How are strategy tools used in practice in a university context?
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of my most respected teachers would often tell me while I was a teenager “nothing is given to mortals without labour.” I never truly understood the meaning of that statement until I started working on this thesis. The commitment required, the perseverance needed and the right attitude can often be overlooked when commencing one’s thesis. Writing this thesis presented many challenges nevertheless because of the support from family, friends and a helpful supervisor I endured to the end. My mother (Monica Hutchinson), my two sisters (Gloria and Janelle), my friend Richard, my Aunt Hermaine and my boss who called on a regular basis to ensure that I was meeting my deadlines and to give those much appreciated words of encouragement. To them I will always be thankful for their love, patience, kind words and encouragement. I will also like to thank my supervisor Andreas Nilsson who was always willing to help and was understanding and supportive when the many challenges arose. There were many other people who offered kind words and support to all of them I am also thankful.

Working on this thesis helped build character within me and taught me some lessons that will stay with me throughout my life’s journey. Sometimes it is important to be challenged and tested within confiding time constraints since this can help to develop an attitude for success. In concluding I must thank Jesus Christ the rock of my salvation and the source of my sanity on the many difficult days. As I move forward to a new scope of life I am reminded “…to whom much is given, much is required.” (Bible, Luke 12:48).

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ABSTRACT

Many business schools teach the importance of using strategy tools when engaging in strategizing activities. Despite this fact there is an ongoing debate concerning what is taught in business schools and what is actually used in practice. In spite of this debate there has been little research done regarding how these strategy tools are used in practice. This study seeks to address this through the adoption of a strategy as practice perspective which helped to identify what is actually practiced by managers while engaging in strategizing activities. Managers use strategy to respond to complex forces (social, political, economic) in their business environments. However to develop and implement strategy encompasses a full range of strategizing activities such as strategic thinking, strategic analysis, strategic decision making and implementation. Many business schools teach strategy tools are techniques which managers use to structure and influence strategizing activities. Previous research on strategy tools played emphasis on the benefits that can be derived if tools are used in different context. Others have highlighted the frequency of tool usage. Nevertheless, there is a need to make a review what is taught and how strategy tools are used in practice.

A qualitative study was conducted in two universities through the use of semi structured interviews to gather data. The use of an inductive and interpretivism perspective through a case study helped the researcher identify the context in which events were taking place. The choice of a small yet deliberate sample size was done to focus in on the various levels of management within these universities and to review how strategy tools were used at these levels. After each interview the interviewees were given a list of 15 strategy tools (all of which were taught in the researcher’s masters programme) to identify whether they used any of the strategy tools on the list and if they did how did they use them. It was noted from the empirical data acquired that quite often strategy tools were not always being used for the purpose for which they were taught nevertheless managers were altering components of various tools to meet their individual business needs. Strategy tools were often used to assist in strategic thinking and strategic decision making. Managers’ perception of strategy tools affected the extent to which tools were used and the frequency of usage. While strategy tools were often used for growth and development, communication and persuasion and best practices it was its use in sense-making and evaluation which indicated that there is a need for a greater understanding into how managers make sense of strategy tools. The study answers how strategy tools are used in practice in a university context by giving illustrations and quotations from the various interviewees regarding strategy tools.

Keywords: strategy tools, strategizing activities, strategic thinking, strategic decision making, implementation, sense-making
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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION
This chapter begins by giving a general background to the research area. It continues by outlining the research question and the research objectives to be covered throughout the study. Finally, the chapter concludes by giving a brief outline of the general structure of the entire study and what will be covered in each chapter.

1.1 Background to the research
Mintzberg (2005, p. 1) defined “management as a practice that has to blend a great deal of craft (experience) with a certain amount of art (insight) and some science (analysis).” However, the exact amount of experience, insight and analysis required for managers to ensure organizations success is still unknown. Today, many business schools place substantial emphasis on the application of strategy tools, techniques and theories that should be used in the strategic management of organizations. Nonetheless, past research suggests that very often managers do not depend on academics and academic research findings when developing and implementing strategies and best practices (Rynes, Bartunek and Daft, 2001; Abrahamson, 1996). The concept of managers being from Mars and academics being from Venus (Baldridge, Floyd and Markóczy 2004) highlights the perspective that managers and academics envision problems and solutions concerning the business environment from different lenses. Rynes et al (2001) noted that “academics and practitioners have essentially different frames of reference with respect to such things as the types of information believed to constitute valid bases for action and the analytical process that should be used in sense-making.” It was this mismatch between practical relevance and academic theory that spurred the curiosity of the researcher in this study to examine whether strategy tools are used in practice in a university environment and if they are how they are used.

Managers who are involved in managing and influencing strategy usually develop capabilities that give an overview which helps them conceive the whole rather than just the parts of the situation facing the organization (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008, p. 11). This overview is necessary for the strategic position, strategic choices and managing strategy in action within organizations. It has been said (Gunn and Williams, 2007) that “strategy tools were developed to help managers handle the complexity of their environments.” It is taught in many business schools that strategy tools should be used as a guide in the strategic thinking, strategic decision making and strategic implementation processes (Knott, 2008). However, studies have found (Knott, 2008; Stenfors and Tanner, 2007; Hill and Westbrook, 1997) that managers often diverge from the textbook suggestions for tool usage and instead combine different aspects of various tools to suit the given business context.

This study investigates how strategy tools are used in practice from a university context. Historically, universities were viewed as institutions, not enterprises or service agencies. Today universities may be viewed as a combination of institutions, enterprises and service agencies. According to Balderston (1974) “this is partly because they have assembled a large range of activities and operations, but partly also because the major parties at interest want to see it in different ways: the faculty and students, as institutions; the trustees and administrators, as enterprises; and the governmental sponsors, as
agencies.” Within most organizational structures there is a clear hierarchy responsible for making and implementing decisions. However, in universities’ setting most of the power rest in the hands of the professorial and senior academic staff and senior administrators, who form most of the management committees such as senior management, academic board, faculty board, university advisory committees etc. These individuals are responsible for the strategic management and direction universities pursue.

Smith (1992) noted that a dual authority structure exist within universities. Smith (1992) went on to emphasize that the hierarchy of vice-chancellors, chairs, deans, registrars, and presidents must collaborate with the academic authority system that exists through the various management committees. Academics play a predominant role the in decision making, selection of programmes and development of new proposals as it relates to their given section or department and the committees in which they serve. As a consequence, senior administrators are often in a position where they have to develop and implement strategy that reflects directives from various academic committees and not what is necessarily required for universities’ strategic progress. Generally, on a departmental level, heads of departments implement strategy directives that have been decided upon by fellow senior academics, faculty deans and senior administrators. However, these directives concerning university strategy are often quite vague and therefore a high level of autonomy is entrusted to the various sectional heads. There is a general perception that academics (Heads of Departments, Senior Lectures on various committees etc.) are “more loyal to their discipline than to their institution” (Shattock, 2003). The ability to view the university as a single unit pursuing a common goal is often difficult for some academics to accept. As a result “strategic management in universities is a holistic process in which all the interlocking elements need to work together” (Shattock, 2003).

Sectional heads and entrusted with a large amount of responsibility ranging from making decisions as it relates to budgetary requirements, teaching, research and consultancy. The questions therefore arise whether these sectional heads use strategy tools in their strategizing activity processes and if they do, in what way and for what purpose are these tools used.

1.2 Research Question
“Although strategy tools are being taught in many business schools there is an absence of in depth information regarding how these tools are actually used, or indeed, whether managers use the tools they were taught” (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan, 2006). The importance and perceived benefits of tool usage is prominently high at in the academia world. However, this study looks at what theories (strategy tools) are being applied in a practical business environment. Investigation into the significance managers’ place on the tools being used will be evaluated based on the textbook recommendations for tool usage. This study seeks to answer the question:

“How are strategy tools used in practice in a university context?”
1.3 Research Objective
The rationale behind this study seeks:
- to determine the context associated with strategy tool usage
- to determine the extent to which strategy tools are used in the strategizing process
- to make a comparison between what has been described in previous literature and what is actually being used in practice
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews past literature on strategy, strategies in universities and strategy tools usage. The chapter then reviews past research done on strategy tool usage in a university context. The chapter ends by identifying the knowledge gap in this area of research.

2.1 Introduction

“Organizations are complex phenomena and managing them is a difficult, nuanced business, requiring all sorts of tacit understanding that can only be gained in context” (Mintzberg, 2005 p.9). Strategy is seen as a means of direction and scope that helps to channel the course for organizations to achieve a competitive advantage in its changing environment. Traditionally, strategy was seen as something organizations have however the strategy-as-practice approach views strategy as something that is done (Wright, Paroutis and Blettner, 2008) within organizations. Recent research on strategy (Jarzabkowski, 2008; Whittington, 2006; Chia, 2004) has taken a practical stance as compared to the theoretical stance of the past. This stance reflects the critical choices about who to involve in strategy, what to do in strategizing activity, and which strategizing methodologies to use in order to guide this activity (Johnson et al, 2008). Despite this newly developing practical stance, Volberda (2005) noted that “the strategy field is replete with competing prescriptions and directives with regard to successful performance.” The use of strategy tools is one such prescription that is taught to business students to help assist them in the strategizing process when they become managers.

2.2 Strategy

There is no precise definition of strategy. The term strategy is often used in a variety of ways to explain the decisions and actions organizations pursue. Mintzberg (1987) presented five different points of reference for strategy which he labeled the 5P’s for strategy: plan, ploy, pattern, position, and perspective. Quite often strategy is seen as a plan or an intended course of action planned and pursued to achieve given outcomes. However, organizations may also use strategy as a ploy to manipulate or distract its competitors. Nonetheless to develop a better understanding of the direction organizations follow or have been following it is wise to review the consistency in behaviour. This approach to strategy is known as strategy as a pattern, it can be both intended (deliberate) and unintended (emergent). Because organizations operate in different environments, strategy can often be used as a means to match the organization with its environment. Strategy as a position allows managers to position organizations in an environment where resources are concentrated. It is noted that based on this definition of strategy, “strategy can be compatible with either (or all) of the preceding ones; a position can be preselected and aspired to through a plan (or ploy) and/or it can be reached, and perhaps even found, through a pattern of behaviour” (Mintzberg, Lampel, Quinn and Ghoshal, 2003 p.7). Finally, strategy as a perspective denotes that strategy can also be seen as a concept. When organizations employ strategy as a perspective, “perspective is shared by members of the organization through their intentions and/or actions” (Mintzberg et al, 2003 p.8). In essence, strategy as a perspective is associated with “image and sense of direction, namely vision” (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, Lampel, 1998 p.124) that is created or expressed by the leader. Looking at strategy from Mintzberg’s definition it becomes clear that
strategy formation is complex. However, developing strategy is only the first step, what happens in the decision making and implementation stages can change the intended direction of strategy.

Ohmae (1982 p.4) notes “successful business strategies result not from rigorous analysis but from a particular state of mind.” Ohmae (1982 p.4) went on to express that “insight and a consequent drive for achievement, often amounting to a sense of mission, fuel a thought process which is basically creative and intuitive rather than rational.” Even though strategist do not work without conducting analysis or engaging in strategizing activities this is only done to stimulate the creative process, to test ideas that emerge, to determine any strategic implications or to ensure the successful implementation ideas that may otherwise be poorly implemented (Ohmae, 1982). Accordingly, strategic management can serve as a map which helps achieve milestones and to clarify the right strategy (Coyne and Subramaniam, 1996). “Consequently, strategists should be familiar with the various concepts available to them, but not biased toward any of them. They should narrow their focus to a specific sub-model only after they determined which one is most appropriate to their situation” (Coyne and Subramaniam, 1996; Hussey, 1998). In another article, Hussey (1997) indentified five areas of critical importance in successful strategic management (See Diagram 1) these include “capabilities of decision leaders, creative dimension to strategic thinking, quality of analysis, the process and systems that affect how strategic decisions are taken and an obsession with implementation.” Hussey (1997) acknowledges deficiencies in any of these areas may have negative repercussions. Therefore there is a need to fully analyze a given situation before strategic decisions are made, pursue and implement strategic decision, implement adequate planning processes and finally when using new business concepts develop an understanding of them before apply them to a practical situation (Hussey, 1997).
It may be argued that while analysis is good, analysis alone seldom produces strong strategy. Managers’ ability to make sense of the information acquired through analysis also plays a significant role in strategy development. Quite regularly “issues are not objectively defined and do not appear in the same form to all of the members at the same time: issues are noticed, shaped, interpreted” (Maitlis and Lawrence, 2007; Dutton et al. 2002) based on managers’ sense-making ability. Weick (1995 p.5) notes that while sense-making may not always result in action it can influence managers’ understanding that action should not be taken or that a better understanding of an event is needed. Therefore, sense-making quite often plays a role in the strategizing process.

2.3 University Strategies

“Universities are inundated with strategies, in the sense of consistent patterns of actions: within programmes, and department about issues concerning research, approaches to tenure, construction of buildings and methods of teachings” (Mintzberg and Rose, 2003; Hardy, Langley and Mintzberg, 1983). While the mission, vision and general strategy statements may vary most universities strategies tend to concentrate on research, teaching, consulting, resource allocation, growth and or quality. The management of these strategies makes a significant difference in universities’ performance. Although some traditional universities enjoy competitive advantage based upon long-standing reputation and control of accreditation and credentialing (Duderstadt, 2006) this trend is quickly being eroded by other universities that have strategically positioned themselves through adequate marketing and resource allocation. Academics must therefore decide when to pursue opportunities for profit and when to adopt traditional business practices that are mainly geared towards research and teaching.
2.3.1 Previous Research on Universities Strategies

Jarzabkowski and Wilson (2002) reviewed how a top management team engages in strategic activity at a university in the United Kingdom. Their work looked at two main theories for strategic activity in a university context: strategy as practice and strategy as a process. Jarzabkowski and Wilson (2002) highlighted that “the focal point of universities’ strategy are a result of an interplay of localized routines and patterns of action within the organizational context, which both produces and is a product of such actions.” According to their paper, the organizational structure plays a critical role in influencing decisions and actions as it relates to strategic management. They explored how different actions are linked with the organization and the management team. This article focused mainly on the practices of top management teams. However, very little attention was placed on what mechanisms were used to help in the strategizing processes.

On the other hand, Groves, Pendlebury and Stiles (1997) reviewed strategic management concepts and their relevance and appropriateness for universities. Their work focused on the fact that some universities are still heavily dependent on governments’ financial support. Consequently, governments’ funding has been decreasing in recent years and universities are now required to think of new measures and strategies to generate income. Consistent to this view, some universities have engaged in third stream activities as a means of generating new income and staying ahead competitively. Prince (2007) defined third stream activities as activities such as training, consultancy, short courses, accreditation, knowledge transfer partnerships, executive development and enterprise development and the like. According to this definition, third stream activities include all the income producing activities excluding the central teaching programmes and research activities which are usually considered main stream activities within universities. Prince (2007) acknowledged that universities are managing third stream activities in a deliberate, practical and professional manner. In light of these financial constraints, what becomes evident is that the development of third stream activities is dependent on the strategic thinking, planning and implementation by leadership. Prince (2007) noted that effective leadership is needed for the development of strategic practices that support these activities. This can only be a reality if “leadership possesses an understanding of universities resources and capability mix, and the market opportunities of their region” (Prince, 2007).

While some universities have attempted to find new strategies to generate income and compete in their dynamic environments, others have often tried to resist these external pressures and opportunities. Yet all too often universities fail to react to or even resist taking strong, decisive actions to determine and pursue their own goals (Duderstadt, 2006). Duderstadt (2006) acknowledged the need for universities to give thoughtful attention to the design of institutional processes for planning, management, and governance. A key concept highlighted in Duderstadt (2006) was the need for “universities’ management to recognize that in a rapidly changing environment, it is important to develop a planning process that is not only capable of adapting to changing conditions, but to some degree capable of modifying the environment in which the university will find itself in the future.” This point was reemphasized in other literature (Groves et al, 1997; Hanham, 1988) which focused on the need for “universities’
management to develop and implement more appropriate and conceptually sound management thinking and policy making, as well as the reviewing and improving of the techniques and systems in use.” Universities’ management must engage in strategic thinking which “combines generative, creative, synthetic divergent thought processes with a rational, analytical, convergent approach to problem solving” (O’Shannassy, 2003). O’Shannassy (2003) notes managements’ strategic thinking abilities originate from instinct and analytical understanding regarding the future of the organization.

