



**Postgraduate Certificate / Diploma in  
Research Methodology in Business & Management  
and  
MRes in Business & Management**

**2016-17**



## **Welcome to Strathclyde Business School (SBS)**

I am delighted to welcome you to the SBS researcher training programme, which is designed to support the development of all postgraduate researchers in the School whether they are registered for the PhD, DBA, MRes, or MPhil. This programme is unique amongst Scottish Business Schools, providing comprehensive and coherent coverage of all the methodological issues that arise in business research. The design, delivery, and results that it achieves have been described as exemplary by the external examiner, and indeed this was confirmed in the recent national benchmarking exercise to measure research quality (REF 2014), where SBS was rated first amongst all UK business schools for the research environment that we foster. This exceptional result reflects not only our commitment to providing the best possible training and facilities for our postgraduate community, but also our research engagement with issues that matter not only in an academic sense, but also to stakeholders in business, government, and society.

Your researcher training will provide you with the intellectual foundations that you will need for your journey into higher level learning, but in addition it will also enable you to build a social network for mutual support along the way. You will meet, and work with students from all the business disciplines, which will bring opportunities to challenge and broaden your own thinking. Often the friendships that students make here continue throughout their post-study careers.

This Handbook lays out the requirements and options for your researcher training here at SBS, but I would also encourage you to browse the University's webpages if you have any particular information needs.

Best wishes for your studies. I look forward to meeting you along the way.

**[NAME]**

Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research)

September 2016

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## COURSE DATES & KEY INFORMATION

### Course dates

Welcome & Lunch	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
BF992 Research Methods	10 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> October 2016
BF801 Reviewing Literature in Business Subjects	15 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> November 2016
BF991 Research Philosophy	5 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> December 2016
BF994 Introduction to Quantitative Methods:	21 <sup>st</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2017
BF998 Advanced Quantitative Methods	13 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
BF995 Advanced Qualitative Methods	24 <sup>th</sup> -28 <sup>th</sup> April 2017
BF984 Research Colloquium	26 <sup>th</sup> May 2017

Unless otherwise stated, modules usually run over 3-5 days, from 9am until 5pm, with a one hour break for lunch. Students should therefore plan appropriate blocks of time within their programme of work. Detailed schedules will be made available on MyPlace in advance of each class. Some modules may require evening work.

### Who's who on the programme

Course Director, Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research)

Course Administrator ([sbs-pgrsupport@strath.ac.uk](mailto:sbs-pgrsupport@strath.ac.uk))

The Course Administrator has responsibility for the administration of the programme and deals with progress of students through the course. They is the first point of contact for matters related to the overall programme.

Each module has a '**Module Coordinator**'. The Module Coordinator has responsibility for the development, delivery and assessment of the module. The Module Coordinator provides the first point of contact for any problems/issues that may arise relating to any particular module.

In addition, each department has a Director of Postgraduate Research who will facilitate and monitor your performance throughout your degree. The current Directors are:

Department	Director of Postgraduate Research
Accounting and Finance	Dr Devraj Basu
Economics	Dr Alex Dickson
Human Resource Management	Prof Ian Cunningham
Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship	Dr Niall MacKenzie
Management Science	Prof Alec Morton
Marketing	Dr Matthew Alexander
Strategy & Organisation	Prof Peter McKiernan

## Registering for modules

Register online in Neptune [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/neptune](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/neptune). Login to Neptune requires your DS user ID and password.

## Online resources

### Business School Research Methodology Training webpage – [www.mresearch.org](http://www.mresearch.org)

This page provides information about the programme, news and events relevant to postgraduate research students in the Business School and other resources to help you access the training you need for your research development. It is intended for all researchers in the Business School.

### Neptune - [www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/neptune](http://www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/neptune)

Neptune is the online database used for all Postgraduate Research students in the Business School. Once you register for your degree, your information will automatically appear in Neptune. This will allow you to **self-register for the modules associated with this Course**. Login to Neptune requires your DS user ID and password.

Each student's record will show the course you are registered for, the modules you are taking, and other relevant information.

### MyPlace - <http://classes.myplace.strath.ac.uk/>

MyPlace is the University's virtual learning environment. Each module has a MyPlace class page where the module details, slides, and, in most cases, assignments and feedback will be uploaded. Once you register for the modules on Neptune you will be enrolled for the class on MyPlace in order to have access to these materials. Login to MyPlace requires your DS user ID and password.

### Methods Video Library – accessible from [www.mresearch.org](http://www.mresearch.org)

The Business School has developed a searchable online library for current students to use as a resource. It covers a range of specialist techniques, methodologies and academic career-related themes which are not included in the basic research methodology training. These videos and podcasts are based on seminars provided by our own staff and visiting scholars.

## Additional Research Methodology Training

The Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma and MRes classes are intended to provide training in business and management related research methodologies. There is also other generic skills training provided by the University and external networks. All students are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with and keep updated on the additional training offered by these facilities.

### Researcher Development Programme ([www.strath.ac.uk/rdp/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/rdp/))

The University co-ordinates a range of additional seminars and workshops in transferable skills targeted at developing postgraduate and early career researchers. You should check this programme regularly and ensure you access as many of these training opportunities as you can.

