

School of Management

## **MGMT 430/ MMMS 530 RESEARCH PAPER ON A SELECTED ASPECT OF MANAGEMENT**

Trimester 2 2012

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

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#### **CONTACT DETAILS**

**Coordinator**

Deborah Jones  
Room RH 930, Rutherford House  
Phone: 463-5731.  
Email [deborah.jones@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:deborah.jones@vuw.ac.nz)  
Office Hours: Office hours: 2-5 pm  
Wednesdays during term time. Supervision  
times: by appointment during these hours.  
Any students with a regular class clash at this  
time, please contact me to arrange an  
alternative.

**Lecturer and Supervisor:** Todd Bridgman

Room: RH 903, Rutherford House  
Phone: 463-5118  
Email: [todd.bridgman@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:todd.bridgman@vuw.ac.nz)  
Supervision times: by appointment

**Supervisor :** Sarah Proctor-Thomson

Room: RH 909, Rutherford House  
Phone: 463-9982  
Email: [sarah.proctor-thomson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sarah.proctor-thomson@vuw.ac.nz)  
Supervision times: by appointment

**Administrator:** Tricia Lapham

Room: RH 1022, Rutherford House  
Phone: 463-5397  
Email: [tricia.lapham@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:tricia.lapham@vuw.ac.nz)

#### **Class Times and Room Numbers**

Wednesdays 8.30 am – 11.20 am. RWWW 315

#### **Trimester Dates**

Teaching Period: Monday 16 July – Thursday 25 October  
Study Period: Monday 22 October – Thursday 25 October (Monday 22 October is a public  
holiday, Labour Day).

#### **Withdrawal from Course**

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 27 July 2012.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 28 September. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an 'Application for Associate Dean's Permission to Withdraw Late' including supporting documentation. The application form is available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks.

**SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE**

WEEK	DATE	STAFF	TOPIC	READINGS (from O'Leary 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed)	BRING TO CLASS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1	18/7	DJ	Workshop: Eight questions exercise and literature reviews	Chapters 1, 4 & 6	For class: Bring copy of 8 questions exercise to hand in (on Blackboard)	
2	25/7	TB	Workshop: Research design	Chapters 7 & 8	For class: Bring completed 'Project details' - 2 copies.	
3	1 /8	DJ	Workshop: Data collection	Chapters 10, 11 & 12	For class: Bring draft interview outlines, survey forms and/or observation sheets - 4 copies.	ASSIGNMENT 1: Literature Review Due 3 pm Friday 3 August
4	8/8	DJ	Workshop: Human Ethics application	Chapter 3	For class: Bring draft HEC Application including forms etc. - 2 copies.	
5	15/8		Supervision			
6	22/8		Supervision			ASSIGNMENT 2: Research Design essay and HEC form Due 3 pm Friday 24 August
MID-TRIMESTER BREAK 27 August - 7 September						
7	12/9		Supervision			
8	19/9		Supervision			
9	26/9		Supervision			Data collection should be complete by 28 September at the latest.
10	3/10	DJ SPT	Workshop: Data analysis	Chapters 13 & 14	For class: Bring a draft outline of key issues in analysing your data (to go into your methods section) - 4 copies.	
11	10/10	TB	Workshop: Writing your journal article	Chapter 15	For class: Bring a draft of your introduction section - 500 words or over - 4 copies.	
12	17/10		Supervision			ASSIGNMENT 3 due 3 pm Thurs 25 October

## **COMMUNICATION**

We will email the class to confirm any important messages you need to have about the course. We will also post announcements and hand-outs on Blackboard. We will send all class messages to VUW SCS email account, so you should check these regularly. To contact staff by email: Include the Course Code, your Name, and the Topic in the subject area of the email.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this course you will begin to develop the role of a professional researcher. The key objective is to design and pilot a research project on a topic of your choice, using the methods of your choice. The final output is a journal article. Assignments are designed so that they cumulatively lead to the final report in journal article format.

For those going on to further research, the pilot will help you develop your thesis research design. Students may also wish to use the project to explore an aspect of professional practice that interests you for the future. The final article may be submitted to the School of Management Working Paper series for review and potential publication online.

### **Your topic**

It is essential that you find a topic that genuinely interests you, and that you take ownership of the research process. You will be required to go beyond a 'recipe' approach to research: instead, you will creatively design your own unique project, and be able to effectively explain your research design choices in your own words. You can consider a wide range of topics, as long as they have a link to management, organization and/or work.