It was noted that universities function under a dual authority structure, and in order to achieve its vision and move towards its strategic intent, a critical requirement for success and progress is to gain support from sectional heads in the development and implementation of strategic activity. Universities’ management play a critical role by ensuring that the universities survive in an environment where competition affects all their activities (Groves et al, 1997). Are strategy tools currently being used to ensure this mandate is attained? If yes, how are sectional heads at Umea University and The University of the West Indies (UWI) using strategy tools in their strategizing activities? If no, why are strategy tools left out of strategizing activities? This paper attempts to answer these questions.

2.4 Strategy Tool
As was previously mentioned, the complexity and instability of organizations’ market environments create high levels of uncertainty. As a consequence many organizations use strategy activity to counteract these challenges. Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2008) purported that “strategy tool use is a means of sense making about uncertainties by helping to structure and interpret information; it serves to justify or legitimatize particular positions; and it instigates and facilitates interaction among various actors.” However, because “strategy is partly creative and not routine, strategy tools cannot provide a blueprint but rather they can act as a guide to thinking or as a starting point for structuring activity” (Knott, 2008). Are managers really incorporating these tools in their decision making and strategizing process? Or do they view tool usage as another management fad or vogue that will also past with time? Some researcher are of the opinion that “some management fashions such as strategy tools and techniques (total quality management, business process reengineering etc.) fail to become firmly entrenched and institutionalized since organizations are attracted to them for a period and then abandon them in favour of apparently newer and more promising ones” (Clark, 2004).

2.4.1 Strategy Tool Definition
What then are strategy tools? According to Knott (2007) “strategy tools or management tools encompass the full range of concepts, ideas, techniques and approaches that structure or influence strategy activity.” Specifically strategy tools are those concepts and techniques used by managers in the decision making process (Gunn and Williams, 2007). Stenfors and Tanner (2007) emphasized that using strategy tools can help bring awareness in both a practical and contextual form which fosters more effective strategies to be developed and implemented. Strategic planning, mission and vision statements and benchmarking were repeatedly seen in Rigby’s surveys (2007, 2005, and 2002) as
commonly used management tools. Whereas Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2008) identified Porter’s five forces, Scenario Planning, Core Competences, Porter’s Generic Strategy Model, SWOT analysis (SWOT: strengths, weakness, opportunities and treats) and Strategy Planning as the top tools for strategy analysis. Generally “managers select tools based on the given task, some tools are better suited to some strategy tasks” (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan, 2008), as a result it becomes imperative to choose the best tools for the task. Consequently, many other tools may be frequently used in some organizations’ context even though they may not be perceived as commonly used tools. Since strategy tools can be used to bring clarity and help deliver results for wide cross-section of activities within organizations it becomes pertinent to explore how tools are used in practice.

2.4.2 Previous Research
Previous research placed emphasis on what tools are being used and the frequency of their use (Rigby and Bilodeau 2007, 2005; Rigby 2001; Frost 2003; Clark 1997) nonetheless this information while helpful limits the interpretation of the relevance of strategy tool use in practice. Rigby’s work rated a wide range of strategy tools and highlighted the winners and losers in terms of usage. It was noted that tool preference changed throughout the years of his surveys. Rigby also evaluated how strategy tool usage and attitudes towards tools usage varied in different regions. One notable observation in Rigby’s work was the fact that many managers believe that several strategy tools promise more than they deliver. Given that, “every strategy tool has its own strengths and weaknesses, positive benefits can only be achieved if users understand the effects (and side effects) of each tool then combine the right tools in the right way at the right times” (Rigby, 2005). Rigby’s surveys displayed that the authenticity of the results of usage lies with the users.

Similar to Rigby’s work, Frost (2003) reviewed a range of strategy tools that strategy planners use. His research indicated that there is a need for a wider understanding of the tools available and their application to strategy development. A comparison was done between tool usage in small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). Frost (2003) article was thought stimulating nevertheless one question that still seemed to be left unanswered was how organizations were using these strategy tools. Frost (2003) indicated that there is limited usage among SMEs and alluded to the fact that it can be result of ignorance. However, Knott (2007), whose research did not focus on SMEs, noted that when managers used few or no tools it was not because of ignorance of the available tools but rather it was because of the perceived needs of the task or organization. In essence, while managers may be aware of strategy tools, usage will only take place if managers understand and recognize the benefits that can be derived from their usage. Moreover, knowing which tool to use and when to use it seems to be more helpful than just using a variety of tools. Thus, it can be argued that while strategy tool usage can deliver favorable results the inability to differentiate the significance of a given tool at a given time can be result in adverse effects. Managers’ cognitive ability plays a vital role in the success of strategy tool utilization. Mintzberg (1994) noted that “the flaws and limitations of some of these tools are a result of the shortsightedness of the people using the tools and not the tools in themselves.”
There are many benefits achieved through strategy tool utilization in terms of its ability to assist with communication, structure for analysis, assist with co-ordination in complex and adaptive situations (Clark, 1997; Knott, 2006). Knott (2008) noted that in practice managers take components from different tools and combine them to develop a new tool or practice that suits their pre-existing needs. This revelation maybe an underlying truth that has not been explored in its entirety and can probably explain why the utilization of some strategy tools work for some organizations while it fails for others. However, studies have shown that some managers generally rely on instinct instead of using strategy tools (Kassanen, Wallenius, Walleniusm and Zions, 2000; Miller and Ireland, 2005; Nutt, 2002 cited in Stenfors and Tanner, 2007). Since users are not using strategy tools for the purpose in which they have been developed a review on how strategy tools are used may bring further clarity regarding its benefits. “The interpretative flexibility of each tool, allows subjectivity to be incorporated in the decision-process, giving actors a means to make sense of the problem and also to advance their own interpretations of that problem” (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan, 2008). However managers must be aware of ‘paralysis of analysis,’ whereby managers spend too long perfecting their analysis that not enough time is given for taking decisions and acting on them (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008). Yet, March (2006) noted that strategy tools generally lose their effectiveness in periods of ambiguity and complexity. March (2006) further highlighted that using strategy tools in these periods can have adverse effects resulting from oversimplification or misrepresentation of the given problem. Here, strategy tool users focus on the outcomes which indicate that tools will only be used if they are perceived to deliver appropriate results.

“Strategy tools are often used to aid with social interactions within and across hierarchical levels” (Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2008). Some of the past studies focused on strategy tool usage between and among management as a means of communication centering on addressing problems by explaining information attained. However, Grant (2003) and Spee and Jarzabkowski (2008) acknowledged that tools may also hamper shared meaning, particularly across hierarchical levels. The general view from Grant’s work was that tools can complicate information sharing between top and middle management and it can be used as a means for flexing one’s political power. As a result circumstances under which tools are employed can sometimes be manipulated to achieve managers’ personal objectives. It becomes evident that sometimes the “adaptation of tools is driven not only by tool characteristics or awareness, but also by the diversity of the business contexts” (Knott, 2006). The context under which these strategy tools are used often shape and affect strategy outcomes (March, 2006; Jarzabkowski and Kaplan 2008). It is therefore the flexible nature of strategy tools which enables users influence decisions in the strategy making process.

Developing research explores the strategy-as-practice perspective which focuses on how managers use these strategy tools in their strategizing process (Whittington, 1996; Johnson et al., 2003; Knott, 2006; Jarzabkowski and Kaplan 2008). These authors share the common view that “strategy tools are likely to assist with part of activity rather that providing a substitute for capabilities and experience of the manager” (Knott, 2006;
Whittington, 1996). In accordance with this trend of thought strategy tools success will be dependent upon how tools are applied as compared to the number of tools used. Stenfors and Tanner (2007) indentified the individual, interpersonal, organizational and societal as four social contexts under which strategy tools can be applied in practice. In particular, their work evaluated how strategizing activities are mediated by strategy tool utilization based on these four levels. The work of Spee and Jarzabkowski (2008) acknowledged “strategy tools as artifacts which may be used in actions, interactions and negotiations through which actors at multiple levels accomplish strategy.” This concept is driven on the basis that “strategy tools do not present a specific outcome instead tools need to be meaningfully and usefully incorporated into the multiple contexts of all strategy participants and bridge their diverse practice-based fields of strategy work” (Spee and Jarzabkowski, 2008). Furthermore, and in accordance with the same trend of thought strategy tools were seen as boundary objects which obtain value based on various practices developed by the users (Jarzabkowski and Kaplan, 2008).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that many of the previously mentioned articles stated the benefits derived from the appropriate use of strategy tools, many other articles reflect the view that strategy tool usage is another management trend or fad that also fades with time (Clark, 2004; Abrahamson, 1996). These authors share the view that many publishers, consultants, management gurus and management academics articulate that it is necessary for managers to use particular tools and techniques in order to achieve certain outcomes. And while many fashions only last for a season few are able to stand the test of time and become part of organizations’ culture. Abrahamson (1996) acknowledge in spite of this “management fashions still shape the management techniques that thousands of managers look to in order to cope with extremely important and complex managerial problems and challenges.”

2.5 Strategy Tools and University Strategy

Groves et al (1997) highlight how strategic thinking and strategy tools can be applied to the unpredictable environment which universities operate. In their article, Groves et al (1997) looked at the benefits that can be derived if focus groups are formed within universities. According to Groves et al (1997) focus group members can use Porter's Generic Strategies concept as a means for exploring various general strategy directions for the university. These authors altered Porter’s original 2 x 2 matrix to develop a 2 x 3 matrix while using the same axes to give a better reflection of universities environments. This tool can be used to help sectional heads and focus groups determine the best strategic options universities should employ (see Diagram 2). Groves et al (1997) went on to highlight that using such strategy tools can assist universities in determining whether to follow broad or narrow strategies (narrow being teaching programmes and broad being quality leadership and market place). According to this article, the application of such a tool can help universities’ management in their strategic management thinking process. While this strategy tool can be useful, it should be noted that the authors had to take into consideration its limitations in a university context and make the necessary alterations to get the desired results.
### Diagram 2

**GENERIC UNIVERSITY STRATEGIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competitive Scope</th>
<th>Competitive advantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad Target</td>
<td>Lower Cost: Cost Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow Target</td>
<td>Lower Cost: Cost focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Similar to Porter’s Generic Strategies, this paper also reviewed Porter’s value chain technique as a means of strategically breaking down organizations to determine which activities add value to its products and services. They noted that universities, unlike other most companies, cannot determine value only through profit maximization. In general, universities’ objectives are never stated in financial terms, nonetheless, when universities realize their strategic goals and objectives, this is seen as adding value. This article altered Porter’s Generic Value Chain Model to reflect universities’ primary activities: teaching and research. Since the original activities highlighted in Porter’s Model did not adequately reflect universities’ activities, more appropriate activities were substituted, but the general concept of Porter’s Generic Value Chain Model was still applied (See Diagram 3). Based on this concept, universities can determine its competitive scope according to which of the activities identified gives it a competitive advantage (Groves *et al*, 1997). While the authors of this article suggested different uses for strategy tools in a university context, the article did not provide a practical stance regarding how and if sectional heads at universities are using strategy tools in practice.
2.6 Identification of Knowledge Gap

Previous research acknowledged that there is a disconnect between what is taught by academics and what is used in practice. While business schools continue to teach the importance of strategy tool use in strategizing activities very little is known regarding how these tools are used in practice and the context in which they are used. Universities like most other organizations need to determine which strategies to pursue and which ones to disregard. Based on the previous literature strategy tools can play a significant role in strategizing activities (strategic thinking, strategic decision making and strategic implementation). Attempting to answer how strategy tools are used in practice in a university context can help contribute to this knowledge gap (between what is taught about strategy tools and how they are used). The researcher in this study seeks to determine the context associated with strategy tool usage, the importance sectional heads at the University place on strategy tools and draw a comparison between what is written in past literature and what is used in practice. This will be done by looking at the extent and in what way managers are employing various strategy tools.
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

The focus of this chapter is to examine the underlying philosophical framework used in this study and to present a rationale for the selection of a qualitative and case study research strategy. The chapter describes and justifies the methods of research and analysis used. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview regarding the criteria for data evaluation.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2007 p. 101). Accordingly, there are three main perspectives that relates to research philosophy; these include epistemology, ontology and axiology. “Epistemological issues are usually concerned with the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline” (Bryman, 2008 p. 13) explicitly it is the study of how knowledge is generated (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). While ontological issues are concerned with the nature of reality. In essence, “ontology to a greater extent than epistemological considerations raises questions of the assumptions researchers have about the way the world operates and the commitment held to particular views” (Saunders et al, 2007 p.108). Alternatively, “axiological issues relate to the branch of philosophy that studies judgments about value” (Saunders et al, 2007 p. 110). Saunders et al (2007) went on to say that in an axiological study the focus shifts to the role that researcher own values play in all stages of the research process.

Given this understanding, the study adopts an interpretivism perspective, which is an “epistemology that advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in their role as social actors” (Saunders et al, 2007 p. 106). To accurately address the question how strategy tools are used in practice in a university context the interpretivism perspective enabled the researcher to explore the social reality that human action is meaningful. That is, Senior Management, Faculty Deans and Heads of Departments preference to select and use various strategy tools may be as a result of a particular meaning or value they attribute to the acts of using these tools. Based on this philosophy the researcher can gain access to people’s common-sense thinking and hence interpret their actions and based on their individual situations and experiences (Bryman, 2008). In addition to the interpretivism perspective, the paper also adopts an ontological approach which hinges on the premise that it is important to study the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them (Remenyi, 1998). Similar to the interpretivism perspective this approach sees the necessity to explore the subjective meanings motivating the actions of social actors in order for researchers to be able to understand these actions (Saunders et al, 2007).

3.2 Research Strategy and Design

A qualitative approach was adopted as compared to that of a quantitative approach. Berg (2001 p.3) defined qualitative research as research that refers to meanings, concepts, definitions, characterics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things whereas quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things. Generally, qualitative research do not focus on collecting data in terms of numbers but rather data is collected
through conducting observations and interviews. The data collection strategy for qualitative data incorporates in-depth inquiry, observations that yield detail and interviews that capture direct quotations about people’s personal perspectives and experiences (Johnson and Christensen, 2004).

The research focus is not primarily on quantity of tools used or counting of data but rather the focus is on the significance derived (Rasmussen, Ostergaard and Beckmann, 2006) from the tool usage and the purpose tool usage serve to management. Though the use of an exploratory study, which seeks to find out what is happening … and to bring clarity to your understanding of an issue (Saunders et al, 2007 p.133), this paper explores what is happening in practice by examining in what way and to what extent managers are utilizing strategy tools. Exploration was chosen since the research area was relatively vague and the researcher in this study needed learn under what circumstances managers were using strategy tools.

The research strategy was also based on the primary research premise of this paper, which seeks to describe the case in-depth while answering the research question and issues (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). When embarking on qualitative research researchers can select one of four main research strategies. The determining factor of selection is dependent on the purpose of the research. Specifically, a phenomenological approach may be adopted if the researcher seeks to describe one or more individual experiences of a phenomenon (Johnson and Christensen, 2004) whereas an ethnographical approach would be used when the researcher seeks to “describe issues, and explain the social world the research subjects inhibit in the way in which they would describe and explain it” (Saunders et al, 2007 p. 142). Grounded theory may be selected to when researcher seeks to inductively generate a grounded theory to describe and explain a phenomenon (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). Alternately, the case study strategy has considerable ability to generate answers to the question ‘why?’ as well as ‘what?’ and ‘how?’ questions (Saunders et al, 2007) additionally a case study strategy will be of particular interest if you wish to gain an rich understanding of the context of the research and the processes being enacted (Saunders et al, 2007; Morris and Wood, 1991). Bryman (2008) reserve the term case study for those instances where the ‘case’ is the focus of interest in its own right. Case study methods involve systematically gathering enough data information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions (Berg, 2001 p.225).