**Scottish Graduate School of Social Sciences, Accounting & Finance/Business and Management/Economics pathways** - Economic and Social Research Council Doctoral Training Centre ([www.socsciscotland.ac.uk](http://www.socsciscotland.ac.uk))

Strathclyde is a member institution of the Economic and Social Research Council-funded Doctoral Training Centre (DTC), the Scottish Graduate School for the Social Sciences. The DTC draws together Scottish universities to build doctoral students' skills and capacities. The Business School participates in three training pathways: Accounting & Finance, Business & Management, and Economics. Training opportunities through the DTC pathways, including an annual summer school, will be advertised throughout the year. All research students are encouraged to take advantage of these.

**Applied Quantitative Methods Network (AQMeN)** (<http://aqmen.ac.uk/>)

This network based at Edinburgh University is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of the **ESRC Quantitative Methods Initiative**. Its aim is to build capacity in the use of intermediate and advanced level quantitative methods amongst the social science community in Scotland and beyond. The website announces regular training events and seminars, provides research students with valuable resources for their own research and an online forum.

**Career Management Skills for Postgraduate Researchers**

Whether you are undertaking your postgraduate research degree as a step towards a specific future career goal, or you do not yet know what you want to do at the end of your course, there are several useful resources available for postgraduate researchers.

**Strathclyde University Careers Service** [www.strath.ac.uk/careers/pgr](http://www.strath.ac.uk/careers/pgr)

The Careers Service offers the same level of support to postgraduate research students as to undergraduate students. Their dedicated website for postgraduate researchers is designed to lead you through the sequential stages of career planning and give you round the clock access to information, advice and useful resources to help you plan your future. You can also use their Resource Centre or call in and get individual help from a careers adviser.

**Vitae** [www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers)

This national UK organisation is dedicated to enhancing the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes. Information and resources for postgraduate researchers include, for example, guidance on supervisory issues, on self-development and raising your profile, as well as connecting postgraduate researchers through online communities and blogs.

**Student representation**

Your active involvement in the programme is encouraged. There is a number of mechanisms both informal and formal where your views can be expressed and documented.

**Staff - Student Committee**

PGR students have three representatives, one each for first, second, and third year cohorts. Representatives are usually appointed from volunteers, but if necessary, an election will be held. They will attend Faculty Research Committee meetings, and will also meet informally with the Course Director throughout the academic year. The role of the representative is threefold: firstly to organise feedback from students to the Faculty and Course Director; secondly, to be a conduit for additional information from

the Course Director to the students; and thirdly to be involved in the organisation of extracurricular activities for students.

### **Student Evaluation Forms**

All modules are subject to evaluation by students. At the end of each module students are asked to complete an evaluation on the MyPlace class page. The completed evaluations are reviewed by the module coordinator and the Course Director. It is really important to us to receive student feedback, so we would appreciate it if you would please take the time to complete evaluations for every class.

# COURSE OVERVIEW

## Course mission

The course is intended to provide research training of the highest standard to postgraduate researchers and professionals in business and management, allowing them to undertake and evaluate credible, independent and contributory research. It is designed to enable students to develop skills and competencies across the spectrum of research methods, balancing the acquisition of specialist knowledge with the ability to apply a range of research techniques in a practical environment. As such, the course also maps on to the four domains of Vitae's Researcher Development Framework ([www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk)): Knowledge and intellectual abilities; Personal effectiveness; Research governance and organisation; Engagement, influence and impact.

The course draws on the wide range of expertise that exists across the Business School. By bringing together academics and professionals from a range of subject areas and disciplines, the course provides a stimulating environment in which to develop traditional and innovative research competencies.

The course is offered at three levels - Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's, with full-time and part-time modes. It is approved as:

- a) a stand-alone Master's in Research
- b) Strathclyde Business School's prescribed curriculum in research training for students undertaking higher degrees by research at Master's and Doctoral levels.<sup>1</sup>

Students undertaking (b) should complete at least the 60 credit Postgraduate Certificate. **It is a requirement of the University that all research training is completed before a higher degree by research can be awarded.**

Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas are awarded as interim qualifications at an annual examination board which normally takes place in September. The current external examiner is Prof Frank Mueller from Newcastle University.

## Aim of the course

The aim of the course is to provide students with knowledge, skills and experience of research that will enable them to conduct high quality business and management research either as practitioners or academics. The course is designed to enable students to develop competencies across the spectrum of research methods, balancing the acquisition of specialist knowledge with the ability to apply research techniques in practice.

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<sup>1</sup> This training meets the University requirements for all students undertaking research degrees as stated in the Calendar of Regulations Part 3. From October 2013, students in other faculties are required to complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Researcher Professional Development. SBS postgraduate research students are exempt from this requirement, but they must complete the Certificate in Research Methodology in Business & Management.

On completion of the course students are expected to be able to:

- demonstrate an awareness of research in business and management;
- contribute to theory and address practice concerns;
- demonstrate a systematic understanding of research philosophy, appreciating alternative epistemological positions and their implications for theory development and research design, analysis and interpretation;
- formulate research problems and/or hypotheses in a clear and concise fashion;
- show originality in the application of research methodologies;
- demonstrate a systematic understanding of the range of advanced research techniques, be able to critically evaluate these techniques and apply them appropriately; and
- use a range of transferable skills to disseminate research and demonstrate the ability to communicate research findings effectively, both orally and in written form, to the business research and practitioner communities.

## Entry requirements

Applicants to the course must ordinarily be in possession of at least an upper second class degree from a British university or a recognized equivalent from a non-British institution. All candidates whose first language is not English will be required to demonstrate an appropriate level of competence in the English language as required by the University.

