable ([see an example here](#)).
The proposed markets must be outside the home country of your organization. (1-3 pages)
6. **Market Description:** For the country/region identified as the most promising market, provide the following information and explain how it is relevant in the context of your business proposal:

- a. Basic characteristics: Trends in population, area, urbanization rate, climate, natural resources and other relevant basic characteristics of the market. (0.5-1.5 pages)
- b. Economic Environment: Trends in economic development, including GDP/capita, and GDP growth rate, income level and distribution, size of labor force, education level of labor force, labor cost; major sectors of the economy, imports and exports, major trading partners and international trade regulations; inflation and currency exchange rates, ease of doing business, other relevant economic characteristics. (2-3 pages)
- c. Political and Legal Environment, Government: Political and legal systems, political risks, government policy toward trade and foreign direct investment, property rights and intellectual property protection, membership in regional political and trading blocks, corruption, freedom and other relevant indicators. (2-3 pages)
- d. Cultural Environment: Culture, predominant religion(s), language(s), social class structure, values and attitudes, customer preferences and tastes in the market, other relevant cultural characteristics. (2-3 pages)

Based on these analyses:

7. Entry mode: Suggest the most suitable market entry mode (e.g., licensing, franchising, joint venture with a local company, management contract, wholly-owned subsidiary, etc.). If you feel the product/service should be developed and/or distributed in a partnership with another company, provide additional details on how the partnership should be set up (contribution of each company, sharing of profits/losses, and how the partnership will be governed). Explain your suggestions. (1-3 pages)
8. Staffing: Outline how the development and distribution of the proposed product/service should be staffed (e.g., hire new personnel or use current employees; use locals, expatriates, or third-country nationals, outsource product development/distribution/branding, etc.) Provide additional details if you feel that the staffing choices should differ across positions, functions, or regions. Comment on expected staffing challenges. Explain your suggestions. (1-3 pages)
9. Marketing: Describe the marketing strategy for the product or service you recommend. Comment on expected marketing challenges (e.g., language and cultural differences, legal differences with respect to marketing, packaging, advertising, content information, etc.) and suggest solutions to these challenges. Simply suggesting marketing vehicles is not enough (e.g., advertise on Facebook) – provide all the necessary details and implementation guidelines. Explain your suggestions. (1-5 pages)
10. Appendices, references: It is strongly recommended that all tables, graphs and other information be incorporated directly into the body of the report. However, if needed, you may have appendixes at the end of the report. This final section should also contain references to the sources cited in the report. (up to 4 pages)

Report Formatting

Your team must collaboratively produce and submit *one* team report that addresses all questions listed above. The report should be 15 to 35 double-spaced pages, including the reference section and appendices with statistics, charts, maps etc.

Please format your report according to the following:

- Number all pages in your team report.
- Margins should be 2.5cm (one inch) at the top, bottom, and sides of the page.
- Font type should be 12-point Times New Roman throughout the report.
- Double-space all body text.
- Indent the first line of a new paragraph.
- The text should be left-aligned.
- In-text citations should include only the name of the author(s) and the date of the publication. Full references (author, year, title of the publication, volume, issue, page numbers, publisher; for website sources, use proper referencing for website addresses and include date of access – see APA style.) should be provided at the end of the report. APA reference style is required. Please consult <http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa> for additional guidelines.
- Wikipedia is an excellent resource to begin your research, but it is an inappropriate source to cite in your paper. Instead, you must find the source behind the Wikipedia entry and verify its accuracy.

Submitting Team Reports

We use a centralized electronic team report submission system. Each team must submit only **one** report. Select one team member who will electronically submit the report on behalf of the entire team.

To submit your team report (see [X-Culture Training Module](#) for more details):

Part 1. Create a TurnItIn account (time required: 60-90 seconds).

1. Go to www.turnitin.com.
2. Under the email box in the upper right corner, click on the link "Create Account".
3. On the next window, under the "Create a New Account" heading, click on the "Student" link.

4. Follow the directions on the New User page.
Class ID#:
 to submit the **preliminary draft** (deadline 7): [6763828](#)
 to submit the **final** report (deadline 8): [6763823](#)
Class enrollment password: [xculture](#)

Note: if you already have a TurnItIn account, simply log on using your “old” login information, click on the “Enroll in Class” tab on the top, and repeat step 4.

Part 2: Submitting the report (time required: 60-120 seconds)

5. Once the form is completed, you can log into your account. Your home page will list your classes, click on the one titled “X-Culture, 2013, Aug-Oct, Final Report” (or “X-Culture, 2013 Aug-Oct, Report Draft” if you are submitting the draft).
6. Click on the “Submit” button.
7. Choose Single File Upload.
8. For the title of your submission, enter your team number (e.g., 123, DO NOT add words such as “team” or “report”, the name of the file must only contain the number of your team).
9. Click on “browse” to locate the paper saved to your computer.
10. Click on the file and click “open”.
11. Click the “upload” button at the bottom.
12. Click “submit” to confirm your submission. Once the submission is finalized, you will see “Your submission was successful” on the top of the page.