A case study approach was selected based on the assertion that this study seeks to investigate the context under which strategy tools are used. According to Berg (2001 p.233) “case studies of organizations allow the investigator to have insight into the life of that organization.” Berg (2001) went on to highlight that the case study approach is an extremely useful technique for researching relationships, behaviours, attitudes, motivations and stressors in organizational settings. This study used a multiple case study approach. According to Saunders et al (2007p. 140) “the rationale behind the multiple cases focuses upon the need to establish whether the findings of the first case occur in other cases.” Within the multiple cases an embedded case study would be
conducted on both universities. That is, although the first study will be on Umeå University (a single organization) the study investigated how strategy tools are used in practice at this university by examining what happens in one school and three departments (sub-units). Similarly, at the University of the West Indies the study was conducted at one of the main campuses (a single organization) but the study explored how strategy tools are used in practice by examining what happens on a senior management level, a faculty level, a departmental level and from a senior academic level (sub-units). Therefore, according to Saunders *et al* (2007 p.140) the study inevitably involves more than one unit of analysis and cannot be seen as a holistic case study (concerned with the organization as a whole) but rather it is an embedded case study. As said by, Scholz (2002) in an embedded case study, the starting and end point is the comprehension of the case as a whole in its real-world context. Moreover, Scholz (2002) noted that the course of analysis the case will be faceted either by different perspectives of inquiry or by several sub-units.

### 3.3 Research Approach

An inductive stance was selected for this paper since allowed the researchers to draw a conclusion from particular facts or pieces of evidence (Cooper and Schindler, 2003), acquired through interviews. Inductive research is concerned with the context in which events are taking place. Inductively, impressions and experiences are used to build up a general knowledge (Rasmussen *et al*, 2006), that is, theory is the outcome of research (Bryman, 2008). In conducting inductive research, researchers logically establish a general proposition based on observed facts (Sekaran, 2003). In contrast to the deductive approach, where theory and hypothesis are first deduced and then drive the process of gathering data (Bryman, 2008). Specifically, deduction is a process by which researchers arrive at a reasoned conclusion by logical generalization of a known fact (Sekaran, 2003). There has been little research done in the past addressing how strategy tools are used in practice. As a consequence, a bottom up or generalized approach to this research seems to be the most logical method as compared to the deductive approach which is a top down or confirmatory approach to research (Johnson and Christensen, 2004).

### 3.4 Research Context

#### 3.4.1 Universities being studied

Two universities were selected to review how strategy tools are used in practice. The decision to choose a university context to gather information was as a result of the uniqueness in the features of universities’ management structure in terms of decision making. In addition, the researcher selected two universities as the case to be studied because there has been little work in the past focusing on strategizing activities and strategy tools usage in a university context. The first university is Umeå University Main Campus and the second university is one of the three main campuses of The University of the West Indies (UWI). Umeå University Main Campus was chosen as a result of the fact that the researcher is currently a student at the university and has been taught by the university the importance of strategy tools in strategizing activities. Hence, the researcher wanted to review how (and if) managers at different levels of the said university incorporate strategy tools in their strategizing activities. However, one immediate challenge the researcher encountered after selecting Umeå University was the fact that
most of the informational brochures for the university was in Swedish. Many of the structure and procedural documents relating to the university’s strategy tend to be in Swedish. As a consequence, the researcher had to gather background information from the university’s website and the few informational brochures that were in English. Secondly, one of the three main campuses of The University of the West Indies was selected because the researcher wanted to make a comparison between two universities that operates in different economic and market environments and draw a comparison of whether or not strategy tools are being used in the same ways and for similar activities. In addition this university was chosen because the researcher has been employed at the institution for the past seven years and has a genuine interest in university strategies. As a result this allowed the researcher have contact with many pertinent members of staff.

3.4.1.1 Umeå University
Umeå University is Sweden’s fifth oldest university. Established since 1965 the university now comprises of two main campuses. These includes its main campus known as Umeå University and the newly named Arts and Design Campus which is situation close to Umeå River and is walking distance from the main campus. The campus faculty composition includes Arts, Medicine, Teacher Education, Social Sciences and Science and Technology. In addition to these faculties, the Umeå University also run six schools which focus on Business, Design, Environmental Studies, Fine Arts, Restaurant and Culinary Arts and Technology. To date there are approximately 29,000 students enrolled at the main campus and 4,000 employees. There is a wide range of over 800 different courses and 50 different degree programmes presently being offered by the university. While Umeå University’s seeks to develop in both Teaching and Research, Umeå University may be seen as a Teaching University. As with most universities Umeå University’s organizational structure reflects a dual authority system which is governed by both academic/professorial staff and academic committees and an administrative team (See Diagram 4).
Diagram 4

Umeå University Organizational Structure

University Board

Vice-Chancellor
Pro-Vice-Chancellors
Deputy Vice Chancellor

University Director

Committees

Foundations

Head of Administration
Administration incl. Computer Centre
University Library

Faculty of Arts
Dean's Office
Departments (equivalent)
Incl. Umeå School of Fine Arts, Bildmuseet - a museum of arts
Research Centres

Faculty of Social Sciences
Dean's Office
Departments (equivalent)
Incl. Umeå School of Business (USBE) Research Centres

Faculty of Medicine
Dean's Office
Departments (equivalent)
Research Centres

Faculty of Science and Technology
Dean's Office
Departments (equivalent)
Incl. Umeå Institute of Design Research Centres

Teacher Education
Dean's Office
Departments (equivalent)
Research Centres

(Umea University homepage, 2008)
To commence the data collection process the researcher sent out emails and telephone calls to the five deans at Umeå University and 15 Heads of Department. After contacting the 20 faculty members, two Deans and six Heads of Departments agreed to meet with the researcher. One week prior to the week carded for interviews, the researcher sent out a basic background about the study and some of the general questions that will be discussed during the interviews. However, after this was done one Faculty Dean and four Heads of Departments called to cancel because of their schedules. The researcher noted that in two of the apology emails these faculty members also mentioned that apart from being quite busy they did not think that if they were interviewed they would be much help to the researcher. Nevertheless, the researcher was able to confirm appointments with one Dean and three Heads of Departments. While this sample size was much smaller than anticipated, it worked to the researcher’s benefit since the researcher was gather more in-depth and insightful information. The interviews conducted were more detailed hence a better understanding of each interviewee’s role in the strategizing process and how they apply strategy tools was developed.

Before conducting any interviews the researcher visited Umeå University’s website and noted the main vision and strategies outlined by senior management of the university. These strategies include ‘desire for development,’ ‘respected and committed,’ and ‘success together.’ Given that these strategic objectives are broad and the leadership style of universities is quite dispersed, this study looks at how strategy tools are being used at two different levels of management on various committees and independently to meet the university’s strategic objectives.

3.4.1.2 The University of the West Indies (UWI)
The second university that will be used in this study is The University of the West Indies (UWI). UWI comprises of three main campuses one in Mona, Jamaica, one in Cave Hill, Barbados and one in St. Augustine, Trinidad. Apart from the three main campuses UWI operates a Centre of Hotel and Tourism Management in the Bahamas, Sir Arthur Lok Jack Business School at its St. Augustine campus and the Institute of Business at its Mona campus (UWI homepage, 2008). In addition there are 11 other non-campus centres operating in other Caribbean islands. It is estimated that UWI have a combined enrolment of almost 40,000 students and an annual output of some 6,600 graduates who have earned first degrees, higher degrees and advanced diplomas. In June 2008, UWI launched its newest campus the Open Campus in Antigua and Barbuda. “The Open Campus is an amalgamation of the previous Office of the Board for Non-Campus Countries & Distance Education (BNNCDE), the School of Continuing Studies (SCS), the UWI Distance Education Centre (UWIDEC), and the Tertiary Level Institutions Unit (TLIU)” (UWI Open Campus homepage, 2008).

Over the past six decades, the UWI evolved from a small, mainly residential academy in an elitist higher education setting into a relatively large publicly-funded institution. This study reviews one of the above mentioned campuses. The campus in this study has a work force of 576 academic and senior administrative staff and 2289 non-academic staff members. Table 1 reflects the student statistics in that campus for the last three academic years are as follows:
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1066</td>
<td>1060</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>2203</td>
<td>2309</td>
<td>2204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Legal Education</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Sciences</td>
<td>1405</td>
<td>1481</td>
<td>1602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Continuing Studies</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>2136</td>
<td>2387</td>
<td>2455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>4818</td>
<td>5503</td>
<td>5123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14737</strong></td>
<td><strong>15985</strong></td>
<td><strong>15571</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The selection of the Campus was based on the high intake (as compared to the other two campuses) of management and business students for its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. At the beginning of the study the researcher tried to make appointments with one member of senior management (Campus Registrar), all five Faculty Deans and 15 Heads of Departments (three from each faculty). However, because of the unavailability of some members of management and the time difference between the two countries, the researcher decided to interview one person from the various levels of management and not to select the larger sample size that was initially planned. The main criterion for the selection process was based on an individual’s involvement on one or more committee that is directly involved in strategizing activities for a department, faculty or the university. Doing this enabled the researcher to engage in a more focused study by exploring how (or if) strategy tools are being used on the various levels.

The interviewees were selected from the four main management positions within the university’s management structure: senior management, faculty deans, head of departments and senior lecturer/professors. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with four members of staff holding different job titles which include Campus Registrar, Faculty Dean, Head of Department and Senior Lecturer. The Campus Registrar was identified as a key person to interview since he is a member of the Senior Management Committee at the university and he also chairs a large number of university strategy, advisory, appointments and the like committees. The Faculty Dean was selected based on the number of programmes being offered and the student intake in the given faculty. After confirming an appointment with the Faculty Dean the researcher chose to interview one Heads of Department and one senior academic staff member from the same faculty. Similar to the selection of the Faculty Dean, Heads of Departments were chosen based on the number of programmes being offered by the department. Whilst the senior academic staff was selected based on their level of involvement on various management committees and their availability.
According to UWI, St. Augustine Campus homepage UWI’s seven strategic objectives include student centredness, expansion of access, quality, information technology platform, finance, institutional strengthening, and stakeholder and alumni relations. While these strategic objectives are different to the strategic objectives of Umeå University, what remains the same is the level of vagueness that exists between the two universities’ strategic objectives. Hence the study reviews how strategy tools are being used by three different levels of management on various committees and independently to meet the university’s strategic objectives. Focus will be placed on the context in which tools are used and the importance academics and senior management place on these tools while engaging in strategizing activities.

3.4.1.3 Justification of Sample Size and Research Setting
It can be argued that a larger sample size of 40 maybe more appropriate for such a study. Nevertheless, the researcher decided to work with a small sample to gather in-depth knowledge concerning how strategy tools are being used at various levels of management and management committees in two different universities. Time constraints issues also limited the number of quality interviews that could have been arranged. As a consequence a total of eight interviews were conducted (four interviews from each campus). However, in an attempt to ensure that the main objectives of the study would be addressed the researcher selected a key member of staff at the main levels of management based of their individual involvement on core academic committees of the university’s operations. Additionally, while previous work has been done regarding strategy tools that could be used in a university context, there has be very little work showing the application of strategy tool usage in strategizing activities in a university context. The similarities between these two universities in terms of culture and demographic location are quite few. However, since both universities acknowledged that the main focus of their university was teaching the researcher also decided to review whether demographic location affected managers’ perception as it relates to strategy tool usage.

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Telephone and Face to Face Interviews
Given the time constraints of this study, the researcher selected semi-structured telephone and face to face interviews as the data collection method. Bryman and Bell (2003) defined “semi-structured interviews as a wide term that typically refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions.” In semi-structured interviews the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to answer but the researcher can choose to omit some questions in particular interviews (Saunders et al, 2007). Conversely, additional questions may be included to explore the research question and given the nature of events in the given organization (Saunders et al, 2007). One key objective for the selection of semi-structure interviews was the flexibility it gave to researchers. Consistent to this objective, preliminary issues were allowed to surface which enabled the researchers to determine what areas required further questioning and investigation.
All of the semi-structured interviews conducted with faculty members of Umeå University were face to face interviews. At the beginning of each interview the researcher started by explaining the main concept of the thesis, then researcher began by asking some general questions about the interviewees’ perception of strategy and their involvement in strategizing activities. During the discussion the researcher then proceeded to asked some general questions about the interviewees use of strategy tools and their perception regarding the importance of these tools in strategizing activities. Information was gained about strategy tool usage on a daily, monthly and annually basis as it relates strategizing activities. Additionally, because the interviews were face to face interviews it allowed the researcher to inquire into other areas in which the researcher perceived to be relevant to the study. Interpreting the interviewees none verbal body language assisted the researcher in determining which areas were perceived by the interviewee to be more important as compared to others. At the end of each interview the interviewees were given a list to select and indicate from a list of 15 strategy tools which tools they used and at what stage of the strategizing process they used the tools. Each interview lasted between 60 to 90 minutes and was recorded. While conducting an interview with Interviewee A at Umeå University the researcher encountered some technical problems with the recording device and the interview was not recorded. As a result the researcher became a little distracted and this affected the researcher’s ability to focus on the answers of the questions being given and ask more detailed questions.

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted on skype over a period of two weeks with the selected members of staff at UWI. However, one of the main drawbacks of using semi-structured telephone interviews is the inability of the researcher to establish personal contact which is considered to be quite useful in qualitative research. Face to face interviews can often help establish an environment of trust between the researcher and the interviewees however this is often lost when engaging in telephone interviews. This inability often restricted the nature of some of the questions asked and the answers received. The lost of non verbal cues may have sometimes hindered the researcher’s ability to control the pace of the interview and to interpret how to how to pursue a particular line of questioning. In one of the interviews there was a problem with the quality of the connection which often caused the researcher to repeat certain questions. However, since these problems were anticipated by the researcher, the researcher sent the questions to all interviewees in advanced and asked the interviewees to submit a hard copy with their responses to the general questions. Thereby the researcher had both semi-structured interviews and written responses to the main or general questions. This approach enabled the researcher acquire the necessary data at a lower cost and within the given time constraints.

Each conversation lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. Similar questions were asked to the questions that were asked in the Umeå University interviews. Questions relating to involvement in strategizing activities were developed both on an individual level and on a committee level. The general nature of the interviews allowed the researcher to stop and ask different questions relating to the answers given by the respondents. After a discussion on strategy development to the strategy implementation process was covered, the researcher then inquired about strategy tool usage and the respondents’ perspectives.
as it relates to these tools. The respondents were also questioned about the rationale for strategy tool selection and how (to what extent and in what way) were these strategy tools used. The final question in all the interviews related to the concept of best practices. The researcher was curious to know if any of these managers developed best practices along the way and what were these practices. This was done to indicate to the researcher whether or not the respondents were unconsciously using strategy tools or aspects of various tools in their strategizing activities. The concept of best practices was also brought up to gain an understanding regarding whether or not these respondents were developing their own strategy tools and if they were when and how these tools applied. Before concluding the interviews each respondent was asked to indicate from a list of 14 strategy tools which tools they have ever used and at what stage of the strategizing process were these tools used. The list of 14 tools was developed based on strategy tools that where taught in the researcher’s current masters programme.

3.5 Criteria for Evaluation: Validity and Reliability

Johnson and Christensen (2004) noted that the concept of validity has been traditionally attached to the quantitative research. There has been much debate regarding whether the concepts of validity and reliability can be applied to qualitative research. Bryman (2008 p.376) recognized one stance is to “assimilate reliability and validity into qualitative research with little change of meaning other than playing down the salience of the measurement issues.” Bryman (2008) went on to state that other writers Kirk and Miller (1986) have applied concepts of validity and reliability to qualitative research but have changed the sense in which the terms are used very slightly. This study adopts the view of those researchers who argue that qualitative research can have validity and reliability (Bryman, 2008; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Here Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose trustworthiness instead of validity and reliability when assessing a qualitative study.

