

Responding to a Case Study

What is the Purpose of a Case Study?

Case study assignments usually require you to identify problems and issues in a scenario, in order for you to demonstrate your developing knowledge of theories and professional policies (Flinders University, 2012, p. 1). For example, you may be asked to identify issues in a healthcare case study and demonstrate your knowledge of holistic care in relation to NMBA standards.

Steps in Responding to a Case Study

These are a number of steps you should follow when writing a response to a case study:

1. Read the Case Study and Question Carefully

In this step, you should highlight any points that you think are important. While it might seem like an obvious step it is often skipped or rushed. Spend real time carefully reading the case study and question to ensure you have understood what you are being tasked to do.

2. Identify the Main Issues

In this step you are required to identify the key issues arising from the facts in the case study.

3. Link Theory to Practice

In this step use you should link your knowledge about a topic—such as theory, codes of practice, policy and practices—to the facts in the case study. In other words, in this step you are applying your knowledge in practice by using this knowledge to identify and resolve issues and solve problems.

4. Plan Your Response

In this step, outline or mud-map your response. You can use the set questions as headings when you plan your written response. It will help you organise your thoughts and stay on track. It will also ensure you do not miss any material you need to cover. If your lecturer does not want you to use headings, you can always take them out before submitting your written response. However, most lecturers are happy with headings in a case study response.

5. Write Your Response

A written response to a case study requires an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

Structure of a Case Study Response

Introduction

Think of the introduction as a brief guide to your paper. The introduction of your case study response should tell the reader:

- What the context or focus of the case study is—in other words, what is it about?
- What key areas will be covered, and in what order.
- What conclusion has been reached—this is generally, the thesis statement.

Example thesis statement *This paper looks at the process that was followed when Jack, an elderly homeless man was brought into a public hospital with chest pains and difficulty in breathing. It critically examines this process with reference to the five dimensions of health and makes recommendations for improving the medical admissions process (Flinders University, 2012, p.2)*

Body

This is the main part of your response and will be made up of a number of paragraphs that work through the issues in your case study. You will need to decide on how many paragraphs are required to respond to each of the questions or issues raised in the case study. Some issues may require more than one paragraph in response. In the body of your case study response you should:

- Refer back to the headings you created in the Plan Your Response step to keep your writing on track.
- Ensure each paragraph focuses on only one main idea.
- Build the points you are making in a logical order.
- Clearly link the end of one paragraph to the beginning of the next paragraph.

Conclusion

Your conclusion should draw together the main points you have made in the body of your case study, without introducing any new ideas. You should also restate your thesis statement. Do not rush your conclusion as it is the last part of your paper to be read before it is marked. Instead, look at your conclusion as an opportunity to make final, good impression.

Remember...

This resource has been created to give you an idea of how to set out a case study. However, your lecturer may have specific ideas of what should/should not be included in your assignment, or how it should/should not be structured. Always consult with your lecturer if unsure.

Resource References

Flinders University. 2012. *Case studies*.

<https://students.flinders.edu.au/content/dam/student/slc/case-studies.pdf>