



Module Specification

Executive Dissertation and Research Methods

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Executive Dissertation and Research Methods

Module code: UMSCDC-60-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2023-24

UWE credit rating: 60

ECTS credit rating: 30

Faculty: Faculty of Business & Law

Department: FBL Dept of Business & Management

Partner institutions: None

Delivery locations: Not in use for Modules

Field: Strategy and International Business

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: Not applicable

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The aim of the module is to help MBA students to acquire significant research skills, partly through undertaking a course in research methods, but mainly through carrying a research project (Research proposal and Dissertation).

The research proposal and dissertation write-up are embedded within the published academic theory and research relating to a chosen topic and encourage students to conduct conceptual and empirical research that advances the understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of organisations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value (Principle 4, United Nations Principles in Responsible Management Education).

In addition the educational experience may explore, develop, and practise but not formally discretely assess the student:

Ability to find creative and practical solutions to gain access to relevant data, to conduct research recognising resource constraints, and to present findings in a manner that is appropriate to the level of detail required.

Autonomy to independently conceptualise a research problem and determine appropriate research strategies.

Ability to manage the research process over a prolonged period of time involving both theoretical and practical issues.

Outline syllabus: Research Methods:

Introduction to Business & Management Research; definitions of research; debates on the nature, generation and dissemination of knowledge; features and range of applications of business and management research; ontology, epistemology and methodology; aims and structure of the module.

Research planning; the research process; generating a research topic and conceptualising the research problem; selecting an appropriate methodological approach; research design and project management negotiating access; ethical issues in business and management research.

Reviewing the literature; purpose and process of literature review; use of library data-bases and the internet; characteristics of a convincing, critical literature review; relationship with the conceptual/analytical framework informing the research; attribution of sources; use of appropriate software packages.

The survey method; characteristics of the survey method; potential scope of application; questionnaire design and piloting sampling techniques; questionnaire administration, data analysis, and evaluation.

Quantitative data analysis; statistical data analysis techniques; presentation of statistical data.

Qualitative interviewing and observation methods; interviewing, observation and ethnography; planning and conducting semi-structured and unstructured interviews; recording, analysing and evaluating the data; types of observation study and examples of use in business & management research.

Case study approach; nature, types and applications of the case study method; planning and conducting a case study investigation; use of multiple data collection methods; organising, analysing and evaluating the findings.

Qualitative data analysis; quantifying and non-quantifying methods of qualitative data analysis; evaluating the data and analysis; presentation of qualitative data.

Writing-up and presentation of research findings; planning the work, getting started and avoiding the problems and pitfalls; structuring the dissertation report, organising the content, achieving overall coherence writing styles and issues of presentation.

Critical evaluation of research methodologies and methods; the indeterminacy of knowledge; evaluating critically the purpose of an investigation, approach adopted and results obtained.

Research Proposal:

Defining research problem (corporate relevance, academic interest and validity, application of taught material, originality, data usage); setting context of research (major issues or hypotheses) and justification of purpose of research (clarity of purpose, balance, critique).

Establishing objectives; the literature review; selecting data collection methods (variety, triangulation), measurement techniques and samples; identifying resource requirements; specifying time/milestones; specifying financial cost; preparing research proposal.

Final Dissertation:

Structure; writing style (accuracy, clarity, conciseness, unity, readability); referencing, attribution and citations; presentation of data and results.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The module is a combination of sound academic underpinning and practical application. The academic underpinning takes two forms: the delivery of a research methods programme, and the independent study by the student with the support of a dissertation tutor. The research methods programme consists of formal specialist input, directed reading, workshops involving group and individual exercises. A tangible outcome from this part of the module is the identification of a research topic that leads to the allocation of a dissertation tutor and the production of a dissertation proposal.

During the independent research phase of the module, primary support is given to the student via their dissertation tutor. This support takes the form of guidance and mentoring with the onus on the student to explore options and bring issues and potential solutions to the tutor for discussion. It is anticipated that, on average, students would have four formal meetings with their tutor over the period of the dissertation although individual arrangements may be made.

In addition to the dissertation tutor, students can access the dissertation co-ordinator for more general administration and procedural advice.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Demonstrate the relationship between research focus, theory, research approach and method

MO2 Display deeper knowledge and skills in a specific subject or context that is the topic of the independent investigation

MO3 Defend choices of research methods on the basis of reliability, validity, generalisability, applicability of findings and resource requirements

MO4 Distinguish between descriptive, exploratory, predictive, explanatory and action research and to manage problems associated with reliability, validity, bias, and resource intensity of research methods

MO5 Apply a creative and reflective approach to enquiry and research process acquiring a clear knowledge that approaches vary depending on research methods chosen: interviewing, questionnaire design and administration, focus group management (including diary management), project management, information search, text analysis, content analysis, statistical techniques, etc.

MO6 Apply knowledge, critical thinking and problem solving skills and techniques to an area of personal interest or organisational relevance

MO7 Reconcile the ethical issues in social scientific and business research, including those arising in relation to the negotiation of research access, dissemination and implementation of research findings in accordance with any relevant codes of conduct pertaining to the nature and scope of the research topic e.g. protection of subject confidentiality, Data Protection Act, Market Research Society, BBS code of conduct, NHS code of ethic, etc.

MO8 Conduct conceptual and empirical research that advances the understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of organisations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value

MO9 Demonstrate skills and expertise in addressing multifaceted management problems through this self-learning activity

MO10 Undertake a critical literature review, identifying a conceptual model to underpin the work, develop a research design, select appropriate data collection

method(s) and carry out a competent and rigorous analysis of the data to synthesise new knowledge and insights in the research context and make effective use of multiple and potentially conflicting sources of data/information/knowledge

MO11 Produce two substantial written documents, a research proposal and a dissertation that demonstrate clarity of thinking and logical argument in drawing practical conclusions and recommendations for further research and/or for practising managers

Hours to be allocated: 600

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 600 hours

Total = 600

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/index.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/index.html>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: The student is assessed in a summative manner on their performance in the dissertation submitted. Students are required to produce a dissertation proposal immediately following Research Methods part of the module and will therefore be assessed at an early stage in the research process with regard to their research planning skills.

Assessment components:

Dissertation (First Sit)

Description: Dissertation proposal (2 000 words)

Weighting: 10 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO10, MO11, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6, MO7, MO8, MO9

Dissertation (First Sit)

Description: Dissertation Project (max 15,000 words)

Weighting: 90 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO10, MO11, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6, MO7, MO8, MO9

Dissertation (Resit)

Description: Dissertation Project (max 15,000 words)

Weighting: 90 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO10, MO11, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6, MO7, MO8, MO9

Dissertation (Resit)

Description: Dissertation proposal (2 000 words)

Weighting: 10 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO10, MO11, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6, MO7, MO8, MO9

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study: