TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Marketing and International Business

IBUS 430 Research Project in International Business

Trimester 2, 2016

COURSE OUTLINE

Prescription

This is a supervised research project that provides students with the opportunity to undertake independent research in a specific area of international business. A variety of different types of research are encouraged, subject to the availability of a supervisor.

Course Learning Objectives

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

1. Produce independent research including setting initial research questions and forming conclusions;
2. Identify, plan, design and manage a significant research project (under supervision);
3. Apply appropriate methodology for the research;
4. Write up and present the research using the appropriate structure and format;
5. Make an original contribution to research in the field of international business.

Course Content

Students will complete an individual research project that combines learning from other courses in the Honours programme and individual research on a topic agreed with their supervisor. Students are expected to acquire expert knowledge in a chosen area of study and demonstrate scholarly and ethical behaviour when conducting and reporting their research. The dissertation must have a well-developed conceptual foundation and include a primary research component unless otherwise recommended by the supervisor and approved by the course coordinator.

There are no formal classes scheduled for the course. However, six informal seminars/workshops are offered in both T1 and T2 to help students gain a better understanding of the research process, and key requirements for completion of the dissertation. A seminar schedule is listed below.

Date	Time & Room		Led by
26 January	2.45pm-3.45pm; RWW313	Seminar 1: Intro to postgraduate research	Hongzhi Gao
13 April	1.30pm-3.30pm; RH1113	Seminar 2: How to write up a good research proposal	Hongzhi Gao
11 May	1pm-3pm; RH1113	Seminar 3: how to use the HEC application online system?	Cheryl Rivers, School representative in

			the HEC committee
15 August	1pm-3pm; RH1113	Seminar 4: Effective fieldwork	Hongzhi Gao
12 September	1pm-3pm; RH1113	Seminar 5: Discovering the 'gold nugget' in your data	Hongzhi Gao
3 October	1pm-3pm; RH1113	Seminar 6: Writing up and time management in the final phase of the dissertation	Hongzhi Gao

To assist students to gain additional feedback on their research from other staff members in the International Business programme, and also learn from other students' research experience, three presentations are scheduled over the two trimesters. The schedule for student presentations is shown below. Please note that all these three presentations are **compulsory**. We expect that all students deliver well-thought out and meaningful presentations, carefully reflect on the comments received after the presentations, and try to incorporate these comments into their work after consulting with the supervisors. Students **MUST** give these required presentations before their dissertations are considered for examination.

Date	Time & Room	Presentation coverage
2 May	2.30pm-3.30pm; RH1113	Preliminary research proposal (including: research objectives, preliminary research questions, preliminary literature review, preliminary research design)
15 June	1pm-3pm; RH1113	Full research proposal (including: Clear research questions, full literature review, and preliminary conceptual development/solutions; detailed research design)
21 September	1pm-3pm; RH1113	Results, analysis and preliminary conclusions of the research topic

The format and specific requirements of each presentation will be provided at least one week before the presentation date.

Trimester Dates

   From Monday 11 July to 26 October 2016

Withdrawal from Course
1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 22 July 2016.

2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 23 September 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 online.

Course Coordinator: Dr Hongzhi Gao
Room 1125, Rutherford House
Email: hongzhi.gao@vuw.ac.nz
Telephone: 04 463 6914
Office hours: by appointment

Course Administrator: Mary Alexander
Room 1121, Rutherford House, 23 Lambton Quay
Email: mary.alexander@vuw.ac.nz
Telephone: 04 463 5723
School Office opening hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 am – 16:00 pm

Course Delivery

Students MUST have regular contact with assigned supervisors and seek supervisor advice proactively. Fortnightly meetings with supervisors to check the progress of the research can be a good arrangement; however, each student needs to discuss this with the supervisor, and make an individual arrangement. Each student has maximum 12 hours over two trimesters for scheduled meetings with the supervisor. Students should aim to send draft chapters or parts of the written work to supervisors for comments as they develop each part of the thesis (as negotiated with the supervisors).

If you are conducting research involving 'human subjects' you will require approval from the Pipitea Human Ethics Committee. Pipitea Human Ethics Committee applications are submitted online at https://rme.vuw.ac.nz/RMENet/. Applications are due with the School of Marketing and International Business's representative on the committee on or before the first working day of each month. You should discuss the requirements with your supervisor in advance of this deadline. Given the tight time schedule of the course (less than 4 months), it is expected that you submit your HEC application online (after getting checked and approved by the supervisor) by 1 July in order to complete the research on time.

