

School of Management

MGMT 430 RESEARCH PROJECT IN MANAGEMENT

Trimester 2, 2016

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE COORDINATOR

Dr Deborah Jones

Room: RH 930, Rutherford House

Phone: 463 5731

Email: deborah.jones@vuw.ac.nz

COURSE ADMINISTRATOR

Misa Ito

Room: RH1022, Rutherford House

Phone: 463 5397

Email: misa.ito@vuw.ac.nz

Prescription

Research project on a selected aspect of Management or HRIR.

Course Learning Objectives

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

1. Develop a research question within the relevant literature;
2. Apply relevant research methodology and/or analytical methods;
3. Draw appropriate conclusions from independent research;
4. Present research to an audience of peers and write it up in a suitable form.

Trimester Dates

Teaching Period: Monday 11th July – Friday 14th October

Study Period: Monday 17th October – Thursday 20th October

Examination Period: Friday 21st October – Saturday 12th November (inclusive)

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 22nd July 2016.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 23rd 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](#).

Class Times and Room Numbers

Tuesday 13.40pm – 16.30 pm RWW413

NB: Classes are not held every week – see the Course Schedule for details. Attendance at all classes is expected.

In weeks where there are no classes you should be working independently and with your supervisor, reading, preparing your research design, carrying out data collection and analysis, and writing the relevant sections of your final research article as you go.

Course Delivery

This course is about developing your skills as a professional researcher. Successful research requires a unique combination of skills: creativity; interpersonal, project-management and writing skills; and a critical approach to research methodology and the relevant academic literature.

In this course you will design and conduct a research project on a topic of your choice, using the methodology of your choice. It is essential that you find a topic that genuinely interests you, and that you take ownership of the research process. You can consider a wide range of topics, but your chosen topic must have a link to management, organisation and/or work.

This course combines six workshops, where you will work on successive parts of the project based on feedback from your peers, with individual supervision by a member of the School of Management. You will be allocated a supervisor by the Course Coordinator, based on your expressed area of research interest, and the availability of staff. You are encouraged to find out about staff research areas of expertise, and to approach potential supervisors. As well as having some topic expertise, the supervisor should be knowledgeable about the methodology you plan to use. Supervisory arrangements will be confirmed at the first class.

Your project:

- Will involve research with people ('human subjects');
- Could also include the use of documents, images, etc.;
- Must be related to management, organisation or work in some way;
- Can be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination.

The scope of the project will depend on the methodology (or combination of methodologies) you use and should be guided by the expected workload for this course (see below). It is important that your design is practical in the time you have available, while providing enough scope to practice key research skills.

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.

Expected Workload

You should expect to spend 300 hours working on this course. This includes both scheduled contact time (class sessions) and work outside class. You are expected to participate in class sessions, presenting your own work and providing constructive feedback to others.

Readings

To complete the assessment, you will need to have read widely on issues of research methodology. You are expected 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.

The **recommended** textbook is:

O’Leary, Zina (2014). *The essential guide to doing your research project* (2nd edition). London: Sage. Key readings will be based on this book.

We will also refer to the MGMT 404 textbook:

Cavana, R.Y., Delahaye, B.L. & Sekaran, U. (2001). *Applied business research: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. Brisbane: John Wiley & Sons.

Also particularly useful:

Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2016). *Business research methods*, 4th Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This is a very up to date handbook which focuses on the organisational context in depth.

This edition will arrive in the library shortly – earlier editions are available now.

Tolich, M., & Davidson, C. (1999). *Starting fieldwork: An introduction to qualitative research work in New Zealand*. Oxford University Press.

Davidson, C., & Tolich, M. (2003). *Social science research in New Zealand: Many paths to understanding*. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Tolich and Davidson’s two books are useful in the specific New Zealand context.

The Pipitea Commerce Library has a very good collection of research methods textbooks and handbooks and you should be familiar with these. Suggested further readings on specific topics will be recommended and made available via the Library e-resources as required.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Workshop Topic	Reading (Ch = O'Leary)	Bring to Class
1	12 July	Planning and starting your project Overview of methodologies	Ch. 1-2 Ch. 8-9	8 Questions form
2	19 July	Developing your research question Reviewing the literature	Ch. 3 Ch. 6	Completed first draft 'Project Details' form
3	26 July	Designing your research 1 Choosing respondents Collecting data 1: Designing 'instruments': Surveys; interview outlines; observation guides, etc.	Ch. 7 Ch. 10 Ch. 11	Updated second draft 'Project Details' form
4	2 August	Collecting data 2: Interviews, observation, survey distribution etc. Secondary data Human Ethics: Issues and HEC Application	Ch. 11 Cavana et al. (2001). pp.138- 163 Ch. 12 Ch. 4	Draft HEC Application
Mid- Trimester Break				
9	20 September	Analysing data	Ch. 13 (Quant.) Ch. 14 (Qual.)	Note: Separate workshops on quantitative and qualitative analysis will be provided, depending on the needs of researchers.
10	27 September	Writing your article	Ch. 15	Draft of abstract

Assessment

The Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf>.

