

Fostering case method and simulations

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GUS Fellow proposal

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Summary of the project focus

Aim

The project involves fostering the production, sharing and delivery of cases and business simulations throughout GUS business schools, as well as exploring the new opportunities AI brings for these experiential methodologies.

On one side, some business schools find it difficult to develop a systematic use of the case method and simulations due to diverse circumstances, typically insufficient training of academics, lack of support from senior leaders, the belief that the students will not be able to effectively engage with a methodology that requires continuous participation, sometimes facilities limitations, and quite often uncertainty regarding assessment and how to cater for students with disabilities and other personal limitations.

With several business schools spread across different countries and continents and a global student base, our business schools would highly benefit from developing a strategy to use the case method and simulations more intensely, as well as building a platform for sharing cases written and simulations developed all over the world that other institutions can use for free, in terms of exchange or for a preferential fee.

Finally, even when the case method has been used in business schools for more than a century, the new developments in Generative AI have opened new opportunities and challenges that require reflection and bold ground-breaking proposals under solid pedagogic foundations. These include the production of multi-media cases and AI-supported dynamic simulations. GUS could be at the forefront of innovation in this respect. The project also involves investigating the use of AI in fields like the assessment of class participation and facilitating the engagement of students with disabilities or any limitations for participation. Very importantly, there is a potential for some of these developments to be sold to third parties separately, and for GUS to monetise the advancements through the creation of companies that can sell their advanced cases and simulations to other business schools around the world.

Likely or potential impact that is to be expected from the project

Case method and simulations are based on a highly effective pedagogy in business schools aiming to confront students with real-life situations and ask them to make decisions in those environments. It encourages active learning by engaging students in critical thinking and enhancing decision-making skills through the analysis of real-world challenges that mirror the complexities of genuine business situations, fostering their learning-by-doing.

It also constitutes a strong KSP for our programmes, as using a methodology based on replicating real business situations makes them more attractive to prospective students. It also contributes to ensuring the graduates' work readiness, their attractiveness to the employment market and therefore their job prospects.

Buying cases and simulations may be more expensive than it seems. Even when the cost by student can typically be in the order of \$3 to \$5 per case and around \$25 per simulation, when multiplying this figure by hundreds of students in each intake, the investment per session can be substantial each year. Writing our own cases and simulations is a solution for that, with the advantage that they can be perfectly tailored to the needs of each session and programme.

Apart from contributing to the enhancement of teaching and learning, it is commonly accepted that writing cases increases the opportunities for institutions to engage with businesses and the people who lead them. Moreover, cases should be developed with the potential to be published, and therefore, contribute to the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) application, showcasing the institutions' commitment to excellence in applied research.

Finally, as suggested above, there is the possibility of developing a separate business plan for GUS by selling these cases through external platforms like <https://www.thecasecentre.org/>, and even creating a separate company to produce and sell to third parties simulations that use all the potential of AI tools, overtaking existing services like <https://www.cesim.com/>, which are still offering the old format of simulations based on a simple spreadsheet running behind the decision model.

How the project is going to engage GUS institutions/communities/stakeholders

Fostering the use of the case method and simulations across institutions will entail building communities of practice formed by academics interested and trained to use that methodology, creating a network of these groups across institutions, as well as sharing the cases and simulations they write in the proposed shared platform. With time, this can also foster the use of visiting academics across institutions.

Possible resource implications

Even when most of the work can be done online, and the communities of practice will be autonomously operating from a certain moment, launching the project will require a high degree of persuasion with academics and senior leaders. It would highly benefit from the demonstration of the benefits of using cases by delivering a series of sessions with students, all of which would require travelling to the GUS business schools. The cost can be compensated by delivering a series of sessions as visiting lecturer in the host institutions using the case method for students and academics.

The platform will require some investment in development, although in the early stages, it can be as simple as a tailored SharePoint environment until it demonstrates its effectiveness.

The development of business simulations using all the potential of AI will require some investment that is difficult to qualify at the moment. It will surely depend on how ambitious the aims are for this particular initiative.

Work plan

High-level, the phases will be:

- 1- Engaging with business schools across GUS and gaining the support of senior leaders and academics
- 2- Fostering the creation of communities of practice formed of academics with the interest to participate in this project. Supporting them and their institution in developing the conditions for the use of case method and simulations in their programmes and the production of these academic resources. This may involve training, resources and overcoming the typical difficulties found regarding assessment and students with limitations to participation.
- 3- Develop the full potential of a strategy aimed at making use of the new functionalities of AI tools to enhance the use and production of cases and simulations.

Achievements timeline

6 months

Phase 1 completed, therefore the business schools have been contacted and support has been obtained

12 months (interim report)

The business schools have been visited with the aim of delivering taster sessions to students and staff, and fostering the generation of academics' communities of practice

24 months (second interim report)

Business schools increasingly use cases and simulations in their programmes and produce their own materials.

36 months (final report)

Advanced AI tools are used for the delivery and production of cases and simulations. A wider strategy is considered for a GUS company to market these externally.