

VICTORIA MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

**MGMT 404 / MMMS 505**

**RESEARCH METHODS**

Trimester 1, 2007

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Contact Details**

**Course Coordinator & Lecturer:**

**A/Prof Bob Cavana**

Room: RH 904, Rutherford House

Phone: 463-5137

Email: [bob.cavana@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:bob.cavana@vuw.ac.nz)

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**Administrative Assistant:**

**Mrs Tricia Lapham**

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**Class Times and Room Numbers**

**Start Date:** Wednesday, 28 February 2007

**Lecture Times:** Wednesday, 9:30 – 12:20 pm.

**Location (classes):** Railway Building RLWY 315

**Location (labs):** Railway Building RLWY 202 [see schedule for specified times]

**Format:** One three-hour session each week.

Final Examination Period: 8<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007

**Introduction**

Business and management research can be described as a systematic and organised effort to investigate a specific problem or opportunity in the work environment that requires a solution. It comprises a series of steps including: identifying the problem or opportunity for research; undertaking a literature review; developing or extending a conceptual or theoretical framework; establishing the research objectives, research questions or hypotheses for testing; preparing a research design; gather information and data; analyse and interpret the data and findings; and providing results in a form that will help the manager deal with the situation and/or adds to the

business and management literature. In essence, business and management research provides the needed information that guides managers to make informed decisions to successfully deal with problems or opportunities. This course provides an overview of the research process, and an introduction to a range of qualitative and quantitative methods and approaches utilized in business and management research.

## **Programme and Course-related Learning Objectives**

This course will provide students opportunity:

- to develop oral, written and IT-related communication skills
  - through active participation in class discussion
  - through the development and presentation of oral and written reports
  - through presentation of literature derived from databases
- to develop critical and creative thinking skills
  - through assignments requiring analysis, evaluation, interpretation and synthesis
  - through critical evaluations of the published management literature
  - through debate and classroom discussion
- to develop leadership skills
  - through structuring independent & group project activities
  - through leading a class discussion or group exercise
  - through acting as a spokesperson for a group's activities or ideas
- to develop computer related skills
  - through searching electronic databases
  - through the statistical analysis of data using SPSS

## **Overall Course Objectives**

The course has several objectives, some of which include:

- heightening your awareness of the research process inherent in business and management decision-making;
- understanding some of the main philosophies and paradigms that underpin business and management research;
- enhancing your skills at searching relevant literature and developing appropriate research designs for your own research questions and hypotheses;
- developing your capacity to understand and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research in the business and management fields.
- developing your analytical skills in qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis and interpretation;
- developing your computer skills in statistical data analysis and hypothesis testing.

## Course-related Student Learning Objectives

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- have an overview of the purpose of business and management research, the qualities of a good researcher, types of research, the research process and the characteristics of a good research project.
- have a broad understanding of conceptual & philosophical issues as they relate to the research process including research paradigms and related methodologies.
- understand and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research in the business and management fields.
- search relevant literature and develop appropriate research designs for your own research questions and hypotheses.
- understand practical issues as they relate to the research process including ethics, negotiating access and relationships with stakeholders.
- prepare a research proposal.
- understand and be able to apply a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection, data analysis and interpretation.
- understand a range of bivariate and multivariate statistical tools and methodologies used in management research.

## Expected Workload

Students can expect the workload to be approximately 15hrs per week, including both scheduled contact time and outside class.

## Group Work

While the course has a tradition of study group collaboration, there are important elements in the assessment process that are strictly individual. Collaboration on individual assignments is not allowed beyond general discussion as to how one might interpret the nature of the assignment question. Please do not work together to formulate a response and do not loan out your completed assignments. You will be expected and encouraged to work in groups on in-term cases and assignments; however individual assignments must be individual submissions.

## Readings

The **required** textbook is: Cavana, R.Y., Delahaye, B.L., & Sekaran, U. (2001). *Applied business research: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. Brisbane: John Wiley and Sons.

Other research methods textbooks are available in the FCA library on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Railway Building.