A major reason for Guba and Lincoln’s unease about the simple application of reliability and validity standards to qualitative research is that the criteria presuppose that a single absolute account of social reality is feasible … instead they argue that there can be more than one and possibly several accounts (Byman, 2008 p.377). According to this criterion, trustworthiness is made up of the following characteristics:

1. **Credibility**, which parallels internal validity
   - Credibility of findings entails ensuring research is carried out according to canons of good practice.

2. **Transferability**, which parallels external validity
   - Since qualitative research tends to produce rich accounts of details of a culture, this can be used as a database for making judgments about possible transferability of findings.

3. **Dependability**, which parallels reliability
   - In order to establish the merit of research in terms of trustworthiness, researcher must keep adequate records (in this case interview transcripts).
4. **Conformability**, which parallels objectivity

- *It is noted that total objectivity cannot be established in social research. However, the researcher must not allow personal values or theoretical inclinations to manifestly sway the conduct of the research findings.*

  *(Bryman, 2008 pp.377-379)*

The researcher ensured that all the information gathered during interviews were transcribed and taped (those from Umeå University) to give a true reflection about what information was acquired during the interviews. In addition all of the interviewees from UWI submitted an answer sheet to the broad questions in Section A (See Appendix I) which were also used with the other answers given during the semi structured interviews. After the first draft of the thesis was written all interviewees from both universities were sent a copy of the empirical section and the data analysis to ensure that they were not misrepresented and their views were not compromised in anyway. The interviewees were informed to clarify and change any points that were misunderstood or were not a true reflection concerning what was discussed during the interviews. Upon the confirmation of all the interviewees the researcher then submitted the empirical and data analysis sections to the study.
Chapter 4: EMPIRICAL STUDY
This chapter focuses on the data acquired during the eight interviews.

4.1 Information acquired during interviews
All of the interviews started with the interviewees explaining their involvement in strategizing activities from a sectional and committee level. It was noted that most (seven out of eight) of the interviewees functioned on a minimum of one other committee and was responsible for leading at least one section (department/unit/faculty/school/professional administrative unit) within their individual campuses. The concept of strategizing activities was broken down into three main components of strategic thinking, strategic decision making and strategy implementation. Below is an outline of some of the general thoughts expressed by the various interviewees and their usage of strategy tools while engaging in strategizing activities.

4.1.1 Umeå University
Interviewee A: Dean of one the Schools at the university
Interviewee A acknowledged that he is involved in strategizing activities on a daily basis and on many levels. According to him, in that school, strategy development is usually aligned with the university’s strategic objectives and mission and vision. A plan is usually developed to outline the strategic objectives for a period of two to three years highlighting some main areas of emphasis. That is, Education, Research, Corporate and Community Relations and Other (Human Resources, Finance, Internationalization) are given priority. Responsibilities are delegated to various sectional heads, sub-sectional heads and senior academic and professorial staff who would lead in the implementation of these strategic objectives.

Usually, from the general plan document strategizing activities are then agreed upon through sectional and committee meetings. Emphasis was placed on the critical role that discussion plays when engaging in strategizing activities. The following were outlined as the process of developing a strategy for Corporate and Community Relations:

- Hold a discussion with the delegated person responsible for Corporate and Community Relations
- Determine the required resources
- Outline the possibilities and availability through
  - Meeting with the alumni to discuss what kind of relationships can be established
  - Look at students
  - Review other alumni programmes
  - Meet with Advisory Board to discuss suggestions
- Hold more meetings with small group of alumni (to gauge their views and opinions about the given strategy to be implemented)
- Increase the number of invitations to other alumni members
- Develop a programme
At the end of the final step target groups would have been identified and a programme would have been developed to work with the targeted groups.

Interviewee A was then questioned regarding his use of strategy tools in the strategizing process. According to him “strategy tools are a starter they are the basic part in strategizing activities.” As Dean in this of the school he said tools are generally used as an instrument to gather information. “Tools are used to get a better grip of a situation… one decision can affect another and immediately you can conduct a consequence analysis.” Even though, Interviewee A considered strategy tool usage to be quite important he noted that implementation is far more critical. An illustration was given concerning acquiring a given accreditation. Interviewee A went out to highlight that while acquiring this accreditation can make the department more attractive on an American market there are many other discussions that still needs to take place. As a consequence, tools are often used for acquiring information however they do not serve as the determining factor in the selection of a programme or strategic objective.

In essence, Interviewee A saw strategy tools as simple and uncomplicated techniques that can provide managers with relevant information which can be used in their daily activities and decision making processes. At the school in which Interviewee A heads, strategy tools are used quite frequently. Some of the main strategy tools used in this school were SWOT Analysis, Strategic Alliances, Outsourcing, Strategic Planning, and Strategy Meetings. Interviewee A noted that strategic thinking occurs on a daily basis and various tools may be incorporated in the thinking process however one can often be unaware of the fact that they are using a particular tool. The interview concluded with a question being asked about any best practices that were developed on a school level and the role strategy tools play in best practices. Interviewee A acknowledged that there are many best practices that were developed such as identification of key variables within the school such as:

- grasping an idea where the school strands in terms of research, education, finance etc.
- ensuring a standard turnover of Ph.D. students and dissertations defended
- move from an informal strategy process to a more coordinated and formal process (through issuing a document)

In his concluding statements Interviewee A noted that there are other factors that come into play when developing best practices that may not necessarily be related to strategy tool usage. One such factor is the psychological issues that may influence an individual thought process. There while tools may provide information in the strategic thinking process strategic decisions and strategic implementation are often dependent on a wider range of issues.

**Interviewee B: Head of Department**

This interview commenced with the researcher asking Interviewee B about his involvement in strategizing activities on both a departmental and committee level. After the researcher noted that Interviewee B was indeed involved in strategizing activities on a
departmental level and on another committee, Interviewee B was asked to describe the process for developing strategy on a departmental level. Interviewee B highlighted that strategy development is channeled towards the department’s portfolio (comprises of both Online Courses, Campus Courses) of courses and programmes, this is done to help ensure that the department does not become too vulnerable to the environment. As a result of the university’s organization structure, strategy develop usually takes a top down approach. That is, directives often handed down from a faculty level and a senior management level. Interviewee B then gave an illustration to the process of engaging in strategizing activities based on the recommendation from the faculty as it relates to Research. There have been some changes as it relates to resources for research, in the past one third of the funding would come from the state based on how many dissertations there were every year. However this has changed and is now dependent on the number of publications each year and the amount of external funding you receive. That is, the more external funding you get the more funding you receive from the state. Consequently, the department has made a strategic decision to adapt. Interviewee noted that “discussions are critical when engaging in strategizing activities.” Discussions usually take place at departmental board meetings and research groups then recommendations would be made. Final decisions are often made either by the departmental head or the departmental board. Interviewee B proceeded to discuss that “University’s strategic objectives are more like the starting point or a leading story that you try to develop.” However, since “there are always new things to adapt to coming from the government, senior management, or the faculty … there is often never enough time to work strategy questions as it relates to the general vision.” Based on this “in your general involvement of doing some strategic activity you are working with a vision.”

Interviewee B was then asked whether strategy tools are used in the strategizing process in his department. “One’s mind does not operate in terms of strategy tool usage; however based the definition given, I use different elements of various tools to get a desired outcome.” Interviewee B went on to highlight “that strategy tool usage is a reflection of the individual’s thinking… reflective thinking involves strategy tool usage…reflective thinking involves the use of strategy tools on an unconscious level (thinking forward and backwards).” It was then suggested that in the same manner that one would take a longer time to contemplate a decision based on the magnitude of outcome, one would also apply more tools based on the magnitude of what is at stake. Interviewee B noted that “based on the cost or magnitude of the decision more tools may be used.” Strategy tools were used in the strategic thinking process as a means of persuasion and for development. Sometimes departments are “forced to use different strategy tools (e.g. strategic alliances) to gain funding.” In such a circumstance strategy tools are used as a means of persuasion. Conversely, strategy tools may be also be used for development. “Establishing a strategic alliance with another department in which both parties can learn from each other can create a win win situation.” Using a strategy tool in such a manner fosters an environment of corporation, growth and development.

Interviewee B was then asked concerning at what stage of the strategizing process were strategy tools used. “Strategy tools are used at all the stages (strategic thinking, strategic decision making and strategy implementation).” The researcher then asked Interviewee
B to give an example regarding how strategy tools may be used in strategy implementation. “At the implementation stage strategy tools can be used as a follow up method to evaluate the strategy implemented.” The question of what were some of the commonly used strategic tools in the used in Interviewee B’s department was raised. Interviewee B highlighted strategic planning, scenario planning, strategic alliances, and SWOT analysis. However, it was noted throughout the discussion that Interviewee B used various aspects of many other strategy tools (e.g. stakeholder mapping, strategy meetings, benchmarking) while engaging the strategic thinking and strategic decision making. The interview ended with a question regarding whether there have been any best practices developed by the department. Interviewee B suggested that seminars are often used as a means of transfer learning to enlighten other departments concerning the successful approaches developed while offering Net-based courses. According to Interviewee B “it can sometimes be assumed that the idea of best practices are based on the concept that we are all the same… but we are not all the same… as a result these best practices must be changed to the individual situation and context.” Other best practices outlined included identifying what works and sticking to it these includes strategic planning, strategic alliances, core competences and the like. In essence, it can be said that at this department some strategy tools were used as best practices.

**Interviewee C: Head of Department**

This interview like the two previous interviews started with the researcher asking the interviewee about his involvement in strategizing activities. Interviewee C confirmed his involvement in strategizing activities on both a departmental and advisory board level. The researcher then asked Interviewee C to identify the various steps for strategy to be developed within the department. It was noted that any member of staff can initiate the development of an idea or an issue. However, quite often the initial ideas come from the Headmaster of Education who sits on the Departmental Advisory Board. The steps for strategy development are as follows:

- Have discussions about various aspects of different ideas, evaluate the cost, benefits, estimate how many students, determine who will be the main teacher etc.
- After a lot of discussion has taken place a decision will be made that they may be proceeding with the new course
- This will then be handed over to the Headmaster of Education
- The Headmaster of Education will develop a course plan or assign this task someone else
- After this responsibility has been delegated there will be a follow up to process to see whether or not plan was developed
- The plan will then be taken to the Departmental Board for enforcement of the plan
- Finally it will be implemented by assigning resources and the like

Interviewee C was then asked which of Umeå University’s strategic objectives were pursued by his department and why. Interviewee C noted that while Umeå University’s strategic objectives can be used for outlining long term strategic planning these broad strategies are often difficult at a departmental level. The question was then raised regarding how the department would evaluate whether or not to pursue a strategy.
Interviewee C indicated “this would vary from time to time.” However the general process may be as follows:

- Make an estimate (“even though quite often people make bad estimates”)
- Look at what could be offered
- Determine how to establish alliances with other departments

The focus of the interview then changed to whether or not strategy tools are used in the strategizing process. Interviewee C acknowledged that “strategy tools are usually incorporated in the evaluation stage … tools such as SWOT analysis, benchmarking, ratio of list of current student to graduating students, economic tools for the budget process, scenario planning and strategy meetings.” Interviewee C went on to discuss that while strategy tool usage is helpful “dialogue and communication is key.” Considering the size of this department Interviewee C acknowledged that economic and budgetary issues were most important when engaging in strategic activity. “The various outlined models of strategy tools are not necessarily used however many attributes of some strategy tools are often applied when engaging in strategy activity.” Interviewee C then highlighted that “even though tools are important to gather information there are many other factors to be considered when making a decision and implementing strategy.” The interview then shifted to the idea of best practices developed by the department. According to Interviewee C “we are often unaware of many of the best practices … like the culture, how we make decisions, procedures we follow etc.” Interviewee C then noted that strategic implementation is often the most difficult aspect of strategizing activities. This is often a result of some of the organization’s and department’s best practices.

The interview progressed and Interviewee C explained “when engaging in strategizing activities it becomes important to delegate some of the responsibilities. This ensures that plans progress to the implementation stage since there is a sense of accountability.” Interviewee C was of the opinion that strategy tools should be used at all stages of the strategizing process. Nevertheless, it was noted that “an individual’s character can have a great influence on strategy.” Interviewee C raised an interesting perspective that “gutt feeling plays an important role in strategy making.” Interviewee C went on to say that “we would like to think that gutt feeling does not play a significant role with this… that we are all very rational people and we make rational decisions and so on … but in most cases we don’t know about outcomes and we can analyze (using tools) and sometimes it does not bring us any closer to a qualified decision then we naturally resort to gutt feeling.” Indeed “gutt feeling probably matters a lot more than we are willing to realize and admit… we may wish that it did not because it often seems unprofessional to use it but in real terms many people resort to it.” In concluding the interview Interviewee C reviewed the second section of the interview questions and noted that “you should be wise when choosing which strategy tools you should use since dependent on what level you are in the organization some strategy tools may be more important for high levels since they address issues that are not dealt with on a departmental level… if however you choose to use them you may end up just wasting time.”
Interviewee D: Head of Department
At the beginning of this meeting Interviewee D acknowledged that he is responsible for strategy and strategy planning on a departmental level. Interviewee D is also a member of two other campus committees. He expressed that “while I would like to spend more time with strategy planning and strategy activity most of the time I am addressing short term tasks.” Interviewee D was then asked to take the researcher through some of the steps his department would follow when developing a strategy. The steps for developing a new programme were outlined as follows:

- Discuss any new ideas with the director of studies (who is usually responsible for matching courses with lecturers, therefore this individual will have an idea about what is needed and who is available to work on new course)
- Hold meetings with members of staff with similar interest in the new idea and have discussions (listen to different perspectives)
- According to the nature of the matter try to assemble a group
- In another meeting try to reach a consensus

Interviewee D was then asked how he used the university’s broad strategic objectives when developing the department’s strategy. He responded “I must admit we do not look very much at the strategic objectives of the university...partly because they are very broad and not precise as a result one could choose to do that and it still may fall under one of the broad headings.” The focus of the interview then shifted to whether or not strategy tools are used when engaging in strategizing activities on a departmental level and if they were how were they used. Interviewee D noted that some basic strategy tools are used such as SWOT analysis and strategic alliances. An example was given on a new programme the department decided to implement a few years ago and how strategy tools played a role in the strategic thinking and decision making processes. The following steps were taken:

- Evaluate what other universities are doing (look at the opportunities and treats)
- Contact potential employer companies for their opinions to see what they were looking for in potential employees and find out if they have old students (from Umeå University who had done a programme with the department) and find out what were their strengths and weaknesses (thereby, they could evaluate the market demand for potential graduates)
- Review what is needed in terms of resources

Interviewee D noted that while the programme was indeed implemented there were many stumbling blocks along the way as it relates to other lecturers in the department belief that the programme may not be a good idea and the limited resources of the department. Additionally, it was noted that even though the programme have been implemented “it is not exactly like the initial version since there were many changes.” The question was raised what was the determining factor to implement such a programme even with the reservations of some faculty members. Interviewee D suggested that “the determining
factor was that the subject area is evolving all the time as a result you must change otherwise current programmes may become obsolete.” The researcher then asked if Interviewee D found strategy tool usage to be helpful. “SWOT analysis (strategy tool) is useful because it forces you to focus and be more precise than you would have otherwise been… I am not familiar with some of the tools however I believe that sometimes tools are replaced by computer software.” Additionally, “while we use benchmarking we never considered it to be a strategic tool we may use a few other tools but never consider that we are using a strategy tool.” Interviewee D also expressed that “tools are more useful while engaging in strategic thinking … when you are trying to prepare for a discussion (it helps to outline the main issues that should be considered).”

The penultimate question addressed whether or not the department had developed any best practices. Interviewee D noted that “the department’s culture may be seen as a best practice however it is not formalized or written down therefore it may be hard for new members of staff to immediately catch on.” The concluding question referred to whether strategy and strategizing activities are used more often on a senior level or at the various levels within the organization. Interviewee D responded “Strategy is important on several levels although sometimes we perhaps don’t think so explicitly that this is a strategic decision … we sometimes never think of what strategy we should have we just act the way we find best. Sometimes, I think that it would be a good idea for strategy to be more explicit… and that strategy should play a more significant role in the way we take decisions.” The interview concluded with Interviewee D indicating which strategy tools are used most often by his department.

