

Victoria Management School

**MMBA 532 BUSINESS RESEARCH PROJECT**

Full Year 2009

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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**Contact Details**

Course Coordinator: David Stewart  
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**Course Start Date:** 7:40pm Tuesday, 3 March 2009

**Course Completion Date:** Tuesday, 13 October 2009

**Format:** Part A: Six two hour Lectures  
Lecture Theatre GBLT 2  
Part B: One-on-One Academic Supervision  
(Student – VUW academic staff)

**Withdrawal dates:** Information available via  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

**Course Objectives**

The Victoria Master of Business Administration Programme serves to produce professional managers capable of fulfilling strategic roles within business and government enterprises. Integral to this capability is the application of systematic and organised research methodologies to investigate specific problems or opportunities encountered in the work setting.

This course aims to provide students with applied research methodologies with which practical solutions to real organisational issues can be derived. The scope of this course, being focused on individual student proposals, is open-ended and negotiable. Students need to gain access to an organisational sponsor, identify a relevant issue, and propose an applicable methodology in order for the business research project to proceed. By the end of this course, students will:

1. Have an understanding of the major social science research methodologies available for applied business research.
2. Have the experience of defining and addressing real-life problems and opportunities in organisational settings.
3. Have an appreciation for applicable research methods as a means to address organisational issues.

**Textbook:**

There is no prescribed text book for the course but a recommended reading list will be distributed in class.

The course will also rely on materials from a variety of sources, including practitioner and academic journals, dependent on the specifics of topic area chosen by the student.

**Assessment**

Research Proposal	Word Limit: 2,000	20 %
	<i>Due: Tuesday, 19 May 2009</i>	
Business Research Report	Word Limit: 10,000	80 %
	<i>Due: Tuesday, 13 October 2009</i>	

**Research Proposal (20%)** – Students will be required to prepare a research proposal document subject to terms and conditions set by the supervising academic staff member in consultation with the Course Controller. At a minimum, research proposals will clearly identify the organisational sponsor, describe the relevant issue and its performance implications, and suggest a proposed methodology to address the issue.

**Business Research Paper (80%)** – Upon conclusion of the project students will be required to submit a detailed research paper subject to the terms and conditions set by the supervising academic staff member in consultation the Course Co-ordinator. At a minimum, research proposals will incorporate key aspects of the research proposal and build from that foundation, including: a detailed literature review, a comprehensive research design that covers data collection and analysis, a discussion of findings and conclusions, and a recommended management action plan.

**Course Terms of Reference****Late Assignments**

Unless otherwise authorised by the Course Co-ordinator, in consultation with the Academic Supervisor, students will have t weeks to prepare a proposal and five months, subsequently, to complete the research and submit the report. Note: No extension will be granted for the submission of the report.

**Mandatory Course Requirements**

To meet mandatory course requirements, students must submit two documents – a research proposal and a final business research report.

**Passing the Course**

In order to pass this course, students are required to obtain at least fifty percent of the overall course marks available.

**Victoria MBA Grading Standards**

Victoria MBA - Excellent Category

A (80 – 84%) to A+ (85% and above): The quality is performed to a very high level of proficiency, i.e. it is at a standard that makes it exceptional at Master’s level.

Victoria MBA - Very Good Category

B+ (70 – 74%) to A- (75 – 79%): The quality is performed at a high standard. Students have reached a level which clearly exceeds “competency”.

### Victoria MBA - Good Category

B- (60 – 64%) to B (65 – 69%): The quality is clearly demonstrated without being exceptional in any way. Students can be thought of as competent in respect of this quality.

### Victoria MBA - Satisfactory Category

C (50 – 54%) to C+ (55 – 59%): The quality is demonstrated to a minimally acceptable level. There may be flaws but these are not serious enough to “fail” the student on this quality.

### Victoria MBA - Unsatisfactory Category

E (0 – 39%) to D (40 – 49%): The quality is absent or performed to a very low level, or the performance is seriously flawed in this respect.

### ***Individual Work***

While the Victoria MBA programme has a tradition of study group collaboration, there are important elements in the assessment process that are strictly individual. Unless otherwise approved by the Course Controller in advance, MMBA 532 is designed as an entirely individual learning module. Study group collaboration is not permitted.

### **Appeals / Concerns / Statute on Conduct**

If you have any concerns with your research supervision, you should first talk to the academic staff member concerned and, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, contact the Course Co-ordinator. The University has well developed, independent procedures for dealing with academic grievances and complaints. These procedures are set out in the Statute on Academic Grievances in the University Calendar (please refer to following page).

### **Session Schedule**

The course has two parts. Part A is a series of six lectures scheduled for the beginning of Trimester One (see below). Part B is governed by the interaction between the student and the VUW academic staff member.

Course evaluation and success will be defined by the proposal document negotiated between the student and the academic supervisor in consultation with the Course Co-ordinator who will ensure parity across individual projects and supervisors.

### **Part A: Lecture Schedule**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1.	4 March	Introduction to the Research Process – selecting topic, selecting a supervisor
2.	11 March	Philosophy of Social Science – paradigms, ontology, epistemology and methodology
3.	18 March	Writing a Literature Review
4.	25 March	Conducting Quantitative Research
5.	1 April	Conducting Qualitative Research
6.	8 April	Writing a Research Proposal & applying for Human Ethics approval

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## **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.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.