



University of the
West of England

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Code: UMOD3F-40-3 **Title:** Enquiry into the Workplace **Version:** 1
Level: 3 **UWE credit rating:** 40 **ECTS credit rating:** 20

Module type: Project

Owning Faculty: FBL

Field: Organisation Studies

Faculty Committee approval: QMAC

Date:

Valid from: 1 September 2011

Discontinued from:

Contributes towards: BA (Hons) Business Management Practice

Pre-requisites: None

Co-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Aim of module

The module allows students to gain knowledge and understanding through engaging with real situations in the workplace, and aims to provide students with the opportunity:

- to combine practical work experience (be it paid part-time work or a formal volunteer role) with academic reflection and critical analysis
- to develop skills for independent enquiry and to demonstrate the student's ability to operationalise and apply academic knowledge in the investigation of a business issue or problem
- to enable students to acquire analytical and problem solving skills based on evaluation and synthesis within a work environment
- for continuing personal and professional development as relates to current work role and to longer term employability.

The precise nature of the work-based enquiry will be encapsulated in a learning contract agreed between the student, their organisation and the academic supervisor.

Learning outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- Identify issues relevant to their organisational context and to be able to frame an organisational enquiry (A1, 2)
- conduct an action research enquiry (A1, 2)
- Work critically with theory in practice and to create knowledge through practice (A1, 2)
- reflect on own organisational role and associated personal and employability development needs (A1,2)
- Formulate reasoned solutions and make practical recommendations (A2)

Syllabus outline:

The student's initiative will be known and supported by the organisation and expressed in a learning contract. Through facilitation and supervisory support, the student will use their learning contract to explore and further enquire into their chosen topic in a way that reflects the framework of the learning outcomes.

Key themes:

- Work-based enquiry
- Action research, purposes and methods
- Sense-making and critical reflection

Students are required to plan and complete a work-based enquiry project of a maximum of 15,000 words, based on the investigation of a business issue. This will include a 2,000 word executive summary/ management report.

Teaching and learning methods:

An essential part of the module is the student's own work experience and to satisfactorily complete the module students should normally be in part time employment or a volunteer role for a minimum of 6 hours a week for the duration of the module.

Learning on this module will enable the student to explore an aspect of their workplace and to integrate learnt experience and knowledge with their workplace experience, developing their ability to enquire, evaluate and synthesise.

The module builds on tools and techniques developed in previous modules and is a self-directed, independent enquiry process. Students also have an individual academic supervisor assigned to them for ongoing guidance throughout the enquiry process.

Students will be directed towards the University Library online Study Skills resources for the development of skills appropriate to the level and style of the module. Students will be directed on how the resources on this site should be used to develop the skills that will underpin their studies in the module handbook and/or via Blackboard.

Extensive use will be made of Blackboard to support students' learning, to facilitate interactions between students and as a repository for students' own work thereby promoting a sense of learning community.

Reading Strategy

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.

By necessity students will need to develop as autonomous learners and will be actively encouraged to develop information skills to enable them to identify, retrieve and evaluate sources of information that are relevant to the specific context of their organisation and the associated work-based enquiry.

Essential reading:

The essential reading will be specified in the module handbook and on Blackboard at the start of the module. This is potentially subject to change at short notice and students should not purchase any set text without the guidance of the module tutor. Examples of the essential reading for this module may include:

Coghlan, D. & Brannick, T. (2010) *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* (3rd edition). Sage Publications, London.

Further reading:

- Cunningham, I.; Dawes, G. & Bennett, B. (2004) *The Handbook Of Work Based Learning*. Gower Publishing Company.
- Durrant, A.; Rhodes, G. & Young, D. (Editors) (2011) *Getting Started with University-level Work Based Learning* (2nd edition) Middlesex University Press.
- Evans, K. (2006) *Improving Workplace Learning*. London: Routledge.
- Helyer, R. (2010) *The Work-Based Learning Student Handbook* (Palgrave Study Skills). Palgrave MacMillan.
- McNiff, J. & Whitehead, J. (2009) *Doing & Writing Action Research*. Sage Publications.
- Moon, J. (2004) *A Handbook of Reflective & Experiential Learning*. Routledge Falmer.
- Raelin, J.A. (2008) *Work-Based Learning: Bridging Knowledge and Action in the Workplace*. John Wiley & Sons
- Silverman, D. (2010) *Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.
- Schon, D. (1991) *The Reflective Practitioner*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Streumer, J. (ed) (2006) *Work-related Learning*. New York: Springer.
- Reason, P. & Bradbury-Huang, H. (Eds) (2006) *Handbook of Action Research: Concise Paperback Edition: Student Edition*. Sage Publications Ltd.

Assessment Strategy

This is a project module, comprising two elements of assessment. The first element is the proposal and learning contract, which is an essential pre-requisite to the implementation of a successful work-based enquiry. The proposal and learning contract is assessed with a weighting of 10% to underpin the importance of the planning stage of a work-based enquiry project. The learning contract element is designed to ensure access to the organisation is negotiated between the student and employer for the purpose of the module. The final submission is a work-based enquiry project of a maximum of 15,000 words containing a 2,000 word executive summary/ management report; this comprises 90% of the module.

The proposal and learning contract is both summative (contributing to the overall mark) and formative, as there is formal feedback provided to students at this stage to assist progression of their work-based enquiry plans to completion.

A1 – Proposal and Learning Contract

- Well thought out and focussed work-based enquiry question(s) and learning contract which illustrates the negotiated access between the student and employer, and confirms the organisation's commitment to enabling the student access to the organisation for the purpose of the module
- Identification of relevant and adequate quality literature resources
- Consideration of action research and enquiry approach and methods of data collection and analysis
- Appropriate timetable

A2 – Project

- clearly stated and intellectually challenging objectives
- appropriate work-based enquiry design with due consideration of methodology and methods
- relevance and extent of primary action research and enquiry, quality and depth of data analysis
- persuasive and supported conclusions, practical and well considered recommendations
- internal consistency and integration of academic knowledge
- originality and resourcefulness
- level of critical/self critical awareness and reflection

Assessment

Weighting between components A and B (standard modules only) n/a

ATTEMPT 1

First Assessment Opportunity

Component A

Description of each element

Element weighting

Element 1 Work-based enquiry proposal (max. 1500 words)

10%

Element 2 max 15,000 word work-based enquiry project including a
2000 word executive summary/management report

90%

Second Assessment Opportunity

Component A

Element Weighting

Resubmission of max 15,000 word work-based enquiry project including a
2000 word executive summary/ management report

100%

Second or Subsequent Attempt: Attendance at taught classes is not required

Specification confirmed by

(Associate Dean/Programme Director)

Date