Applicants who intend to obtain a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma in Research Methodology as a composite part of their PhD will be subject to the PhD application regulations. Similarly, applicants who intend to obtain a Postgraduate Certificate as part of an MPhil or DBA will be subject to the MPhil or DBA application regulations.

## Course content

The taught elements of the course are designed to help students confront problems that are likely to be encountered at various stages of the research process and to develop their abilities to manage and defend research. All modules are credit bearing, although some students may wish to 'attend only' without completing assignments (this will depend on numbers and is ultimately at the discretion of the module coordinator). The following menu of modules offers students flexibility in choosing a curriculum that best meets their own development needs:

BF992 Research Methods (20 credits) \*  
BF991 Research Philosophy (20 credits) \*  
BF801 Reviewing Literature for Business Subjects (10 credits)  
BF984 Research Colloquium (10 credits)  
BF994 Introduction to Quantitative Methods: Survey Design and Analysis (10 credits)  
BF998 Advanced Quantitative Methods (10 credits)  
BF995 Advanced Qualitative Methods (20 credits)  
RD905 Researcher Professional Development Elective (10 credits)  
EX938 ISM-PhD Training & Supervision Workshop (20 credits)

### **\*required for Certificate, Diploma and Master's**

In addition, students may, with the approval of the Course Director, take subject-specific Masters level classes offered by Departments in order to develop advanced knowledge in a cognate area relevant to their research. After consultation with their supervisor, students who wish to participate in any such Departmental classes should register online for that class. Where a student's specific development needs cannot be met from available taught classes, Special Topics (BF977, BF978, BF979) may be customised as required.

**Students must complete 60 postgraduate credits to qualify for the Certificate, 120 credits for the Diploma and 180 credits for the Master's Degree.**

During the course additional non-credited workshops and Masterclasses will be organised. These classes feature invited speakers with international reputations in their field. Students will be expected to attend these Masterclasses and will be notified about them well in advance.

The following is an outline of the normal requirements for students registered for research training at each level of qualification.

### **The Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits)**

Students studying for a Certificate will usually take 3-4 modules comprising:

BF992 Research Methods (20 credits)  
BF991 Research Philosophy (20 credits)  
1-2 optional module(s) (totalling 20 credits)

Optional modules may be selected from the schedule in this Handbook. The Research Colloquium (BF984) and Reviewing Literature for Business Subjects (BF801) classes are recommended to students registered for all research training qualifications, although they are not compulsory.

Successful completion of the Certificate is the minimum training requirement for all PhD and MPhil students.

Students seeking a Specialisation in Risk and Reliability for the Postgraduate Certificate in addition to the two compulsory modules shall undertake two or more optional modules from the following, to total no fewer than 20 credits:

MS 502	Basic Reliability Theory and Techniques (5 credits)
MS 503	Advanced System Reliability Modelling (5 credits)
MS 507	Modelling within Reliability and Maintainability (10 credits)
MS 927	Risk Analysis and Management (10 credits)
MS 962	Foundations of Risk (10 credits)
MS 963	Risk Governance (10 credits)

### **The Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits)**

Students studying for a Diploma will take four compulsory modules designed to develop competencies in key areas of research theory and practice, and at least 20 credits in advanced methods modules. They must also complete 40 credits from the schedule in this Handbook. The Postgraduate Diploma therefore comprises:

#### Compulsory classes

BF992	Research Methods (20 credits)
BF991	Research Philosophy (20 credits)
BF801	Reviewing Literature for Business Subjects (10 credits)
BF984	Research Colloquium (10 credits)
<b>Either</b>	
BF994	Introduction to Quantitative Methods: Survey Design and Analysis (10 credits), and
BF998	Advanced Quantitative Methods (10 credits)
<b>or</b>	
BF995	Advanced Qualitative Methods (20 credits)

No fewer than 40 credits of optional classes selected from:

### Optional classes

BF994	Introduction to Quantitative Methods: Survey Design and Analysis (10 credits)*
BF998	Advanced Quantitative Methods (10 credits)*
BF995	Advanced Qualitative Methods (20 credits)*
RD905	Researcher Professional Development Elective (10 credits)
EX938	ISM-PhD Training & Supervision Workshop (20 credits)
BF977	Special Topics I (20 credits)
BF978	Special Topics II (20 credits)
BF979	Special Topics III (20 credits)

\*If not already taken.

Students seeking a Specialisation in Risk and Reliability for the Postgraduate Diploma shall undertake the following compulsory classes and 30 credits of optional modules to a total of no fewer than 120 credits:

### Compulsory classes

BF992	Research Methods (20 credits)
BF991	Research Philosophy (20 credits)
MS507	Modelling within Reliability and Maintainability (10 credits)
MS927	Risk Analysis and Management (10 credits)
MS962	Foundations of Risk (10 credits)
MS963	Risk Governance (10 credits)

### Optional classes

BF984	Research Colloquium (10 credits)
BF801	Reviewing Literature for Business Subjects (10 credits)
BF994	Introduction to Quantitative Methods: Survey Design and Analysis (10 credits)
BF998	Advanced Quantitative Methods (10 credits)
BF995	Advanced Qualitative Methods (20 credits)
RD905	Researcher Professional Development Elective (10 credits)
EX938	ISM-PhD Training & Supervision Workshop (20 credits)

## **The Master's Degree (180 credits)**

Students intending to complete the Master's Degree are required to complete the 120 credit dissertation as outlined in section 10 below as well as 60 credits from the class schedule in this Handbook, of which 20 credits must come from either the two quantitative modules (BF994 and BF998) or Advanced Qualitative Methods (BF995). The dissertation comprises a 60 credit research project plus the 60 credit postgraduate certificate classes. The research project is intended as a piece of work that demonstrates high levels of research competence.

