



ACADEMIC SERVICES

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Part 1: Basic Data					
Module Title	Investigating a Business Issue from an HR Perspective (Dissertation)				
Module Code	UMPCYG-60-M	Level	M	Version	2.1
Owning Faculty	FBL	Field	Human Resources Management		
Contributes towards	MA Human Resources Management				
UWE Credit Rating	60	ECTS Credit Rating	30	Module Type	Dissertation
Pre-requisites	None		Co- requisites	None	
Excluded Combinations	None		Module Entry requirements		
Valid From	September 2010		Valid to		

CAP Approval Date	6 February 2013
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Part 2: Learning and Teaching	
Learning Outcomes	<p>On successful completion of this module students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate knowledge of the principal research traditions and approaches in business and management research. • Appreciate the relationships between theory, research approach and method. • Conceptualise a research problem in the field of HRM and devise an appropriate research strategy. • Show a critical appreciation of the theory and empirical research relevant to the topic area. • Demonstrate proficiency in different techniques of data collection (quantitative and qualitative) and understand the strengths and limitations of these methods. • Demonstrate knowledge of the techniques of qualitative and quantitative data analysis. • Design a research strategy that is appropriate for the investigation of the Dissertation topic. • Understand the problems of negotiating and maintaining research access. • Analyse rigorously and synthesise different sources of data to reach well-supported conclusions. • Relate the research findings to the literature on the topic and to evaluate the organisational or wider relevance of the results. • Make a persuasive business case for appropriately developed and justified recommendations, based on their dissertation research, including an indication of relevant cost and resource implications for the organisation. <p>All the above learning outcomes are formally assessed through Component A of the assessment</p>

	<p>In addition the educational experience may explore, develop, and practise <u>but not formally discretely assess</u> the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the nature of research and its role in the analysis of HRM issues. • Appreciate the ethical issues in social research and of the problems and dilemmas in the dissemination and implementation of research findings. • Understand the notion and practice of self-directed continuing professional development.
Syllabus Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nature of Research: the purposes of research and its contribution to the analysis of HRM issues; the main traditions in business and management research and the principal research approaches; the stages in the research process. • Planning the Research: selecting a research topic; reviewing critically relevant published literature; defining the aims and objectives of the study; the principles of research design; the problems of research access and associated issued of confidentiality and anonymity; ethical issues in research. • Data Collection: an overview of the different methods of data collection, their strengths and limitations; quantitative data collection techniques including questionnaire design and administration, sampling principles and methods; qualitative data collection through in-depth interviewing, observation studies, use of focus groups; the use of secondary sources and archival research. • Data Analysis and Interpretation: preparing data for analysis; methods of analysing qualitative data; methods of analysing quantitative data including the use of software packages (eg SPSS) and statistical methods of interpretation; the evaluation and integration of primary and secondary data. • Writing up the Research: the problems of writing-up and importance of time management; structuring the dissertation; writing skills and effective presentation. • Implementation of Research Findings: identify the audience/client groups; completing oral presentations and briefings; navigating the political process; ethical considerations and dilemmas. • Continuous professional Development: The philosophies, principles and practices of continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning and CIPD policy. Methods of recording CPD and creating personal development plans. Different contexts of and approaches to learning.
Contact Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact hours will be three per week over a period of twelve weeks, predominantly along the lines of a lecture, followed by a student-lead seminar. This will include a 3-hour hands-on library session and a 3-hour hands-on SPSS session. All contact will be face-to-face.
Teaching and Learning Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching strategy - The module will be taught through a combination of formal staff presentations, student-led seminar discussions and debate, and exercises involving the practical application of research concepts, principles and techniques. Additional learning materials, intended to complement the formal class sessions, will be supplied. A formal teaching programme on research methods covering research design, quantitative and qualitative data collection, data analysis and writing up the research. Time will be made available on the course for the development of students' practical skills in such key areas as interviewing, questionnaire design and computerised data analysis. • Learning strategy – Students will be expected to undertake a large amount of self directed learning during the dissertation phase. However, primary support is given to the student through his/her dissertation supervisor. The supervisor is there to act as advisor and mentor to the student providing the immediate

