# MSIA CASE STUDY: TABLE OF CONTENTS

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MSIA Case Study Information

Introduction
The case study is a linch-pin in the MSIA program. Experiential learning – the direct applicability of lessons to real-world situations – expands a student’s learning beyond basic knowledge (facts and information). Students often learn that issues of relationships, communication, listening, and consensus-building have a more significant effect on IA than product selection and system implementations. You will observe first-hand how the value of your knowledge is directly linked to organizational culture.

Your case study offers you more than a laboratory in which to analyze IA practices and policies. Over the course of the MSIA program you will demonstrate your ability to articulate IA issues clearly and to communicate your findings logically and concisely. You will conduct interviews with IA and business leaders in your organization or industry and will build important relationships with them. You will improve your skills in critical analysis and problem-solving in a real-world context. You will establish your credentials as a knowledgeable IA practitioner.

Case study scope
Your case study will need to sustain you for the first year (the first four seminars) of the program. Here is a high-level view of case study topics. These topics may change as changes are made to the program curriculum.

- How your organization/industry has historically approached information management
- How your organization/industry stores, manipulates, and otherwise manages its data
- How your organization/industry views the requirements, roles and functionality of information security
- How has your organization deployed and managed its network? What business policies and objectives does that network structure support?
- What approach does your organization take to authorization and authentication?
- What does your organization/industry do to foster security awareness?
- How is ethical awareness and ethical decision-making a part of the security program?
- What employment practices in your organization/industry support information security?
- How has your organization/industry approached regulatory/legislative compliance requirements?
- What is the information assurance policy development structure in your organization/industry? What metrics are used to measure policy effectiveness?

Case study descriptions

Organization Specific Case Study (OSCS) at your employer OR at another organization

The OSCS provides a very specific context – a single organization – within which IA issues are examined. In an OSCS
• You will identify specific issues, examine particular situations, analyze selected alternatives, and make IA recommendations that are tailored to the organization’s operations and are immediately relevant to the organization’s business and IA needs.
• You will research the organization’s operations and policies, and analyze those operations and policies in light of industry and recommended practice.
• You will interview the organization’s IA and business leaders to understand the organization’s history, IA rationale, decision-making structure, and business and IA objectives.
• Finally, you will create comprehensive end-of-seminar management reports that provide an in-depth examination of the organization’s IA posture and prioritize specific recommendations for enhancements and improvements.

A NOTE FOR CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS: Many consultants and contractors chose an “OSCS at your employer” when the case study is at the client site. No matter how long you have served that client, your client is NOT your employer. To conduct a case study with your client, you must select an OSCS at another organization. In addition, you assume the responsibility for resolving client/consultant confidentiality issues or conflicts of interest. The MSIA program advises you to consult your client about the case study well in advance of your start date! Identify the issues and concerns that the client raises, and contact the program staff to see whether the program can help you advance your cause.

Industry Specific Case Study (ISCS)

The Industry-specific case study (ISCS) provides an industry context within which IA issues are examined. In an ISCS

• You will undertake comprehensive research of IA issues as they affect a range of organizations within the industry.
• You will identify issues, examine situations, analyze alternatives, and evaluate their effects upon the organizations within the industry. Differences based on geographical location, company size, customer base, regulatory differences, etc. will need to be taken into account, and disagreements within the industry regarding IA requirements will deserve your particular attention.
• You will identify at least one IA practitioner with significant expertise in the seminar subject matter, and interview that person to learn his or her views on the issues raised.
• Finally, you will create end-of-seminar white papers that identify and analyze industry-wide IA issues, examine the different approaches to IA solutions, and propose next steps or even new approaches that organizations may take to improve their IA posture.