The specific nature of the research project is agreed between the student, the supervisor and the Course Director; and its focus should be on doing research. Students should note that material from the research project must be clearly differentiated from the content of any subsequent PhD or DBA thesis.

Additional guidance for the research project is provided as Appendix 1 in this Handbook.

## **Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL)**

Where a student can demonstrate that relevant learning outcomes have already been achieved through a prior course of study, the Course Director may grant a credit transfer of 34%, or exceptionally up to 50%, of the credits required for the Certificate, Diploma or MRes degree. Credit will be recognised once, and only for achievements within the five years preceding registration for a postgraduate research qualification at Strathclyde. Applications for RPL should be accompanied by official academic transcripts and outlines for the completed classes for which credit is being claimed.

## **Full-time and part-time study**

The course is available in both full- and part-time modes. The full-time course runs over a minimum of nine months in one academic year. Students studying part-time will take the specified modules but will be able to complete their course of study over two academic years.

## **Learning approach**

The general approach to learning in all modules is infused by the values of interactive learning and learning by doing, through reflection and co-operative inquiry in learning sets. One central goal of the course is to create a collegial and supportive environment for students learning about research methodology. Facilitating the development of supportive relationships and networks amongst students is a major influence on the modes of delivery adopted for the course.

For each module there is from 20 to 40 contact hours over three to five consecutive days, in addition to computer laboratory sessions for some modules and personal study time of around 5 hours per contact hour. The intensive blocks for module delivery are intended to encourage students to fully engage with the subject of study. This format also enables part-time students to study with full-time students, developing a 'community of practice'.

## **Course learning outcomes and expectations**

The course descriptors include characteristic generic outcomes of postgraduate certificates, diplomas and masters level study drawn from the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). They are intended to provide a general shared understanding of the expectations ordinarily to be fulfilled at this level of study, and to differentiate this level of study from other levels.

They are intended as a guideline and not a precise statement, and may be revised in due course. Students should use them as a guideline for what is expected of them in the course of their research methodology training. An outline of the generic learning outcomes is included as Appendix 2.

## Assessment

Students are assessed at the end of each module. Various forms of assessment are used across the modules, some involving your own supervisor and others assessed by the module coordinators. Assessments are submitted via MyPlace. Ordinarily, students will receive their grades and feedback for each assessment within three weeks of submission.

The pass mark for each module is 50%.

Any student who fails an assessment will be entitled to **ONE** resubmission.

Specific advice on individual modules' assessment will be supplied by the module coordinators. The general criteria used to assess submitted work are as follows:

%	
90 -100	<u>Truly Exceptional/Outstanding</u> demonstration of learning outcomes: wide, appropriate knowledge and understanding (and where appropriate effective project work) including outstanding insight and/or originality
80 - 89	evidence of reading and thought beyond course/assignment materials appropriate use of references and exemplars an exceptionally high standard of writing and communication
70 - 79	<u>Excellent</u> demonstration of learning outcomes: a) wide, appropriate knowledge and understanding including insight and/or originality b) evidence of reading and thought beyond course/assignment materials c) appropriate use of references and exemplars d) a high standard of writing and communication
60 - 69	<u>Good Pass - Comprehensively Good</u> demonstration of learning outcomes: wide appropriate knowledge and understanding (and where appropriate effective project work) with only occasional lapses in detail evidence of reading and thought beyond course/assignment materials a high standard of writing and communication
50 - 59	<u>Pass - Generally Satisfactory</u> demonstration of learning outcomes: sound knowledge and understanding of essential material (and where appropriate essential project skills) general accuracy with occasional mistakes and/or uncoordinated use of information
40 - 49	<u>Fail - Unsatisfactory</u> demonstration of learning outcomes: some very basic knowledge and understanding (and where appropriate basic project skills) omissions and/or weaknesses of presentation and/or logic and/or evidence Inconsistency in argument and unsubstantiated assertion
30 - 39	<u>Poor</u> performance in learning outcomes: some relevant information and limited understanding (and where appropriate some project work completed under supervision) omissions and/or weaknesses of presentation and/or logic and/or evidence lack of familiarity with the subject of assessment and/or assessment vehicle Inconsistency in argument and unsubstantiated assertion
20 - 29	<u>Weak</u> performance in learning outcomes: a few key words or phrases
1 - 19	serious errors little evidence that learning or project work was seriously attempted Entirely inconsistency in argument and unsubstantiated assertion
0	No work submitted for assessment, or evidence of plagiarism or academic dishonesty

## Penalties

Each module has specific dates for the submission of assessments. These dates are included in each module descriptor. Late submission of module assessments without prior notice of due cause approved by the Module Coordinator will be penalised (normally at 5% per working day).

Cases of suspected plagiarism or academic dishonesty (see below for definitions) will be automatically graded at 0% and will be referred to the Course Director for further action.

Additional module-specific penalties are outlined in the module descriptions that follow.

