6.7 Module 7 Research Methods

6.7.1 Headline information about the module

Module title	Research Methods
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)	9
Module number/reference	PGDAFM -RM
Parent programme(s) the plural arises if there are embedded programmes to be validated.	MSc in International Business Management
Stage of parent programme	1
Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable)	2
Module credit units (FET/HET/ECTS)	ECTS
Module credit number of units	5
List the teaching and learning modes	Full time, part time
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)	Learners must hold an honours degree of at least a H22 standard in an accounting/finance related field or equivalent qualification from an approved tertiary or professional institution.
Pre-requisite module titles	Not applicable
Co-requisite module titles	Not applicable
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff (staff includes workplace personnel who are responsible for learners such as apprentices, trainees and learners in clinical placements)	Qualified to at least master's level with significant knowledge and experience of a variety of research approaches and methods and considerable supervisory experience in Level 9 dissertations. Preferably with a third level teaching qualification (e.g. Certificate in Training and Education).
Maximum number of learners per centre (or instance of the module)	60
Duration of the module	12 weeks
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week	3
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)	Normal lecture room with internet access and good-quality audio-visual equipment.

Analysis of required learning effort										
Effort while in contact with staff										
Classroom and demonstrations		Mentoring and small-group tutoring		Other (specify)		Directed e-learning (hours)	Independent learning (hours)	Other hours (specify)	Work-based learning hours of learning effort	Total effort (hours)
Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner					
24	1:60	12	1:20				89			125
Allocation of marks (within the module)										
				Continuous assessment	Supervised project	Proctored practical examination	Proctored written examination	Total		
Percentage contribution				100%				**100%**		

6.7.2 Module aims and objectives

Within this module, learners develop an understanding of the nature, purpose and value of business and commercial research. The learner is guided on how to conduct a critical literature review using best practice in developing a critical approach. Through the module, workshops are provided covering the various primary data techniques. Learners develop a knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods and understand how these can be usefully employed in carrying out a research dissertation. Learners can make a strong argument and defend their work in a professional manner. Learners are equipped with a well-developed research proposal, which then directs their dissertation research.

6.7.3 Minimum intended module learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, learners are be able to:
(i) Apply scientific inquiry skills to assess the effectiveness of any research approach when faced with potential organisation research questions.
(ii) Critically evaluate literature at the forefront of knowledge that underpins justification for the chosen field of research and progression towards a conceptual framework.
(iii) Formulate a rigorous and appropriate research design with methods for data collection and analysis consistent with a learner's research philosophy/paradigm and the requirements of their research question.

(iv) Evaluate the selected research method and describe the possible outcomes relevant data to the research questions posed.

(v) Critically evaluate and analyse the findings of their own research and appreciate its value in terms of its contributions, limitations and position within the overall research in the field.

6.7.4 Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall MIPLOs

Research Methods introduces the learner to the purpose and role of research in business and the different qualitative and quantitative traditions and approaches practiced in research.

The module ensures learners understand the significance of the process of research, from well-developed research objectives and questions, literature review, research design and its implications for how trustworthy the findings from the research can be considered. The importance of appropriately illustrating the process in reporting and presenting the research is central. For those learners progressing to complete a dissertation, the module ensure they are well prepared by the development and production of a solid, well informed research proposal that provides them with a sound basis for carrying out independent research under supervision.

6.7.5 Information provided to learners about the module

The Programme Handbook contains the module descriptor and assessment details. Extensive use of the VLE, Moodle, provides detailed notes and additional resources. In class, learners are provided with a PowerPoint pack and extensive reading list, incorporating professional and academic sources.