Review the side-by-side comparison of the three case studies on the following pages, and review the Checklists for Case Study Success. You are responsible building a case study infrastructure that will lead to your success in the program.
### MSIA Case Study Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Comparison</th>
<th>OSCS - employer</th>
<th>OSCS – other organization</th>
<th>ISCS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Focuses on the IA practices, issues, and challenges within the organization</td>
<td>Focuses on the IA practices, issues, and challenges within the organization</td>
<td>Focuses on the IA practices, issues, and challenges within a single identified industry</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Requires interviews with staff and management within the organization</td>
<td>Requires that you arrange for interviews with staff and management within the organization. Such interviews may have to take place after normal business hours, or by phone.</td>
<td>Requires at least one <strong>personal or telephone interview with a professional in your selected industry</strong> who possesses sufficient experience to provide insights into one or more specific areas of IA practice.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>May require access to policy documents, procedures, and other company documentation.</td>
<td>May have to request specific organizational information that would be readily available to employees.</td>
<td>Must develop own sources of industry information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>End-of seminar reports make specific IA recommendations to support the organization and its objectives</td>
<td>End-of seminar reports make specific IA recommendations to support the organization and its objectives</td>
<td>End-of-seminar white papers analyze issues and make relevant IA recommendations of general value to the industry</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>End-of seminar reports must prioritize IA recommendations</td>
<td>End-of seminar reports must prioritize IA recommendations</td>
<td>End-of seminar white papers do not have to prioritize IA recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate level of library and external research required to supplement organizational information</td>
<td>Moderate level of library and external research required to supplement organizational information</td>
<td>Wide-ranging library and external research required throughout the program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study organization cannot be changed during the program without permission from the Program Director.</td>
<td>Case study organization cannot be changed during the program without permission from the Program Director.</td>
<td>Industry under study can only be changed to an organization-based case study within the same industry. Program Director permission required.</td>
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### Case Study Success Checklists

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>OSCS - employer</th>
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<th>ISCS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there organizational policies that severely limit the IA issues about which you may write or research?</td>
<td>Are there organizational policies that severely limit your access to company information or limit the IA issues about which you may write?</td>
<td>If published industry information is limited, is your direct experience in this industry strong enough to allow you to speak for industry practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can you identify the individual(s) who is/are the primary source(s) of IA information in your organization?</td>
<td>Can you identify the individual(s) who is/are the primary source(s) of IA information in your organization?</td>
<td>Can you identify the individual(s) who is/are the primary source(s) of IA information in your industry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you reasonably confident that the primary source(s) will be available for interviews throughout the duration of the program?</td>
<td>Are you reasonably confident that the primary source(s) will be available for interviews throughout the duration of the program?</td>
<td>Are you reasonably confident that the primary source(s) will be available for interviews throughout the duration of the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you identify at least 3 specific information resources (which may include company documents) that you can use to research the topics required by the research paper assignments?</td>
<td>Can you identify at least 3 information resources that you can use to relate research paper assignments to your industry?</td>
<td>Can you identify at least 3 information resources that you can use to relate research paper assignments to your industry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will your assignments have to be reviewed or approved by others prior to submission? Satisfactory progress in each seminar is measured in part by each assignment being submitted on or before its due date</td>
<td></td>
<td>Can you identify the audience who would read your research papers and final whitepapers? Where could you present or publish your whitepapers?</td>
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Inability to respond positively to any single checklist item does not make a case study impossible, but inability to answer several items will make the case study difficult.

If you choose an OCSC, read Learn more: OSCS Case Study issues, and Prepare the Case Study Proposal.

If you choose an ISCS, read Learn more: ISCS Case Study issues, and Prepare the Case Study Proposal.

Then Complete the Case Study Proposal and the Case Study Acknowledgement and submit them as part of your program application paperwork. The Case Study Proposal and the Case Study Acknowledgement are separate documents.
Learn more: OSCS case study issues

What value does the MSIA case study offer an organization?
The end-of-seminar papers provide the equivalent of a professional IA assessment with prioritized recommendations for improvement of all aspects of enterprise information IA. Additionally, the case study papers provide

- Increased visibility of IA issues: greater awareness of and interest in information IA within the organization.
- Focus on business objectives: The reports cover that seminar’s relevant aspects of enterprise IA management. Over the course of the program, end-of seminar papers may address facilities security, data security, operations, vulnerability assessment, incident response, business continuity, disaster recovery, employment policies, IA awareness, IA policy development and maintenance, and risk management. The papers also look at IA management techniques including vendor relations, accounting standards, IA budgeting, fiduciary responsibilities, and group leadership.
- An end-of-seminar report to the organization reviewing its information IA posture and making recommendations
  - Analysis of current environment in light of research, standards, and such industry best practices as are applicable
  - Recommendations for improvements
  - Dollar value: Equivalent to evaluations performed by consulting firm with value in the range of $100,000 - $500,000

What is the organization’s time commitment?
Interviews and meetings between the student and IT or management resources within the Case Study Organization form the foundation for three 2,000-word research assignments. These are examinations of how the IA topic at hand is addressed by, or has implications for, the Case Study Organization.