## Referencing protocols

In submitting your assessments there is a number of possible systems for referencing cited materials. For this course it is recommended that the Harvard System is used. The Harvard System provides brief citations within the main text, along with full referencing details in the bibliography at the end of an essay or dissertation. For example:

### In the Text

When you refer generally to the work or arguments of an author, state the author's surname and the date of the publication e.g.:

As Sisson (1989) argues, personnel management is in transition.

**Or**

It has been argued that personnel management is in transition (Sisson 1989).

When you quote an author directly, either by repeating text (which must be enclosed in quotation marks) or by referring to statistics given, state the author's surname, date of publication **and** the page number e.g.:

It has been suggested that employers are '... getting increasingly desperate and in their hour of need are turning to some ingenious and, in many cases, highly enlightened policies' (Pickard 1989, p 46) or (Pickard 1989: 46).

### In the Bibliography or References section

When using the Harvard system, all types of sources (e.g., books, articles, chapters in edited books) should be listed by author in alphabetical order, and not in separate sections.

Examples of the formatting for each source are given below:

**Books:** author (date) *Title in italics: with full subtitle*, place of publication: publisher.

Example: Kelly J (1998) *Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilisation, Collectivism and Long Waves*, London: Routledge/LSE.

**Edited books:** editor, ed. (date) *Title in italics: with full subtitle*, place of publication: publisher.

Example: Thompson P & Warhurst C (eds) (1998) *Workplaces of the Future* London: MacMillan.

**Chapters in edited books:** author (date) 'Title of Chapter' in Editors, *Title of collection in italics*, place of publication: publisher.

Example: Arjaliès, D., Lorino, P. & Simpson, B. (2013) 'Understanding organizational creativity: Insights from Pragmatism' in Keleman, M. & Rumens, N. (eds), *American pragmatism and organization*, Surrey: Gower.

**Articles in journals:** Author (date) 'Title of article', *Journal title in italics*, Volume and number: page numbers.

Example: Ramsay, H, Scholarios, D. & Harley, B. (2000) 'Employees and High Performance Work Systems: Testing Inside the Black Box', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 38. No. 4, pp.501-531.

**Internet references:** Author/Editor (date) (if ascertainable) Title (in italics or underlined) Edition Place of publication Publisher (if ascertainable) Available URL: http: // internet address /remote path Date accessed [in square brackets]

Example: US Department of Labor (2005) *Workers on Flexibility and Shift Schedules in May 2004*. Washington, D.C., US Dept of Labor. [online] Available at: [www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/flex.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/flex.pdf) [Accessed 20 September 2011]

Example: *Independent Inquiry into Access to Healthcare for People with Learning Disabilities*. n.d. Healthcare for all. [online] Available at: [http://www.iahpld.org.uk/Healthcare\\_easy\\_final.pdf](http://www.iahpld.org.uk/Healthcare_easy_final.pdf) [Accessed 10 April 2009]

## Avoiding Plagiarism

The University's regulations state that your degree will be awarded in recognition of your personal achievement, so any written work that you submit towards your degree must be your own. It is critical that your degree from University of Strathclyde is of the highest academic integrity; otherwise qualifications will become disreputable and meaningless. **Plagiarism is unacceptable. The consequences of committing plagiarism are very serious** (see Penalties above).

Plagiarism is defined in the University regulations as:

**The unacknowledged use of another's work as if it were the student's own work, or excessive use of another's work as your own.**

Examples which apply to both conventional sources and information downloaded from the internet are:

- Inclusion of more than a single phrase from another's work without the use of quotation marks and appropriate acknowledgement of source.
- Summarising another's work by changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without acknowledgement.
- Copying another's work.
- Using another's work and presenting it without acknowledgement, as if it were the student's own idea.

Academic dishonesty also includes in the case of assignments, unacknowledged collaboration between individuals or groups, which results in work that is, if not identical, overly similar to that of other students claiming the work to be their own.

Academic dishonesty also includes falsification, misrepresentation or fabrication of primary or other research carried out as part of a coursework assignment or dissertation. Please also see the Code of Conduct for Examinations.

Here are some practical steps you can take to avoid plagiarism.

## 1. Note taking

It is often faster and easier to take paper copies of articles and other material or to download large chunks of material from the Internet – but this increases the danger that you will plagiarise work – even if unintentionally. So:

- Make your own notes before writing essays and write the essays from these notes. Allow plenty of time to organise your thinking before writing essays and to develop your own ideas
- Don't write essays by cutting and pasting sections of text from different sources. Read documents carefully so that you understand them and then rely on your memory to report in your own words
- When you copy text from any of your sources always put quotation marks around it and highlight the text in a different colour
- Each note should be accompanied by a note of the author and title of the source
- Develop a bibliography of sources, search engines and databases used. As well as saving time later on, this will making checking of sources easier.

## 2. Style

Some guidelines:

- Cite direct quotes using inverted commas to indicate selected text. Do not quote more than one or two sentences directly. Quoting complete paragraphs is not acceptable.
- Show sources of ideas by giving the year of publication and the date e.g. (Smith, 2003 p 10)
- Cite sources of all ideas including those from lectures
- You must cite material taken from web sites as well as academic articles
- Listing works used in the bibliography alone is not adequate – they must also be cited at the appropriate points in the text
- Do not paraphrase the work of others with only minor changes. You must use your own words and cite the sources of ideas
- It is not necessary to cite sources of common knowledge i.e. if information is undocumented in other sources or it is information which the reader will already have (e.g. The sun is yellow, the Second World War ended in 1945) but, if in doubt, cite a source as precaution.