**Additional Material:** Additional readings, articles, chapters, and workshop exercises will be distributed in class or posted on Blackboard.

### MGMT 404 / MMMS 505 Research Methods Course Schedule – 2007

Week	Date	Topics	Readings (1)	Assignments
1	Feb 28	Intro & course overview Intro to management & business research Ethical issues Research paradigms Scientific research	ABR, ch 1 & 2	
2	Mar 7	Research reporting Evaluating research <b>Case</b> – Sutton & Rafaeli AMJ article	ABR, ch 14 & 15 Reading 6 (Case) Frost & Stablein, pp 113-140	
3	Mar 14	Prelim info gathering & problem definition Literature search lab [with Janet Keilar, in RW 202]	ABR, ch 3	
4	Mar 21	Framework development & research objectives Research design & planning <i>(brief presentation of topic analyses)</i>	ABR ch 4 & 5	
5	Mar 28	Qualitative data gathering & analysis	ABR, ch 6 & 7	
6	Apr 4	Measurement of variables Scaling, reliability & validity Questionnaire design	ABR, ch 8, 9 & 10	<b>Assignment 1 due</b> – Critique qual research article
		<b><i>Mid - Trimester</i></b>	<b><i>Break</i></b>	
7	Apr 25	ANZAC DAY	NO CLASS	
8	May 2	Sampling Intro to descriptive statistics	ABR, ch 11 ABR, pp400-413	
9	May 9	SPSS workshop – descriptive statistics, inferential statistics & hypothesis development [in RW 202]	ABR, ch 13 & App I	<b>Assignment 2 due</b> – Research Proposal
10	May 16	SPSS workshop – [in RW 202]	ABR, ch 13 & App I	
11	May 23	Alternative research methods & approaches. VMS guest lecturers	tba	
12	May 30	Other research issues Course overview		<b>Assignment 3 due</b> – Critique quan research article
	June 8 - 27	Exam period		<b>Exam</b>

(1) Textbook: ABR = Applied Business Research; Refer to readings & handouts as appropriate.

## Assessment Requirements

Assignment	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1	Individual Assignment 1 – Critical evaluation of a qualitative research article	20%	<i>in class, Apr 4</i>
2	Group Assignment 2 – Research Proposal	20 %	<i>in class, May 9</i>
3	Individual Assignment 3 – Critical evaluation of a quantitative research article	20%	<i>in class, May 30</i>
4	Final Examination	40%	<i>Exam period, June 8 - 27</i>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

### 1. **Individual Assignment 1. Critical Evaluation of a Qualitative Research Article**

Due: *in class, Apr 4.* Marks: 20%  
 Word limit: 2,000 words

This assignment requires the critical evaluation of a qualitative management research article. A suitable article will be provided in class for evaluation. Guidelines for the critical evaluation of research articles are provided in the textbook and supplementary readings. Students can use these guidelines as a basis for their evaluations.

### 2. **Group Assignment 2. Research Proposal**

Due: *in class, 9 May* Marks: 20%  
 Word Limit: 3,000 words (excl. appendices).

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester students will undertake a small guided pilot research project (either qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approach), as part of the course prescription for MGMT 430 & MMMS 530 (Research paper on a selected aspect of management).

However, for the purpose of this assignment, we would like you to assume that you will be undertaking a research project, which will require quantitative data collection and analysis. Work should commence from week 2 onwards on preparing a *Research Proposal* for this project. The first major step in preparing a proposal is to gain the approval, for your *Topic Analysis* (or client brief) from the course coordinator (**to be presented briefly in class on March 21** [5 minute presentation with max of 5 minutes questions & answers] together with a brief (1-2 page) written summary hand in). Generally the Topic Analysis demonstrates two major points: firstly that you have identified an interesting and worthwhile problem for investigation and secondly, that you have a means of conducting a viable investigation within the time frame available.

