

School of Government

GOVT 562
RESEARCH PAPER
(30 Points)

Trimester F (1 + 2) / 2016

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator: **Dr Elizabeth Eppel**
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Administrators: **Darren Morgan**
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School Office Hours: 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Trimester Dates

This course is completed over two consecutive trimesters. Trimester F/2016 covers the period of trimesters 1 AND 2, as follows:

From Monday 29 February to Monday 17 October 2016.

Withdrawal from Course

Formal notice of withdrawal must be in writing on a Course Add/Drop form (available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks or from the course administrator). Not paying your fees, ceasing to attend lectures or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a formal notice of withdrawal.

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before **Friday 11 March 2016**.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 26 August 2016**. 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 or www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/publications/Application-for-late-withdrawal-2010.doc .

Class Times and Room Numbers

This course is an individual research course, completed over two consecutive trimesters. Members of the cohort will meet once as a group on **Tuesday 23 February 2016**. This meeting will be held on the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University in Wellington, and you will be advised of your classroom one week prior to the class by email. The timetable is also available to view on the Victoria University website at www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/timetables .

You will also meet individually with your academic supervisor throughout the course as required. Once a supervisor is allocated to you, it will be up to you individually to arrange an early introductory meeting and agree a time, place and frequency for subsequent meetings.

Course Delivery

This course requires you to design and conduct an independent piece of research which will be reported in a research paper. The class at the beginning of the course will canvass the basics of identifying a researchable topic, writing a research proposal and a specific question or statement of research focus. The course content assumes that GOVT 561, *Research Methods and Design*, or the public policy core, has been completed or is being completed concurrently (this condition can be waived in certain other circumstances; please contact the course coordinator to discuss).

An outline of your research topic, initiated during the class on Tuesday 23 February 2016, and finessed over the following week, will be used by the course coordinator to help identify a suitable supervisor for your research project, and this appointment must then be agreed by the Head of School. **Attendance is required on Tuesday 23 February 2016, from 9.00am – 5.00pm.**

The course coordinator is responsible for ensuring that you get advice and support on academic research matters up to the point at which you have been assigned to a supervisor. S/he will also provide you and your supervisor with feedback on your draft proposal prior to the final submission and approval process. The course coordinator is also responsible for other matters associated with completion of the research project, including trouble-shooting supervisory problems, and ensuring consistent and accurate assessment.

Group Work

While the focus of this course is on the design and conduct of independent research by each individual student, it is conceivable that students in the same cohort might be researching questions related to the same or a closely related area or even related research questions. If this were to be the case then students might work together to ensure efficient use of research participant time and resources provided that each student is mindful of the requirement to focus on their own research question and tailor their individual report accordingly.

Expected Workload

Your research will be conducted over two consecutive trimesters and you should anticipate about 300 hours of work. You are required to produce a research report of 10,000-12,000 words to outline your research and findings.

Prescription

Research leading to a report on a specific topic in public management or public policy.

Course Learning Objectives

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Design a piece of original research
2. Independently conduct a fresh, theoretically informed, critical examination of a specific topic in public management or public policy
3. Demonstrate competent analysis and interpretation of research findings
4. Clearly present a long argument in a research report

Course Content

The course is in three informal and inter-related stages: 1) finding and defining a suitable research topic; 2) writing a formal research proposal; and 3) conducting the research and writing up the findings as a report.

Stage one will be initiated in the class session on Tuesday 23 February 2016 and will be refined over the following week. This research topic statement will be used to identify an academic supervisor who will be appointed by the Head of School to guide the subsequent development of your research.

Stage two involves the refinement of the research topic/question, research methodology and design in a written research proposal which is approved by the School. The purpose of a research proposal is to allow a reviewer to judge the academic merits of the proposed research, offer constructive feedback that can improve the research and offer other useful suggestions. Writing a proposal is also an effective way to focus your thinking and avoid 'false paths' later.

Separate approval might also be needed from the University's Human Ethics Committee before the empirical phase of the research can be undertaken (see further advice regarding this process below).

Stage three involves completion of the research described in the proposal and the writing of a research report. Guidance on the format of the research report is provided below. You should aim to share completed stages of your research with your supervisor and have a full draft of the report three to four weeks ahead of the due date to allow for supervisor feedback on your draft and refinement of your arguments and conclusions. Given that the research must be carried out, and reported on, in a relatively constrained timeframe, it is essential that you resolve any difficulties as soon as they arise with the help of your supervisor or the course co-ordinator. The three stages briefly described here are further elaborated in the Assessment guidance and Annex to this Course Outline.