## 3. Help and Advice

If you are having difficulties with this you should seek advice from your supervisors.

The University provides clear advice and guidance on how to avoid plagiarism in your work. Please see the website for further links to a downloadable document, which also contains further references:

<http://www.strath.ac.uk/cis/localteaching/plagiarism/>

There is a further booklet for students at the following web address:

[http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/qmap/plagiarism/plagiarism\\_student\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/ps/cs/qmap/plagiarism/plagiarism_student_booklet.pdf)

## Use of Turnitin

Students are required to use the plagiarism software Turnitin, in advance of submission of all written assignments. Turnitin compares your work with a whole host of online resources and reports a 'Similarity Score' and a comprehensive 'originality' report. Students are encouraged to use this facility as a learning tool to raise awareness of their own writing practices. Assignments may be resubmitted to Turnitin until the due date of the assignment but not more frequently than once every 24hours, as that is the amount of time needed for

resubmitted assignments to be processed. Each assignment in MyPlace will be marked clearly with a Turnitin description for students to use as they submit. Once the due date is passed, each submitted paper will have a similarity score set against it.

## General reading

Bryman, A. & Bell, E., (2011) *Business Research Methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2009) *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds) (2011) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Easterby Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P. (2008) *Management Research: Theory and Research*, London: Sage

Gill, J., Johnson, P. & Clark, M. (2010) *Research Methods for Managers*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, London: Paul Chapman

Hart, C. (2009) *Doing a Literature Review*, London: Sage.

Kaplan, D. (ed.) (2004) *The SAGE Handbook of Quantitative Methodology for the Social Sciences*, London: Sage

Maylor, H. and Blackmon, K. (2005) *Researching Business and Management*, London: Palgrave

Murray, R. (2011) *How to Write a Thesis*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Milton Keynes: Open University Press

Phillips, E.M. & Pugh, D.S. (2010) *How to Get a PhD*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Milton Keynes: OUP.

Potter, S. (ed.) (2006) *Doing Postgraduate Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Sage

Saunders, M., Lewis, P & Thornhill, A. (2012) *Research Methods for Business Students*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Harlow: Pearson.

**You might also be interested in the following as contextual reading that critiques the current state of academic research:**

Furedi, F. (2004) *Where have All the Intellectuals Gone? Confronting 21<sup>st</sup> Century Philistinism*, London: Continuum

Nieminen, M. (2004) 'Changing academic research environments and innovative research' in Allwood, C.M. and Marin, B.R. (eds), *Creative Knowledge Environments*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

# MODULES

## 1. *Research Methods (BF992: 20 CREDITS)*

**Module coordinator:**

Prof John Quigley (Department of Management Science), email: [j.quigley@strath.ac.uk](mailto:j.quigley@strath.ac.uk)

**Other lecturers:**

Prof Dora Scholarios (Human Resource Management), email: [d.scholarios@strath.ac.uk](mailto:d.scholarios@strath.ac.uk)  
Further lecture contribution from staff across the Business School.

**Core/optional:** Core for Certificate, Diploma and MRes

**Pre-requisites:** None

### 1.1 RATIONALE

The module introduces students to a range of different methodological approaches to conducting research and key issues researchers are commonly faced with (e.g. relevance of practitioner engagement, ethics). Students will be provided a broad overview of research choices and issues from the perspective of Strathclyde staff representing each department in the Business Faculty who will present vignettes from their own research projects. The focus will be the implementation of research choices.

### 1.2 MODULE DESCRIPTION

This is generally taken as the first required module of the MRes in Business and Management and for MPhil/PhD/DBA students in the Business School taking the PG Certificate/Diploma in Research Methodology for Business and Management. The module views methods used in management research in terms of a broad spectrum rather than the more conventional split between quantitative and qualitative methods. Students are exposed to a range of methodological approaches through a series of vignettes, presented by staff from departments across the Business Faculty of the University of Strathclyde. This provides students with access to specialists with particular strengths in different approaches, both during and after the module. Also, by using in-house Business School staff, the methodological approaches covered in each vignette are more likely to appropriately target the needs of our own students.

### 1.3 MODULE AIMS

Research Methods aims to provide the participants with an appreciation of the wide range of methodological choices available to management researchers, including, where relevant, an overview of their approaches to data collection, principles of data analysis and theory development. Basic skills will be developed and students should appreciate issues common to different methodological approaches.

### 1.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Subject specific knowledge and skills**

- A basic understanding of a range of methodological approaches and the knowledge claim implied by each
- An understanding of alternative options for enacting the generic tasks of research: collecting data, accessing data, using subject literature and external research, research design, using methodology, analysis and theory building, and writing
- An understanding of and the ability to articulate the basis of methodological choice

**Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills**

- An ability to explicate a chosen research approach, verbally and in writing

- An ability to cope with ambiguity caused by indistinct boundaries between methodological options in management research
- The ability to debate methodological issues.

## 1.5 LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The course is delivered through a series of vignettes of methodological approaches. Each vignette is an interactive 2-hour session normally delivered by University of Strathclyde specialists. In order to help students compare and analyse the alternative approaches there is a structured introduction, an overview of data collection methods, a session on organizing literature, synthesizing discussion sessions, group work and presentations. In addition, each vignette will cover, if appropriate, the following topics:

- overview of the approach
- typical research sites and access issues
- data collection methods
- analysis methods
- typical form of research output
- limitations/critical appraisal of the method
- ethical issues
- issues related to public/practitioner engagement
- order of research activities
- practical considerations.

