

School of Information Management

INFO 580 RESEARCH PROJECT

Trimesters 1, 2 & 3 2005

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details			
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Course Objectives

The INFO 580 Research Project is a 30-point minor thesis, and is compulsory for the Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) degree. It is an extension of work undertaken in INFO 528, which provides an introduction to the various research methodologies and research procedures; it is normally expected, therefore, that you will have completed and passed INFO 528 prior to INFO 580.

INFO 580 is designed to assess a student's ability to:

- * identify, clarify, and investigate a problem/topic;
- * locate, analyse, and integrate relevant literature;
- * gather and analyse additional data; and
- * present a coherent and well-organised argument.

Course Content

There are four stages involved in successful completion of the research project; **each of these must be completed in sequence.**

Stage 1: Topic approval and Supervisor allocation

You are required to submit a brief description of your proposed research topic to the INFO 580 Course Co-ordinator using the prescribed Topic Approval Form, which is available under "INFO 580 Materials" in the LIM Community on Blackboard and in Appendix 1 of the printed *Research Project Handbook*.

Stage 2: Research Proposal

- * *Length:* 3000-5000 words
- * *Value:* 30% of assessment

A research proposal is required as the first piece of assessment in INFO 580 and must be submitted to your supervisor by due date. The proposal must be assessed and assigned a passing mark by your supervisor **before** you proceed with your research study. If your proposal is not of a passing standard, or has major deficiencies, you may not proceed with Stage 3 until the proposal has been revised to your supervisor's satisfaction.

Please note that the revision of an unsatisfactory proposal must be completed within 2 weeks of being informed of the result (in the case of a one-trimester enrolment), or 4 weeks in the case of a two-trimester enrolment, and that such revision will not receive more than a minimum pass (50%).

The proposal should demonstrate:

- a. that you have identified an interesting and worthwhile problem for investigation.
- b. that you have the means for conducting a viable investigation within the time frame available.

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Stage 3: Human Ethics Approval

If your project involves human subjects - i.e. asking people their views, or observing people doing something - you must find out whether you will require approval from the Informatics Human Ethics Committee. For relevant forms and further information, you should refer to the Guidelines and Documentation page on the SIM website, at <http://www.sim.vuw.ac.nz/research/hec/index.aspx>.

Stage 4: Completion of the Project

- * *Length:* 16,000-25,000 words
- * *Value:* 70% of assessment

Once you have been informed that the proposal is ready for implementation, you can proceed with your research study. You will be studying a problem in depth, and gaining hands-on experience of designing and conducting research on a relatively small scale. You will experience directly the difficulties inherent in research, and should gain an appreciation of the essentially tentative nature of knowledge, evidence and data available to the social sciences and the LIS/information management profession.

Although the length of the final report will vary, depending on the topic and approach, its length is likely to be in the region of 20,000 words (16,000 words minimum, 25,000 words maximum).

Readings

There is no set text; a list of suggested readings and references is included in the *INFO 580 Research Project Handbook*.

Materials and Equipment

Students should ensure they read the printed *INFO 580 Research Project Handbook*, which has additional information on Proposal and Project guidelines, a list of recent INFO 580 and includes sample copies of TAF & HEC forms. There is also material available on Blackboard, under the LIM Community.

Assessment Requirements

There are two pieces of assessment in INFO 580; a formal research proposal (worth 30% of the total mark) and a completed research report (worth 70% of the total mark), written in the format and style expected of those who undertake scholarly or applied research. Terms requirements for INFO 580 are that **both** pieces of work must achieve a pass mark.

Your supervisor will be responsible for marking both the research proposal and final research report. They may also be reviewed by another academic staff member of the School, as well as by the INFO 580 Course Co-ordinator.

Both the proposal and final research report will be assessed according to those elements in the following criteria that are relevant to your particular approach to the investigation:

- * problem statement/research question
- * literature review (coverage of relevant primary and secondary materials)
- * critical analysis of source material
- * methodology
- * data analysis and graphic presentations
- * conclusions
- * understanding of theories and concepts
- * coherence and development of ideas
- * original thought and critical evaluation
- * clarity of communication (organisation of material and readability)
- * correct spelling, grammar, citations.

Timetables, extensions and withdrawal

You will have enrolled for either one or two trimesters. If you enrol for one trimester, you should spend 20 hours per week on this course, on average. If you enrol for two trimesters, you should expect to spend an average of 10 hours per week on the project. You should think carefully about whether to enrol for one or two trimesters before you enrol. If you find it necessary to change from one trimester to two, you must do this within 4 weeks of the start of the trimester.

Due dates for 2005/2006 are shown below. Please note that a delay in submitting your proposal may seriously affect your ability to complete your project by the due date, especially if your supervisor requires extensive revisions to your approach to the project.

Your final project must be submitted on the Monday following the last day of the trimester in which your enrolment for this course concludes. **No projects will be accepted or marked later than four weeks after the due date, unless previously arranged with the Course Co-**

ordinator. If the proposal or final paper is submitted (or postmarked) after 5pm on the due date, a 5% late penalty will be imposed for each week or part week overdue, unless an extension has been granted by the Course Co-ordinator. Please note that this varies from the practice applied in other LIM courses. If you request an extension because of ill-health, you may be required to submit a medical certificate.

If you withdraw from INFO 580 before you are half-way through your scheduled research period (i.e. by the end of the 6th week if you are enrolled for one trimester, or by the end of the 12th week if you are enrolled for two trimesters), you may re-enrol at a later date and continue working on the same topic if in the interim that topic has not been taken by another student. If you withdraw after this date, or do not withdraw and fail to submit a project, you may be required by the Course Co-ordinator to develop a new topic upon re-enrolment. If you complete but do not pass INFO 580, upon re-enrolment you may be permitted to continue with the previous topic, or you may be required by the Course Co-ordinator to select a new topic.

Withdrawal from the project requires formal notification to your supervisor, the School Office, and Faculty Office, as well as requiring the Programme Director's approval.

Due Dates 2005/2006

Trimester(s)	TAF Due Before	Proposal Due	Project Due
Trimester 1 only	28 February	28 March	7 June
Trimesters 1 & 2 (F)	28 February	26 April	10 October
Trimester 2 only	4 July	1 August	10 October
Trimesters 2 & 3 (J)	4 July	29 August	13 February 2006
Trimester 3 only	7 November	5 December	13 February 2006
Trimesters 3 & 1 (K)	7 November	16 January 2006	7 June 2006

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures.

Student Conduct and Staff Conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor. This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office or on the website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct.

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct.

Academic Grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the Associate Dean (Students) of your Faculty. Class representatives are available to assist you with this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Policy which is published on the VUW website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances.

Plagiarism

Victoria University defines plagiarism as the copying of ideas, organisation, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate reference or acknowledgement so that it appears to be one's own work. This includes published and unpublished work, the Internet and the work of other students and staff. Plagiarism is an example of misconduct in the Statute of Student Conduct. Students who have plagiarised are subject to a range of penalties under the Statute. See the website: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct.

Students with Disabilities

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity with all other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, then please contact the Course Coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services to confidentially discuss your individual needs and the options and support that are available. Disability Support Services are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building, or phoning 463-6070, email: disability@vuw.ac.nz. The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant or the School Prospectus.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students' learning experiences at the University to be positive. If your academic progress is causing you concern, please contact the relevant Course Co-ordinator, or Associate Dean who will either help you directly or put you in contact with someone who can.

The Student Services Group is also available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/ or email student-services@vuw.ac.nz.

VUWSA employs two Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building, phone 463 6983 or 463 6984, email education@vuwsa.org.nz.