

Victoria Management School

**MGMT 404: RESEARCH METHODS**

Trimester 1, 2009

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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**Course Coordinator & Lecturer:**

**Sarah Proctor-Thomson**

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**Trimester Dates:** Monday 2 March to Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

**Class Times and Room Numbers**

**Start Date:** Monday, 2 March 2009

**Lecture Times:** Monday, 10.30 – 1:20 pm.

**Location:** Railway Building: RWW 128

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

**Withdrawal dates:** Information available via

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

**Introduction**

Organisational and management research can be described as a systematic and organised effort to extend our understanding of how, why, and in what ways, organisations and the workers within, operate. Research in this field can add new insights to an existing body of knowledge in an area of interest, and/or gather information that can guide decision-making within the workplace. This course invites students to consider the purposes and objectives of organisational and management research and provides an overview of the research process. It introduces students to a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and provides some hands on experience with these. The course also invites students to explore the ethical and moral considerations related to carrying out organisational and management research in New Zealand.

## **BCA (Hons) Programme Learning Objectives**

- Directly access, comprehend, critically assess and draw on the published international scholarly research in their discipline.
- Display insight in adapting and applying a theoretical framework(s) to real world situations.
- Design and implement a research project or demonstrate advanced analytical skills
- Explain, discuss and use a range of concepts, theories, and/or techniques in their discipline.
- Convey key discipline-specific concepts concisely in an appropriate written format.
- Display articulate oral communication skills.
- Provide direction and/or present new ideas persuasively.

## **Overall Course Objectives**

This course is designed to help students meet the MMMS programme objectives above. This course will provide students opportunity:

- to display innovative and critical thinking through creative solutions related to management and organisational research methodology.
- to understand and describe some of the main philosophies and paradigms that underpin organisation and management research on a given topic.
- to identify gaps and potential areas of contribution for research through analysis of existing knowledge and creative research design.
- to convey key concepts related to organisational and management research concisely
- to work with peers to develop effective and rigorous research practices including research design, survey development and observational skills.
- to demonstrate their knowledge of local and international contexts in which research may be developed and how these contexts can influence research processes.
- to demonstrate their computer skills in quantitative data spreadsheet design and statistical data analysis.

## **Course-related Student Learning Objectives**

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

- demonstrate their understanding of the purposes of organisational and management research, the research process and the characteristics of a good research project (Class Discussion and all three assignments).
- demonstrate a broad understanding of conceptual and philosophical issues as they relate to the research process including research paradigms and related methodologies (Assignment 1 and 2).
- demonstrate an understanding of a range of practical and moral issues related to the research process (Assignment 2 & 3).
- search relevant literature and develop appropriate research designs to address selected research questions and hypotheses (Assignment 1).
- identify a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection, data analysis and interpretation (Class discussion and Assignment 2 & 3).
- demonstrate an understanding of and experience with a range of practical research skills (Assignment 2 & 3).

## **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:

- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P.R. (2008). *Management Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). London: Sage.
- 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 on the Hons/MMS programmes (MGMT 430/MMMS 530).

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 Research Methods Course Schedule – 2009

Wk	Date	Lecturer	Topics	Class Preparation
1	Mar 2	SPT & SR	<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the course; The objectives and processes of organisational and management research; The research process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>O'leary, Ch.1.</li> </ul>
2	Mar 9	SR	<b>Philosophies of Research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is a paradigm? And does it matter?; Founding concepts; An overview of predominant western philosophical approaches in management and organizational research; Widening the debate - culture and knowledge; Relevance of theoretical foundations to the research process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easterby-Smith et al. Ch 4</li> <li>Henry and Pene, 2001 (supplied)</li> </ul>
3 **	Mar 16	SR	<b>Reviewing the Literature</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Search, access to, and collation of information; Narrowing down and honing a specific topic; Organizing sources and ideas to build an argument (or 'thesis'); Writing and presenting; establishing the relevance of your topic by constructing a space for your contribution</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>* Assignment 1 handed out</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easterby-Smith et al. Ch 3</li> <li>O'Leary pp 74-83</li> <li>Locke &amp; Golden-Biddle, 1997 (supplied in class)</li> </ul>
4	Mar 23	SR	<b>Designing Research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research questions; Exploring the variety in research designs; Implications for method; Contributing to theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easterby-Smith et al. Ch 5</li> <li>O'Leary pp 32-37</li> </ul>
5	Mar 30	SPT	<b>Introduction to Quantitative Research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purposes and objectives of quantitative research; Identifying research questions &amp; hypotheses; Sources of quantitative data; Measurement of variables; Evaluating quantitative research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easterby-Smith et al, Ch.9, esp. 219-227</li> <li>Cavanna et al. (2001), p.188-194.</li> </ul>
6	April 6	SPT	<b>Quantitative Survey Research I</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose of surveys; Survey design; Principals of question design: clarity, validity, response scales, cultural issues.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>* Assignment 2 handed out</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easterby-Smith et al., Ch.9, esp. 227-231.</li> <li>Review of chosen survey research article selected in week 5.</li> </ul>
<b>April 13<sup>th</sup>-April 26<sup>th</sup> Mid-Trimester Break</b>				
7	April 27	SPT	<b>Quantitative Survey Research II</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Populations &amp; sampling; Questionnaire appearance; Piloting; Reducing non-response; Implementing ethical surveys ethically.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easterby-Smith et al., Ch. 9, esp. 211-219.</li> <li>O'Leary, Ch. 8</li> </ul>
8	May 4	SPT	<b>Quantitative Data Analysis, Interpretation and Presentation of Findings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating spread sheets; Coding data; Testing reliability and validity: Describing data; Testing associations between groups &amp; variables;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easterby-Smith et al., Ch 10</li> <li>O'Leary, p.187-191.</li> </ul>
9	May 11	KR	<b>Qualitative Research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is qualitative research?; Assumptions and dichotomization; Qualitative Research Methods; Discussion on Observational studies</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>* Assignment 3 handed out</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tolich &amp; Davidson, Chp 7. (supplied in class).</li> <li>Cavanna et al. (2001), Chp 6, 134-166 (supplied in class)</li> </ul>
10	May 18	KR	<b>Main Types of Data Collection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Types of interview; Pattern of an interview; Conducting an interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>O'Leary, pp161-170</li> </ul>
11	May 25	KR	<b>Qualitative data analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coding qualitative data; Document analysis</li> <li>Course admin &amp; evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>O'Leary, pp.170-181</li> <li>Easterby-Smith et al. Ch.8</li> </ul>
12	<b>June 1st</b>		<b>Queens Birthday – No class</b>	