## 1.6 INDICATIVE CONTENT

- A framework for understanding research choices: this will provide an integrating framework for the separate vignettes and cover for example: the role of literature, theory, data collection, public engagement, ethical issues
- An overview of approaches to data collection
- Vignettes will be on a series of methodologies however, they will vary to reflect the available expertise in the Faculty. Examples of methodologies are:
  1. Case studies
  2. Survey methods
  3. Grounded theory
  4. Historical Methods
  5. Model building
- Synthesising presentations

## 1.7 INDICATIVE READING LIST

Detailed reading lists are provided for each of the methodological approaches covered in the vignettes. Recommended general texts on research methods include:

Brewer, J. & Hunter, A. (2006) *Foundations of Multimethod Research. Synthesizing Styles*. London: Sage.

Bryman, A. & Bell, E., (2011) *Business Research Methods, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2009) *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Easterby Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P. (2008), *Management Research: Theory and Research*, London: Sage.

Gill, J., Johnson, P. & Clark, M. (2010) *Research Methods for Managers*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, London: Paul Chapman  
Gay, L. & Diehl, P. (1992) *Research Methods for Business and Management*, New York: Maxwell Macmillan.  
Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (2011) *Designing Qualitative Research*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition London: Sage.

Remyeni, D., Williams, B., Money, A. & Swartz, B. (1998) *Doing Research in Business and Management*, London: Sage.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P & Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research Methods for Business Students*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, London: FT/Prentice Hall.

Saunders, M. & Lewis, P. (2014) *Doing Research in Business and Management: An Essential Guide for Business Students*. Pearson.

Sekaran, U. and Bougie, R. (2010) *Research Methods for Business. A Skill Building Approach*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Chichester.

## 1.8 ASSESSMENT

There is one assignment (described below). This involves producing a research paper on the topic of the student's research area. Students are asked to work with their supervisors in choosing methodologies appropriate to their research area. Supervisors are required to assess the paper, evaluating the extent to which the student has explored each of the seven points listed below. Supervisors are asked to return detailed feedback.

**Research Paper:** Select **two** of the approaches covered as part of Research Methods vignettes and consider these in the context of a problem of interest to you, such as your own area of research. If you wish, **one** of your methods may be different from those covered in the course. Other methods include, for example, ethnography, behavioural observation, cooperative inquiry, etc. Whichever approach you choose, you should discuss your choice with your supervisor, who will also be responsible for assessing and providing feedback on the assignment.

In your answer include at least the following:

1. A statement of your problem of interest and a specific research question for the purposes of this assignment
2. A short review of relevant literature in your area of study and what methodologies have been used in research conducted in this area.
3. Why the methods are appropriate or inappropriate for your problem of interest and the previous literature/research. This discussion might include, for example, a consideration of limitations and delimitations of your research questions which influence the relevance of methods, reference to other similar studies which have adopted the method, or trade-offs involved in choosing one method over another.
4. Reference to appropriate methodological literature
5. Potential critiques of the methods
6. A consideration of the pragmatics of these methods; i.e. problems and constraints
7. How you might deal with potential problems and constraints at this stage of planning your research process

**Your answer should be presented in essay format and should be approximately 1500 words in length.**

**The submission date is no later than Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016 Assessments should be submitted via MyPlace.**

## 1.9 MATRIX OF LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT

Subject specific knowledge and skills	Learning/ Teaching Method	Evidence of Outcome
A basic understanding of a range of methodological approaches and the knowledge claim implied by each.	l, dr, ir, cd	cd, gp, rp
An understanding of alternative options for enacting the generic tasks of research: collecting data, accessing data, using subject literature and external research, research design, using methodology, analysis and theory building, and writing.	l, dr, ir, cd, gp	cd, gp, rp
An understanding of and the ability to articulate the basis of methodological choice.	l, dr, ir, cd, gp	cd, gp, rp
<b>Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills</b>		
An ability to explicate a chosen research approach, verbally and in writing.	l, dr, ir, cd	cd, gp, rp
An ability to cope with ambiguity caused by indistinct boundaries between methodological options in management research	l, dr, ir, cd, gp	cd, gp, rp
An ability to debate methodological issues.	l, dr, ir, cd, gp	cd, gp, rp

l – lecture, dr – directed reading, ir – independent reading, rp- research papers, gp- group presentation, cd – class discussion.

## **2. Reviewing Literature for Business Subjects (BF801: 10 CREDITS)**

### **Module Coordinator:**

Prof Julia Darby (Department of Economics) email: [julia.darby@strath.ac.uk](mailto:julia.darby@strath.ac.uk)

### **Other lecturers:**

Dr Derek Bryce (Department of Marketing) email: [derek.bryce@strath.ac.uk](mailto:derek.bryce@strath.ac.uk)

Dr Katerina Nicolopoulou (Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship)  
email: [katerina.nicolopoulou@strath.ac.uk](mailto:katerina.nicolopoulou@strath.ac.uk)

**Core/optional:** Core for Diploma and MRes

**Pre-requisites:** None

### **2.1 RATIONALE**

The overall aim of the module is to help students reflect on the required steps toward creating insightful and appropriately critical reviews of literature and the better understand the roles of literature reviews in research and in the MRes research project, PhD thesis and in journal articles in particular.

