

## SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

### **INFO 544: Advanced Reference Services**

Trimester 3, 2009

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

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#### **Contact Details**

##### **Course Coordinator:**

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**Please note** that INFO 544 will be delivered online, with all materials (including readings and study guides) available on Blackboard only.

This course focuses on advancing your knowledge of reference and information work gained in [INFO 523, Information Sources and Client Services](#). INFO 544 covers more advanced online searching skills and virtual reference services.

We will explore advanced online searching skills and strategies, using both subscription databases and Web search engines as examples. We discuss how to evaluate search results, and database platforms. We also investigate searching for information in some specific areas not covered elsewhere in the LIM programmes such as Government, statistical, and scientific and technical information, and will explore issues in the implementation of virtual reference services. **Please note** we recommend that you complete the core course [INFO 523](#) before taking this elective as part of the MLIS or PGCert/DipARM.

## **Course description**

INFO 544 focuses on users and their information needs, and ways in which information services can assist in resolving these needs. It covers advanced searching skills in the online environment, and the provision of user services in the online environment. In addition, it covers information use and sources in subject disciplines that have particular characteristics.

## **Learning objectives**

By the end of INFO 544, students should be able to:

1. Exploit the full range of features available to carry out searches on the Internet and subscription databases
2. Carry out searches using effective strategies and tactics
3. Evaluate and compare database content and search platforms
4. Critically evaluate a search result and the information retrieved
5. Understand the structure and sources of information in the specialist subject areas of government, statistical, and scientific and technical information.
6. Understand issues in the implementation and evaluation of virtual reference services.

## **Time commitment and workload**

**You should expect to spend about 12 hours per week on this course.** Part of this time commitment will be taken up in your weekly internal or Internet conference session. The remaining time should cover:

- reading set texts and articles — you are expected to have read these before the weekly session;
- reflecting on issues presented in the module and preparing assigned practical work for the weekly session; and
- researching and writing assignments.

## Schedule

INFO 544 will be taught in the third trimester of the 2009 academic year **from 16 November 2009 to 12 February 2010**. The mid-trimester break is from 21 December-3 January.

**Please note that due to enrolment numbers this course will be taught in distance mode only.**

If you are based in Wellington and do not have your own facilities for accessing the weekly online conference, contact [Timothy Greig](#) to arrange to use a campus computer. Although there isn't a face to face class, I will be available in my office 2-3pm Wednesdays (except 6 January) if you'd like to chat about the module content

The weekly Internet conference sessions will be held on **Wednesdays from 5.00-6.30 p.m.** There will not be an Internet conference on 6 January, and we will cover Module 6 using Blackboard as a communication medium.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>1</b>	Search techniques using database structure and controlled vocabulary
<b>2</b>	Search strategy
<b>3</b>	Citation databases
<b>4</b>	Evaluation of database content
<b>5</b>	Evaluation of search platforms
<b>Mid-trimester break</b>	
<b>6</b>	Advanced Web searching
<b>7</b>	Scientific and technical information
<b>8</b>	Government information
<b>9</b>	Statistical information
<b>10</b>	Virtual reference: Research and standards
<b>11</b>	Virtual reference: Case study of AnyQuestions

## Students with special requirements

Students who have special requirements which are relevant to their successful completion of this course should speak to the Course Coordinator as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## Assessment

This course is internally assessed, with the following assignments to be completed in order to satisfy the mandatory course requirements. **Full details, including explanatory notes and criteria, are available under "Assessment" on Blackboard.**

Assignment	Date due	Value
1. Weekly assessment: practical exercises & tests	Monday following each week	20% in total
2. Annotated online search	18 January 2010	40%
3. Presentation on a topic relating to the weekly module	Wednesday of the week to which your topic relates	40%

*Note: Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of FCA programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.*

## Late assignments

Assignments submitted after they are due will have a 10% penalty imposed unless an extension has been granted by the course coordinator. Assignments submitted more than one week after they are due will not be accepted unless there are exceptional circumstances and the late submission has the prior approval of the course coordinator.

## Submission

Electronic submission via Blackboard is required; instructions are available under '**Assessment**'. Remember to keep a hard and soft copy of each assignment you send us, just in case the original goes astray.

