

VICTORIA MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

**MGMT 404 / MMMS 505 RESEARCH METHODS**

Trimester 1, 2008

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Course Coordinator & Lecturer:**

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**Lecturers:**

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**Administrator**

**Ms Luisa Acheson**

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**Class Times and Room Numbers**

**Start Date:** Tuesday, 26 February 2008  
**Lecture Times:** Tuesday, 3:40 – 6:30 pm.  
**Location:** Railway Building RLWY 414  
**Format:** One three-hour session each week.

## **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 project activities
  - through leading a class discussion or group exercise
  - through acting as a spokesperson
- to develop computer related skills
  - through searching electronic databases
  - through the statistical analysis of data.

## **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.
- understand and be able to apply a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection, data analysis and interpretation.
- understand a range of 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.

## Assignment Work

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 class exercises, but assignments must be individual submissions.

## Readings

The *required* textbooks are:

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

O'Leary, Zina (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London: Sage.

*Note:* these books will also be used on the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester research courses (MGMT 430/MMMS 530) on the Hons/MMS programmes.

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

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

## MGMT 404 / MMMS 505 Research Methods Course Schedule – 2008

Week	Date	Lecturer (1)	Topics	Readings (2)	Assignments
1	Feb 26	SC	<u>How can we know about management? I</u> Key dimensions of mgmt research defined, including: Object & subject Ontology & epistemology Empiricism & idealism Modern & postmodern	O'Leary ch. 1	
2	Mar 4	SC	<u>How can we know about management? II</u> Relating objects of study to subjects, paradigms, epistemologies & methods	Burrell & Morgan pp. 1-37*	
3	Mar 11	SC	• Thinking about presenting research ideas. • Using your 'out clauses': areas for future research and limitations.	Cummings ch. 2*	
4	Mar 18	BC	<u>Introduction to quantitative research</u> Evaluating research Framework development	ABR, ch 4 & 15 O'Leary ch 5 <b>Case – Sutton &amp; Rafaeli (3)</b>	
5	Mar 25		<b>No class – Easter break</b>		
6	Apr 1	BC	Research design Quantitative data collection	ABR, ch 5, 8-10 O'Leary pp150-161	<b>Asst 1 due – Fri, Apr 4</b>
7	Apr 8	BC	Sampling Refresher on business statistics	ABR, ch 11, pp400-413. O'Leary ch 8	
			<b>Mid - Trimester Break</b>		
8	Apr 29	BC	Quantitative data analysis	ABR, ch 13 & App I O'Leary pp184-196	
9	May 6	KR	<u>Introduction to qualitative research</u>	ABR ch 6	<b>Asst 2 due – Fri, May 9</b>
10	May 13	KR	Qualitative data collection - Interview	O'Leary pp161-183	
11	May 20	KR	Qualitative data collection- Participant observation & document analysis	O'Leary Pp170-175	
12	May 27	KR	Qualitative data analysis	ABR ch 7	<b>Asst 3 due – Fri, June 6</b>

(1) Lecturers: SC = Stephen Cummings; BC = Bob Cavana; KR = Kala Retna

(2) Textbooks: ABR = Applied Business Research; O'Leary = Essential Guide to Doing Research. Refer to readings & handouts as appropriate (marked \*).

(3) Sutton, R.I. & Rafaeli, A. Untangling the Relationship between Displayed Emotions and Organisational Sales: The Case Of Convenience Stores, *Academy of Management Journal*, 1988, Vol. 31, No. 3, 461-487. [not in readings, but available online through the VUW library 'Journal Finder'].

## Assessment Requirements

Assignment	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1	<i>Essay - Management research needs more</i>	33 %	<i>5pm Fri, Apr 4</i>
2	<i>Critical Evaluation of a Quantitative Research Articles</i>	33 %	<i>5pm Fri, May 9</i>
3	<i>Qualitative Report</i>	34 %	<i>5pm Fri, June 6</i>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

### 1. **Assignment 1.** *Essay - Management research needs more...*

Due: *5pm Fri, Apr 4* Marks: 33%

Word limit: 2,000 words

In this essay you should argue a case for what you believe to be the best research method(s) or approach(es) for improving our knowledge about management.

### 2. **Assignment 2.** *Critical Evaluation of a Quantitative Research Articles*

Due: *5pm Fri May 9* Marks: 33%

Word limit: 2,500 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. Students can use these guidelines as a basis for their evaluations. Further information will be provided in class.

### 3. **Assignment 3.** *Qualitative Report*

Due: *5pm Fri, June 6* Marks: 34%

Word limit: 2,000 words

Observation (QR) report: Students will be required to engage in an observation exercise and submit a report on it. Further details will be given in the class.

### **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 Ms Luisa Acheson (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, and
- (ii) submit all the assignments by the due dates.

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 counselor'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.

## 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 Administration Office

The Student Administration 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 office on (04) 463 5376.

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

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

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

Check with the Student Administration Office for opening times (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.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx)

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

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

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

*The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.*

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

*Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.*

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html)

### **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.