

Victoria Management School

## **MMMS 505 RESEARCH METHODS**

Trimester One 2010

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

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**Course Coordinator & Lecturer:**

**Sarah Proctor-Thomson**

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**Lecturer:**

**Dr Sally Riad**

RH 910, Rutherford House

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**Administrator:**

**Luisa Acheson**

RH 912, Rutherford House

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[luisa.acheson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:luisa.acheson@vuw.ac.nz)

**Teaching dates: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

Teaching Period: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Study Period: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Examination Period: Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June – Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010 (inclusive)

**Lecture Times:** Wednesday 10.30 – 1:20 pm.

**Location:** Railway Building: RWW 315

**Format:** One three-hour session each week and independent work

**Withdrawal from Courses:**

Information available via

**Withdrawal dates: Late withdrawals with Associate Dean (Students) permission  
(See Section 8: Withdrawals - from the Personal Courses of Study Statute)**

<http://policy.vuw.ac.nz/Amphora!~~policy.vuw.ac.nz~POLICY~000000001743.pdf>

**Withdrawal dates: refunds:**

<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 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.

This course provides the foundation on which students will develop their own research project in MMMS 530 in Trimester 2.

### **The MMMS Programme Learning Objectives**

- Display innovative thinking through creative solutions and insights on management-related problems and methods.
- Combine existing and original research into a research project that adds to knowledge.
- Convey key management concepts concisely in an appropriate written format.
- Display articulate oral communication skills.
- Co-operate in teams to effectively present management information and analysis.
- Demonstrate their knowledge of local and national organisational environments and construct strategies from a global perspective.

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

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

1. Explain and differentiate conceptual and philosophical issues as they relate to the research process including research paradigms and related methodologies (Assignment 1).
2. Identify gaps and potential areas of contribution for research through analysis of existing research literature (Assignment 1).
3. Evaluate a range of practical and ethical issues related to the research process in local, national and international contexts (Assignment 2 & 3).
4. Apply both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyse data relating to a chosen topic (Assignment 2 & 3).

### **Expected Workload**

Students can expect the workload to be approximately 10-15hrs per week, including both scheduled contact time and outside class.

### **Individual and Group 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* textbook is:

- O'Leary, Zina (2010). *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. London: Sage.

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

### ***Recommended reading:***

- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P.R. (2008). *Management Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). London: Sage.
- Cavanna, B., Delahaye, B. L. & Sekran, U. (2001). *Applied business research: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. Milton: John Wiley & Sons.

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 505 Research Methods Course Schedule – 2010**

Wk	Date		Topics	Class Preparation
1	Mar 3	SR	<b>Introduction</b> Overview of the course; The objectives and processes of organisational and management research; The research process. <b>* Assignment 1 handed out</b>	O'leary, Ch.1. Easterby- Smith Ch 1 (supplied in class)
2	Mar 10	SR & SPT	<b>Philosophies of Research</b> 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	Easterby-Smith et al. Ch 4 (supplied) Henry and Pene, (2001) (supplied)
3 **	Mar 17	SR	<b>Reviewing the Literature</b> 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	O'leary Ch. 6 Locke & Golden-Biddle (1997) (supplied)
4	Mar 24	SR	<b>Designing Research</b> Research questions; Exploring the variety in research designs; Contributing to theory; Implications for method.	O'leary Ch.4
5	Mar 31	SPT	<b>Introduction to Methods</b> Research process, methods, quantitative/ qualitative divide. Rigour in research. Observation exercise. Measurement of variables. <b>*Assignment 1 due * Assignment 2 handed out</b>	O'Leary, Ch. 12 Cavanna et al. (2001), p.186-201
<b>April 2nd-April 18<sup>th</sup> Easter &amp; Mid-Trimester Break</b>				
6	April 21	SPT	<b>Quantitative Survey Research I</b> Article reviews. Refresher on research statistics I – Types of data, types of questions, types of answers. Purpose of Surveys; Survey Research Design; Principals of Question Design	Review of chosen survey research article selected in week 5. O'Leary, Ch.11, p. 180-193 Cavana et al. (2001), p. 225-246
7	April 28	SPT	<b>Quantitative Survey Research II</b> Question testing; Questionnaire appearance; Populations & sampling; Reducing non-response;	O'Leary, Ch. 10
8	May 5	SPT	<b>Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretation</b> Piloting, Preparing data, Describing data; Business statistics refresher II: Working with SPSS.	O'Leary, Ch. 13
9	May 12	SPT	<b>Finish off Quantitative survey</b> Working with SPSS: Univariate and bivariate variable analysis in lab <b>Qualitative Research</b> What is qualitative research? Assumptions and dichotomization; Qualitative Research Methods: Documentary, interviews, focus groups. <b>Assignment 2 due *Assignment 3 handed out</b>	Review of chosen qualitative research article selected in week 8.
10	May 19	SPT	<b>Qualitative Interview &amp; Focus Group Research I</b> Types of interview; Focus group as type of group interview, developing focus group schedule, conducting a focus group.	O'Leary, Ch.11, p. 194-206 Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999, Ch.1 (focus group)
11	May 26	SPT	<b>Qualitative Interview &amp; Focus Group Research II</b> Run focus group, formal reflection, refinement of questions and format. Introduction to abstracting and coding qualitative data I	Creswell p.183-201 O'Leary, Ch. 14
12	June 2	SPT	<b>Qualitative data analysis</b> Abstracting and coding qualitative data II. Course admin & evaluation. What's next?:Trimester 2. <b>Assignment 3 due on June 9<sup>th</sup> 2010</b>	No reading – bring 1 page excerpt of focus group transcript.