4.1.2 The University of the West Indies (UWI)

Interviewee E: Campus Registrar

At the beginning of this interview the researcher questioned Interviewee E regarding his involvement in strategizing activities at the university. Interviewee E indicated “Yes. I am involved in strategic activity in the Senior Management group of the Campus and the wider senior management of the University. This involves departmental meetings and discussions as well as much wider university gatherings.” Interviewee E was then asked to explain the process of developing strategy and new business objectives for an upcoming year. Interviewee E gave two illustrations. In the first example Interviewee E expressed “this is done through discussion, development of existing arrangements and application of new information technology developments. Many things become self-evident when you have embarked on a particular course. For example, the introduction of on-line admissions and registration processes in one year suggests next year’s developments: e.g. on-line fee payments; on-line document submissions; and so forth.” In the second example Interviewee E explained “There is usually a Campus Management retreat, organized by the Campus Principal. This is a two day, off-campus activity at which all senior managers present their strategic plans to their colleagues before a wide-ranging discussion takes place. This year, this retreat led to a decision to move our Human Resources structure from an outdated, registrarial form to a more appropriate divisional arrangement, to be introduced in 2009.” Interviewee E highlighted that from an administrative transformation perspective the main strategic objectives were to ensure
the creation of a divisional structure, transformation business processes and to place
greater focus on the student as a customer.

However, some directives may be passed down from the Chancellor and Vice
Chancellors regarding the university’s strategic vision for the upcoming year. After these
directives are received the following process is usually followed:

- Attend management conference to discuss new goals, objectives and budget for
the coming year (this conference would be hosted by the University Centre
administrators e.g. University Registrar (who is head registrar for all three
Campuses)).

- Next, meet with senior management team (Principal, Deputy Principal, Bursar
and Campus Registrar) to discuss what is expected of this campus and the budget
constraints.

- Hold discussions with senior departmental staff during their annual performance
review and objective-setting exercises.

- Develop a rough framework plan and request Heads of Departments, Deans,
Sectional and Unit Heads to complete. Senior staff will contribute to the process
having been informed by their own interactions with subordinate staff and
reflection on their unit activities in the previous period.

- After various proposals are received from all the different departments and
sections, make the necessary changes

- Preparation of an annual plan by the head (Interviewee E) and discussions with
senior staff. Combine into a final proposal which would be sent to the university’s
centre for approval.

According to Interviewee E members of senior management are given a high degree of
freedom to implement new strategic goals and objectives however these changes must
first be submitted to the university’s centre for approval at university meetings (in which
decisions for strategic objectives and direction of the three universities are considered). It
was outlined that because of the general structure of the university strategic changes
cannot be made without the approval from the university centre. Additionally, once
strategic goals and objectives are to be changed or altered the university centre will issue
a notification to the various management committees (campus academic board, board for
graduate studies and research, board for undergraduate studies etc.) about this change.

The direction of the interview shifted as the researcher asked Interviewee E whether or
not strategy tools were used while engaging in strategizing activities. Interviewee E was
quick to respond “Not as such. However, I have a well developed sense of strategic
management nurtures over a lengthy career in University administration, in quite
responsive systems and what might be called strategy tools are almost second native to
me...” Interviewee E also noted that many strategy tools are just another management
fashion trend which disappears with time. He went on to state “I find the greatest
drawback with all strategic management tools is when they come to be seen as having a
vigour which they do not have. They should provide an indication of direction, a
compass bearing, rather than a road map to be followed at every step. Strategy planning
is approximate only in the real world and we have to be flexible when employing it.” Interviewee E was then asked whether or not he used strategy tools in his day to day operations. Interviewee E further expressed “I have implicitly used these tools, however, if I were to use them explicitly (not sure I would!) I would want some training in what they are and how to apply them.” However, “if I look at business plans, and service level statements, my reason for using them is that they enable me to be explicit as to what I do, to ‘atomize’ processes, and to determine those that are no longer needed and how to improve those that are.”

The concept of best practices was then discussed. Interviewee E noted that there were many best practices developed within his unit. “Meetings and workshops to discuss strategy and development, benchmarking, fact-funding/environmental scanning, application of relevant technologies” these were some of the main best practices outlined by Interviewee E. The researcher noted that strategy tools were being used as best practices by Interviewee E and his senior management team. After much discussion it was noted that Interviewee E and his senior management committee have been using strategy tools (SWOT analysis, strategic planning, strategy meetings) while engaging in strategizing activities. Interviewee E was then asked to review Section B of the interview questions and indicate which strategy tools from the list of 15 tools he believed he and his senior management team used. Interviewee E acknowledged that he had never considered SWOT analysis, strategy planning, strategic alliances etc. to be strategy tools. It was expressed by Interviewee E “I use more than four of these strategy tools on a regular basis ... some are not frequently used but are used when we want to ascertain specific information.”

**Interviewee F: Head of Department**

The interview began with the researcher asking basic questions regarding Interviewee F involvement in strategizing activities. Interviewee F acknowledged that he is involved in strategizing activities on a departmental level (where he heads these activities) and on various committee in which he is a member of the board. Interviewee F was then asked to discuss the process that he would usually engage in when developing new strategies and business objectives on a departmental level. Interviewee F noted that “many times a directive will come from the faculty office to produce a proposal for the upcoming academic year… this proposal should address financial issues (in terms of request for additional staff, equipment etc) and the department’s objectives (in terms of teaching, research, growth etc).” When such a directive is received the department would do the following:

- Make a copy of the request from the faculty dean and circulate it to all members of staff. Ask these members of staff to complete the document (and submit to head of department by a given date) as it relates to their areas of focus and what is needed for their courses to be more successful
- Have a departmental meeting to discuss the various suggestions
- Meet with subject and programme heads to review what was discussed in the meeting
At this meeting evaluate the department’s needs and strengths and weaknesses and budget restrictions

Produce a final proposal and return to the faculty office

Interviewee F acknowledged that while the university’s website may outline the university’s strategic objectives this is rarely reviewed when engaging in strategizing activities. According to interviewee F “teaching and research plays a key role in strategy development, the department ensures that programmes are continuously evaluated and compared to other programmes being offered by other universities both locally and internationally.” The researcher then asked whether or not strategy tools are used in the strategizing process and if they are how are they used. Interviewee F highlighted that prior to the interview he was not aware of the term strategy tools, however based on the definition given and some of the examples in Section B of the interview paper he could admit that he has been using some tools but was unaware of this. Interviewee F expressed “once you start thinking about strategy or change you would immediately evaluate the market, look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats…you would also consider the cost, how could we be more effective (what new approaches we could adopt), how we make our programmes more attractive etc.” Interviewee F went on to say “these activities are all part of strategizing … never have I stopped to think let me use this tool to get a particular result… once a decision needs to be made it is natural to evaluate the nature of the decision on many levels and I guess it is at this stage I would use a strategy tool (but I would not be thinking I am using a tool, it would be evaluated based on my thinking process or the committee members thinking process through discussions).”

The concluding questions related to best practices and the most commonly used strategy tools by the department. Interviewee F indicated “this department implemented many best practices through the concept of transfer learning … once we develop a practice that has worked in the past we try to share it with others by having regular meetings so that persons with similar concerns can explore this option… another best practice is the office monthly breakfast (which usually takes place the day after everyone gets paid) it is for all members of staff in the department … it allows persons at different levels to interact with one another hence persons can discuss work related and non work related issues in a relaxed environment. The creation of this controlled environment helped develop communication between and among members of staff.” Interviewee F concluded by saying while SWOT analysis, strategy planning, strategy meetings and scenario planning are used more often at that department different components of other tools are incorporated in practice.

**Interviewee G: Senior Lecturer/Director of Masters Programme in subject area**

Interviewee G acknowledged that he is involved in strategizing activities both on a departmental level and on a university level. After having 18 years of service at the organization Interviewee G have also served as a head of department and functioned on at least 10 other committees and special groups for various university matters. Interviewee G was then asked to outline the process used for developing strategy at one of the groups or committees he serves on or heads.
- Form a committee to address the issue
- Hold regular meetings
- Define and communicate protocols developed
- Focus on quality in all aspects
- Make final decision and submit to department or faculty head (based on where the directive came from)

Interviewee G was then asked the question, in accordance to UWI’s strategic objectives, which of the strategic objectives he would use as his main focus when engaging in strategic activity and why. According to Interviewee G quality was the main focus in many of the strategic groups he operates on. He went on to discuss “when developing strategy of any kind for any programme or otherwise it is important that the end result is of a high standard.” The researcher then asked whether or not strategizing tools were used to ensure this objective is achieved. Interviewee G immediately responded “while strategy tools may be used most of the tools used are my own and not necessarily something that is specifically considered to be a tool.” He went on to explain that the “development of your own practices and techniques to make decisions can be more case specific (and beneficial) which is more often needed than gathering a wide cross section of information that may be irrelevant at times.” The benefits derived from the development of these practices or tools include “team work, regular meetings (constant discussion and dialogue), ability to produce and distribute precise procedures to be implemented, have a breakdown of who will do what and when (accountability).” Interviewee G acknowledged “strategy tools are indeed useful to help identify what can be done differently however many other critical factors must also be considered before any true decision can be made.” Interviewee G noted “strategy tool usage helps bring order and reasoning to that which was planned… therefore they are often used for sense making.”

It was highlighted that “because in a university environment some decisions need to be made within a short period of time the amount of work involved in using some of strategy tools (or the amount of time involved in understanding what has to be done) act as a deterrent for tool usage.” Interviewee G went on to outline that “you can get many benefits from tool usage such as precision… however getting people to follow instructions in a timely manner is challenging… and therefore the most useful approach is to constantly chase persons to get them to meet deadlines.” Interviewee G then explained that “even though tool usage brings order and defines precisely what needs to be done, it must remain flexible for improvement/modifications on methods or objectives to be achieved.” Like many of the other interviewees Interviewee G believed that strategy tools can be used mainly in the strategic thinking stage of the strategizing process. At the other stages, such as decision making and implementation, many other factors affect what will actually be decided upon and implemented.

**Interviewee H: Dean of Faculty**
This interview commenced with the researcher asking interviewee H his involvement in strategizing activities. Interviewee H highlighted that he is involved in strategic activity both on a faculty level and he is a member of three other management committees
involved in strategizing activities for the university. The researcher then asked the interviewee to describe the process of developing strategy on the faculty level. Interviewee H acknowledged that he usually convenes meetings with his Deputy Deans and Heads of Departments to discuss the way forward for an upcoming academic year. After these meetings the decisions are presented to the rest of the Faculty for noting via the monthly Faculty Board Meetings. If needed, some decisions would be sent forward to the Campus Academic Board meeting or Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings for approval from the Campus before commencement. The researcher then asked Interviewee H regarding UWI’s strategic objectives and which one he considered to be the main focus of the faculty. Interviewee H responded “Student centredness because it remains one of the main purposes of our entire existence as an institution. However while the seven strategic objectives remain the platform from which we continue to build, we have plateau from these. The University of the West Indies focuses on its 2007-2012 Strategic Plan.” Interviewee H highlighted the importance of the new strategic plan launched by the Vice Chancellor to guide the development of the University over a five year period 2007-2012. Interviewee H went on to explain “The leadership of the University attached considerable importance to the design and implementation of a process that maximized the opportunities for participation and inputs from internal and external stakeholder groups. At the start of the process, the Vice Chancellor wrote personally to each member of staff advising that the process was about to commence and urging them to take advantage of the opportunities for helping to shape the future of UWI. The Vice Chancellor also wrote to Prime Ministers and the various Ministers responsible for tertiary education inviting their inputs and those of relevant public officials.” According to Interviewee H, “in order to achieve this vision for the UWI, over the next five years UWI will concentrate on building excellence in four areas that, taken together, represent the core activities of the University:

- teaching and learning
- graduate studies
- research and innovation and
- outreach

It is recognized that success will be critically dependent on getting this right in the following areas: (i) transforming the administrative culture and processes; (ii) effective marketing and branding; (iii) strengthening regionalism; (iv) strengthening the national engagement processes; (v) leveraging international partnerships, and (vi) funding the institution.”

A question regarding how are new programmes, business objectives or processes pursued in an upcoming year was the asked. Interviewee H acknowledged that he would pursue a similar process of meeting with Deputy Deans and Heads of Departments to discuss new business objectives or processes however as it relates to new programmes or courses the process is very structured. (See APPENDIX II which explains in detail the process of introducing a new undergraduate programme). The direction of the interview then shifted to whether or not strategy tools were being used in strategizing activities. Interviewee H stressed the importance of strategic planning on a faculty level. Interviewee H highlights
“transformation, essentially a response to complex forces of change of a social, political and economic nature, enabled the institution to remain relevant and to sustain an unrivalled contribution to social mobility and national and regional development… this transformation was achieved through the use of strategy tools.” Interviewee H notes “in order to make the university a first choice for the region's students and talented academics… it will provide a truly supportive environment that rewards excellence and it will be agile enough to thrive in a dynamic global environment.” Strategy tools are often used unconsciously by many faculty members to achieve these goals. Interviewee H concedes while strategy tools are often used in strategizing activities it is management’s ability to recognize the need for change and which tools can be useful in the process which really makes a difference. The interviewee recognizes management’s sense making ability as critical to the university’s development and growth capabilities. The ability to understand what is needed for the institution to remain relevant and to sustain an unrivalled contribution to social mobility and national and regional development does not come from tools usage per se but instead originates from management’s ability to understand the environment in which the university is operating and meeting its stakeholder’s needs. Interviewee H notes that strategy tools compliments this thought process by providing relevant information. According to Interviewee H strategy tools act as a guide however if management or tool users are not capable of making sense of the information acquired then strategy tool usage becomes irrelevant. Additionally, Interviewee H also acknowledges the need for management to make sense of which strategy tools to use and when to use these tools. An illustration was given regarding while some tools may derive great benefits to some organizations using these tools in another organization may be inappropriate. Therefore management must select appropriate strategy tools to get the desired outcome or information required. Finally, the interview ended with the concept of best practices. Interviewee H highlights that communication was the main best practice within the faculty. This is done through regular faculty meetings to encourage dialogue and transfer of information.
Chapter 5: DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Extent of strategy tool usage
After conducting interviews with faculty members from both Umeå University and UWI it became evident that strategy tools are used in practice at the two universities. The extent to which strategy tools were used varied from section to section and sometimes university to university. The information gathered from the universities revealed that it is often difficult to measure the extent of strategy tool usage. This was due to the fact that quite often strategy tool are used cognitively. As Interviewee B highlights “reflective thinking involves the use of strategy tools on an unconscious level (thinking forward and backwards).” In light of this, identifying where and when strategy tools are used is not always possible. More often than realized different components of strategy tools were used in everyday routines to assist the interviewees with their strategizing activities. Therefore, new strategy tools were often created based on the given situation requirements.

It should be noted that while many of the interviewees indicated that strategy tools should be used at the various stages in the strategizing process all of the examples of strategy tool usage were at the strategic thinking stage as a means of justification, evaluation, communication and or sense-making. Therefore while strategy tools were being used quite often the extent to which most of the tools were utilized was mainly for strategic thinking. However, the information collected reflects that the higher the level in the hierarchy the greater the level of strategy tool utilization. Interviewee B highlighted “based on the cost or magnitude of the decision more tools may be used.” Interviewee E also noted “while I never considered it this way before strategy tools are used intensively (not necessarily by me) on a senior level at the campus.” Interviewee E went on to express that “strategy tools are used regularly in management seminars to communicate new business objectives and strategies.” Additionally, Interviewee E acknowledged “strategy tools are often used by external consultants when conducting development seminars.” Nevertheless, Interviewee E noted “one can become weary of strategy tools since new tools are always introduced when management seminars and facilitators change…therefore some of these strategy tools are often seen as another management fad which will fade with time.” It may be said that the extent of tool usage is dependent on the user, the context and the nature of the task or decision at hand.

