

MBA 680 Homework

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of homework?

Answer:

The goal of the homework is to help you develop analysis and critical thinking skills.

2. How does the homework help develop analysis and critical thinking skills?

Answer:

MBA 680 homework requires you to **“figure it out.”** The technique employed is to give you questions you have never seen. Unlike the homework assignments in almost every other class you have ever taken, the homework in this class **is not** merely **pattern matching**. Traditional pattern matching eliminates critical thinking and analysis skills, by teaching you to look for familiar patterns and then apply them.

3. How can I answer the question if I have never seen the type of problem before?

Answer:

That is the challenge. You must determine alternative approaches to traditional looking problems. Someone who has never seen a DeLorean might spend all day trying to [open the door](#) and never succeed. Yet, once you realize the door opens up, instead of out, it seems so simple. A [Chinese Finger Trap](#) illustrates the same situation. The solution is impossible, counter intuitive and almost impossible to figure out, using traditional logic. Yet, when solved, it seems so simple. This is what you will experience in the homework.

4. How does the homework align with the lectures and why does it not match what we cover in class?

Answer:

The homework is a supplemental learning tool. That means it is not a repeat and practice of what we covered in class. It is additional learning. Traditional homework is designed to be “repeat and practice” of what you covered in class. The homework in this course is designed **TO BE DIFFERENT** than what we covered in class. Development of critical thinking and analysis skills could not occur if the homework merely copied what was done in class.

5. How do I get help during an assignment?

Answer:

Send me a spreadsheet of your work. I will review it and send feedback. Since the online homework assignments are computational, you should do your work in a spreadsheet. Please do not wait until the due date to ask for help, as I may not be available to reply in sufficient time. If you are stuck at “I don’t know where to start,” read the chapter. While each problem is creative, they all originate from concepts presented in the book.

6. I have spent many hours on one problem and cannot figure it out. What should I do?

Answer:

You should take a break long before spending hours on one problem. As you will see, the answers are relatively simple, yet creative. Thus, brute force is not always the answer. Sometimes, walking away and starting fresh is the best approach. When you return, however, read the questions SLOWLY and try a completely different approach. Often reading the question is the key, as nuances are sometimes buried in the question.

7. How much time should the homework take?

Answer:

It depends on the person. This is the most time consuming course for many students in the MBA program. Thus, you need to allocate considerable time outside of class. The first homework assignment is the most difficult and time consuming. Thus, students should start early. Since taking breaks and starting fresh sometimes works, starting near the due date reduces the chance to step away and return to the homework.

8. Will you go over the homework answers in class?

Answer:

No. But, I will schedule a meeting to review it, individually. Once the homework due date has passed, you may see the answers and methods for solving the problems online. Almost always, the answer is creative, yet simple. Students often say “I can’t believe it was that easy.” If upon review of the answers, you still cannot figure out how the answer was calculated, contact me to schedule an appointment or visit me during my office hours. I am happy to review the homework with you, individually.

9. Will the test be like the homework?

Answer:

Mostly, No. The same concepts will be covered on the exam, but you will not be required to “figure it out,” as in the homework. Instead, you will be asked to apply what you have learned. If you have developed analysis skills, however, the test will be easier. The challenge on the test is to match the data provided with the finance technique required. Beyond this, the math is relatively easy.