Readings

Recommended reading is the two books prescribed for the GOVT 561 *Research Methods and Design* course:

Thomas, G. (2013). *How to do your research project: A guide for students in education and applied social sciences* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management: An introduction*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Also recommended for easy-to-read, step-by-step guidance on doing a research project is:

O’Leary, Z. (2014). *The essential guide to doing your research project*. London: Sage.

These books are available through the VUW Library.

A selection of other research methods references can also be found in the VUW Library:

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning, perspective and the research process*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (2010). *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Materials and Equipment

It is assumed that all students have access to a personal computer and study space and that no other research materials and equipment are required. If you require access to any specialist software for your data collection and analysis, this should be identified as part of your research proposal.

Assessment

The Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf.

Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Your grade is based on your research report. Two additional requirements are that you produce a one paragraph summary of your intended research topic to facilitate the allocation of a supervisor and submit a research proposal in both draft and final form. If you do not submit an acceptable final proposal by the due date, penalties may be applied to the grade on your research report.

Assessment Items	CLO	Length	%	Due Date
1. One-paragraph summary statement of the intended topic	1	One page maximum		5.00pm Tuesday 1 March 2016 *
2. Draft research proposal	1	1,000-1,250 words		5.00pm Tuesday 19 April 2016
3. Final research proposal	1	1,000-1,250 words		5.00pm Monday 2 May 2016
4. Report	2, 3, 4	10,000-12,000 words	100	5.00pm Monday 17 October 2016

*Note that the final date for withdrawal with a refund from this course is **Friday 11 March 2016**. If you do not provide a satisfactory topic description by this date, you will be advised to withdraw and re-enrol in a later trimester.

You should aim to submit a penultimate draft of the final research report to your supervisor by **Monday 19 September 2016** at the latest to enable you to receive feedback before final submission.

The assessment details are set out below: please take careful notice of the specific requirements for format and submission.

The research report should centre on a clearly posed issue or question, a concept, a process or application for investigation. The student should investigate the topic in a manner that demonstrates a careful review, understanding and synthesis of *relevant* research and scholarship; the collection, presentation, and/or analysis of issue- or problem-specific data or evidence; and an argument leading to clear conclusions or an informed judgment. Implications or recommendations are often included.

1. Summary statement of the intended topic, due 5.00pm, Tuesday 1 March 2016

Set out in one paragraph the topic you intend to develop into your research project. The purposes of this paragraph are to ensure you make a timely start with proposal development and to assist the School to allocate supervisors for all research getting underway at the same time.

Your paragraph should be presented on *one page*, with the following information:

- Course code and name
- Assessment item descriptor (summary statement)
- Due date (and date submitted, if different)
- Name of candidate
- Student ID number
- Optional: Supervisor requests (including preferred supervisor/s and/or information relevant to the assignment of your supervisor). This information is in confidence to the course coordinator only and can also be submitted in a separate email.

Your paragraph should be a draft version of the “summary statement” (see the proposal details below for a description of the summary statement).

Please email to elizabeth.eppel@vuw.ac.nz by **5.00pm, Tuesday 1 March 2016**.

In most cases, within about 2 weeks you will receive (a) initial comments on your summary statement and (b) the name and contact information for the supervisor you have been allocated.

2. + 3. Draft Proposal, due 5.00pm, Tuesday 19 April 2016, and Final Proposal, due 5.00pm, Monday 2 May 2016

Your *draft proposal* will be developed *with the advice of your supervisor*. You should provide your supervisor, and the Course Co-ordinator, a complete draft by **5.00pm, Tuesday 19 April 2016** at the latest. Feedback from your supervisor on at least one draft of the proposal is almost always needed in order for the final proposal to be of an acceptable standard. The Course Co-ordinator will focus more on the requirements for the proposal, its clarity and other matters which might affect the approval of the Proposal. When your supervisor advises you, or by **5.00pm, Monday 2 May 2016** at the latest, you must formally submit your final proposal.

The final proposal is a mandatory requirement. There are penalties for lateness and for proposals that are unacceptable (see the deadlines section in this outline).

When submitting your *final proposal*, include a front page with the following details:

- Course code and name
- Assessment item descriptor (final proposal)
- Due date (and date submitted, if different)
- Name of candidate
- Student ID number

Please email your final proposal in a Microsoft Word attachment to elizabeth.eppel@vuw.ac.nz . DO NOT pdf the file.

Your *final proposal*, which should be approximately 1,000-1,250 words, should include the following:

1. A title
2. A summary statement
3. A brief summary of the background, objectives, merit, and methodology/research design of the proposed research
4. A section-by-section outline of the final report

5. An indicative timeline for the completion of the various parts of the research
6. A statement of any particular conditions that apply
7. A HEC statement
8. References

The job of a proposal is to seek permission to carry out the study: it is an exercise in persuasion, in which you set out and justify a compelling study which is likely to be achievable in the time available. It is concise and clear, and is fully referenced.

