

School of Accounting and Commercial Law

MMPA 515 RESEARCH PROJECT

Trimester 1, 2014

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details	Office	Telephone
<i>Course Coordinator & Project Supervisor</i> Carolyn Fowler carolyn.fowler@vuw.ac.nz Office hours: By appointment	RH 601	463 6506
<i>Project Supervisor</i> Jim Ryan jim.ryan@vuw.ac.nz Office hours: By appointment	RH 631	463 6709
<i>Course Administrator</i> Pinky Shah pinky.shah@vuw.ac.nz Office hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-5.30pm	RH 728	463 6921

Trimester Dates

From Monday 3 March to Monday 16 June 2014

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 14 March 2014.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 16 May 2014. 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.

Class Times and Room Numbers

There are no formal classes for this course.

Course Delivery

Whilst there are no formal classes, students are expected to meet regularly with their supervisor, i.e., at least once a fortnight. As a guideline, you should expect these meetings to average approximately one half hour a week (i.e. fortnightly meetings would last approximately one hour). Individual supervisors may request you to attend meetings more often if they deem it necessary.

Expected Workload

The expected workload for your MMPA 515 research project is approximately 20-25 hours per week for each week of the trimester. Overall, your research project should reflect approximately 300 hours of work.

Prescription

A specific research project chosen by the student.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- (a) Develop an effective research question to guide research.
- (b) Present a research design based on the relevant literature in accounting, taxation or a related field.
- (c) Demonstrate the application of research methodology and methods to applied research.
- (d) Carry out a research exercise, analyse the results and draw conclusions in relation to the research question.
- (e) Demonstrate how the results contribute to practice.

Course Content

This special topic is a supervised research project that provides students with the opportunity to undertake independent research in a specific area of professional accounting (or a related field).

Readings

Your supervisor will assist you with relevant readings. However, you will be expected to primarily engage in intellectually independent and largely self-directed research.

The recommended textbook for MMPA 515 is Zina O'Leary 'The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project' Sage, 2010.

This book is available from the university bookshop and on closed reserve and 3-day loan in the Commerce library.

Assessment

From Trimester 1, 2014, a revised Assessment Handbook will apply to all Victoria courses: see <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf>.

In particular, there will be a new grade scheme, in which the A+ range will be 90-100% and 50-54% will be a C-.

The assessments in this course are designed to enable the student to build up to a final research project.

Assessment Item	%	Due Dates (by 4pm)	Course Learning Objectives Assessed
1. Description of Planned Research Project	5%	Tuesday 18 March 2014	(a)
2. Literature Review	15%	Tuesday 1 April 2014	(a) (b)
3. Research Design	10%	Tuesday 15 April 2014	(b) (c)
4. Final Research Project	70%	Monday 16 June 2014	(a) (b) (c) (d) (e)

Assessment Details

- 1. Description of Planned Research Project** **Word limit: 500** **5%**
This is a brief description of the project as agreed with the project supervisor, and will include the identification of the issue the student would like to investigate.
Due: 4.00 pm, Tuesday, 18 March 2014

- 2. Literature Review** **Word limit: 3,000** **15%**
This is the review of the anecdotal and academic literature to support the contemporary relevance of the identified issue, using news media, industry/professional literature, and refereed journals.
Due: 4.00 pm, Tuesday, 1 April 2014

- 3. Research Design** **Word limit: 2,000** **10%**
The research design will outline and justify the research method chosen to answer the stated research question. Further, it will explain how the data is to be accessed, collected and analysed.
Due: 4.00 pm, Tuesday 15 April 2014

- 4. Final Research Project** **Word limit: 15,000** **70%**
The final research project will generally incorporate a detailed literature review, a comprehensive research design that covers the research question, method, data collection and analysis, the presentation of the results, and a discussion of findings and conclusions, including their implications for practice. However, the exact content and structure will vary depending on the research project type. This will be discussed by your project supervisor.
Due: 4.00 pm, Monday, 16 June 2014

Submission Instructions

Assessment items 1 to 4 above are to be submitted to the *Course Coordinator* in electronic form (Microsoft Word document or PDF) via email. A confirmation email will be sent by the *Course Coordinator* once the assessment item has been received. The assessment item will then be forwarded to your project supervisor (if not the course coordinator).

Types of Research Projects

A variety of different types of research projects are encouraged. Examples include:

- Empirical work within a particular research paradigm (e.g. content analysis of annual reports).
- An in-depth review of the research literature on a particular topic (e.g. balanced scorecard).
- An historical study on a particular topic (e.g. development of a specific accounting standard).
- A critical comparison of different research approaches to a particular topic (e.g. corporate governance, environmental accounting, and business ethics. “Differences” explored might include differences in theories used, research methods and/or social/political philosophies).
- Exploration of a public policy issue e.g. reviewing relevant conceptual and empirical literature and making policy recommendations.

General Guidelines

1. Students are responsible in the first instance for selecting a topic. However, the topic has to be agreed to by the project supervisor.
2. Any research involving human participants will need to obtain *University HEC approval*, prior to being undertaken.
In Trimester 1, 2014, this application would need to be completed by 31 March 2014.
3. Each student is required to adhere strictly to deadlines set. Extensions will only be granted in extenuating circumstances and can only be approved by the Course Coordinator.
4. During the trimester, your project supervisor will read and provide comments on your assessment items 1 to 3 above and one draft version of assessment item 4. Individual supervisors may request other written work as you proceed. Further, your supervisor will provide academic advice only. They will not edit your writing.

Penalties

Assessments must be handed in on or before the due date and time. In fairness to other students, any assignments submitted after the deadline will not be marked.

An extension or waiver (with no penalty) will be considered on the grounds of exceptional personal circumstances. Students must complete the 'Assignment Extension/Waiver Application Form' available on the MPA Student Information site on Blackboard and submit the form (with the relevant supporting documentation) to the *Course Coordinator* or Pinky Shah preferably before the assignment due date.

Note: The submission of an application does not mean that the extension has been approved. Penalties, as detailed above, will apply if the extension is not granted.

Exceptional Personal Circumstances include an impairment assessed by Disability Services, illness, bereavement, circumstances involving the health or wellbeing of a relative or close friend, compulsory attendance at court, national or international representative commitments, significant cultural commitments, or activities in which the student is representing the University.

*Note: Not being organised or failing to plan ahead are **not** exceptional circumstances.*

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and submitted to Turnitin. A copy of submitted materials will be retained on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

Mandatory Course Requirements

In addition to obtaining an overall course mark of 50 or better, students must complete all four items of assessment (listed on page 2).

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

Class Representative

As this research paper is completed on an individual basis, no class representative is required for this offering.

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information concerning this course will be provided directly to the student by email.

Student feedback

Any feedback is considered and followed up on.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php

Link to general information

For general information about course-related matters, go to

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information>

Note to Students

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 academic audit. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of VBS programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.