- Contacts with management and staff are critical for the student to be able to see what the important issues and priorities are within the organization.
- These interviews will require two to four total work hours from one or more members of organization staff, depending on the nature of the organization, the nature of the topics being researched and the depth of the responses from staff members.

How is confidentiality maintained?
Norwich University offers Case Study Organizations a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to cover student research and written assignments. Once requested and signed, the NDA becomes a part of the student’s file for the duration of the student’s participation in the program. A prototype will be provided upon request. The university is happy to work with organizations that have preferred NDA documents.
What does the student do to maintain confidentiality?

- **Organization anonymity**: Students are directed *not to identify their Case Study Organization* by name in their student profiles, their discussion postings, or their written assignments. They may substitute “the company”, “my organization” or a similar phrase, or use a fictitious company name.

- **Individual anonymity**: Students are directed not to identify by name any individual in their Case Study Organization. They may use the person’s title, such as “the Network Manager”, “the Human Resources Director” or something similar. They may simply say “management”.

- **Contact anonymity**: Students are directed *not to use the email of their Case Study Organization* for communicating with MSIA faculty, Norwich administration, or the MSIA program staff. The program recommends that students employ a personal email account of their own choosing.

- **Location anonymity**: Students are *not required to divulge the location of the Case Study Organization*. Students affiliated with the military, or with a government agency, are *not required to disclose the branch of military or government with which they are affiliated*. Students working for defense contractors or consulting firms are *not required to divulge the names or locations of clients*.

- **Organization system integrity**: Students will *not be taking any actions upon the systems of their Case Study Organization*. Students are *not expected to receive any new access privileges on those systems*.

What does the Norwich MSIA program do to maintain confidentiality?

- **To respect confidentiality**: Students are *never required to divulge* company-confidentiality or proprietary information of any sort. Students are *warned against accidentally divulging* company-confidentiality or proprietary information unless the Case Study Organization agrees in writing to share such confidentiality or proprietary information with the student and agrees in writing that this confidentiality or proprietary information may be shared with the faculty and staff of the MSIA Program. See Non-Disclosure agreement, above.

- **To maintain student privacy**: Student classrooms are self-contained. The individuals with access to a classroom are the enrolled students, the instructor, the Program Director, the Associate Program Director, and the MSIA Student Service Coordinators. No student has access to a classroom other than his/her own. Students cannot use the learning management system to access the work of any other student.

- **To protect student work**: Student work is stored on a protected server within the Angel environment. Each student has an individual user id and password to gain access to the Angel classroom. Additionally, students may submit their weekly essays and final papers directly to an instructor using PGP encryption.

- **To limit the visibility of student work**: Instructors only have access to the work of the students registered in the instructor’s class.

What happens if a student submits work that is subsequently determined to contain sensitive, confidential, or proprietary information?

- Upon receipt of a fax or email from the organization, the program will have the submitted work removed from the learning management system, and the appropriate instructor will be directed to purge any copies from their files.
Learn more: ISCS case study issues

**ISCS Challenges**

Your responses in your ISCS Case Study proposal can have a substantial effect on the success of an industry case study. While an inability to respond to any single case study proposal item does not make an ISCS impossible, an inability to respond in depth to several items may make an ISCS very difficult.

- Because an ISCS transcends individual organizations, you must be well-acquainted with the industry idiosyncrasies of operation, policy, management outlook and IA, or you must be able to recognize them when they surface.
- You must understand the industry’s overall business objectives and many of its IA issues.
- You must find your own research sources for information that might be readily available in an OSCS but is less accessible at an industry level.
- If you do not already have a working relationship with one or more people in the industry who will be your Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), you must begin to develop those relationships. Having ready access to one or more such individuals is a requirement for the ISCS case study.
Prepare a Case Study Proposal

The Case Study proposal brings a focus to the skills and experience you bring to your case study organization or industry. It is also an important piece of information for your instructor, since almost all of your writing assignments require you to apply what you’ve learned to your case study environment. Your selection of case study has no bearing on the grades you receive in the course.

Your case study proposal will be shared with your instructor prior to the start of every term. It will acquaint your instructor with your selected organization or industry, and with the level of experience you bring both to the case study and the program. This will help your instructor respond more effectively to your writing assignments, and will help your instructor understands any questions that you have that related to your case study.