Assignments will be assessed by supervisors, and moderated by the Course Coordinator.

The HEC Application will not be marked, but must be formally approved by the Course Coordinator before you can start collecting data involving human subjects.

Assignment	Title	% of marks available	Due date
1	Literature review, research design and HEC application	30%	Friday 19 August, 4pm
2	Journal article	70%	Friday 14 October, 4pm
	TOTAL	100%	

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

Learning Objective	Literature review, research design and HEC form	Journal article
1	X	X
2	X	X
3		X
4	X	X

All assignments should be submitted to the School of Management Reception on Level 10 of Rutherford House. Assignments received after the due time will be deemed to be late. The Reception is open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday.

Students must:

- keep an electronic copy of their work archived in case the original assignment goes missing
- keep the marked hard copy of their assignment after it is returned to them until the grades are finalized at the end of the course

Failure to do so could jeopardise claims to your work and/or its grade in the rare cases where your work goes astray.

1. Literature Review, Research Design and HEC application

Due: Friday 19 August, 4pm

Marks: 30% (The HEC Application will not be marked, but must be formally approved by the Course Coordinator before you can start collecting data involving human subjects.)

Length: 3000 words (+/- 10%), excluding timetable, reference list and completed Human Ethics Committee documentation.

This assignment combines the early phases of the research process:

1. The development of a research question within relevant literature together with
2. The appropriate choice of a research methodology and analytical method(s). It should take the form of an academic essay. It is not a business report and you should therefore avoid the use of lists and bullet points.

The purpose of the **literature review** is to research and develop your topic and to connect your research project to the academic literature, as well as to any relevant practitioner literature. Depending on your topic, the review will include a mix of academic articles and books and non-academic background material. 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. 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 that the literature is referenced appropriately.

The **research design** component of the assignment should examine how you are going to go about generating a credible response to your research question, including epistemology, methodology, and method, including data collection and data analysis. A realistic project timetable with milestones should be attached at the end.

Assessment criteria

Your assignment should:

- 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
- Show understanding of the theoretical aspects of research design, especially methodology
- Demonstrate ability to design a viable and realistic project
- Justify appropriate data collection methods
- Justify appropriate data analysis methods
- Show understanding of ethical issues in research
- Include a realistic project timetable with milestones
- Be written to an appropriate professional standard.

HEC Application

You must also submit completed Human Ethics Committee (HEC) documentation along with Assignment 1. You should work on this with your supervisor who should approve it, including all attached relevant documents. This must then be formally approved by the Course Coordinator before you can start collecting data involving human subjects. Applications will be returned to researchers for revisions until they are approved. Incomplete or incorrect applications will delay the time you have available for actual data collection.

Please note that you may not formally agree to carry out research with any individuals or organisations, or start data collection before getting human ethics approval. Please also note that you should keep all signed research agreements until the end date on your HEC forms.

2. Journal article

Due: Friday 14 October, 4pm

Marks: 70%

Length: 8,000 words (+/-10%), excluding references.

Your task is to produce a credible academic research article in the form of an academic journal article. You should have a particular journal in mind, and indicate this journal and its audience in the assignment.

A suggested format is outlined below. Titles and contents of each section may vary according to your approach.

- Title and author
- Journal and audience
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature review
- Methodology (including research perspective, research design, methodology, data collection and data analysis.
- Findings
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Implications of your study for practice and/or future research
- References.

Assessment criteria

The journal article should:

- Flow coherently from the research question to the final conclusions
- Contribute to the academic literature
- Demonstrate a good theoretical understanding of the research process
- Be written to an appropriate professional standard

Penalties

- I. In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline will incur a penalty for lateness. **The penalty is 10% 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 5 days after the due date** will not be accepted.
- II. Course Outlines provide a signal to students 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 course co-ordinator 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 course co-ordinator as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- VI. The ability to write in an economical style is a skill that is valued in both academic and business settings and therefore word limits should be strictly adhered to. +/- 10% is acceptable. Beyond that, a penalty may be applied.

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

None

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

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

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 & Administration at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide.

Communication of Additional Information

Information on course-related matters will be announced at class and posted on the **Blackboard** website at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz/>. It will be crucial for you to regularly check Blackboard for messages, announcements and materials.

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 <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.