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

## Assessment Requirements

Assignment	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1	Exploring potential contribution to Management knowledge	30 %	10.30am Wed, 31 March
2	Survey planning and design	35 %	10.30am Wed, 12 May
3	Focus group pilot and analysis	35 %	10.30am, Wed, 9 June
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

### **Assignment 1. Exploring potential contribution to management knowledge**

Due: 10.30am Wednesday 31 March 2010.

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 1.**

### **Assignment 2. Survey planning and design**

Due: 10.30am Wednesday 12 May 2010.

Marks: 35%

Word limit: No word limit for questionnaire & coding instructions  
1,500-2,000 words for report (excl. references).

This assignment builds on the ideas covered in the first section of the course and the work undertaken in the survey methods section of the course. In this assignment you will develop a short survey on an organisational or management topic of your choice. You will need to move through each of the main steps of planning and developing a survey, however, you will NOT be required to execute the survey or analyse any resultant data. You may propose to use existing survey questions and/or scales in your questionnaire, but you must justify your choices and generate some original questionnaire items.

**Full details of Assignment 2 will be handed out in Week 5.**

### **Assignment 3. Focus group pilot and analysis**

Due: 10.30am Wednesday 9 June 2010 (please submit to Luisa Acheson in RH 912).

Marks: 35%

Word limit: 1,500-2,000 words (excl. references, focus group guide, excerpt of analysis, expanded notes)

This assignment builds on the previous two assignments and gives you an opportunity to engage in qualitative data collection and analysis via a focus group exercise. In this assignment you will be working with a group of peers to develop and run a focus group on a shared topic of interest, and analyse an excerpt of your data.

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

## **Handing in assignments**

Assignments must be submitted in hardcopy and in electronic form:

**Hardcopy:** Assignments should be submitted by the due date, in **hard copy** form in class or to Luisa Acheson, RH 912.

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

Title your email: MGMT 404, ASSIGNMENT X, Name.

Title your file: ASS. X, Name

Please also make sure that your name, project title and word count is on the title page of the file.

Hardcopies received after due date will be deemed to be late, and must be handed to Luisa Acheson (RH 912). Assignments will not be returned until electronic files are received.

## **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.

Students must also keep an electronic copy of their work archived. 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.

*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.*

## **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 12 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
- Copies of class handouts or readings
- Administrative details.

Any important new information will be given in class, and / or distributed by email to student email addresses.

## **Class representative**

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be made available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

## **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**

### FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services Office is located on the ground floor of Rutherford House. 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 or go to <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fca/studenthelp/>

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

### **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 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.

To view the university's policy on academic integrity and plagiarism please go to:

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

### **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 <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

### **AVC (Academic) Website: information including: Conduct, Academic Grievances, Students with Impairments, Student Support**

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

### **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 go to: [http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/mentoring/](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/mentoring/), 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**

**MMMS 505**

*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: \_\_\_\_\_