Proposal in Detail

1. Title

Titles should be short and descriptive. Journals are good sources of ideas for titles.

2. Summary Statement

The summary statement should first provide a 'narrative hook' that alerts the reader to your general field of interest, such as child health policy or interagency collaboration. Second, it should raise a feature for focused examination. Third, it should convey the purpose of the research. Finally, the summary statement should convey the nature of the answer you will provide. The summary statement should be about 4 to 6 sentences.

The summary statement contains the overall research "in a nutshell". It is similar to an abstract for an article or report (except that it is written before the results of the research or the main messages are known).

3. Background, Objectives, Merit and Methodology

This section provides an overview of the objectives and merits of the research, and an indication of the methodology and research design to be used. If there is some relevant background or context that the reader needs to understand your objectives, then this section should include a brief note on it. This section should be no longer than three or four paragraphs.

The purposes of this section are to allow the reader to assess the feasibility of the research, the coherence of the overall design and the academic merit of the proposed work. In reaching this assessment, the reader will look at how well the indicated methodology matches the study objectives (will the methodology provide the desired type of answer?). The reader will judge feasibility mainly by looking at the stated objectives, but also by looking at the implied time and resources required for the indicated methodology. Academic merit will be established through scrutiny of the summary as a whole in light of the course objectives.

A Note on Methodology

A research methodology is the strategy with which you will achieve your objectives. The summary section should clearly state your strategy and the rest of the proposal should develop it in a consistent manner.

Attention must be paid to methodology in two important respects:

- What information are you going to use and how are you going to get it?
- How are you going to construct your argument? That is, how are you going to muster theory and evidence in a way that allows the reader to follow you and be able to judge for themselves the conclusions you have reached? How will you go about putting together a convincing chain of evidence and reasoning?

4. Section-By-Section Outline

Here you will *describe what each section of your final report will contain*. As appropriate you will indicate the information you are going to draw on and how that information will be collected and interpreted. This section should be about two pages long. You should NOT write a reduced version of the expected final content.

Depending on your topic or methodology, you may have more or fewer sections than the rough guide below, which suggests “generic” section headings for a proposal that includes some literature review, an application, analysis and interpretation. Note that the proposal should comment on the content and appropriate methodology for each section (as applicable). You may find it helpful to include indicative word limits for each section.

Introduction

For the proposal, you may briefly state something like: “This section will set out the issue(s) to be addressed and provide a reader’s guide to the paper.” You may also state if the introduction will include some particular context or motivation that will raise the reader’s interest and justify the study (for example, a recent event or publication).

Background

This section of the essay will provide the reader with key *facts* that set the scene for your investigation. It could include a summary of legislation, a brief history, or a description of the state of the world with regard to your topic. If your work is comparative, you may describe aspects of the comparators here. If your work is mainly theoretical, you may describe the real-world salience of your analysis. ***Your proposal should indicate what content will be included and the general sources for that content.***

Concepts, theories or ideas

Concepts, theories or ideas (or whatever word you prefer) provide the framework and terms for your investigation. In this section, you will report on a selection of literature, summarise its relevance to your research topic, define and justify concepts and related tasks. ***In your proposal, you need to identify the content of this chapter and/or the way in which you are going to come up with the content*** (for instance by drawing on several different strands in the literature, or synthesising several frameworks used in other jurisdictions).

Findings

In this section of the essay you will present your research findings. To the extent possible, you should plan to present these results first and then (in the next section) tell the reader how you have interpreted them. In other words, you should first *describe* your findings and how you arrived at them. However, this is not a hard and fast rule. You should plan to write up what information you have collected, organised in some sensible way. ***Your proposal, therefore, needs to explain what evidence you will collect, or use, and how.***

Analysis and interpretation

In this section of the essay you will interpret your evidence in light of your concepts, theories or ideas. ***Your proposal needs to make clear how you will analyse and interpret the evidence.*** Analysis may fit better in the “findings section”, depending on your methods. The key is to clearly imagine your final essay, and to be able to explain how the various sections will come together.

Conclusions/Implications

This final section reports your conclusion and recommendations (if any). In the proposal, ***you should re-iterate from your issue statement the nature of these conclusions.*** This does not mean that you will state your actual conclusions.

5. Indicative research plan and timeline

You should map out the various parts of your research and indicate what you proposed to have done by when in order to complete the research you have proposed in the time required by the course.

6. Statement of Particular Conditions

State any particular conditions that apply, such as the involvement of a third-party mentor (such as a workplace supervisor), the relationship of the research to your paid employment, or whether the research builds on a paper you submitted to another course in your current degree or previous study. If your research may suggest conflicts of interests or political sensitivities or similar, discuss how you plan to deal with these. Note: completed research will normally be in the public domain (through the VUW library). If you foresee a problem with this, you **MUST** raise the matter here.