Lecturers: SPT = Sarah Proctor-Thomson; SR = Sally Riad; KR = Kala Retna

## Assessment Requirements

Assignment	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1	Exploring Potential Contribution to Management Knowledge	30 %	10.30am Mon, 6 April
2	Survey Planning and Design	35 %	10.30am Mon, 11 May
3	Qualitative Observation Report	35 %	2.00pm, Fri, 5 June
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

### **Assignment 1. Exploring Potential Contribution to Management Knowledge**

Due: 10.30am Monday April 6

Marks: 30%

Word limit: 2,000 words (excl references)

In this assignment, students are required to choose a topic of interest to them and discuss how they can potentially develop it into a research project that contributes to knowledge on that topic. In its first part, the assignment requires the student to select five journal articles on the topic and examine their theoretical approach, central questions and contribution. In the assignment's second part, students will pose a relevant research question, ground it in a philosophical position and discuss implications for research design.

**Full details of Assignment 1 will be handed out in Week 3.**

### **Assignment 2. Survey Planning and Design**

Due: 10.30am Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May.

Marks: 35%

Word limit: 1,000-1,500 words for report (excl. references).

No word limit for appendices (incl. survey, coding instructions, spreadsheet, & pilot feedback notes)

This assignment builds on Assignment 1 and the work carried out in the quantitative section of the course. In this assignment students will develop a short survey on an organisational or management topic of their choice (probably the topic explored in Assignment 1). Students will need to move through each of the main steps of planning and developing a good survey. However, students will NOT be required to execute the survey or analyse any resultant data.

**Full details of Assignment 2 will be handed out in Week 6.**

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

Due: 2pm Friday 5 June 09.

Marks: 35%

Word limit: 2,000 words (incl. observation guide/expanded notes/1-page report, but excl. references).

This assignment gives students an opportunity to engage in an observation exercise and submit a report on it. In this assignment students will develop an interview guide and conduct an observation of events of their choice (must be agreed upon with lecturer). Students will go through the process outlined by Tolich & Martin (refer to chapter 7).

**Full details of Assignment 3 will be handed out in Week 9.**

## **Handing in assignments**

**Hardcopy:** Assignments should be submitted by the due date, in **hard copy** form in class or into the **Post-Graduate Box #26 on the Mezzanine Floor**, Rutherford House.

**Electronic copy:** Please also email an **electronic copy** to [sarah.proctor-thomson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sarah.proctor-thomson@vuw.ac.nz) by due date.

Assignments received after due date will be deemed to be late, and must be handed to Luisa Acheson (RH 912).

## **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**

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

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 11 scheduled sessions, and
- (ii) submit all assignments within the allowable timeframe (see Penalties section) below.

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 without prior arrangement of an extension will incur a penalty for lateness. The penalty is 5% 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, e.g. 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. This is to reinforce the importance of accurate, concise and clear communication in management studies and organisational practice!!

### **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, Rutherford House** 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 on the ground floor (EA005). This counter is the first point of contact for:

- 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.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: including the work of others will not be considered plagiarism as long as the work 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 penalised 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.

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 6015. 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.



**Victoria Management School**

*MGMT 404*  
*Individual Assignment Cover Sheet*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Lecturer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

*I have read and understood the university policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.  
I declare this assignment is free from plagiarism.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension of the due date (*if applicable*)

**Please attach a copy of the note authorising your extension.**

*Date extension applied for:* \_\_\_\_\_

Extension granted until: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension granted by: \_\_\_\_\_