



ACADEMIC SERVICES

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Part 1: Basic Data					
Module Title	Investigating a Business Issue from an HR Perspective (International)				
Module Code	UMPCYF-60-M	Level	M	Version	2.3
Owning Faculty	FBL	Field	HRM		
Contributes towards	MA International Human Resource Management				
UWE Credit Rating	60	ETCS Credit Rating	30	Module Type	Dissertation
Pre-requisites			Co- requisites		
Excluded Combinations			Module Entry requirements		
Valid From	1 September 2014		Valid to		

<b>CAP Approval Date</b>	22/5/14
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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"> <li>• Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of research and its role in the analysis of HRM issues (Component A)</li> <li>• Demonstrate knowledge of the principal research traditions and approaches in business and management research (Component A)</li> <li>• Appreciate the relationships between theory, research approach and method (Component A)</li> <li>• Conceptualise a research problem in the field of HRM and devise an appropriate research strategy (Component A )</li> <li>• Demonstrate a critical appreciation of the theory and empirical research relevant to the topic area (Component A)</li> <li>• Demonstrate proficiency in and knowledge of different techniques of data collection (quantitative and qualitative) and understand the strengths and limitations of these methods (Component A)</li> <li>• Design a research strategy that is appropriate for the investigation of the dissertation topic identified (Component A)</li> <li>• Analyse rigorously and synthesise different sources of data to reach well-supported conclusions, relate these findings to the literature topic and evaluate the organisational or wider relevance of the results (Component A)</li> <li>• Make a persuasive business case for appropriately developed and justified recommendations, based on the dissertation research, including an indication of relevant cost and resource implications for the organisation. (Component A)</li> <li>• Self-critically reflect upon the design and execution of their investigation</li> </ul>

	<p>and review their personal learning from the research (Component A)</p> <p><b><u>In addition the educational experience may explore, develop, and practise but not formally discretely assess the following</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent learning and skills associated with discussion and debate</li> <li>• Personal organisation and study skills</li> <li>• Time management skills</li> <li>• Appreciation of the ethical issues in social research and the problems and dilemmas in the dissemination and implementation of research findings</li> </ul>
Syllabus Outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of research: the purpose of research and its contribution to the analysis of issues in international HRM: the role of theory in research; concepts, measurements and indicators; reliability and validity; causality, generalisation and replication</li> <li>• Planning and designing the research: selecting a research topic; drafting a research proposal; access and ethics; sampling in qualitative research (illustrative/evocative sampling, snowball sampling, natural sampling, self-selection) sampling in quantitative research (probability sampling methods, sample biases, non-probability sampling methods, errors in survey research); the literature review and its use to develop research questions; searching for academic sources (library session); ethical issues in research; negotiating and maintaining access.</li> <li>• Data collection: an overview of the different methods of data collection and their strengths and limitations: qualitative research methods, including, qualitative interviews; focus groups; observation; ethnography; discourse/conversation analysis; documentary/text analysis; quantitative research methods, including, structured interviews; self-completion questionnaires; structured observation; content analysis. Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods</li> <li>• Data analysis and interpretation: analysing qualitative data, including discussion of the use of software packages, such as NVIVO; introducing datasets and statistical analysis with SPSS. Evaluation and integration of primary and secondary data.</li> <li>• Writing-up: structuring the proposal and dissertation; writing skills and effective presentation; assessment criteria; time management.</li> </ul>
Contact Hours/Scheduled Hours	<p>24 hours (4 x6) research methods training.</p> <p>6-8 hours individual project supervision.</p>
Teaching and Learning Methods	<p>The module is organised around formal lectures, seminars and practical activities. The lectures are designed to introduce concepts, data and a framework for analysing the particular themes and issues under discussion. The seminars and practical activities enable students to 'make sense' and experience first hand, the challenges of understanding, planning, designing, implementing, analysing and writing-up their own research. A formal programme of learning will include a research methods handbook which contains detailed discussion and work exercises relating to each element of the course, a dissertation handbook, specifying time allocated to each learning activity and handouts. Much of the knowledge component of the course is intended to be supported by the research methods handbook, leaving more time available for the development of students' practical skills. Students will also have access to Blackboard where lecture slides and additional readings can be downloaded, and the study skills web pages, especially in relation to referencing and other academic-related activities.</p>