7. HEC Statement

State either: “HEC approval is not required” OR “HEC approval is required”

NOTE: If your research will involve getting information from people, you may find that working through the Human Ethics Committee application at the same time as you write your proposal will make both processes easier. Remember that HEC approval must be secured before you embark on research involving people.

A Note on HEC Process

(Note that you should apply after your proposal has been approved or while you are developing your proposal if your supervisor agrees. You must develop your application with your supervisor).

Pipitea Human Ethics Committee applications are to be submitted online at <https://rme.vuw.ac.nz/RMENet/> . Your supervisor needs to have selected a Pipitea HEC rep (peer reviewer) on or before the first of any month (or nearest Monday).

This step-by-step guide (www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics/Using-the-Online-Ethics-Form-Guide-for-Applicants.pdf) will help you through completing the form. If you are unable to log onto the system, this form (www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics/Access-to-Online-Ethics-Applications-form.docx) should be completed and sent to ethicsadmin@vuw.ac.nz .

Quick overview: When an application is submitted, if it is a student application, it goes firstly to your supervisor for approval. Your supervisor needs to select the School's Pipitea HEC rep to provide you with a preliminary review, following which he supervisor can release the application to go to the Head of School for approval. Once the Head of School has approved the application, it is forwarded to the committee. Applications might be returned for revisions, and in these cases comments on the screen will give details of changes which need to be made.

The University Research Ethics pages are here:

<https://www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics>

If you have any trouble completing the form online, please contact the ITS Service Desk on (04) 463 5050 or its-servicedesk@vuw.ac.nz .

8. References

The last required part of the proposal is a reference section, which will probably contain at least 10 items. The references will show that you have undertaken sufficient preliminary investigation to have identified the key sources of facts, concepts, methodology, comparisons or whatever else is relevant for your study. References should be presented in the correct format. Check that you have listed here all references used in the text and that there is at least one reference for every claim in the text that calls for one.

Proposal Approval

Approval of research proposals is the responsibility of the School. Three decisions are possible:

1. Approved, with the student and supervisor invited to consider any refinements to the proposal;
2. Conditionally approved, with the student invited to address issues or make changes as indicated on the approval form, to the satisfaction of the supervisor before proceeding to undertake further work;
3. Not approved. This option requires the student to submit a revised proposal for review, taking into account comments on the approval form, and incurs a penalty (see section on penalties below).

Comments, suggestions and conditions (if any) will be conveyed to you in writing. After receiving the review decision, YOU must contact your supervisor to arrange a meeting or phone call to discuss the decision and make plans for the remainder of the course.

4. Final research report, due 5.00pm, Monday 17 October 2016

The research report, of 10,000-12,000 words, is worth 100% of your final grade. It should be completed in accordance with your approved proposal and with the advice of your supervisor.

No major changes can be made to an approved proposal without seeking approval from the course coordinator, Dr Elizabeth Eppel. However, it is recognized that as information becomes available during the research process, the original proposal often needs to be modified. Modest modifications can be approved by your supervisor.

Submission

Include a title page, with title, your FULL name, degree and date.

Submit one electronic copy to sog-assignments@vuw.ac.nz AND one clean hard copy (not bound or stapled) to the address below **by 5.00pm, Monday 17 October 2016:**

Post Experience Programmes,
School of Government,
Victoria University of Wellington,
Level 8 Reception,
Rutherford House,
23 Lambton Quay,
P.O. Box 600,
Wellington 6140.

Confidentiality

University policy is that students should do their research work in areas where the results can be available in the “public domain”. The HEC policy reinforces this position. If you intend to work in an area that may involve sensitive or confidential material, whether during your research or beyond, you must discuss this with the Course Coordinator. You should not enter into any agreements with any organisation that may prejudice use of your information for academic purposes without prior approval.

Publication

Students should give consideration to ways in which to publish their results. Successful research essays, for example, should be readily converted to a 3,000–5,000 word article. Your supervisor can advise you on how to prepare a short article and on possible publishers. You may also find it helpful to summarise your work for dissemination through work channels – having worked so hard on your research, it’s great to let people know what you learned.

The University of Wollongong has some aids for students that describe and illustrate the show the main parts of an article: <http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/reading/1d.html> .

Word Press has pulled together a good reference:

<http://writingajournalarticle.wordpress.com/structure/structure-the-paper/>

FORMAT AND STYLE FOR RESEARCH REPORT SUBMISSION

Abstract

Include an abstract of no more than 200 words, written for a wide audience without specialized knowledge. Avoid acronyms and references. Your abstract should cover the project focus, the conceptual or empirical content, and the main conclusions. The abstract should follow the title page and precede other front matter.