5.2 How are strategy tools used in practice?
5.2.1 Sense-making and Evaluation Purposes
One theme that was commonly expressed by many of the interviewees was the significant role that strategy tools play in sense-making and evaluation. To many of the interviewees strategy tools were used to bring focus, precision, order and reasoning to a desired course of action. Once interviewees had to make a strategic choice, in which they would formulate different courses of action, strategy tools were often used both consciously and sometimes unconsciously to help in their evaluation process. The interviewees viewed strategy tools as an instrument to determine what improvements were needed by forcing them to think beyond the current scope and develop new and innovative ideas to meet their section’s challenges. The information gathered from strategy tool usage directed
interviewees to focus on issues (market demands, resources, competition, strengths, weaknesses etc.) which might have been otherwise overlooked. This knowledge acquired from strategy tool usage brings a degree of awareness.

However, the idea of strategic management or engaging in strategizing activities considers a wide range of other factors. One factor that was continually highlighted by many of the interviewees was the role that sense-making and strategic thinking plays after strategy tools are used to provide a framework for analysis. Understanding how individuals interpret and makes sense of the information acquired may help highlight how decisions are made. This is seen in Interviewee H perspective which states while strategy tool usage can be beneficial critical to its success is management’s ability to make sense of what strategy tools to use in different business context. While Interviewee F expressed “…once a decision needs to be made it is natural to evaluate the nature of the decision on many levels and I guess it is at this stage I would use a strategy tool…” This is in accordance with Hussey’s (1997) work which notes “in many cases what appear to be hard analytical processes are affected by hidden behavioural or soft considerations.” This view is also in alignment with what has been expressed by Interviewee C “we would like to think that gutt feeling does not play a significant role with this… that we are all very rational people and we make rational decisions and so on … but in most cases we don’t know about outcomes and we can analyze (using tools) and sometimes it does not bring us any closer to a qualified decision then we naturally resort to gutt feeling.” Many of the interviewees acknowledged that they used strategy tools as a starting point for sense-making. However, many of the interviewees expressed that while tools are used in the thinking process to help an individual focus on an issue and help bring order and reasoning to a situation, there is still a level human aspect that must also be considered. This human aspect addresses how behaviour is influenced and hence affects choices. As Interviewee C noted “people approach things (decisions) in different ways (some may be emotional while others may be analytical and sometimes this affects how decisions are made … an emotional person may be more likely to make creative decisions however this have a negative effect on the decision making process also).” Or as Interviewee G noted “strategy tool usage helps bring order and reasoning to that which was planned… therefore they are often used for sense making.” This concept of sense-making is in alignment with Maitlis and Lawrence (2007) work which states “sense-making is often enabled by combination of a discursive ability that allows users to construct and articulate persuasive accounts of their environment, and process facilitators in the form of organizational routines, practices, and performance.” Based on these accounts it may be argued that strategy tools are often used as a foundation to initiate cognitive tasks of sense-making and interpreting of information which would be used for other stages in the strategizing process.

The interviewees used the same strategy tools for different purposes. SWOT analysis for example was used as a means of communication and discussion while others used it as a means evaluate a decision whereas others used it as a motivation tool. This is similar to Wright et al (2008) work which notes “strategy tools are often used based how the users make sense of the tool.” This can be interpreted from the various responses of some of the interviewees:
“… many attributes of some strategy tools are often applied when engaging in strategy activity”

“I use different elements of various tools to get a desired outcome”

“…you should be wise when choosing which strategy tools to use …”

“...since strategy tools are not industry specific ... it becomes necessary to alter tools to suit your business context…thereby developing a tool that addresses the issues you need to address”

“I believe a lot of these tools which are usually discussed at management seminars are just another management trend (which will not stick around very long) as a result I have never been too keen on adopting tools in my business practices ... although ... I have never considered SWOT analysis, strategy planning, strategic alliances etc. to be strategy tools”

Based on these comments it was noted strategy tool usage was highly dependent on how the interviewees made sense of tools. If the interviewees perceived a particular strategy tool to be beneficial to their business context the strategy tool would be used often. It was noted that management’s ability to modify particular tools so that they used in the business context was also critical to strategy tool usage. Moreover, there seemed to be a strong relationship between interviewees’ perception of strategy tools and the value it can add to their section and usage. Therefore, management’s sense-making ability as it relates to various strategy tools affected the extent to which strategy tools were used by both universities. As a consequence, the greater management’s ability to make sense of a particular tool the greater the probability of usage.

5.2.2 Communication and Persuasion
It was noted that all of the interviewees stressed on the importance of discussion and communication when engaging in strategizing activities. Based on the responses from the interviewees it was noted that strategy tools are often used as a means of communication, persuasion and justification of new ideas and business objectives. Below are some of the views expressed by some of the interviewees:

“…discussion is need after tool usage.”

“…while tool usage is important dialogue is just as important (communication is critical)”

“sometimes SWOT analysis and scenario planning are used to create an environment for discussion...”
“during monthly departmental meetings various ideas are discussed and are evaluated based on benefits, cost, availability of resources etc. ... to communicate why we should or should not pursue a decision.”

“strategy tools are used in many management retreats to communicate new ideas and approaches of doing business…”

Although engaging in strategizing activities generates better results through better decisions, identifies more opportunities (by considering factors that may have otherwise been overlooked), fosters better coordination at the various levels within the university, this can only be achieved through adequate communication. Hence, many of the interviewees used strategy tools as a communication mechanism which assisted them in justifying decisions made and getting other members enthused with a decision. Furthermore, strategy tools were sometimes used as a means to stimulate and encourage dialogue. All of the interviewees from both universities emphasized that communication and dialogue are fundamental when engaging in strategizing activities. Consequently strategy tools were often used in the communication process.

Quite often when strategic goals and objectives are developed middle management are left out of the process. Therefore, it is essential that the message is communicated and accepted by those who need to implement these strategic goals and objectives. The use of strategy tools as a means of persuasion in communicating strategic goals and objectives helps to ensure that strategic goals and objectives are understood by all. In addition, when strategy tools are used for persuasion (depending on the tool) they can highlight costs, benefits, risks, opportunities and the like that can be derived if a particular goal or objective is pursued. Equally as important, and as was highlighted by Interviewee B sometimes an individual may be “... forced to use different strategy tools (e.g. strategic alliances) to gain funding.” In this context tools are also used as a means of persuasion to achieve sectional gain. It might be argued that if the interviewees perceived strategy tool usage as a means of getting a desired outcome by management or external parties more tools will be used.

5.2.3 Development and Growth Strategies
It was expressed by some of the interviewees of both universities that strategy tool usage can help with development and growth within their sections. The complexity of the market environment and the need to stay abreast and ahead creates the need for continuous growth and development. There is therefore a need for creative business choices and practices, it was noted that many of the interviewees used strategy tools to help alleviate this need. Strategic alliances, change management programmes and outsourcing were used at various times by different sectional heads and universities for a variety of reason.

“Establishing a strategic alliance with another department in which both parties can learn from each other can create a win win situation.”
“...throughout the last couple of years there were many reductions in the department’s annual budget ...decisions were made to hire some services on a part-time basis (outsource)…”

“introducing and implementing change is never easy... change management workshops and other change management artifacts are sometimes needed...”

As was given in an illustration by Interviewee E during his first term in office he decided to implement some change management programmes to assist in the refocusing of the university’s strategic goals and objectives. Change management workshops were held for all members of staff highlighting the new direction of the university. Each member of staff was given a tea cup and a key ring with the new strategic goals and objectives. In addition, there was one month of training (customer service etc.) offered to different categories of staff to ensure they understood that they too played a significant role in the process. While Interviewee E never thought that he was using a strategy tool to implement change he was. On the other hand, Interviewee B acknowledged that a win win situation can be achieved when using strategic alliances. Strategic alliances were seen by many of the interviewees as an opportunity for development and growth while staying ahead of the competition. It was noted that organizational development involves many actors at different levels of the hierarchy. Strategy tools were used by persons at the different levels in both universities to assist their section pursue growth and development strategies.

Many organizations pursue growth and development strategies and universities are no different. Venturing into new markets, identifying core business, applying relevant technologies, developing strategic alliances were some of the approaches pursued by the interviewees for growth and development strategies. Upon further investigation it can be argued that strategy tool usage played a pivotal role in their pursuit for strategic growth and development.

5.2.4 Best Practices
During the course of each interview the concept of best practices was raised. Interviewees were asked to highlight some of their section’s best practices. Best practices ranged from the departmental culture to developing strategic plans to having regular meetings. Many of the interviewees were oblivious to the fact that their best practices were indeed strategy tools. Here strategy tools were not necessarily used in strategizing activities per se but rather they were used as a means of transfer learning by identifying what works and what does not work. Developing deliberate best practices is never simple because there is often a need to persuade other staff members that the particular approach is the right one to follow. Nevertheless, according to the interviewees most of the best practices were emergent and not deliberate. The interviewees and the individual departments were drawing components from different tools to create practices which added value. Therefore in this context strategy tools were used based on knowledge acquired from practice.
Many of the interviewees prided themselves on the best practices of their section. The unique processes of sections were often given as an illustration of best practices. However, upon closer examination of some of the processes and in accordance to Knott (2007) definition of strategy tool most of the practices outlined were indeed strategy tools. This raises an interesting thought as it relates to strategy tools and best practices. Are all best practices strategy tools?

5.3 Comparison between two universities
At Umeå University all of the interviewees used strategy tools. On average departments used five strategy tools while engaging in strategizing activities. Interviewee A acknowledged that while engaging in strategic activities throughout his tenure he had used all 15 tools highlighted in Section B. However, the other interviewees at Umeå University never considered that they were using strategy tools most of them when questioned about strategy tool usage identified that they used only one or two tools. But upon further questioning it was evident that many other tools were being incorporated into their strategizing processes. While reviewing Section B of the interview questions, all of the interviewees noted that some of the strategy tools outlined in that section were only used on in times of change (scenario planning, change management programmes, benchmarking, and balance score card). The researcher noted that there were commonly used strategy tools by all of the interviewees at Umeå University these include SWOT analysis, strategic planning, strategy meetings, and strategic alliances.

In the same manner also at UWI many of the interviewees used at least six of the highlighted strategy tools in Section B when engaging in strategizing activities. However, similar to Umeå University some of the interviewees were sometimes oblivious to the fact that they were using components of various strategy tools. Hence they never acknowledged that they were using some of the strategy tools that they were actually using. Interviewee E and Interviewee H both viewed strategy tools as a management fad. Nevertheless, the interviewees demonstrated that even though they considered strategy tools to be another management fad they were still using strategy tools in their strategizing activities. The other two interviewees at this university acknowledged that the success acquired from strategy tool usage is dependent on the people employing them. At UWI the commonly used strategy tools were SWOT analysis, strategic planning, strategy meetings and strategic alliances. However as was previously recognized a wide range of strategy tools are often used at various management seminars and workshops held by external consultants.

What immediately stood out to the researcher was the fact that both universities had the same commonly used strategy tools. Nevertheless, the justification for usage varied from assisting in the decision making process by helping to gather information, to being a means of communication, persuasion and justification of a new idea or process. The tools that were commonly used for sense-making, planning, management and governance. This is in accordance to what have been expressed earlier by Duderstadt (2006) universities’ management need to recognize that in a rapidly changing environment, it is important to develop a planning process that is not only capable of adapting to changing
conditions, but to some degree capable of modifying the environment in which the university will find itself in the future. Table 2 outlines the interviewees’ responses to Section B of the interview questions. From the responses given in the table it was noted that some tools may were industry specific (strategic alliances, strategic planning) that is usage of these strategy tools were considered critical in the universities’ strategizing processes. However, other strategy tools were used based on the interviewees’ knowledge and exposure to the tool.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Tool</th>
<th>Tool Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Umea University</td>
<td>UWI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOT Analysis</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Meetings/Workshops</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter’s 5 Force Model</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Score Card</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Chain Analysis</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PESTLE</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Competences</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario Planning</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCG Matrix</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsourcing</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Management</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Alliances</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Mapping</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY
Yes                      √
No                        x
Sometimes but not often  *

5.4 Discussion

The information acquired from the interviews reflected that strategizing activities differed from section to section and were often circumstance specific. Additionally, many of the interviewees acknowledged that since the strategic goals and objectives of their university were vague it gave them a greater degree of flexibility to develop and implement strategy. This is somewhat consistent to Cohen et al. (1972) view which states that universities are organized anarchies with unclear strategic goals and objectives. Nevertheless, it may be argued that while the strategic goals and objectives were broad and unclear it allowed creativity and flexibility in the various processes needed for the universities to function efficiently. When academics or sectional heads place too much emphasis on their individual section’s strategic objectives (development of research etc.)
this is sometimes seen as being “more loyal to their discipline rather than to their institution” (Shattock, 2003). However, it can be debated that the flexibility which comes from the broad universities’ strategic goals and objectives facilitates growth and development to the university as a holistic unit and not only the given section.

A lot have been said (Prince, 2007; Duderstadt, 2006; Groves et al, 1997; Hanham, 1988) about the need for universities’ management to recognize and adapt to the changing environment. These authors work stresses the importance of university management’s thinking ability and policy making capabilities. From the information gathered it became evident that sectional heads at both universities spent a large amount of time on strategy and policy making. All of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of strategic thinking in this process. Consistent to O’Shannassy’s (2001) view there seemed to be no single formula for strategic thinking for the interviewees. The interviewees developed their strategic thinking abilities from the progression and development of strategies over time. This created a higher degree of flexibility in their problem solving abilities through coherent and creative thought processes. In attempting to develop and implement successful strategies the sectional heads must possess an understanding of their section’s role within the universities. That is, how can their individual sections add value to the university at large. This is in coherence with O’Shannassy (2003) which states “strategic thinkers at all levels of the firm must identify problems …for investigation with an understanding of the wider business context.” O’Shannassy (2003) also noted that strategic thinkers’ problem solving ability “allows the use of intuition and analysis depending on needs.” At both universities the interviewees repeatedly highlighted that analysis is not sufficient. The interviewees stressed that there is often a need to make sense of a situation after analysis is done then make a conceptually sound decision. Strategic thinking therefore requires “thinking in time” that is learning from the past, having “a clear perception of the present while determining the future” (O’Shannassy, 2003). Due to the dual authority structure within universities, sectional heads play a pivotal role in the decision making and development of new proposals for their universities. This is as a result of their involvement on management committees. Therefore, sectional heads must render support to senior managers’ strategic goals and objectives by ensuring their sections and committees individual strategies interlock with the universities’ broader strategies while thereby guaranteeing coherence.

Over the last couple of years government funding within universities have been on the decline and the criteria to gain additional funding for research have changed. As a consequence many universities are forced to think of more creative strategies to address this issue. Throughout the interviewing process many of the interviewees highlighted the importance of strategic alliances. Increases in funding, research opportunities (creating a win win situation), transfer learning and growth and development were the main reasons identified for developing strategic alliances. There seemed to be a need for sectional heads to establish Corporate and Community relationships and relationships with other universities through exchange programmes. Interviewee A acknowledged that his section had over 80 exchange programmes and many faculty members were involved in research with different corporations. While Interviewee F acknowledged that his department established an ongoing collaboration with the government service to offer training to
various ministries. In the same manner also, the other interviewees noted the importance of the many strategic alliances established within his section. The interviewees stressed the importance of developing existing strengths while not being totally dependent on one strategy. This is in alignment with Prince (2007) work which speaks about third stream activities. The interviewees from both universities highlighted that there is often discussion about the development of more Corporate and Community relationships. However, a thorough assessment is needed of the sections’ resources and competence before determining to venture into these new market opportunities. It can be noted that the interviewees from both universities acknowledged that third stream activities are just as important as main stream opportunities. Nonetheless, lack of sufficient resources (sharing staffing between regular duties and new third stream activities) often acts as a deterrent in the pursuit of third stream activities.