Preliminary Research Proposal
Due: 2pm, 4 May 2016
World limit: 1000 words (+/- 10%), excluding references

The purpose of this preliminary research proposal is to bring clarity to the project so that you, your potential supervisor and course coordinator are clear that the planned empirical research for the purpose of this course is well considered and feasible. This preliminary research proposal needs to be submitted to and approved by the course coordinator before the commencement of the course.

Your task is to provide the purpose and focus of the research project. You should: (1) identify the key knowledge and gaps in the research domain; (2) establish the focal research problem/research questions of your study; (3) justify the research method you may apply to solve the research problem/answer the research questions.

Format
The preliminary research proposal 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. Research Method – about 500 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 may this be done?

Full Research Proposal

Due: 2pm, 1 July 2016
World limit: 2500 words (+/- 10%), excluding references

The purpose of this research design is to bring clarity to the project so you and your supervisor are clear that the planned research is realistic, achievable and well-grounded in an appropriate methodology.

Format
The research design 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?
- **References**

The full research proposal should demonstrate:
- understanding 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
- understanding 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.

Readings
Students will identify readings related to the chosen research topic, with guidance from their supervisors. The following readings provide excellent guidelines for writing a high quality dissertation.
1. Perry, C. 1998. A Structured Approach for Presenting Theses. *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)*, 6(1): 63-85.
2. Uncles, M. 1998. A Structured Approach to the Presentation of Research Theses: Commentary. *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)*, 6(1): 87-94.

Mandatory course requirements
In addition to obtaining overall course marks of 50 or better, students must give three presentations as required in the section of Course Content.

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

Expected Workload
Students should devote approximately 300 hours to this course over the two trimesters.

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

The final grade for IBUS 430 is solely based on the merit of the dissertation. A dissertation is normally 10,000-12,000 words in length excluding references. It typically includes:

Cover page (including the title, author's name and supervisor's name)
Abstract (150 words)
Introduction
Literature review
Research objectives/research questions/conceptual development (which may include hypotheses or propositions)
Research methods
Data analysis and results
Discussion of the findings
Conclusions
Limitations and future research
References
Appendix (e.g. research information sheet, consent form, research instrument)

The body text of the dissertation should be in 12-point font, Times New Roman, 1.5 line spacing and single sided. The dissertation should have margins of least 2 cm and no more than 4 cm on the binding edge of the page. Students must follow the referencing style of the *Journal of International Business Studies*. Please refer to the journal (www.jibs.net) for specific style requirements.

Dissertation Due Date
Each student is expected to submit a completed draft of his/her dissertation to the supervisor no later than 4pm, **5 October**. This will allow time for the supervisor to provide sufficient feedback on the work, and then time for the student to incorporate the feedback into the revisions. The deadline for the dissertation is 4pm, **26 October.** Two hard copies must be handed in at the School Reception on the 11th floor of Rutherford House. An electronic copy of the dissertation must be emailed to the course co-ordinator no later than **5pm** on the same day. Each dissertation will be assessed by two academic staff members, excluding the supervisor. The course coordinator may submit your dissertation to turn-it-in to check academic integrity.

In order to submit the dissertation on time, the student should carefully plan each step of the research following the advice of the supervisor and a general time line as listed below.

Suggested Time Line

March	Finalise your research topic in agreement with your supervisor
April	Narrow down your topic to a specific research question, conduct preliminary literature review, and develop a preliminary research proposal
May	Complete a full literature review and develop conceptual solutions for the research topic (which may include hypotheses, propositions, or theory-guided research questions)
June	Finalise research methodology; seek HEC approval (if applicable)
July	Collect data
August	Undertake data analysis
September	Write up the results, discussion and conclusions
October	Complete the first draft and revise the dissertation

Penalties
Late submission of the dissertation will not be accepted without good reason (e.g., a medical certificate) and prior permission. Five marks will be deducted (out of 100) for each day, or part day,

that the dissertation is late. Late submission of the dissertation is likely to result in delayed reporting of the final results for the Honours degree.

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.

Materials and Equipment
There is no standard list of materials and equipment. Students have access to an Honours grant of up to $500 for reimbursement of research-related expenses for the completion of the dissertation. Applications for funding must be submitted to the supervisor for approval prior to spending funds. There will be no reimbursement without prior approval. Original receipts for approved expenses should be submitted to the School Administrators. More information about this can be found in your Honours programme welcome folder.

Student feedback
No feedback information is available for IBUS430.

Communication of Additional Information
Announcements will be made during class and on Blackboard. Please check both Blackboard and your registered email address with Blackboard regularly.

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.

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