### **Skills development**

Successful research requires a unique combination of skills: creativity, a critical approach to research methodology and to the relevant academic material on your topic, interpersonal, project-management and writing skills. The first part of the course is based around class workshop sessions where you will work on successive parts of the project, cumulatively building up to data collection and analysis in the second half under supervision. In this course we combine readings and discussion of general research principles with workshops and individual supervision. We also encourage you to approach other staff in the School of Management where they have expertise that is relevant to your project.

### **Course Delivery**

This course is taught by a combination of class workshops and individual supervision. There is a strong emphasis in this paper on a self-directed programme of research carried out under supervision from staff. Students are also required to prepare and hand in material for each workshop session.

## **REQUIRED TEXT**

O'Leary, Zina (2010). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. *The essential guide to doing research*. London: Sage.

### **Recommended reading:**

- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P.R. (2008). *Management research* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). London: Sage.
- Cavana, 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.

## **Reading**

You will be expected to show that you have read widely on issues of research methodology for Assignments 2 and 3. We expect you to be able to demonstrate that you have a good overall knowledge of the research approach you have taken, and more detailed knowledge of specific methods you are using. You must be able to convincingly use your own words to explain what you are doing and why. For research methods the best resources are usually **books** rather than journal articles.

## **Class Representative**

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

## **Human Ethics**

Everyone will fill in an individual human ethics application form, to be handed in as part of the research proposal assignment, and this must be approved before you can start data collection.

### ***Please note –***

- you may not formally agree to carry out research with any individuals or organisations before getting human ethics approval from a lecturer in the paper, based on Assignment 2.
- You should keep all signed research agreements until after the final course grade is received or until the date on your Human Ethics application forms.

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

On successful completion of the course, students will have improved their ability to:

1. Develop an effective research question to guide their research
2. Present a research design grounded in a review of a body of literature in a field of management studies
3. Articulate orally and in writing their research rationale
4. Give constructive feedback on research designs presented by others
5. Respond effectively to constructive feedback on versions of the research design
6. Carry out a pilot research exercise, analyse results and draw conclusions in relation to the research question
7. Show how the results of the research contribute to the existing body of work in the field
8. If relevant, show how the results of the research contribute to practitioners
9. Use professional research skills in creating effective and ethical research relationships and planning and carrying out a research design
10. Write a journal article based on original research.

## **Expected Participation and workload**

Students are expected to be prepared for all class exercises including bringing copies of specific preparation exercises as noted on the Schedule. You are expected to participate in class sessions, presenting your own work and providing feedback to others. You will be expected to attend all workshop sessions and should let the coordinator know in advance if you can't make it for any reason.

Students can expect the workload to be about 10-15 hrs. per week on average, including both scheduled contact time (class sessions) and work outside class. Careful project management ensuring regular progress on key aspects is essential so that a large portion of the workload does not fall in the second half of the trimester.

### **Project management and supervision**

It is important that you design a pilot project that can realistically be carried out during the course, working consistently. This will mean careful project management; including having a plan B if you are unable to access the people or data you want in a timely way. We encourage you to keep a **research journal** during the course, and we will do class work that contributes to these. See the handout '*Writing a research journal*' on Blackboard.

Supervision will be allocated between lecturers in week two, depending on project topics and approaches. We encourage you to approach other staff in the School of Management for specific advice where they have expertise that is relevant to your project – but make sure that you do this early in your planning process.

### **Materials and Equipment**

Students carrying out interviews will need to source recording equipment. If you do not have access to a digital recorder, please contact the Course co-ordinator.

### **ASSESSMENT**

All assessment is the same for MGMT 430 and MMMS 530. All assessment will be internal, and all assignments will be individual.

#### **Assignments**

Assignments build up to a final pilot research project, written up as a journal article. Your project:

- must involve research with people ('human subjects'),
- could also include use of documents, etc.,
- should be related to management, organisations or business in some way (interdisciplinary research is fine), and
- can be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination.

The scope of the pilot project (to be individually negotiated with your supervisor) will depend on the method (or combination of methods) you use. A rough guide is:

- in-depth interviews (say 1 hour plus) – up to 5 OR
- short interviews (say 30 mins) – up to 15 (or more depending length) OR
- questionnaires – 30 or more OR
- observation – about 4 hours.