6.7.6 Module content, organisation and structure

Introduction and Topic Selection
- Overview of research methods and the research process
- Expectations and assessment of a dissertation
- Inspiration for topics
- Criteria for research topics for the dissertation

Literature review and Critical review of literature
- Purpose of literature review
- Identify quality sources
- Recording what you have read
- Citation and Referencing Workshop – Harvard and Zotero
- Structure of literature review
- Developing a critical approach to literature as a reader and as a writer
- Review of techniques to developing a critical approach

Research Design

- Research approaches and design
- Research paradigms and philosophy
- Research strategies
- Triangulation
- Link of research paradigms to research methods

Introduction to Quantitative Methods of Data Collection and Analysis
Methods of data collection

- Quantitative methods in business
- The application of quantitative methods in research
- Overview of quantitative data collection methods
- Survey tools for collecting data
- Sampling

Generating statistics and Software applications

- Statistical analysis overview
- Statistical concepts and their application
- Hypothesis testing
- Modelling relationships
- Statistics and software applications

Interpreting statistics & Presentation of Quantitative Data

- The application and use of statistics in business decision making
- Presenting and displaying data

Methods of Qualitative Data Collection

- Major issues in data collection
- Methods of data collection
- Qualitative methods
- Primary data collection methods
- Recording data and storage
- Assessing the focus and logic of your data collection
- SPSS Workshops

Methods of Qualitative Data Analysis
- Major issues in qualitative data analysis – trustworthiness
- Methods of qualitative analysis – from approaches to coding to quasi-judicial methods
- NVivo Workshops

Proposal
- Structure and format of proposal
- Planning and timetabling research

Ethics
- Ethics and access
- Making basic ethical provisions
- Human participants / organisations
- Guidelines, policies and procedures

Findings and Synthesis
- Interpretation
- Findings and synthesis
- Developing conclusions

Presentation of dissertation
- Presentation of findings
- Writing up
- Structure and template
- Presentation and formatting
- Viva

6.7.7 Module teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

A range of delivery methods are adopted, including seminar style lectures, tutorials, case studies and one to one "clinics". These are designed to engage the learner in the module content, and associated competencies that the programme team wishes the learner to develop over the course of the module. Learners' guided independent reading and research is supported by use of Moodle to help prepare learners for their classes in addition to developing autonomous self-directed learners.

6.7.8 Work-based learning and practice-placement

There is no work-based learning on practice-placement within this module.

6.7.9 E-learning

E-learning supports are provided via the college's online learning environment, Moodle, including extensive library resources.

6.7.10 Module physical resource requirements

Normal lecture room with internet access and good-quality audio-visual equipment. Smaller meeting rooms are utilised for the one to one clinics.

6.7.11 Reading lists and other information resources

Primary Reading

Bell, E. and Thorpe, R. (2013) *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Management Research*. Publications Ltd.: Los Angeles

Cottrell, S. (2017) *Critical Thinking Skills: Effective Analysis, Argument and Reflection*. Palgrave: Basingstoke.

Gray, D. E. (2017) *Doing Research in the Real World*. SAGE Publications Ltd.: London.

Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2015) *Research Methods for Business Students*. Pearson: New York.

Secondary Reading

Creswell, J. W. and Creswell, J. D. (2018) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications Inc.: London.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P. (2015) *Management and Business Research*. Sage Publications Ltd.: London.

Fisher, C. (2011) *Researching and Writing a Dissertation: a guidebook for business students*. Prentice Hall: London.

Flick, U. (ed.) (2017) *The SAGE Qualitative Research Kit: Collection*. SAGE Publications Ltd.: London.

Patel, Y. (2017) *SPSS for Academic Research*. Lynda.com.

Rivers, D. (2018) *NVivo 2018 Essential Training*. Lynda.com.

6.7.12 Specifications for module staffing requirements

Lecturer(s) qualified to at least master's level with significant knowledge and experience of a variety of research approaches and methods and considerable supervisory experience in Level 9 dissertations. Preferably with a third level teaching qualification (e.g. Certificate in Training and Education).

6.7.13 Module summative assessment strategy

Assessment for the module centres on the completion of a research proposal. As the proposal is an end of semester assessment with no exam, there is a considerable effort made to ensure learners understand the importance of class participation informed by the incremental development of their proposal. The module is assessed by continuous assessment, with two parts.

The assessed work breakdown can be seen in the table below.

No	Description	MIMLOs	Weighting
1	Topic and Literature Paper	i, ii, iv	40%
2	Research Proposal	iii, v	60%

6.7.14 Sample assessment materials

Please see Sample Assessment Handbook