Project Evaluation

Your performance will be evaluated based on the timely completion and quality of the following components:

1. All surveys and progress updates are completed on time, fully and thoughtfully. Please note, the online survey system automatically checks for random response pattern – students who just randomly click on answer options will be identified and disqualified from the project.
2. Quality of the team report as measured by
 - Quality of the Executive Summary (informative, summarizes key points);
 - Accuracy and thoroughness of the company analysis;
 - Economic feasibility and originality of the international business proposal;
 - Quality of the market opportunity analysis, including the feasibility of the success criteria;
 - Accuracy and thoroughness of the market analysis;
 - Feasibility of the suggested market entry mode and staffing policies;
 - Feasibility of the marketing strategy;
 - Quality of the arguments in support of the recommendations provided in the report (clarify, thoughtfulness, strength of the arguments – essentially how well you explain your decisions);
 - Proper use of relevant, reliable and legitimate external sources and references;
 - Clarity of presentation, formatting quality, readability, visual appeal, grammar;
 - Absence of plagiarism – TurnItIn automatically checks all reports for plagiarism and highlights sections of the report that have been copied from other sources without proper referencing.
3. Peer evaluations: At the end of the project each student will evaluate their teammates with respect to effort, commitment, intellectual contribution, and help writing the report and coordinating team efforts.

Plagiarism

Every team report will be *automatically* scanned with sophisticated software to detect plagiarism. Your team members and all instructors will see what parts of the report were plagiarized, even if it was only a sentence or two. See [X-Culture Training Module](#) for more details on what is plagiarism and how to properly site your sources.

Communication and Coordination:

It is up to the teams to decide on team leadership, communication mode, workload distribution and coordination. See [X-Culture Training Module](#) for information on useful virtual collaboration tools such as Google Docs, Google+, Dropbox, Facebook, Doodle and more. Your team can choose to use any or none of these tools, or any other online collaboration tools.

Awards

Participants who successfully complete the project will receive [X-Culture Global Collaboration Certificates](#).

High-resolution ready-to-print electronic certificates will be emailed to each participant individually. Participants can also order printed framed hard copies, mailed to individual students or entire class ([shipping and handling fees](#)).

Also, subject to funding availability and ability to transfer funds to the award recipients, up to three best teams will receive \$1,000 awards, and up to three instructors will receive \$300 Best Professor awards. We reserve the right to withhold the cash prizes in cases when payments cannot be made to the award recipients due to do logistics, legal, or ethical considerations.

Schedule	Task	Deadline*
	Deadline 1. Pre-project Readiness Test: Only students who review the X-Culture Training Module and successfully pass the X-Culture readiness test will be placed on teams. The test will include questions about the project and online collaboration tools, as well as your background. All questions must be answered. The software checks for random response patterns – surveys with random answers will be disqualified. <i>3 days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personalized link to the Readiness test.</i>	Oct 1
	Official start of the project, students placed on teams	Oct 2
	Deadline 2. Report on Establishing Contact with Teammates: By this date, you are expected to exchange at least a few messages with your teammates. If some teammates are not responding, you are expected to send at least three email reminders to them by this deadline. <i>3 days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personalized link to an online report on your progress with establishing contact with your teammates. Even if none of your teammates responds to your emails, you must still complete the online form – just say nobody is responding to your emails.</i>	Oct 5
	Deadline 3. Team Charter: We strongly recommend that before you start working on the business proposal, you get to know your team members (their interest, career aspirations, international experience, interesting background facts, etc.). It is also expected that by this date you discuss how your team will handle coordination, scheduling, workload distribution, and emergencies, including situations when one or more team members do not complete their work or submit work that contains plagiarism. The results of the discussion must be reported in the form of a Team Charter (see X-Culture Training Module for details). <i>3 days before the deadline, you will receive a link to an online survey that will evaluate how well you got to know your team members and ask for a copy of your Team Charter. Each team member will have to complete the form separately (the wording of the Team Charter submitted by different team members is expected to be the same).</i>	Oct 10
	Deadline 4. Agreed on Organization: By this date, your team must select an organization that you will be writing the international business proposal for. <i>3 days before the deadline, you will receive an email invitation to report what organization you chose as your client. Each team member will have to complete the form separately (all team members are expected to provide the same organization name).</i>	Oct 15
	Deadline 5. Agreed on Product and Market: By this date, your team must agree on the product you will be writing the business proposal for and country where the proposed product/service should be offered <i>3 days before the deadline, you will receive an email invitation with a personalized link to report your team's choice of product and market. Each team member will have to complete the form separately.</i>	Oct 20
	Deadline 6. Progress Report 1: 3 days before the deadline, each team member will receive an email with a personalized survey link to report what your team has been able to accomplish thus far.	Oct 30
	Deadline 7. Progress Report 2: 3 days before the deadline, each team member will receive an email with a personalized survey link to report what your team has been able to accomplish thus far.	Nov 10
	Deadline 8. Team Report DRAFT: By this date, one of the team members must submit an initial <i>draft</i> of your team report – only one submission per team, please! The report does NOT have to be fully finished by this date. <i>Please submit your report draft via TurnItIn using the instructions provided on pp. 2-3 of this document (Submitting Team Reports section).</i>	Nov 15
	Deadline 9. Team FINAL Report: by this date, one of the team members must submit the final copy of the report on behalf of the team – only one submission per team, please! <i>Please submit your report draft via TurnItIn using the instructions provided on page 3 of this document (Submitting Team Reports section).</i>	Nov 25
	Deadline 10. Post-project survey: To receive a grade for the project, you must complete the <i>Post-Project</i> survey. You will be asked to comment on your experiences and evaluate performance of your team members. Please note, all questions must be answered. The software checks for random response patterns – surveys with random answers will be disqualified. Peer evaluations will NOT be shared with your team member and will be seen only by the instructors. <i>5 days before this deadline, you will receive an email with a link to this survey.</i>	Nov 28