	<p>contract point when ideas need to be explored or problems addressed, directing the student towards other staff when specific skills/expertise are required. Although individual arrangements will be made for supervision, it is expected that students and supervisors will meet on at least four formal occasions during the dissertation period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the student's dissertation supervisor, support will also be available from the Module Leader particularly over issues which are beyond the limit of the dissertation supervisors. The Module Leader's role is primarily that of ensuring the smooth management of the dissertation phase of the programme. He/she may be involved in the preliminary discussions with students over initial topic ideas and their viability and choice of appropriate project supervisors. In addition, the Module Leader will monitor the progress of the students and take action where progress reports require it.
Key Information Sets Information	Not applicable for postgraduate module
Reading Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and skills - All students will be encouraged to make full use of the print and electronic resources available to them through membership of the University. These include a range of electronic journals and a wide variety of resources available through web sites and information gateways. The University Library's web pages provide access to subject relevant resources and services, and to the library catalogue. Many resources can be accessed remotely. Students will be presented with opportunities within the curriculum to develop their information retrieval and evaluation skills in order to identify such resources effectively. Blackboard – The module is supported by Blackboard, where students will be able to find all necessary module documentation, to include guidance on further reading within the module handbook. Direct links to information resources will also be provided from within Blackboard. Essential reading – The set textbook is (Bryman A and Bell E (2007) <i>Business Research Methods</i> 2nd edition) Oxford University Press, and students are expected to purchase it. It is likely that the textbook will change from year to year so students should check with the module leader or current year module handbook before buying. Other required reading will be provided either in a module resource pack or will be electronically retrievable via Blackboard or from the library directly. Further reading – Further reading will be required to supplement the set textbook and other provided readings (see above). The purpose of this further reading is to ensure students are familiar with current research, classic works, and material specific to their interests from the academic literature, often journals. Suggested further reading by topic will be indicated in the module handbook/outline provided at the start of the module. However, students are expected to use their initiative and discretion in selecting appropriate further reading to support their studies. It is expected that students will engage with the academic journal literature on the subject of HRM and the topic they choose to investigate for their dissertation and as such are likely to use articles from some of the following indicative academic journals in their further reading: Human Resource Management Journal, Industrial Relations Journal, Work, Employment and Society, Employee Relations. Access to all these publications is available through the library and all are available electronically.
Indicative Reading List	<p><i>The following list is offered to provide validation panels/accrediting bodies with an indication of the type and level of information students may be expected to consult. As such, its currency may wane during the life span of the module specification. However, as indicated above, CURRENT advice on readings will be available via other more frequently updated mechanisms.</i></p> <p>Bell J (2005) <i>Doing Your Research Project</i> (4th edition) Buckingham: Open University Press</p> <p>Blaxter L (2006) <i>How to Research</i> Buckingham: Open University Press</p> <p>Easterby-Smith M, Thorpe R and Lowe A (2008) <i>Management Research - An</i></p>

	<p><i>Introduction</i> (3rd edition) London: Sage</p> <p>Jankowicz A D (2005) <i>Business Research Projects</i> (4th edition) London: International Thompson Business Press</p> <p>Robson C (2002) <i>Real World Research - A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner Researchers</i>, (2nd edition) Oxford: Blackwell</p> <p>Saunders M, Lewis P and Thornhill A (2003) <i>Research methods for Business Students</i> London: Pitman</p>
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Part 3: Assessment	
Assessment Strategy	<p>As much of the teaching and learning is based around applied research, the module will be assessed directly through the design, conduct and presentation of the research project in the form of a dissertation.</p> <p>Formative assessment is provided from the start of the module through the consideration of research reports and journal articles. Students will thereby benefit from class debate, commentary and feedback from the tutor. Further formative assessment will be provided by the dissertation supervisor during the dissertation phase. Summative assessment takes place at the end of the module and has one component, Component A, which is a 15,000-18,000 dissertation.</p> <p>Specific assessment criteria for the examination will be published in the module handbook/outline each year. These will be constructed with reference to the generic BBS Master's Level Assessment Criteria which will also be appended to the module handbook/outline.</p>

Identify final assessment component and element	Component A	
% weighting between components A and B (Standard modules only)	A:	B:
	100%	
First Sit		
Component A (controlled conditions) Description of each element	Element weighting (as % of component)	
1. 15,000-18,000 word dissertation	100%	
Component B Description of each element	Element weighting (as % of component)	
n/a		

Resit (further attendance at taught classes is not required)		
Component A (controlled conditions) Description of each element	Element weighting (as % of component)	
1. 15,000-18,000 word dissertation	100%	
Component B Description of each element	Element weighting (as % of component)	
n/a		
If a student is permitted an EXCEPTIONAL RETAKE of the module the assessment will be that indicated by the Module Description at the time that retake commences.		