### **SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>1. Literature review</b>	10% of total	2000 + / - 200 words	DUE 3 PM FRIDAY 3 AUGUST
<b>2. Research design essay and HEC form</b>	30% of total	2500 + / - 250 words plus completed Human Ethics form	DUE 3 PM FRIDAY 24 AUGUST
<b>3. Journal article writing up pilot project</b>	60% of total	5000 + / - 500 words (length partly depends on the type of research you do).	DUE 3 PM THURS 25 OCTOBER

Relationships between the assessments and the course learning objectives are as follows:

Learning Objective	Literature review	Research design essay and HEC form	Journal article
1	X	X	X
2	X	X	X
3	X	X	X
4		X	X
5		X	X
6			X
7			X
8			X
9		X	X
10			X

### HANDLING ASSIGNMENTS

#### ASSIGNMENT BOX: MZ Box 24

Hand hard copy assignments in to the Mezzanine assignment box #24 by 3 PM on the due date. Never leave assignments in staff offices, under doors, etc. No assignments will be accepted by email. Any late assignments should be handed directly to the School office RH 1022.

Format for assignments

- All assignments must be typed or word-processed.
- They all should have: a cover sheet stating your name, the course name, coordinator name, assignment name, a word count and submission date.
- You should also put page numbers on each page, and
- Use in-text referencing and include a list of references at the end.

### Referencing

Accurate and correct referencing is essential to scholarly research skills. A quick introduction to APA as required in this course will be posted on Blackboard. There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce 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. A concise APA Style Guide is also available on the course blackboard site.

### GRADING GUIDELINES

The following broad indicative characterisations of grade will apply in grading assignments:

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.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

10% of total

2000 + / - 200 words (excluding references)

The purpose of this review is to research and develop your core topic. You will connect your research project to the current academic literature, and to the academic and practitioner communities you will address in your final article. The review shows what you have learned from what others have already done, what you think of it, and how your work can contribute in a credible way. It will eventually be part of your final article in a revised form.

The literature review should take the form of an academic essay and include an appropriate structure. It is not a business report and you should therefore avoid the use of lists and bullet points.

You should construct an argument, rather than merely providing a description of the relevant literature. You should argue the need for, and relevance of, your research project by setting it within the context of past research. This requires that you critically evaluate and synthesise the relevant literature to demonstrate the significance and value of your study. **Note:** this review does not include methodological issues which will be covered in assignment 2.

You must be able to summarise key aspects of the literature in your own words. Direct quotations can be useful (e.g. key terms and concepts), but should be used sparingly and should not act as a substitute for your own writing. It is essential to this assignment that the literature should be referenced appropriately. Full details on how to do this are included in the course outline: see 'Referencing strategies'.

### *Format*

Each research project will vary according to the mix of theoretical and applied issues being explored. Depending on your topic, the review will include a mix of two types of published material, and these should be presented in separate sections of the review:

#### **1. Academic articles and books**

These provide a theoretical framework for your topic. It is possible that there is no existing research on your exact topic. You will be mixing and matching to make your own original contribution. You may be relating a theoretical framework to a topic or problem in a new way, or developing ways that your topic has already been studied. You may be combining theories to develop an innovative perspective.

#### **2. Non-academic background material**

For some topics there may be non-academic material such as statistical or policy reports, articles in practitioner journals or other media, news reports, websites or organisational documents which give background to your topic and the issues involved in it. You should use this material in the review only to indicate the relevance of your topic and the issues involved. **This section should make up no more than 1/3 of the review at most.**

### *Assessment criteria*

The literature review should:

- take the form of an academic essay and include an appropriate structure
- present the construction of an argument to demonstrate the relevance of your topic
- include a mix of academic and non-academic material appropriate to your topic
- involve a critical evaluation and synthesis of the relevant literature
- be referenced appropriately
- be well-written and interesting.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN ESSAY AND HEC FORM

30% of total

2500 + / - 250 words (excluding references) plus completed Human Ethics form

This essay:

1. helps clarify the project so that both student and supervisor(s) are clear about what is proposed and can commit to it; and
2. demonstrates your understandings of the research methodology principles that make your design valid. Use referencing to demonstrate your knowledge of research issues and methods.

### **Format**

The essay should include:

#### **A. Introduction – about 500 words**

- **Proposed title**
- **Research question**
- **Set the scene:** What is the research about? Why does it interest you? Why is it academically important or interesting? Is it also important or interesting to practitioners?
- **Background:** What knowledge, if any, do you already have about the empirical situation you are addressing, if you are doing empirical research?
- **Literature Review:** *Briefly* summarise key ideas based on your literature review. What is original about what you want to do?