*All deadlines are set for 11:59 pm (23:59), New York Time. You can check the current time in New York [here](#).

Important: Occasionally emails from X-Culture are filtered into the Junk/Spam email folder. Please check your Junk/Spam email folder (search for messages with "X-Culture" in subject line) if you don't receive a survey invitation message around the date specified in the table above. Lost emails and other technological failures are not an excuse for missing the deadlines.

Appendix 1. CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title: International Student Collaboration Project: Dynamics and Performance in International Virtual Teams

Project Director and Principal Investigator: Dr. Vasyl Taras.

One of the requirements of your International Business course is to complete an international collaboration exercise. You will be teamed up with several other students who are enrolled in similar International Business courses at universities around the world. Working as a team, you will be required to develop a business plan for an international company.

To help you better understand and interpret your experiences and to give you a chance to compare your own experiences with those of other students participating in the exercise, data about your prior international experiences and perceptions about international collaboration will be collected before and after the exercise. In addition, you will be asked to provide peer evaluations once the project is over, and the quality of the team reports will be evaluated by the instructor. A summary will be presented to you at the end of the project, so you can see how your experiences compare to those of other students, how attitudes and perceptions about international collaboration have changed, on average, over the course of the project, and how team composition and prior international experiences tended to affect group dynamics and performance.

Once the project is over, all personal information will be deleted from the dataset, and the data will be completely unidentified, making it impossible to match responses with the names of the people who provided them.

Most of the data will be collected online. Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished, so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.

The risks associated with your participation in the study are minimal.

Please note the data collected during the project may be used for the purposes of research, the results of which may be published in scholarly journals. Any publication will contain only a general summary of the results. No personal information will be reported or shared.

Because your performance in the exercise is counted towards your course grade, the research project is treated as one of the required course exercises/tests. You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time. Your grade in the course will be adjusted accordingly, just as it would if you chose not to write a test or complete a homework assignment. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in an unidentifiable state.

While participation in the project is required as part of your course, it is your right to disallow the use of the de-identified data you provide for research-related purposes. If you do not object that the data you provide during the project can be used for research-related purposes, and the results of the study can be disseminated through scholarly publications, keep this consent form for your records. If you object to the use of the data you will provide during the course project, please indicate so at the bottom of this form. Return the form to your instructor, and your data will not be used for any research-related purposes. The results of the study based on the data you provided will not appear in any resulting publications. Your decision to allow or to deny the use of the data you provide during the project for research related purposes will have no effect on your grade.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated or if you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Eric Allen in the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG at (336) 256-1482. Questions, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Dr. Vasyl Taras who may be contacted at (336) 256-8611 or v_taras@uncg.edu.

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

For a copy of the approval letter from the Office of Research Compliance of the Institutional Research Board, please visit www.vtaras.com/11-0260_IRB_Approval.pdf

I do not grant the right to use the de-identified data I will provide during the project for research-related purposes or disseminate the data through a publication in scholarly journals or in any other form. I understand that my decision to not allow the use of the data for scholarly research will have no effect on my course grade.

Name: _____

Signature: _____