# Assignment 1

Due: Monday, October 19, 2026 by 5:00 p.m. Central

## 1 Purpose and Task

What is the purpose of a firm? Work with your assigned group to develop and defend an answer. Discuss competing views, reach a position your group can support, and communicate it to two audiences: readers who want your reasoning and a public audience that needs a clear statement.

This assignment asks you to (*i*) think critically about the purpose of business, (*ii*) practice persuasion and compromise, and (*iii*) communicate a supported argument clearly and professionally. Build on Module 1's discussion of ownership, control, and the objective that should guide business decisions. Your work is evaluated on the argument, evidence, and communication, not agreement with a particular position.

*Planning estimate:* Allow roughly 3–5 hours for discussion, research, drafting, and revision. This is a planning guide, not a required time commitment.

## 2 Deliverables and Submission

Submit **two separate PDFs**: an essay of no more than two pages and a one-page corporate statement/flyer. Include your group identifier and members' names on both files. One group member should upload both PDFs to the assignment's Canvas submission page. Check that both files open and the submission is recorded; if it does not appear correctly for your group, email the instructor. The assignment is worth **10 points: 5 for each deliverable**.

### Essay (5 points)

Write as MBA students expressing and defending your view of the purpose of business. State your position clearly, explain the reasoning behind it, and support it with **at least one relevant real-world example**. Identify the example's source so a reader can check it, and explain how the example supports your argument. A company's stated values alone do not establish what its actions achieved.

Produce a developed essay, not just two short paragraphs, within the two-page maximum. Keep source references concise and easy to locate. Use a clear structure and readable, professional formatting. If your group cannot reach unanimity, discuss the disagreement, vote if needed, and settle on a position the group can present coherently.

*Evaluation:* Completion (0.5), clarity of thought (1.5), clarity of writing (1.0), professional quality (1.0), and use of real-world examples (1.0). The rubric gives the criteria for each category.

### Corporate Statement/Flyer (5 points)

Write as executives communicating the group's position to investors and the broader public. Create a **general statement about the purpose of business**, consistent with the argument in your essay. The statement itself should be no more than a handful of sentences, maybe one sentence; present it on one page.

Brand the page as a professional corporate communication using a company name, logo, colors, or other coherent design choices. The branding is the presentation; the message still addresses business in general. You are **not** writing a mission statement about one particular firm's products or services.

Be creative and have fun, but keep the message easy to read. Professional quality means clear, coherent presentation; specialized design software is not necessary. The flyer should express the same position as the essay, rather than making a different promise to its public audience.

*Evaluation:* Completion (0.5), succinctness of statement (2.0), professional quality (1.5), and alignment with essay (1.0).

## 3 Resources

These resources offer starting points for exploring the debate. They are not a checklist of required citations (though the first two links are strongly encouraged); use relevant evidence to support your group's own reasoning.

- Milton Friedman (1970), "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits."
- Business Roundtable, "Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation."
- ProMarket, "Friedman, 50 Years Later" debate collection.

# 4 Grading Rubric: Assignment 1

### Part A – Essay (5 points total)

| Criteria | Points | Score | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Completion – submitted on time, meets page length, group members listed | 0.5 | | |
| Clarity of Thought – logical argument, well-defended position | 1.5 | | |
| Clarity of Writing – grammar, structure, readability | 1.0 | | |
| Professional Quality – formatting, presentation, polish | 1.0 | | |
| Use of Real-World Examples – relevant example, source identified, connection to argument explained | 1.0 | | |
| **Essay Subtotal** | **5.0** | | |

### Part B – Corporate Statement / Flyer (5 points total)

| Criteria | Points | Score | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Completion – submitted, one-page format | 0.5 | | |
| Succinctness of Statement – clear, concise, no more than a handful of sentences | 2.0 | | |
| Professional Quality – formatting, design, branding, creativity | 1.5 | | |
| Alignment with Essay – message consistent with essay arguments | 1.0 | | |
| **Flyer Subtotal** | **5.0** | | |

**Overall Comments:**

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**Total Score (out of 10):** _____