#### **B. Methodology – about 1500 words**

- Which research strategies and philosophies of knowledge will you draw on? What kind of design will be used and why?
- **Methods:** what exactly will you be doing? What are the data collection methods to be used? What types of data should be collected? How will this be done? What could be the problems of collecting these types of data? How will access be gained to participants and organisations? How many studies (interviews, surveys, observations, etc.) will be conducted and why? *In which ways will the methods and design answer your research questions?*
- **Analysis:** *What, in general terms, will be done with the data you collect?* What kinds of analytical techniques is it likely you will use? What are their limitations? How will these analyses address and answer the research questions? How are you going to construct your argument, i.e., how are you going to draw together theory and data in a way that allows readers to follow you and be able to judge for themselves the judgements or conclusions you have reached?
- **Ethical considerations:** Are there potential conflicts of interest, or areas of ethical sensitivity which may occur before, during or after the research? What cultural or cross-cultural issues are relevant?
- **Credibility:** What are the truth values in your project? How do you address the issues of reliability and validity that are relevant to your methodology?

#### **C. Planning – about 500 words**

- **Research skills:** Which professional experience or research training do you already have that will be relevant to this project? *Which aspects of your research skills would you like to improve?*
- **Resources:** What kind of resources, e.g., budget; equipment, etc. will you need to complete this project?
- **Timetable:** Give a timetable with dates for each milestone. Include a Plan B – what will you do if you cannot get the data you are planning for by the dates you have in mind? What alternative sources or types of data will you use? [Note: it is not acceptable to simply collect less data because of practical problems].

### **References**

#### *Assessment criteria*

The research design essay should demonstrate:

- understandings of the theoretical aspects of research design, especially methodology
- ability to design a viable and realistic project
- ability to argue convincingly for the academic credibility of the project
- understandings of ethical issues in research
- ability to explain the relevance of all these issues to your project in your own words
- ability to produce research documents to a professional academic standard.



### **3. JOURNAL ARTICLE**

60% of total

About 5000 + / - 500 words (excluding references) (length partly depends on the type of research you do). A set word length does not apply to this assignment.

This final write-up will include in a revised and edited version most of the material already handed in during the course. Your output will be a self-contained and credible academic research article clearly showing how you have proceeded from research question to final conclusions and discussion. You will show what you have learned from the pilot process, and the implications for future research .

This assignment will be written up in the format of an academic journal article. You should find an academic journal that you would aim to publish your paper in, and use the guidelines on their website regarding audience and writing style (if this is mentioned). Some academic journals also aim to reach certain groups of practitioners, and one of these may be suitable if you are also aiming for this audience.

Your finalised and approved HEC Application and all related documents should also be attached for our information.

*Format*

#### **1. Cover material**

- Cover sheet as for all assignments – as per course outline
- Title and author; name of journal you are ‘submitting’ the article to, plus brief outline of journal audience and style

#### **2. Content**

You will use an essay style (models and tables may be included if relevant), and will include (not necessarily in this order) :

- Introduction
- Literature review (an updated, re-focussed and shortened version of assignment 1)
- Methodology ( based on Assignment 2 and updated as necessary)
- Findings and discussion (may be two separate sections)
- What you learned from the pilot for future research
  - What you learned about any aspects of the research process (this should be very specific)
  - What you learned about the research topic and how you would change your research design for future research and/or what you would recommend to other researchers
- Conclusions
- References using APA style

#### **3. Attached – HEC Materials**

Your finalised and approved HEC Application and all related documents.

*Assessment criteria*

The assignment should:

- flow coherently from the research question to the final conclusions
- work effectively as a pilot project
- contribute to the academic literature
- contribute to practitioners (this is not necessarily relevant to all projects)
- demonstrate a good theoretical understanding of the research process
- be written to an appropriate professional standard for the specified audience
- be referenced to journal standards using the strategies provided in the course outline.

## **Mandatory course requirements**

To (pass this course) fulfil mandatory course requirements, students must:

- Hand in all assignments
- Make contact with your supervisor and meet them to discuss your project
- Attend at least 5 workshop sessions
- Obtain at least 50 per cent of the marks available for the final assignment, i.e., at least a grade of C on the final assignment.

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirements for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" 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 notified by email.

## **Quality Assurance 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 FCom programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

## **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 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 lecturer, providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances.
- IV. 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.
- V. 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 lecturer as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- VI. Word limits should be adhered to, especially so when they provide a guide to limiting the student's coverage of a topic. Extra credit will not be given for extra material in an assignment over the limit.

**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**

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study)

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx>

The University's statutes and policies are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx> (See Section C).

Further information about the University's academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at

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

**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)

**Faculty of Commerce Office**

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

**Te Putahi Atawhai**

**Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/tpa/>