Front Matter

In addition to a required Table of Contents, you may wish to provide acknowledgements and lists of tables and figures.

Standard of Presentation

The research project is a piece of academic writing and so differs from the formats used in government reports. The ideas and information presented in the report should be understandable to a wide audience and prior detailed knowledge of institutional arrangements or terminology specific to a particular discipline should not be presumed.

Be sure to:

- appropriately document reference material using a consistent style¹;
- provide a full bibliography;
- devise a consistent system of headings;
- use 1½ line spacing;
- use a left hand margin of at least 3cm; and
- include a title page with the title, your FULL name, degree and date.

Document Specification

There are no specific requirements beyond those expected for all School of Government work (e.g. word processed) and those that your supervisor may set.

Assessment

Assessment of postgraduate research is not a formulaic process. The professional judgement of the assessor plays a significant role. Your essay will be assessed by your supervisor, who will provide written comments on the strengths and limitations of the research report and provide a rationale for the assessed letter grade. In general, one may assume that a “passing” competence must be demonstrated on each of the points in the list below. It is also assumed in what follows that the student prepared and kept to an approved research design. The main criteria are:

- Completion of intended objectives (as set out in the research proposal, or as modified with approval)
- Adequacy of conceptual or theoretical treatment
- Depth of understanding and analysis
- Adequate and proper use of resources
- Logical coherence of arguments
- Structure and expression
- Technical aspects of production

- Difficulty and originality (note originality is not expected, but as with “difficulty” is a factor that can be weighed in the overall assessment)
- Recommendations and conclusions follow from the earlier sections
- Adherence to acceptable research methods and academic standards
- Adherence to the principles of research ethics

Research Responsibilities

Supervisors cannot assure the success of a project. Success is up to the student. Supervisors take an interest in the research, and commit to facilitate its completion by offering guidance on the various research or project tasks, providing support on analysis and interpretation, discussing and commenting critically on drafts of the final report and encouraging the maintenance of academic standards. Students are expected to be self-motivated and to develop high levels of self-direction in the pursuit of their research.

Supervisors are formally assigned by the School. A number of aspects of the ongoing relationship are best negotiated between student and supervisor. These aspects include the timing and manner of responses on draft sections and arrangements for meetings. The amount and frequency of meetings will vary depending on the stage and the nature of the research.

Supervisors

- Assist the student to flesh out the research based on an initial idea, draft proposal or approved proposal and taking into account comments received through the proposal approval process.
- If required, assist the student to apply for approval from the Human Ethics Committee (HEC). Supervisors must approve the HEC application before it can be progressed for HEC approval. No research activities subject to HEC approval may take place until approval has been granted.
- Assist and advise the student through all phases of research in a manner that fosters the student’s learning about the process of research and the content of the specific investigation.
- Meet regularly with the student on a mutually agreed basis to discuss progress, provide timely advice and assistance, and assist the student to set achievable goals for successive stages of the research.
- Provide written and verbal comments on the submitted work in progress, such as draft sections, within a reasonable period of time, which should usually be less than two weeks.
- If a matter is likely to be relevant to the assessment of the final report, such as use of concepts or structure of the report, the student should be alerted (there should be no surprises out of the blue in the assessment report).

Assessors

- The assessors, usually the supervisor, is assigned by the School.
- Assessors prepare a written report recommending a letter grade for the research. The report comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the research in substantiation of the recommended grade and as feedback for the student. The assessor might also indicate corrections that are required for the Library copy.

Students

- Let staff know of any changes affecting their progress. The Administrator or Senior Administrator should be informed about any intended changes to courses, address, e-mail address, etc.
- Arrange the first meeting with their supervisor once notified of the allocation.
- Devote sufficient time, discipline and intellectual energy to the research to ensure its successful completion.
- Attend scheduled meetings or reschedule in advance. Students working from a distance must be able to have regular phone or Skype conversations with their supervisor.
- Undertake and submit work agreed to be the basis for meetings, in advance of the meetings.
- If required, prepare an application to the Human Ethics Committee (HEC) and submit it to the supervisor, ideally by the 25th of the month prior to the target HEC meeting date, make amendments as requested by the supervisor or members of the HEC, await HEC approval before embarking on relevant aspects of the research and conduct research in accordance with HEC approval.
- Ensure the supervisor is advised of factors that might influence the conduct of the research, necessitate a change in the research plan, interfere with successful completion of the research in a timely fashion or that might affect the supervisor's ability to assess the research.
- Submit one hard copy of the report (do not bind or staple the report) plus an electronic copy to the Senior Administrator by the due date.