## Word count

Assignments in INFO 544 do not have a specific word count, but there will be indications of the length expected, and conciseness is an evaluation criteria in all assessment.

## Plagiarism

You should read and take heed of the statement on collaboration and plagiarism on the University website at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html> and also in the *Administration Handbook*; you **must** acknowledge all sources you use. While you are encouraged to work together while preparing for the weekly sessions, assessed work must be completed individually, and collaboration confined to discussion of general points. You are expected to present information in your own words, based on your understanding of the background material you read. **Any assignment which is extensively plagiarised will receive an automatic fail grade.**

**Note:** Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine [turnitin.com](http://turnitin.com).

## Presentation

Details of the LIM Group's assignment policy, including presentation, will be found in the *Administration Handbook*.

## Mandatory course requirements

To fulfil the mandatory course requirements for this course, you must:  
attend a minimum of 75% of the scheduled class sessions, and participate in class discussions;  
complete all of the assignments in the required timeframe.

**Withdrawal dates:** Information available via

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

## Prescribed text

There is no prescribed text for this course. You are expected to be **diligent in completing the weekly readings** for each module instead.

## Course resources

All course material, including study guides and readings, is on the Blackboard website for INFO 544; see 'Online information' below for further details. The study guides on Blackboard include work to prepare for the weekly session. Each week, discussion will be based on both:

- required readings from the material provided;
- introductory material, discussion points, exercises.

Since the course will be conducted as a series of seminars, in which I hope you will have as much to contribute as I do, it is important that you have done the reading and can bring an

informed point of view to class discussions. In some sessions I may ask you to talk about a specific topic, or to share your experience in exploring the resources we are discussing with the rest of your seminar group. You should always be prepared for this.

## Online information

The Blackboard Web-based learning environment will be used to post course information notices, and enable ongoing electronic discussion forums on topics or issues introduced in or out of class. Students are also encouraged to use Blackboard for information sharing, and to post questions for electronic and in-class discussion. You should also read the appropriate module Web pages in conjunction with the module readings and course notes. Details on how to access Blackboard are in the *Administration Handbook*, but if you have any difficulties logging on please contact the Help Desk, at:

[its-service@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:its-service@vuw.ac.nz)

All LIM students will be automatically enrolled in LIM Programmes Information on Blackboard. General announcements and information will be posted here, and students should check this site regularly.

## Internet conferencing

Distance sessions are conducted via the Internet; in order to participate students will need an Internet-connected PC running Windows Vista, XP, or Windows 2000, microphone, and headphones/speakers. To connect, go to the Internet conferencing page (and read the “Getting Started” information) at

<https://conferencing.sim.vuw.ac.nz/>

There is also an ‘Internet Conferencing’ button linking to this page in Blackboard. ***Some days before your first session, and at least 15 minutes before each subsequent session, you should test your system by going to the Echo Room.*** Regular classes will be held in the LIM Room; additional Discussion Rooms are available for breakout groups, and as a “waiting room” if a class is proceeding in the main LIM room. Study groups can use the discussion rooms out of regular class times. For further information, follow the help links on the Internet Conferencing page; details, including screen name conventions, are also available on Blackboard under LIM Programmes Information.

## **LIM Students email list**

Mass communication between the school and students is via the email list. It is your responsibility to ensure you are on the email list; subscription is essential.

The lim-students email discussion list is used to make important announcements and to share news and ideas relating to the LIM programmes. It is vital that all staff and students are subscribed. Please make sure that your current email address is subscribed – one that you check regularly. It is very important that students remain a member of this list until after graduation as the list is used as a main form of communication of important administration messages (including graduation messages). Emails are sent to `lim-students` often, so if you have not had contact for a few weeks it is a good idea to check if you are still subscribed. If an email is rejected by your email account, you will automatically be unsubscribed.

**To subscribe, go to:**

<http://lists.vuw.ac.nz/mailman/listinfo/lim-students>

## **Changing your e-mail address**

If you change email addresses, you must unsubscribe from `lim-students` and re-subscribe with your new email address.

# **VUW ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

**For the following important information follow the links provided:**

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

### **General University Policies and Statutes**

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcademic/Publications.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic/Publications.aspx)

### **Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fca/studenthelp/>

### **Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme**

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/mentoring/](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/mentoring/)