The Topic Analysis will form the basis of your Research Proposal, which could serve as a working plan for your Research Project. This should be a maximum of 3,000 words (excl.

appendices). The research proposal could follow the guidelines (Reading 12) outlined in detail by John Davies, David Smith and Mike Underhill (1989) in “*A Guide to Writing a Research Proposal*”, FC&A; or summarised on pp 123-127 of the textbook, ‘*Applied Business Research*’; or the VUW Student Learning Support guidelines for preparing a research proposal. Alternatively, you may use other guidelines for preparing a research proposal if appropriate.

The research proposal for this assignment will include:

- select a management or business issue to investigate;
- prepare an introduction & justification for the research;
- collect any preliminary information and undertake a literature review for the area;
- develop a theoretical framework, define your research objective(s) and formulate at least three hypotheses;
- outline the research design for the project, including the methods for data collection & analysis;
- include a research budget, resource requirements & research schedule;
- briefly outline any potential ethics implications and any other approvals required.

The research proposal may be undertaken individually or jointly in groups of up to 4 students. All members of the group will receive the same mark unless their contributions are unequal, in which case the course coordinator will make an equitable adjustment. A statement should be provided with each proposal outlining the percentage contribution of each group member.

If it becomes clear that the group dynamics will preclude the group from submitting an effective group research proposal, group members should discuss the matter immediately with the course co-ordinator. If necessary to ensure that no student is unfairly disadvantaged, the coordinator will permit some or all members of the group to submit an individual analysis of a defined subset of the project.

### **3. Individual Assignment 3. Critical Evaluation of a Quantitative Research Article**

Due: *in class, May 30*

Marks: 20%

Word limit: 2,000 words

This assignment requires the critical evaluation of a quantitative management research article. A suitable article will be provided in class for evaluation. Guidelines for the critical evaluation of research articles are provided in the textbook and supplementary readings. Students can use these guidelines as a basis for their evaluations.

### **4. Final Examination**

Date: 8<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> June 2007

Marks: 40%

This will be a 3 hour ‘closed book’ final examination covering all aspects of the course. Students will be required to obtain a minimum of 40 percent in the final exam to pass. All material covered during the course is examinable. Further details will be provided in class at the end of the trimester.

**Handing in assignments:**

Assignments should be submitted, in hard copy form in class or in the course coordinator's Course Box no. 23 on the Mezzanine floor of Rutherford House on the due date. Assignments received after that time will be deemed to be late, and must be handed to the lecturer concerned or to Patricia Lapham (RH 919), the Administration Assistant for this course.

**Format for assignments**

All assignments must be typed or word-processed. They all should have: a cover sheet stating your name, the course name, course coordinator name, assignment name and number, a word count and due date. You should also put page numbers on each page, and use in-text referencing and include a list of references at the end (see pp 72-75 of the Textbook '*Applied Business Research*').

Students must also keep an electronic copy of their work archived in case the original assignment goes missing. Failure to do so will jeopardise any claim by you that your work was submitted in the rare cases where your work goes astray.

All assignments will be marked for writing - that is, correctness, clarity, organisation, referencing - as well as for meeting the specific assignment objectives.

**Mandatory Course Requirements**

To meet Mandatory Course Requirements, unless you have received the prior approval of the course coordinator, you must:

- (i) attend a minimum of nine of the 12 sessions,
- (ii) submit all the assignments by the due dates,
- (iii) attend the final exam, and achieve a minimum of 40 percent of the marks available for the exam.

In order to pass this course, you must satisfy the mandatory requirements and obtain at least 50% of the overall marks available (maximum of 100).

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirements for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" fail grade.

Standard fail grades (D or E) will be awarded when the student's overall course mark falls below the minimum pass mark, whether or not the mandatory course requirements have been satisfied.

Notice of Failure to meet Mandatory Course Requirements will be posted on Blackboard or on the Mezzanine Floor Notice-board.