Human Ethics Committee (HEC)

HEC policy is set by the University. Research involving human subjects is subject to HEC approval. In essence, most research that involves getting information from people will require HEC approval, including research with public servants that asks for opinions. The main exceptions are research on “non-sensitive facts” and information that is discoverable under the Official Information Act. Other exceptions are for “preliminary” discussions, and for scholarly or practical advice. However, information gained in these ways cannot be directly used in the research without HEC clearance. If HEC approval is required, you are strongly encouraged to begin work on your application at the same time as you work on your proposal. It is important that you discuss its ethical implication with your supervisor to ensure you are familiar with basic ethical issues, principles and practice. Pipitea Human Ethics Committee applications are to be submitted online at <https://rme.vuw.ac.nz/RMENet/> .

This step-by-step guide (www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics/Using-the-Online-Ethics-Form-Guide-for-Applicants.pdf) will help you through completing the form. If students are unable to log onto the system, this form (www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics/Access-to-Online-Ethics-Applications-form.docx) should be completed and sent to ethicsadmin@vuw.ac.nz .

The University Research Ethics pages can be found at:

<https://www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics>

If you have any trouble completing the form online, please contact the ITS Service Desk on (04) 463 5050 or its-servicedesk@vuw.ac.nz .

Penalties

The ability to plan for and meet deadlines is a core competency of both advanced study and public management. Failure to meet deadlines disrupts planning for feedback and marking and is unfair on students who do submit their work on time. It is expected therefore that you will complete and hand in your research proposal and final report by the due dates.

Late or unacceptable proposal: Penalties will be applied for late submission of the final proposal, or if a final proposal submitted by the due date is not of an approvable standard.

Late submission of research essay: Marks will be deducted for each week the project is late, up to a maximum period of 4 weeks, after which the student will be awarded an E, and will need to re-enrol in the course to complete.

If ill-health, family bereavement or other personal circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting the submission deadlines, you can apply for and may be granted an extension to the due date. You should let your course coordinator know as soon as possible in advance of the deadline (if circumstances permit) if you are seeking an extension. Where an extension is sought, evidence, by way of a medical certificate or similar, may be required by the course coordinator.

NOTE: Requests for exemptions from penalties MUST be made to the Course Coordinator.

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.

Mandatory Course Requirements

A formally approved proposal is required.

If you believe that exceptional circumstances may prevent you from meeting the mandatory course requirements, contact the Course Coordinator for advice as soon as possible.

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

Computation of Grades

The translation from numerical marks to letter grades is set by the following grade ranges.

<i>Pass/Fail</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Normal range</i>	<i>Indicative characterisation</i>
Pass	A+	90% - 100%	Outstanding performance
	A	85% - 89%	Excellent performance
	A-	80% - 84%	Excellent performance in most respects
	B+	75% - 79%	Very good performance
	B	70% - 74%	Good performance
	B-	65% - 69%	Good performance overall, but some weaknesses
	C+	60% - 64%	Satisfactory to good performance
	C	55% - 59%	Satisfactory performance
Fail	C-	50% - 54%	Adequate evidence of learning
	D	40% - 49%	Poor performance overall; some evidence of learning
	E	0 - 39%	Well below the standard required
Fail	K	Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements, even though the student's numerical course mark reached the level specified for a pass, usually 50%. A student whose course mark is below 50 should be given a D (40-49) or E (0-39), regardless of whether they met the mandatory course requirements	
	P	Overall Pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail)	
Fail	F	Fail (for a Pass/Fail course)	

Access to Blackboard

Blackboard is Victoria University's online environment that supports teaching and learning by making course information, materials and other learning activities available via the internet through the myVictoria student web portal. Ensure that you can access Blackboard before the course begins.

To access the Blackboard site for this course:

1. Open a web browser and go to www.myvictoria.ac.nz .
2. Log into myVictoria using your ITS Username (on your Confirmation of Study) and password (if you've never used the Victoria University computer facilities before, your initial password is your student ID number, on your Confirmation of Study, Fees Assessment or student ID card – you may be asked to change it when you log in for the first time).
3. Once you've logged into myVictoria, select Blackboard (from the options along the top of the page) to go to your Blackboard homepage.
4. The "My Courses" section displays the courses you have access to – select the appropriate link to access the course-specific Blackboard site. Please note that only courses that are actually using Blackboard and have been made available to students by their respective course coordinator will be displayed.

If you have any problems gaining access to Victoria University's computer facilities, such as myVictoria and Blackboard, you should contact the ITS Service Desk on (04) 463 5050 or its-servicedesk@vuw.ac.nz . See www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/ for more information.

Power-point slides and other lecture materials that are posted on Blackboard may differ from the presentations used in class, as the copyright rules for archived presentations differ somewhat from those for live presentation.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and the Use of Turnitin

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must still acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- material from books, journals or any other printed source
- the work of other students or staff
- information from the Internet
- software programs and other electronic material
- designs and ideas
- the organisation or structuring of any such material.

