

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

NOTE: ANY CHANGES TO A CSD MUST GO THROUGH ALL OF THE RELEVANT APPROVAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING LTPC.

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| Academic School/Department: | Business and Economics |
| Programme: | BA Business Administration Combined Studies |
| FHEQ Level: | 5 |
| Course Title: | Research Methods |
| Course Code: | MGT 5210 |
| Course Leader: | Bryan McIntosh |
| Student Engagement Hours: | 120 |
| Lectures: | 30 |
| Seminar / Tutorials: | 15 |
| Independent / Guided Learning: | 75 |
| Semester: | Fall/Spring/Summer |
| Credits: | 12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits |

Course Description:

This Course introduces the main concepts and techniques involved in research in the field of business and economics. The Course develops four main themes: research in context which puts the student as the researcher and as the user of research; research methodology which deals with the nature and limitations of different philosophies of research design e.g. deductive versus inductive approaches and qualitative versus quantitative approaches and the role of literature; research methods which deals with advantages and issues associated with the use of various data collection methods including observation, use of groups, interviewing techniques and questionnaire design; research proposal preparation which deals with issues of planning, literature review, topic selection, access to data, schedules, action plans, writing styles and referencing systems.

Prerequisites: ARW 4195, MGT 4205, MTH 4120

Aims and Objectives:

1. To understand the importance of different research approaches, philosophies and methodologies in the fields of business & economics.
2. To give students a first hand experience of planning and conducting quantitative and qualitative research
3. To give students an opportunity to understand limitations of published work, and critically evaluate it

4. To place students in a real project management situation, where they have to research, plan and discuss a research proposal

Programme Outcomes

A1, A4

B2, B3, B5

D1, D5

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the Departmental/Schools page of the portal.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, a successful student should be able to

1. Critically discuss, select and justify research approaches and research methods in relation to an appropriately formed research proposal which addresses a relevant business or economics issue.
2. Integrate ethical guidelines and standards when conducting research.
3. Understand and apply the steps required to create a literature review.
4. Understand how to apply appropriate research designs for quantitative and qualitative research.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of proper structure and citation in all academic work.
6. Present research results via a written report and an oral presentation.

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Have a detailed knowledge of the different types of research approaches (quantitative & qualitative)
2. Understand the importance of epistemology in conducting sound research

Cognitive Skills

3. Identify the respective advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative research
4. Research and enquiry: be able to conduct a literature review, identify a gap in the literature, identify recent developments, and develop a research question that integrates within an existing body of work
5. Synthesis and creativity: be able to critically synthesize findings, identify shortcomings of quantitative and qualitative projects, and offer areas for future research

Practical and / or Professional Skills

1. Team and organizational working: be able to work efficiently in a group, coordinate efforts, and adapt to group demand. To be able to engage in a class discussion during the group presentation.
2. Ethical awareness and application: understand the ethical aspects of conducting a research projects; understand the need for ethical approval before collecting data

Key Skills

1. Effective oral and written communication business skills with the group project (report + presentation)

Indicative Content:

1. "What is research? / How can epistemology help us understanding research? / Why do we do research? / Introduction to Academic Research / The specificity of Business Research"
2. "What is the logic of research? / Research questions / Testing hypothesis and ideas / Ethics and research design / Identifying relevant research questions / Sub-research questions / Validity / reliability
3. "How to get started on a research project? / Integrating research in an existing body of knowledge / Using the literature and scholar resources: introduction to an efficient literature search / Research plan and schedule"
4. "How to design a quantitative research project? / Choosing a quantitative method / Sampling, participant selection inferences / Online studies / Setup an online survey (survey monkey) / When do you choose a quantitative research method?"
5. "How to design a qualitative research project? / participant selection, target groups? / When to choose a qualitative research method?"
6. "How to design quantitative research instruments? Quantitative Research: questionnaires, surveys, secondary data etc..."
7. "How to design qualitative research instruments? Qualitative research: interview, focus groups, "
8. "How to conduct quantitative data analysis? SPSS, Excel: independent variable, interdependent variable, nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio variables"
9. "How to conduct quantitative data analysis? Qualitative Data Analysis: NVivo, Thematic Analysis, Narrative Analysis, Content Analysis"
10. Structuring a research report; writing styles, citations

Assessment:

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Council on June 28, 2012.

Teaching Methodology:

Weekly sessions will be divided between lectures and seminars. Lectures will offer an overview of the key theories and concepts, alongside with a critical perspective. Seminars will be the occasion for students to engage in developing their own research project. Students are expected to read the corresponding chapters in the course textbook before each session. Students will be assigned to a research group at the start of the semester, and will have to produce a research report of 3,000 words and a final presentation with the group.

Powercampus will be used to upload lecture notes and other essential course-related information.

Bibliography:

Required Texts/Reading

The core text used for this course is:

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) Research Methods for Business Students, Fifth Edition. FT Prentice Hall