How were strategy tools being used at the universities? Strategy tools were used in the strategizing activities by all of the interviewees. While some of the interviewees acknowledged that they were not familiar with the term strategy tool upon further discussion it was noted that all the interviewees used strategy tools in their strategizing activities. Consistent with Knott (2008) the interviewees often took elements of various tools and developed a new tool or practice to address a given situation. It was expressed that strategy tools can provide an indication of direction rather than a road map to be followed at every step. This point is also consistent with Knott (2008) which notes that “strategy tools cannot provide a blueprint but rather they act as a guide to thinking.” The interviewees were not using strategy tools as the basis for decision making but rather they were using them as a means to provide insightful direction and information. Many of the interviewees acknowledged that strategy tools while they can provide order and focus to a variety of factors, their usage was not the determining factor for decision making and implementation. Therefore, many times tools were used as a means of analysis (Knott, 2006; Clark, 1997) and evaluation. It was noted that knowledge relating to the various tools did not hinder the interviewees from using tools. Unlike Frost (2003) work which observed that limited tools were used because of lack of knowledge. While this is a valid statement, the information gathered in this case study reflects that the interviewees were using various strategy tools even though they were unaware of the fact. In addition, while many of the interviewees did not indicate that they were using various strategy tools because of their lack of knowledge as it relates to the tools, the interviewees were still taking components of these strategy tools to address their business context. Additionally, at UWI the interviewees expressed that strategy tools were often used at management development seminars by facilitators. However, lack of strategy tool usage was not only based on lack of knowledge but rather because strategy tools were viewed by the interviewees as another management fashion trend which would eventually fade with time. The interviewees who shared this view were consistent with Clark (2004) and Abrahamson (1996).

The question therefore was raised concerning why the interviewees were using components of various tools and not using specific tools. Undeniably many of the interviewees did not originate from a management background and had no academic training in management. As a consequence many of their practices originated from
practical experience. To these interviewees strategy tool usage was based on their individual sense-making ability. Many of the interviewees used attributes of SWOT analysis, core competencies, PESTLE and the like when engaging sense-making. As Maitlis and Lawerence (2007) notes “sense-making is often enabled by combination of a discursive ability that allows users to construct and articulate persuasive accounts of their environment, and process facilitators in the form of organizational routines, practices, and performance.” In such situations the interviewees while ignorant to the tools being used were still benefiting from the attributes of the tools because of their perceptive and cognitive ability. Therefore, in these situations components of strategy tools were used in the sense-making process.

Frequently, strategy tools were used as a means of communication for persuasion and discussion. While Grant (2003) and Spee and Jarzakowski (2008) notes that top and middle management sometimes used strategy tools to flex their political power, this was not reflected in the information gathered. In contrast, a few heads of departments admitted that they used strategy tools as a persuasion instrument to get additional funding. On the other hand, many top and senior management acknowledged that strategy tools were used as a starting point for dialogue. There is no debate that strategy tools may be used by top management to manipulate communication, however based on the interviewees responses this information was not acquired. Nevertheless, this does not refute what has been discussed before by Grant (2003) and Spee and Jarzakowski (2008). It can however be agreed that strategy tools usage were used to influence decisions. Many of the heads of departments highlighted the need to use a particular strategy tool when presenting proposals to faculty deans and senior management. In light of this it can be said that when strategy tools are used as a communication device at social interactions (with all levels of management) the user can benefit positively while the addressee can sometimes be influenced to hold the same opinion of the user. However, this is not always the case since in the given context discussion and dialogue are encouraged.

“Strategy tools are often absorbed into practice and are almost used unconsciously” (Whittington, 2006; Knott, 2007). This view was further highlighted as the interviewees explained their sections’ best practices. All of the interviewees proudly depicted the best practices of their individual sections. While explaining their best practices the interviewees did not mention strategy tool usage. The interviewees interpreted their sectional needs and established practices however inbuilt into these practices were different aspects of strategy tools. Two interviewees from either university acknowledged at the end of their interviews that they were indeed using strategy tools as part of their sections best practices. This information highlights the shortcomings of trying to measure strategy tool usage. The researcher argues that it may be more adequate to review how strategy tools are used instead of measuring the frequency of strategy tool usage. Conversely, the interviewees used strategy tools as a deliberate strategy for growth and development. Strategic alliances, change management programmes and outsourcing were often used as deliberate strategies which focused on growth and development for the section. In these circumstances strategy tools were used as an answer to a problem. While Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2008) note that academics should review the perspective that “rather than tools being the answer to the strategic
problems, they may more usefully be conceptualized as spaces for debate and dialogue…” Even though the research holds this view, in this case strategy tools were also used as the answer to a strategic problem. It should be noted that this does not contest what have been discussed by Jarzabkowski and Kaplan (2008) but rather the information acquired though the interviews were context specific.
Chapter 6: CONCLUSION

Universities like most other organizations are in a constant battle to develop and implement strategy which addresses the complexities of their business environment. While strategic goals and objectives from university to university may vary, the general practices involved in strategizing activities are similar. Consistent to Johnson *et al* (2008 p.8) managers often develop capabilities that give them an overview to conceive the whole rather than just the parts of the situation or unit. Universities sectional heads and senior academics must develop these capabilities since they play a significant role developing strategy. What is required by these universities’ faculty members is more than just analysis but rather the ability to “connect acting to thinking and implementation to formulation” (Mintzberg *et al*, 1998). The results of the study reflect that successful business strategies usually stem from a particular state of mind. Therefore, it is essential that universities sectional heads possess insight and a drive for achievement.

The study aimed to answer the question how are strategy tools used in practice in a university context. The information acquired reflected that strategy tools were often used in the strategizing process by both universities’ sectional heads as a guide for communication, evaluation, persuasion, justification, development, growth and sense-making. Occasionally, it was noted that strategy tools were used as a solution to a problem rather than guide for strategizing activities. Nevertheless, the majority of the sectional heads did not place a great value on strategy tools. This was as a result of their individual definitions of strategy tools. However, as was previously acknowledged all of the sectional heads used at least four strategy tools on a regular basis. Generally, when strategy tools were used, the interviewees incorporated components of various strategy tools into a process and they also resorted to their cognitive abilities. Strategy tools were never used independent of the users’ cognitive abilities.

This study reviewed how strategy tools were used at four university management levels (senior management, faculty deans, heads of departments and senior academic staff/committee member). Based on the information acquired from the four levels of management the researcher noted that the higher the level in the management hierarchy the larger number of strategy tools used. The study also gives an insight into the various processes these sectional heads would engage in when conducting strategizing activities. While each university may be different and the steps for embarking in strategizing activities often differed, the concepts applied and the rationale for application of these concepts were identical. In this study the sample size was small but deliberate. The researcher believes the results acquired in this study while case specific can be explored on a wider scale with a much larger sample size. Time constraints restricted the researcher to fully interpret the worlds of the interviewees. This could have only been done by following the interviewees throughout their daily routines. Nevertheless the researcher believes the study was successful since a greater understanding was established concerning how strategy tools were used in a university context.

The study began by acknowledging that there is a disconnect between what is taught and what is actually being practiced. This was further illustrated by the results in the study. It is not clear whether this gap can ever be closed because while theories and concepts are
constantly being developed business environments are also constantly changing. Hence there is a great need for managers to develop their cognitive abilities to make rational yet creative decisions to address the increasing complexities of their business environments. Most of the research regarding strategy tools highlights that strategic thinking plays a significant role in the strategizing process. However there is need for more in-depth research regarding how managers make sense of the strategy tools. The researcher wonders whether there is a considerable relationship between managers’ sense making ability and tool usage. To what extent does managers’ cognitive ability influence strategy tool usage and strategizing activities?

The field of strategy and strategic management is full of solutions for managers. Nevertheless, many organizations still underperform and fail to achieve identified targets. Strategy tool usage is just one solution in the pot of many antidotes. Usage of these strategy tools is often dependent on managers’ perception of these tools. Therefore in order to truly understand why strategy tools are used in practice there is needs to review managers’ make sense of these tools.
Research Overview

Research Question: “How are strategy tools used in practice in a University context?”

Research Objective:

- to determine the context associated with strategy tool usage
- to determine the importance practitioners place on strategy tools
- to make a comparison between what have been described in previous literature and what is actually being used in practice

Although strategy tools are being taught in many business schools there is an absence of detailed knowledge regarding how these tools are actually used, or indeed, whether managers use strategy tools in their strategic management process. The importance and perceived benefits of tool usage is prominently high in the academia world. This study investigates what theories (strategy tools) are being applied in a practical business environment and the significance managers’ place on the tools being used.

Key terms: Strategy tools, Strategy-as-Practice

Strategy tools: Strategy tools encompass the full range of concepts, ideas, techniques and approaches that structure or influence strategy activity. Specifically strategy tools can be described as concepts that assist strategic managers in making decisions. They are the concepts and techniques applied when making sense about uncertainties by helping to structure and interpret information; it serves to justify or legitimatize particular positions; and it instigates and facilitates interaction among various actors.

Strategy-as-practice: In the past, strategy was seen as something organizations have however the strategy-as -practice approach views strategy as something that is done within organizations. The practice of strategy involves critical choices about who to involve in strategy, what to do in strategizing activity, and which strategizing methodologies to use in order to guide this activity.
QUESTIONS

Section A

1. What is your current job title? Do you take part in any strategic activity for your department?

2. Apart from on a departmental or sectional level are you involved in strategic activity on any other level within the University? If yes, please state at what other levels you are involved in strategic activity.

3. Describe the process of developing strategy in your department for an upcoming academic year or financial year.

4. If you answered yes to question 2, please give an example of your involvement in strategic activity and the process you or your committee follow.

5. In accordance with Umea University’s three main strategies (desire for development, respected and committed and success together), what areas are your main focus areas and why?

6. In accordance with UWI’s seven strategic objectives (student centredness, expansion of access, quality, information technology platform, finance, institutional strengthening and stakeholder and alumni relations), what do you consider to be the main focus of your section and why?

7. How are new programmes, business objectives or processes pursued in an upcoming year? Explain.

8. Are strategy tools used in the strategizing process?

   a.i. If yes, could you tell me what tools have been used in the past and the benefits derived from tool usage.

   ii. Please give an example showing when and how these tools were incorporated the strategizing process.

   iii. Do you find some tools more useful than others? If yes please explain.

   iv. From your past experience do you consider strategy tool usage more helpful in strategy decision making, strategy analysis, and/or strategy implementation? Explain.

   v. Do you find the complexity of some tools act as a deterrent? If yes, have you or your department ever decided not to use a particular strategy tool because of the level of complexity involved?
vi. What are some of the reasons you believe persons may choose to use or not use a particular strategy tool?

vii. What are some of the main advantages and limitations you find with tool usage? Please give examples.

b.i. If no, could you explain why you believe strategy tools are not used in the strategizing process in your department.

ii. In your opinion, do you think incorporating strategy tools in the strategizing process would be helpful? Please explain your answer.

iii. If you answered yes to b.ii in what context and at what stage do you perceive tool usage to be useful (strategy analysis, strategy decision making and/or strategy implementation)?

8. If you answered yes to 7.a.i. could you explain the rationale for the selection of any strategy tool in your strategizing process?

9. List some of the most commonly used tools in your department or section and the context under which they are used.

10. From you past experience, have you or your department or committee ever merged different aspects of various tools while involved in the strategizing process to get a desired outcome? If yes, do you believe this is more useful?

11. Have you/your department/your committee developed any best practices that have helped in the strategizing process? Explain.

Please note that there are a large range of strategy tools that are often used in practice. When answering Section A, please do not limit your answers to the tools mentioned in Section B.
Section B

Kindly indicate whether you have used any of the following strategy tools and at what stage of the strategizing process they were used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Tool</th>
<th>Tool usage</th>
<th>Strategy Thinking</th>
<th>Strategy Decision Making</th>
<th>Strategy Implementation</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Strategic Planning</td>
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<td>Strategy Meetings/Workshops</td>
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<td>Benchmarking</td>
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<td>Porter’s 5 Force Model</td>
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<td>Balance Score Card</td>
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<td>Value Chain Analysis</td>
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<td>PESTLE</td>
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<td>Core Competences</td>
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<td>Scenario Planning</td>
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<td>BCG Matrix</td>
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<td>Strategic alliances</td>
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<td>Stakeholder Mapping</td>
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Definition of terms:

**SWOT Analysis:** Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis summaries the key issues form the business environment and the strategic capability of an organization that are most likely to impact on strategy development.

**Strategic Planning:** The concept of strategic planning was developed to address strategic problems associated with defining objectives in the overall interest of the organization and then developing corresponding courses of action to realize these objects.

**Strategy Meetings/Workshops:** are meetings or workshops which usually involve groups of executives working intensively for one or two days, often away from the office, on organizational strategy

**Benchmarking** is a practice of searching out and studying the best practices that produce superior performance. Benchmarking is often used when organizations what to make
strategic changes. This is done through analyzing the organizations capability, in terms of internal processes, compared with those of other organizations.

**Porter’s 5 Forces Model:** This is said to be a starting point for strategy analysis even where profit criteria may not apply. The five forces are: the threat of entry into an industry; the power of buyers on industry’s product’s and services; the power of suppliers into the industry; and the extent of rivals between competitors in the industry. The five forces framework helps identify the attractiveness of an industry or sector in terms of competitive forces.

**Balance Scorecard:** combine both qualitative and quantitative measures, acknowledge the expectations of different stakeholders and relate an assessment of performance to choice of strategy.

**Value chain analysis:** Describes the categories of activities within and around an organization, which together create a product or service. A generic value chain model comprises a sequence of activities found to be common to a wide range of firms. The goal of these activities is to offer the customer a level of value that exceeds the cost of the activities, thereby resulting in a profit margin.

**PESTLE:** The PESTLE framework categorizes environmental influences into six main types: political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal.

**Core Competencies:** are the skills and abilities by which resources are deployed through an organization’s activities and processes such as to achieve competitive advantage in ways that others cannot imitate or obtain.

**Scenario Planning:** The central idea of scenario planning is to consider a variety of possible futures that include many of the important uncertainties in the system rather than to focus on the accurate prediction of a single outcome.

**BCG Matrix:** Boston Consulting Group Matrix is used for conceiving the balance in a business portfolio. Here market share and market growth are evaluated on two axis and products are plotted on the diagram. Hence determining whether the product is a star (a business unit which has a high market share in a growing market), a question market (is a business unit in a growing market, but without a high market share, a cash cow (a business unit with a high market share in a mature market or a dog (a business unit with low share in static or declining markets).

**Outsourcing** occurs where organizations decide to buy in services or products that were previously produced in-house.

**Change Management Programmes:** are management programmes which seek to implement significant strategic changes throughout the organization or department.
**Strategic alliances**: occurs when two or more organizations share resources and activities to pursue a strategy.

**Stakeholder mapping**: identifies stakeholder expectations and power and helps in understanding political priorities.
APPENDIX II

A FLOW CHART OF PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW ACADEMIC COURSES/PROGRAMMES

Faculties can only offer courses/programmes which have been approved by Academic Board and with the resources determined for the delivery of each of these courses/programmes.

The following flow chart shows the sequential pathway for approvals of academic courses/programmes:

I. Faculty Approval - courses/programmes

- **Proposer (Department)**
  - Initiates Proposal
  - Develops Proposal
  - Dean
  - Intra-campus, IDU, Cross-campus, Library
  - Department Head signs off on completed proposal

- **Faculty Board**

II. Campus Approval - courses/programmes

- **Faculty Board**
  - Bursary
  - Academic Board
  - Campus Finance & General Purpose Committee
  - Notification of Course Approval: Students' Administration (Admissions, Banner & Examinations, Office of the Campus Registrar)

- **AQA Committee**

III. Board for Undergraduate Studies

- **Authorisation - programmes**

- **Academic Board**
  - Faculty - Dean/Head of Department

- **Secretariat, Office of the Campus Registrar**
  - Notification of Programme Approval: Students' Administration (Admissions, Banner & Examinations, Office of the Campus Registrar)

- **Board for Undergraduate Studies**
  - Marketing and Communications

- **Programme/course offered/advertised/students enrolment**

KEY

- IDU - Instructional Development Unit
- AQA - Academic Quality Assurance Committee

- Academic approval points
- Facilitation points
- Programme/course delivery
- Consultation

Note: The proposal can be referred back to the proposer at any point in the process, also at any point in the process the proposal can be stopped.