Acknowledgement is required for *all* material in any work submitted for assessment unless it is a 'fact' that is well-known in the context (such as "Wellington is the capital of New Zealand") or your own ideas in your own words. Everything else that derives from one of the sources above and ends up in your work – whether it is directly quoted, paraphrased, or put into a table or figure, needs to be acknowledged with a reference that is sufficient for your reader to locate the original source.

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity simply because it is a form of lying, stealing and mistreating others. Plagiarism involves stealing other people's intellectual property and lying about whose work it is. This is why plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you may be penalised under the Statute on Student Conduct. You should be aware of your obligations under the Statute, which can be downloaded from the policy website (www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx). You could fail your course or even be suspended from the University. Plagiarism is easy to detect. The University has systems in place to identify it.

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine 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 subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials 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.

There is guidance available to students on how to avoid plagiarism by way of sound study skills and the proper and consistent use of a recognised referencing system. This guidance may be found at the following website www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx. If in doubt, seek the advice of your course coordinator.

Plagiarism is simply not worth the risk.

School of Government Service Standards

Good learning and teaching outcomes for students in School of Government courses depend on many factors, including open, transparent and accountable relationships between teaching and support staff, and students in their various activities. The following service standards indicate some of the key expectations that teaching staff and students can have of each other. In all cases, they represent what the School believes should be ‘normal’ practice; exceptional circumstances can and will be negotiated as required.

Please note that there are University-wide policies relating to assessment – including rights of review and appeal. Details may be found in the Assessment Handbook (which is reviewed and updated from time to time – www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications).

In general terms, any concerns that a student or students may have should be raised with the course coordinator in the first instance. If that course of action is not appropriate, the School’s programme support staff will direct you to the relevant Programme Director/Coordinator.

Standards relating to staff timeliness of responses to email and phone queries:

- Email or phone queries from students will be responded to in 48 hours

Standards relating to availability of course materials:

- Students on modular or intensive courses will usually have course materials at least 4 weeks before the course starts
- Students on weekly courses will usually have course materials available on the first day of the course

Standards relating to attendance:

- It is expected that students will attend all contact teaching sessions for a course. If a student is aware that they will be unable to attend part of a course prior to it commencing, they are required to advise the course coordinator. In such a situation, the student may be declined entry into the course.
- Where a course coordinator approves some non-attendance before the class commences, the course coordinator may set additional item(s) of assessment of learning and teaching objectives for the course for students unable to attend. Advice relating to the submission and assessment of any such additional assessment will be provided by the course coordinator.

Variations to the assessment details provided in the course outline:

- Any variation to the assessment details in the course outline will be formally agreed between the course coordinator and students at the earliest possible time, preferably at the beginning of the course.

Standards relating to assignments – turnaround and feedback:

- Unless otherwise agreed between students and the course coordinator, items of assessment will be marked within 15 working days of submission.
- Comments on pieces of assessment will allow students to understand the reasons for the mark awarded, relative to the teaching and learning objectives specified in the course outline, and will usually include advice on how the student can improve their grades in future assignments.

Communication of Additional Information

Information will be communicated via Blackboard. It is **essential**, therefore, that you activate your @myvuw.ac.nz email account (the free email account created for you when you enrol and accessed via the myVictoria student web portal) before the start of the course. Once you have activated your @myvuw.ac.nz email account, if you want to receive these emails at your preferred email address (e.g. your home or work email address), you must modify the settings so all emails sent to it are automatically forwarded to your preferred email address. For more information, please go to www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/FAQs.aspx#Email_Forward .

Student Feedback

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 www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information .

APPENDIX: STAGES OF RESEARCH

Stage 1: Getting Ready

Getting ready means:

- deciding which courses to undertake and when (where choice is offered);
- fulfilling the research methods prerequisite (GOVT 561 or the Public Policy core);
- informing yourself using the recommended texts containing guidance on doing research
- preparing yourself for your specific options by seeking advice from staff – in some cases up to a trimester in advance;
- attending a mandatory class meeting; and
- identifying a “rough” topic.

Research work usually fits best towards the end of your course of study. Once you have decided on an option, you should start to give preliminary thought to a topic. You may seek advice on the suitability of your topic from the course coordinator, Programme Director or from another staff member.

