

---

## General Project Criteria & Guidelines

### Overview

All projects identified and undertaken by the Centenary College SBDC reflect actual needs of the client and the work is “real” — they do **not** represent past situations (real, simplified or embellished), case studies or some variation of these concepts. The projects undertaken and coordinated by Centenary’s SBDC enable students to get actual experience solving or dealing with real issues faced in the workplace today, whether the project is for a business, non-profit, community agency or the public.

### Projects

The projects need to have specific time frames that are consistent with the academic semester and/or course schedule. These projects may be poorly defined in scope, intention or expected outcomes. Oftentimes such projects may have incomplete data or the documentation or the “true” underlying issue may be in conflict with the stated objective. These factors are consistent with real-world situations where analysts, staffers or managers/owners are faced with providing the appropriate and relevant framework to develop the actionable insight, to create strategic direction or assist in the decision-making process. In other words, an initial assessment is required to determine the consistency between the stated objective and the underlying business challenge.

### Instructor

From the academic perspective, the projects must be consistent with the goals and desired learning outcomes of the course. The faculty (or instructor) must have involvement and commitment to this educational paradigm. The academic challenge is to balance the real-world business decision-making needs with the desired learning outcomes of the course being taught. The statement of “work” must be as broad as possible because this is typical in the business world. The business analyst/staffer/manager must engage in critical assessment of the viability of achieving the stated objective. The instructor must be willing to guide the student team in critical thinking and assessment as opposed to simply applying principles or analytical techniques to a hypothetical situation.

### Client

The client must be receptive to participating in this venue recognizing the constraints and opportunities presented by student and faculty involvement with project work. The client must be prepared to actively participate through interaction with the faculty members and students who may seek clarification about the project. Specifically they must provide a comprehensive description of the business issue/challenge, they must be available to respond to questions via e-mail or phone; the client may be called upon to present their project to the instructor and/or class and they must accept the project results in various

forms as deemed acceptable by the instructor (written reports, Power Point presentations, Excel spreadsheets or some combination thereof). The project results may be published (with the consent of the client) to obtain exposure in appropriate business venues to highlight Centenary's Student-Powered-Project program.

## Client Selection Criteria

In addition to the implicit criteria delineated in the Project & Resource Identification section, the following "standard" criteria will be used to select projects.

- Existing business/organization
  - In existence for 2 or more years
  - Owners must have owned/managed another business for at least 2 years
- Management team must have prior business experience
  - In same industry
  - Have a proven successful track record of owning/operating a similar business
- Management team must have sufficient depth to
  - Meet time commitments
  - Implement recommendations
  - Cover out-of-pocket expenses (e.g., phone calls, printing, production, etc.)
  - Provide resources for program's continuance
- Management team must be willing to publicize Centenary College's efforts/contributions
  - Publicity opportunities
  - Publication of study results
- Project/business must be consistent with learning outcomes for
  - Course work
  - Learning outcomes
  - Student goals
  - Appropriateness of student population
- Project/business must be ethically and legally consistent with Centenary College's values
  - Legal operations
  - Ethical business conduct
  - Safety of students

- 
- Hold Centenary College free of liability
  - Provide an appropriate mix of businesses consistent with SBDC's current priorities
    - Products vs. services
    - B2B, B2C, C2C & electronic
    - Industry mix
    - Geography/locations
    - Retail vs. commercial vs. industrial
    - Global vs. domestic
    - Large vs. small organizations