Figure 1: New programmes/courses
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE – GUIDELINE FOR SUBMISSION OF NEW UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

Title: Approval of New Undergraduate Programmes of Study
Document No: AQA1-1
Issue Version: 2.0


I. SCOPE

1. An Academic Programme Proposal is a formal request for approval and subsequent registration of a new undergraduate academic programme, and is a requirement for all programmes delivered at all undergraduate award levels.

2. These guidelines not only provide a starting point for reflection on approaches to programme design, but also promote good practice in design for consistency and repeatability of intended learning outcomes:

   (i) Academic and resource planning -
      (a) Consideration should be given to the overall coherence and intellectual integrity of the programme.
      (b) The programme should be designed in a way that will ensure the student’s experience has a logic and an integrity that are clearly linked to the purpose of the programme.

   (ii) Programme assessment - Learning outcomes should be honest and deliverable.

   (iii) Appropriate consultation during programme development as follows:
      (a) The Instructional Development Unit to ensure alignment of the following:
         - Learning progression (sequenced to realise outcomes).
         - Teaching methods and modes of delivery (strategies to maximise learning);
         - Validity of assessment relative to objectives (these must be well matched).
      (b) Across Faculty – preliminary consultation where applicable with other members of faculty who deliver within a similar academic discipline, to ensure coherence in academic quality and where possible maximise resources across the campus establishment.
      (c) The Library – to ensure that the programme will be adequately supported by the following:
• Reading/reference material.
• Technology.

(d) Across Campus - to benefit from any opportunities which could provide information on:
• General advice and suggestions
• Possible articulation
• Enrolment trends in related programmes,
• Opportunities for cooperation
• Any competition concerns.

(e) Other Stakeholders/Accreditation/Certifying Bodies (where applicable.)

(iv) Thorough preparation of programme materials to focus on salient issues of:
• Mission
• Need
• Effect
• Quality assurance

II. PROCEDURES

All new academic programme proposals and any revised changes must be approved by Faculty Board and then forwarded to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) for review before consideration is given for approval by the Academic Board.

1. The Head of Department in consultation with the respective Dean of Faculty takes responsibility for ensuring that those guidelines and information required for undergraduate programme proposals specified in AQA1-1 and AQA1-2 are fulfilled.

2. The approved new or revised academic programme proposals from Faculty Board, with the completed Programme Cover Sheet/Description Template AQA1-3 and any other supporting documents (inclusive of AQA1-5 and AQA1-6) must be forwarded via the Secretariat Unit, Office of the Campus Registrar for transmission to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) for vetting.

3. Note that, during this period, stated in 2 above, the Head of Department will be required to forward this proposal to the Campus Bursar to discuss/rationalise and determine the projected expenditures and resource implications for the new programme. The Dean of the Faculty must be consulted on the final approval and sign-off on the financial aspect of the programme, as this would impact on the Faculty’s budget.

4. The academic programme proposer may be invited to a meet with the AQAC to discuss the proposal.

5. Once all requirements are fulfilled, as in the stipulated guidelines, the AQAC forwards the programme proposal to the Academic Board for approval at the campus level.

6. Further to approval at the Campus level, Academic Board will then forward to the Board for Undergraduate Studies documentation (i.e. report from Academic Board, ii. responses from peer departments from other campuses, and iii. a report indicating how the suggestions emanating from these responses have been incorporated into the new programme design, or defence as to why they have not been incorporated, if there are differences of views among departments) for consideration and authorisation of the new proposed programme.

7. Once the Board for Undergraduate Studies authorises the proposed programme this will be communicated to the relevant Dean of Faculty, Admissions, Examinations and Banner Student via the Secretariat Unit, Office of the Campus Registrar.
### I Programme Proposal Cover Sheet

- a Cover Sheet, (see AQA1-3), should be completed and cover each copy of the proposal.

### II Aims And Objectives

**This section is to demonstrate institutional planning both on campus and as part of the University system and that the programme is based upon campus strengths and specializations.**

1. For the proposed programme, describe:
   - (i) The aims/purpose.
   - (ii) Goals. Goals to include:
     - **Teaching.** (Indicate whether these are lectures, tutor led-seminars and tutorials, practical sessions, field trips, workshops, practical project, problem solving classes, research seminars and professional placement).
     - **Learning.** (Are students encouraged and supported in developing an independent learning style to maximise their academic performance and enable them to take advantage of lifelong learning opportunities?)
     - **Assessment.** (Indicate what these would be e.g. practical reports, essays, oral & poster presentations, data interpretation, problem solving, placement report and project report).
   - (iii) Objectives – these are precise, definite learning outcomes which can be validated by an assessment.

2. Identify existing or projected programmes of the campus/University in the same or related disciplines (where applicable).

3. The expected impact of the proposed programme.

4. Indicate if this programme replaces an existing programme(s) or if it is entirely or primarily a restructuring of existing courses.

5. Explain the relationship of the proposed programme to the approved departmental campus or University mission.

6. Show how the development of the programme relates to the campus or University on-going planning process.

### III System Need And Effect

- **This section is to show the need for the proposed programme, its effects on the University system and that the programme will not unnecessarily duplicate University resources.**

1. Identify similar programmes, if any, at other institutions, public and independent, in the country and/or region, as appropriate and provide evidence of each.

2. Provide evidence of appropriate consultation with other campuses and summarize the results noting, in particular:
   - (i) Comments from campuses with similar programmes,
   - (ii) Any suggested inter-campus collaboration or programme articulation,
   - (iii) Resolution of discussions regarding any perceived competition between campuses.
3. Justify the need for the programme in terms of:
   (i) The clientele it will serve.
   (ii) The economic and/or educational needs of the country and the region.
   (iii) Describe in detail how the level of need was established.

4. State how the enrolment estimates were determined.
   (i) Provide summaries of the surveys conducted and/or other sources utilized in
determining these estimates.
   (ii) Specify the number of students, if any, who have indicated an explicit interest in the
programme.
   (iii) Estimate the impact of the expected enrolment in the programme on the distribution of
students among major fields of study and on total enrolment.

5. For programmes designed to prepare graduates for immediate employment, assessment of
   employment demand, especially for focused programmes requiring new resources, it is critical to:
   (i) Document the potential employers of such graduates.
   (ii) Specify employers who have requested the establishment of the programme and
describe their specific needs.

6. Describe proposed arrangements for any:
   (i) Required external clinical instruction,
   (ii) Agency placement,
   (iii) Practice teaching,
   (iv) Internships, Fieldwork etc.
   (v) Attach copy of affiliation contract and list of prospective affiliates.

7. For clinical placements for professional health and related programmes, written documentation
   signed by the responsible official at each proposed clinical site, should be provided:
   (i) Committing the site to the number of students to be served.
   (ii) Indicating the time period of that commitment.

IV Programme Access and Support

*This section documents access to the programme and the support services available.*

1. Describe the criteria for admission of students to the proposed programme:
   (i) Indicate how the admissions process might encourage increased participation
   of persons from groups historically under-represented in such programmes.
   (ii) Outline how the capacity of a student to undertake the programme will be
determined.
   (iii) Describe the advisement and instructional support arrangements.

V Programme of Study

*This section outlines the curriculum, which must be developed within accepted UWI procedures.*

1. Append a complete outline of the programme of study, including:
   (i) Requirements and credit hours,
   (ii) Indicate when and how often each course will be offered.
   (iii) For existing courses, include a description or a copy of the relevant Faculty Handbook.
   (iv) For a new course, include a syllabus, noting pre- and co-requisites.
   (v) For certificate programmes, name the degree programmes to which the certificate could
   be applied, if any.

2. Append brief biodata of current faculty members who will implement the programme, and/or
describe the qualifications of the staff members to be hired, indicate whether the post(s) is/will
be full-time or part-time and identify the programme director/coordinator.

3. Describe the library/laboratory resources presently available for use in the
programme and plans for making available any additional resources needed.
4. For an internship/fieldwork experience, describe the duration, the responsibility and qualifications of supervising personnel and course grading requirements.

**VI Academic Quality Assurance**

*This section outlines the process of academic quality assurance through assessment and, where possible, through external validation.*

1. Describe how the academic quality of the proposed programme will be monitored.

2. For professional programmes for which accreditation is to be sought, state the accrediting agency and a timetable for completing the accreditation process.

**VII Costs And Resources**

*This section documents the projected cost of the programme and identifies sources of funds, both capital and operating.*

- The Dean must be consulted for approval of any funds allocated to new or revised programme as these decisions will impact on a Faculty’s budget.

1. The form, “Projected Expenditures for Proposed Programme” (see AQA1-4), along with any necessary narratives describing the source of funds, capital and other special needs, would be required to complete the proposal. This projected expenditure must be prepared by the Bursary in collaboration with the Head of Department and approved by the Dean of Faculty.

2. For proposed programmes requiring reallocation of existing campus or University resources, a redeployment of resources plan should be prepared. This reallocation or redeployment of resources must be prepared by the Bursary in collaboration with the Head of Department and approved by the Dean of Faculty.
<p>| <strong>1. Campus(es)</strong> | Specify campus or campuses, if relevant. If joint with another institution, specify institution. |
| <strong>2. Proposed programme title</strong> | |
| <strong>3. Proposed award</strong> | |
| <strong>4. Total credit hours</strong> | Includes teaching, study time and any preparation for classes e.g. 100 |
| <strong>5. Academic Unit(s) that will be offered</strong> | |
| <strong>6. Programme provider</strong> | List faculty and all departments involved in the teaching of the programme. |
| <strong>7. Proposed beginning date</strong> | |
| <strong>8. Programme summary</strong> | As an attachment to this cover, describe in 250 words or fewer, the purpose, content, and structure of the proposed programme |
| <strong>9. Projected enrolments</strong> | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Other year(s) |
| | Full-time students | | | |
| | Part-time students | | | |
| <strong>10. Will programme lead to certification of licensure? (Yes/No)</strong> | |
| If Yes, by what field or speciality? | |
| <strong>11. Will special accreditation be sought? (Yes/No)</strong> | |
| If Yes: | By what group? |
| | By what date? |
| <strong>12. Will the programme or any constituent courses be offered off-campus? (Yes/No)</strong> | |
| If Yes: | Where? |
| | How much? (specify number of course and related credits) |
| <strong>13. Via the Open Campus? (Yes/No)</strong> | |
| If Yes, to what location(s) | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14. Academic staff member who may be contacted for more information:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date &amp; Minutes of approval from Faculty Board:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Department Head:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Dean:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date &amp; Minutes of approval from Academic Board:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of authorisation from the Board for Undergraduate Studies and referenced Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal reallocation(^2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New funds(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional academic staff/support staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal reallocation(^2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>New funds(^3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Usage of computer equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Library Acquisitions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal reallocation(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New funds(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage of library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Capital Expenditures</strong>(^5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal reallocation(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New funds(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start-up Costs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising, printing, equipment, preparation of teaching material</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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Based on the resources identified for this programme, state if this would impact on:

(a) Other Departments/Centres:

(b) Other University activities:
Please attach additional information (e.g. Department business plan) a necessary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval by Bursar (please sign):</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approval by the Head of Department (please sign):</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval by Dean (please sign):</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Specify the academic year.
2. Internal reallocation means that campus or University resources will be moved or redeployed from a current area of expenditure to support the new programme.
3. New funds means expenditures engendered specifically by the proposed programme that the institution would meet from other sources.
4. Include here equipment which is not a capital expenditure.
5. Include here a new facility, or renovation or renewal of an existing building.
Title: Approval of New Undergraduate Courses

Document No: AQA2-1

Issue Version: 1.0


I. SCOPE

1. These procedures apply to all credit-bearing courses.

2. Where courses are being developed as part of a new programme of study, this statement should be read in conjunction with AQA1-2 Template for a new Undergraduate Programme Proposal.

3. From a quality assurance standpoint and continuity in its delivery, a course outline needs to give:
   (i) A clear idea of the nature of the course.
   (ii) Its objectives - to give students a clear indication of the kinds of knowledge, competencies and skills to be developed from studying the course.
   (iii) The depth of examination and exploration required.
   (iv) The texts and readings to be consulted.
   (v) The nature of the assessment to be used.
   (vi) A frame of reference, to assess and to guide equivalency and/or credit transfer/articulation where required.

II. PROCEDURES

1. When developing a new course the Faculty must ensure that the assessment criteria test the learning outcomes.

2. The Academic Quality Assurance Committee will consider course proposals based on the recommendation of the respective Faculty Board.

3. The Academic Quality Assurance Committee will require the following information:
   (i) Course outlines in the templates for submission for course proposals, AQA2-2.
(ii) Details of any resource implications, AQA1-4 and any other supporting
documents (inclusive of AQA1-5 and AQA1-6).

4. Each Faculty Board is responsible for ensuring that:
   (i) During the development of the course consultation takes place with the
       Coordinator, Instructional Development Unit.
   (ii) The Campus Library is consulted on new course proposals, to determine what
       further resources (if any) may be required.
   (iii) Substantial resource implications have been discussed with the Campus Bursar.
   (iv) Other institutional issues which may impact on due process of general services
       provided should be discussed with the relevant Faculty or service department.

5. Once the course proposal is completed, following the above-mentioned guidelines, it is
   sent to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee for review and discussion with the
   respective course developer.

6. Once vetted as robust by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee, the course
   proposal is forwarded to Academic Board for approval.
# Template for a New Undergraduate Course Proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Course title:</th>
<th>To be provided through the Admissions Department, Student Services</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Course code:</td>
<td>e.g. which Department/School will have responsibility for the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Course Provider:</td>
<td>e.g. first, second and/or final year course</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Level:</td>
<td>e.g. semester I or II. If provided across Departments/Faculties, please indicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Semester in which it will be offered:</td>
<td>Includes:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• teaching time</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• study time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a student’s preparation time for classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. No. of credits:</td>
<td>Give a brief description of the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Total study hours:</td>
<td>Give a brief rational for the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These must be stated in terms of student behaviours e.g.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e.g. At the end of this course the students will be able to interpret and evaluate chemical information and data.</td>
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<td>Learning outcomes provide course leaders with an opportunity to think about “the big picture” and enable consideration of some of the more generic skills which are highly desirable, but which often get lost in the quest to provide specific details of measurable competencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Course Description</td>
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<td>9. Course Rationale:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Learning Outcomes:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Content:</td>
<td>This elaborates the topics, outlining the various ideas, concepts, issues, procedures etc. to which students will be exposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Teaching Methodology</td>
<td>This should give an indication of the teaching approach(es) to be used in the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Assessment</td>
<td>The assessment should be designed to match the stated learning outcomes (such as knowledge, skills and attitudes) as stated in the objectives. The nature of the coursework and the assignment of marks to each component of the coursework must be stated.</td>
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### Assessment (length and weightings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Assessed coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Practical classes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(iii) Written examinations | c.g. 1x 2 hours: 50%
(iv) Oral examinations |
(v) Other, please specify |

14. Required Reading | The basic texts as well as other books, journals, articles etc. which students are expected to read/refer to must be documented in an acceptable referencing format. Internet sources can also be properly referenced and included.

Relationship to other courses (irrespective of programme of study)

15. Pre-requisites: | Does the student have to pass a pre-requisite for this course? If yes, state the pre-requisite
16. Co-requisites: | Is there a co-requisite to this course? If yes, state the co-requisite course that must be read concurrently with this course
17. Post-requisites: | Is there a course which must be taken after this course?
18. Forbidden combinations: | Is there a course which must not be taken with this course?

19. Academic staff member who may be contacted for more information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Telephone:</th>
<th>Fax:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>E-mail:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty:</td>
<td>Department:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Library Impact Statement: AQA1-5 | Date vetted by Campus Librarian:
21. Instructional Development Unit (IDU) Review Statement: AQA1-6 | Date vetted by Director, IDU:

22. Please ensure copies of AQA1-5 and AQA1-6 are attached to AQA2-2
   - Check box to confirm AQA1-5 and AQA1-6 are attached

23. Evaluation by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC):
   - Check box to confirm that letter of vetting from AQAC is attached

24. Date & Minutes of approval from Faculty Board:

25. Signature of Department Head: | Date: |
26. Signature of Dean: | Date: |

27. Date & Minute(s) of approval from Academic Board:
   Signature of Assistant Registrar, Secretariat:
Bibliography