Individual research expertise in the School spans a wide set of interests. You are encouraged to find topics in the following areas:

Government and governance	Continuing public sector reform; the effects of austerity; networked and collaborative governance; the community and voluntary sector; global governance; the policy process
Public management	Managing for results; strategy and policy; resource management; implementation and delivery; regulation; monitoring and evaluation; accountability and public value
E-government	ICT governance; regulation and governance of privacy; network governance; social marketing; online identity behaviour; social media and public engagement; service transformation; ICT-enabled public sector reform; open government; data innovation; data analytics; policy informatics
Leadership and integrity	Integrative leadership innovation; anti-corruption and ethics systems; codes of conduct; Pacific Islands policy leadership; executive leadership; ethical leadership; initiative-taking; New Zealand’s involvement in the UN
Effectiveness, sustainability and wellbeing	Studies in selected policy domains (such as climate change, child poverty, tourism, human development); policy capability; gender, poverty and economic geography; social enterprise; place-based leadership
Political and management interactions	Minister–official relationships; prime ministers and advisors; political staff in executive government; workplace culture; human resource management
Health systems and services	Evaluation of service reform; integrated care; contracting and accountability; health evaluation; hospital productivity; health behaviours (note: we do not encourage expressions of research interests in areas such as: clinical / treatment research (including dentistry); epidemiological research; research on smoking or environmental health issues)

Policy design and methodologies	Participatory policy analysis; evidence-based policy making; wellbeing indicators; Q methodology; policy implementation; policy experimentation; case-based learning
Restorative justice practice	Policy and systems analysis – in justice sector, Corrections, police, education, social welfare, environmental disputes, tribunals and corporate governance; responsive regulation; workplace disputes resolution; transitional justice

Choosing a topic can be a daunting step for many people. Others develop a clear idea in one of their courses or in their workplace. The class meeting and the process of developing a proposal can both help you to narrow your topic. While you should choose a topic that interests you and meets your personal criteria, it is helpful to select a topic that is of interest to potential supervisors.

You may wish to consider factors such as the following:

- Do you have access to needed materials?
- Have you realistically estimated the time to complete the required tasks?
- Have you considered work-related factors in undertaking your proposed task (anything from necessary time off to the career/political implications of your choice of topic or likely conclusions)?
- Is the situation likely to remain relatively stable during study?
- Do you have (or can you gain) the necessary analytic skills called for?
- Do you like your topic sufficiently to stay motivated to complete it?

Above all, your choice must have academic merit. Academic merit is assessed by either the intellectual and/or broad practical appeal of the research as a contribution to public policy or public management as fields of study or according to your specific learning outcomes in the overall course of your degree studies. Regardless of whether an essay or project takes a more scholarly or more practical approach, the expectation is for clarity of focus and evidence of critical thinking in all cases.

Academic merit cannot be precisely defined, and each case is looked at individually. In general, if research tasks or projects are essentially part of your normal paid employment, or are commissioned by third parties primarily for their benefit, the work will need extra justification and assurances, and may not be acceptable. Any relevant facts must be disclosed in the plan or proposal.

Stage 2: Developing a Plan or Proposal

Every research project requires formal approval based on a proposal. In addition, you may also need to apply to the Human Ethics Committee for their approval.

Your research proposal is due on Monday 2 May. Most students find that they need to work through two or more drafts of their proposal. Refer to the course outline for details on preparing and submitting a proposal and useful references.

The School is collectively responsible for proposal approvals. Supervisors are first informally assigned on the basis of your nominated topic area. The assignment is confirmed when your proposal is formally accepted. In making supervision allocations, we must take into account staff workloads, leave plans and areas of expertise and interest. In some cases, a project may be assigned to a supervisor whose interests are not closely aligned with the proposed work. Supervisors are usually, but need not be, members of the School's academic staff. You will receive in writing details of your

formal approval, including comments (if any) on your proposal that need to be considered, supervisory arrangement, whether HEC approval is needed and confirmation of the due date.

Stage 3: Conducting the Work and Writing It Up

Detailed material on conducting research is available in the references provided. Each project differs. Methodology varies from one case to the next; numerous “methods” texts can be consulted, and ultimately, as the work is supervised, supervision supports you at all stages. Please keep a careful eye on your progress, and ensure that you provide your supervisor with a next-to-final version at least four weeks before the due date, so that you have time to revise the paper.

As a first step, all research students should always be on the lookout for effective research reporting. In the public policy, public management and e-government fields, journals are the predominant vehicles for reporting. Good journal articles model clarity, succinctness, excellent referencing, and other qualities we expect from your academic work. Find a few articles (in discussion with your supervisor) that you can use as models for your own report.

Some things you may notice in good journal articles: There are clear sections, each section has a clear purpose and material within each section is organised in a sensible way. The author assists the reader to understand the overall structure of the article, with good introductions, transitions, and summaries. Words are chosen carefully and used consistently. Paragraphs express and develop one main theme. And so on. It should also go without saying that the presentation of the report should be of a high standard and the text should have been spelling and grammar checked.
