

School of Marketing and International Business

IBUS 409
DISSERTATION
Trimester Two 2007
COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

The course co-ordinator for IBUS 409 is:

Dr Elizabeth L Rose

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Telephone: (04) 463 6912

Fax: (04) 463 5231

Email: Elizabeth.Rose@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: By appointment

In addition, each student is paired with an academic staff member who serves as a dissertation supervisor.

Class Times and Room Numbers

There are no lectures associated with IBUS 409. Each student should arrange for regular meetings with his or her supervisor during the trimester.

IBUS 409 has no final exam.

Course Objectives

IBUS 409 is a supervised research project that results in a dissertation written, individually, by each student.

Course Content

Each student undertakes a research project that utilises learning from other courses in the Honours programme, combined with individual research on a topic agreed upon by the student and his or her supervisor.

Expected Workload

Students should expect to devote 15-20 hours of independent study, per week, to this course. This time is best allocated throughout the term, rather than intensively at the end.

Group Work

IBUS 409 does not include any group work. Each student will write a dissertation individually, with guidance from his or her supervisor.

Readings

Readings necessary for completing the dissertation research will be identified by the student, with guidance from the academic supervisor.

Materials and Equipment

There is no standard list of materials and equipment. Students have access to an Honours grant of up to \$500, to reimburse research-related expenses incurred in the development of the dissertation. Original receipts for approved expenses should be submitted to Jessie Johnston, in the School of Marketing and International Business reception area.

Assessment Requirements

The final mark for IBUS 409 is based solely on the assessment of the dissertation. Each dissertation is assessed by two academic staff members, one of whom is the supervisor.

A complete draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the supervisor no later than Friday, 12th October 2007. This will allow time for the supervisor to provide feedback and the student to make revisions. The due date for the final version of the dissertation will be in early November, with the exact date to be advised.

Penalties

Late work will be accepted without penalty with good reason (e.g., a medical certificate) and prior permission. In other cases, five marks will be deducted (out of 100) for each day, or part day, the assignment is late.

Late submission of the final dissertation is likely to result in delayed reporting of the final results for the Honours degree.

Mandatory Course Requirements

Students must obtain a passing mark on the final dissertation, in order to pass IBUS 409.

Communication of Additional Information

Additional announcements will be communicated via e-mail. Each student should make sure that the course co-ordinator has his or her current e-mail address.

Additional Details

Some Considerations for Writing

Your written work should always be clear and direct. Writing that is sloppy and imprecise conveys an image of cloudy thinking, and you should be working toward clarity in both your thinking and your writing. The following points are intended to assist you in communicating more effectively.

1. Spell-checking and proof-reading are crucial, despite the fact that they are extremely annoying to do. Be careful to leave yourself sufficient time to complete these important tasks prior to submitting your work. While the MS Word grammar-check is certainly not infallible, it is generally a good idea to have a second look at wording that the software has identified as problematic.

2. Make sure that you are writing to the proper audience. The IBUS 409 dissertation should be written for an academic audience, and follow the format of an article in a top-tier journal. Exemplar journals are *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review* (especially for conceptual dissertations) and *Academy of Management Journal*.
3. Avoid using contractions in formal writing. Reports and papers that you submit in postgraduate classes should be considered formal writing.
4. The use of complete sentences is extremely important. It is often the case that phrases beginning with gerunds (e.g., ‘Meaning that...’) are difficult to make into complete sentences.
5. Proper punctuation makes your writing much easier to read. Remember to use commas to separate logical thoughts, and that the semicolon (;) should be used to separate two phrases that are each standalone sentences.
6. The typical convention is to spell out integers less than 10 (e.g., ‘two’, rather than ‘2’), and to use digits for integers greater than or equal to 10. In addition, it is best to avoid starting a sentence with digits (e.g., ‘59 percent of the respondents...’).
7. Be sure that you have agreement with respect to numbers and verb tenses throughout your writing.
8. The proper use of possessives is not complicated. Simply remember that the apostrophe (inverted comma), followed by the letter ‘s’, generally replaces ‘belonging to’. Thus:
 - company’s = belonging to the company
 - companies = more than one company
 - companies’ = belonging to more than one company
 - MNE’s = belonging to the MNE
 - MNEs = more than one MNE
 - MNEs’ = belonging to more than one MNE.
9. English, of course, has its grammatical oddities. One that is the source of many errors is ‘it’s’ vs. ‘its’:
 - it’s = it is (see note 3, above)
 - its = belonging to it.
10. When choosing between ‘which’ and ‘that’, a useful rule of thumb is that ‘which’ generally follows a comma (e.g., ‘the results, which were...’).
11. Many words assume rather specific meanings in particular contexts. When writing about the results of empirical analyses, you should be aware of the following:
 - ‘Variance’ is a specific measure of variation. Variance and variation are not equivalent concepts. To make things even more confusing, ‘variance’ has different specific meanings in the finance and accounting literatures.
 - ‘Significant’ should be saved for the situation in which you have conducted statistical testing and found a statistically significant result. Avoid using ‘significant’ as a synonym for ‘important’.

- ‘Correlate’ has a particular meaning in empirical analysis. It refers to a linear relationship between two variables, not a generic relationship.

12. Information taken from other sources **must** be properly cited and referenced. Failure to do so represents intellectual dishonesty, which is taken very seriously in the academic community. Cited references should be listed at the end of the paper, in a format that provides complete information, allowing the interested and motivated reader to delve into the finer details of your argument. Please note that this pertains to specific information. Obviously, you do not need to reference the Field book from IBUS 405 every time you refer to statistical analysis. However, if you are using a particular section of a book as the justification for an argument, then you should point the reader to that part of the book.

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.

Notice of Turnitin Use

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <<http://www.turnitin.com>>. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool that identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. You are strongly advised to check with the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

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.

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website 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 or phone (04) 463 5233 ext. 8977. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5842.