**Penalties- for Lateness & Excessive Length of Assignments**

- (i) In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline will incur a penalty for lateness. The penalty is 2 of the marks available for an assignment submitted after the due time on the due date for each part day or day late. Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays will be included when counting the number of days late. Assignments received more than 7 days after the due date will not be accepted and the student will automatically fail the Mandatory Requirements.
- (ii) Course Outlines provide a signal to student of forthcoming workload, dates of submission etc, and thus student study plans should take account of course requirements across all courses. Consequently, workload issues related to other courses and employment will not be accepted as reason for dispensation from mandatory requirements or waiver of penalties. Extensions to submission deadlines for any assigned work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- (iii) Students who are unable to comply with any of the mandatory requirements should make a written application for an extension to the due date for submission of assigned work or for waiver of a penalty, in advance, to the Coordinator, providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances.

All such applications must be made before the deadline and be accompanied by documentary evidence, eg a medical certificate, or counsellor's report that indicates the degree of impairment, and for how long the student has been impaired. Please be sure to ask at the time of consultation for the degree of impairment to be stated in any certificate you provide to support your case.

- (iv) In the event of unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement), that precludes an application in advance, students should make contact with the Coordinator as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- (v) Word limits should be adhered to, especially so when they provide a guide to limiting the student's coverage of a topic. Assignments exceeding the word limit will have 2.5% of the original grade per 100 words over the word limit. This is to reinforce the importance of 'accuracy, brevity & clarity' in business/management report writing!!

### **Grading Guidelines**

The following broad indicative characterisations of grade will apply in grading assignments and the exam:

A+	excellent performance in all respects at this level
A	excellent performance in almost all respects at this level
A-	excellent performance in many respects at this level
B+	very good, some aspects excellent
B, B-	good but not excellent performance at this level
C+, C	work satisfactory overall but inadequate in some respects
D	poor performance overall, some aspects adequate
E	well below the required standard
K	failure to achieve mandatory course requirements and have achieved at least an average "C" over all the assessment. Note this is a failing grade.

### **Policy on Remarking:**

Every attempt is made to ensure that the marking is consistent across lecturers and fair to students. Students may ask for their written work to be remarked. A different lecturer will do the remarking and provide comments. The original marking sheet is removed to ensure the process is independent. If the mark differs by 10% or less the two marks are averaged. If it exceeds 10% then it is independently marked by a third marker and the average of the two closest marks is taken. Experience from previous years is that almost all remarks are within 10% and where there is a change in mark, half the assignments go up and half go down. Occasionally there is a significant shift in the mark.

Application for remarks must be made within 5 days after the marks are available. To apply for a remark, complete the request for re-examination of assessed work form (Annex C) stating which sections (criteria listed in the mark sheet) you wish re-examined. Write on why you think the mark does not, in your view, fairly reflect the quality of your work. Hand this with your assignment at Reception Level 10. Allow for up to 5 days for remarks to be completed.

### **Referencing**

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce & Administration at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide. You can also access the information from the online VUW library site (<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/resources/virtualref.shtml#style>) or check out APA Style Resources on the internet: <http://www.psychwww.com/resource/apacrib.htm> or <http://www.apastyle.org/index.html>



## Communication

Information on course-related matters will be announced at class and posted on the **Blackboard** website at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz/>. It will be crucial for you to regularly check Blackboard for messages, announcements and materials. Material on Blackboard will include:

- Course outline
- Topic outlines week by week
- Copies of class handouts
- Administrative details.

Any important new information will be given in class, and / or distributed by email to student email addresses.

## EMAIL CONTACT

**Students wishing to contact staff by email should adhere to the following instructions:**

Include the **Course Code**, your **Name**, your **Student ID** and the **Topic** in the subject area of the email, eg

MGMT404\_Smith\_Paula\_3000223344\_Asst 1 Query

All students must use their VUW SCS email account and ID. Otherwise, email will be classified as Spam and will be dumped without being read. All emails with attachments will be dumped, unless requested by staff.

## Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

### Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications. To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

### Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Education/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building - it includes the ground floor reception desk (EA005) and offices 125a to 131 (Level 1). The office is available for the following:

- Duty tutors for student contact and advice.
- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

## General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to [www.vuw.ac.nz/policy](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy).

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website [www.vuw.ac.nz/fca](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/fca) under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

### **Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme**

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email [manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz) or phone (04) 463 5233 ext. 8977. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email [pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz) or phone (04) 463 5842.