	<p>During the dissertation phase, primary support is given by a student supervisor who acts as an advisor and mentor to the student, providing a contact point when ideas need to be explored or problems discussed. The supervisor will also provide written feedback on the proposal and drafts of the student's work.</p> <p>In addition, student support will also be available from the module leader whose primary role is to ensure the smooth management of the project phase of the programme. He/she will be involved in preliminary discussions with students over initial topic ideas and their viability, the development of a preliminary research proposal, choice of appropriate project supervisors and matter of access. The module leader will monitor the progress of students and take action when required.</p>
Reading Strategy	<p>Students are encouraged to make full use of printed and electronic resources available to them through the University. These include a range of electronic journals as well as a wide variety of resources available via information gateways. The University web pages provide access to subject relevant resources and services and to the library catalogue and many of these resources can be accessed remotely. Students will be given the opportunity within the curriculum to develop their information and retrieval and evaluation skills in order to identify such resources effectively, for example, through library and computer laboratory-based SPSS sessions.</p> <p>A list of 'essential' and 'further' readings are provided in the course outline (see below). These sources constitute minimum reading requirements and students are expected to additionally draw upon other reading materials from the University library, to include a range of journal articles, books and textbooks.</p> <p>A list of 'essential' and 'further' readings will also be available on Blackboard, where additional readings, identified by tutors, will also be made available.</p>
Indicative Reading List	<p><b>Essential reading:</b></p> <p>Bryman, A. (2008) <i>Social Research Methods (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2007) <i>Business Research Methods (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) <i>Research Methods for Business Students (5<sup>th</sup> edition)</i>. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.</p> <p><b>Further Reading:</b></p> <p>Anderson, V. (2009) <i>Research Methods in Human Resource Management (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)</i>. London: CIPD</p> <p>Blackie, N. (2000) <i>Designing Social Research</i>, Oxford: Polity Press.</p> <p>Mason, J. (2002 or 1996) <i>Qualitative Methods</i>, London: Sage.</p> <p>Curwin, J. and Slater, R. (2004) <i>Quantitative Methods: a short course</i>. London: Thomson Learning.</p>

### Part 3: Assessment

Assessment Strategy	There are two elements to the assessment; an assessed proposal (2,000 words) and a dissertation (13,000 to 16,000 words).
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The assessed proposal will be submitted first and formative and summative feedback will be provided on this. The proposal will include:

- Details of the context for the research
- Aims and objectives
- A preliminary literature review
- Details of the proposed research methods
- Identification of relevant ethical issues

The dissertations will be marked according to the following criteria:

1. Research aims and objectives are clearly stated, relevant to the organisation and intellectually challenging.
2. The organisational context and background to the research is clearly explained and relevant.
3. A critical appreciation of the relevant theory and empirical research is demonstrated and sources are correctly attributed and referenced.
4. A clear conceptual framework for the research is developed.
5. An appropriate research strategy and methodology is developed and discussed.
6. Appropriate methods of data collection are used, choice of methods is justified and limitations are discussed.
7. Evidence of systematic data collection is provided; findings are clearly presented.
8. Findings are rigorously analysed, synthesised and evaluated in relation to the literature and conceptual framework
9. Appropriate conclusions are reached which are consistent with the research objectives and supported by evidence.
10. Recommendations are appropriately developed and justified, taking into account the business application.
11. There is evidence of self-critical reflection and review of personal learning from the dissertation.
12. The dissertation is professionally presented, including good use of English, appropriate use of diagrams, tables and summaries and within word limit

Identify final assessment component and element	<b>Component B</b>	
% weighting between components A and B (Standard modules only)	<b>A:</b>	<b>B:</b>
	<b>100%</b>	
<b>First Sit</b>		
<b>Component A (controlled conditions)</b> <b>Description of each element</b>	<b>Element weighting</b> <b>(as % of component)</b>	
1. Proposal (2,000 words)	15%	
2. Dissertation (13,000 – 16,000 words)	85%	

<b>Resit (further attendance at taught classes is not required)</b>		
<b>Component A (controlled conditions)</b> <b>Description of each element</b>	<b>Element weighting</b> <b>(as % of component)</b>	
1. Proposal (2,000 words)	15%	

2. Dissertation (13,000 – 16,000 words)	85%
If a student is permitted a <b>RETAKE</b> of the module the assessment will be that indicated by the Module Description at the time that retake commences.	