### **2.2 MODULE DESCRIPTION**

On the first day we'll focus on the role of the literature review, and different kinds of literature review, in postgraduate research. We'll discuss strategies used by students to focus, identify, evaluate and organise material and approaches to creating synthesis, as well as discussing common pitfalls and how to avoid them. On day two students will be challenged to think about drawing from literature outside the confines of their own discipline, and to recognise the benefits that this can bring. Day three will consider different strategies for structuring literature reviews and the ways in which they align to the problematisation of the topic in question. We'll focus in particular on alignment of the review to the research aims and objectives, identification of gaps in the literature and the contributions students are aiming to make to their fields of study.

### **2.3 TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS**

Key topics will be introduced, but the main focus will be on group discussion and exercises using practical examples.

Pre-course reading will be made available on MyPlace at least two weeks before the module takes place. It is essential that all participants read this material in advance, so that they can contribute effectively to in-class discussion.

### **2.4 INDICATIVE CONTENT**

On the first day we'll start by discussing the various kinds of literature review, how they differ from a description of existing papers, and what makes a literature review relevant, appropriate and useful. We'll also discuss ways in which review articles can contribute to research and/or practice. Next we'll draw on examples to consider how students approach the initial framing of a review, i.e. determine what questions will be looked at, and why those questions are important and how to set boundaries. The third session will involve explicit consideration of skills development, particularly in relation to the use of effective tools to assist the student in identifying, evaluating and organising material. We'll cover compilation of an annotated bibliography and the need to identify key themes, concepts, questions, puzzles and controversies. A next step will be to work on a synthesis matrix. We'll also consider what's required to critically evaluate studies, giving due consideration to their strengths, weaknesses, problems and limitations. Finally there will also be a session on some common pitfalls and strategies to avoid them.

Day two will begin with brief roundtable discussions to get a sense of participants' initial reactions to the assigned pre-reading in terms of how they see it informing current or future research questions. This will be followed by a lecture outlining the tutor's own application of the literature in her/his own published work or exploring that of others and a Q&A/discussion session in which participants are invited to extend their thinking beyond the strict confines of their research topics, reflecting on how the readings may offer additional, extra-disciplinary, perspectives on the wider applicability of business and management research.

On day three participants will analyse assigned papers from literature-review focused Journals (eg. from Academy of Management Annals, International Journal of Management Reviews, Journal of Economic literature) in order to inform their views about how literature reviews can be structured in ways that can be the basis of a future publication. The papers will be discussed in terms of problematisation of the topic in question, research aims and objectives, identification of gaps in the literature and contribution to the field of study. Supplementary exemplary papers will also be distributed, which do not have a main focus on literature reviews, but comprise brief versions of literature reviews (choices will be made from continental, UK as well as US edited journals). The participants will be asked to work in groups in order to design the structure of their own literature reviews, and will give each other peer feedback. Brief presentations for all students will follow, with in-depth discussion. This will be an inquiry-driven, practice-oriented workshop day.

## 2.5 PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

Sessions will be scheduled over three days from 10am to 4pm each day (with a break for lunch).

Day 1:	Introduction and class discussion of how the allocated pre-reading can inform research questions. Examples of the benefits of extending literature reviews beyond the Business School sub-disciplines. Group discussion: reflecting on how wider reading may offer additional, extra-disciplinary perspectives on students' own research questions.
Day 2:	Reasons for preparing literature reviews. What are the important features of a literature review? Strategies and tools to focus, identify, evaluate and organize. Approaches to creating synthesis. Common pitfalls and some strategies to avoid them.
Day 3:	The literature review as a 'backbone' to the thesis. Deconstructing a published literature review. Group work – structuring an outline for a literature review Peer Review and feedback Recap, overall feedback and individual mentoring.

## 2.6 AIMS/LEARNING OUTCOMES

**On completion of the class the participants will have:**

- gained a broader understanding of different kinds of literature review relevant to MRes/PhD level study, each with different objectives and uses;
- clarified differences between descriptive summaries of the literature, annotated bibliographies and literature reviews;
- recognised that a review should address work that is pertinent and significant and discussed how to define boundaries on what's to be included and why;
- considered a range of tools that students find helpful in compiling their reviews;
- worked with a synthesis matrix;
- gained greater appreciation of how to lay out what is known about an issue, with what confidence, how to identify what important questions/debates/gaps remain and help see where there is scope to make a contribution.

- attained a rounded perspective in terms of strategies for conducting literature reviews, styles and priorities;
- gained an appreciation of the significance of extra-disciplinary literature as either the main inspiration for their research or as an important supplement to it;
- understood the significance of the wider socio-cultural world for their research as well as the significance of their own research for the same.
- reflected on how extending their literature reviews beyond the Business School sub-disciplines can add texture and depth to their own research.
- understood the links between a literature review, other parts of research inquiry and the actual research project.
- become more aware of commonalities and differences between disciplinary approaches, as well as challenges of inter/cross-disciplinary research problematisation.
- have had the opportunity to appreciate choices and priorities in terms of different journal styles in how authors deal with and present a literature review.

## 2.7 REQUIRED PRE-READING (TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS).

### **A package of required pre-course reading will be uploaded to MyPlace including:**

Barker, C (2012) *Cultural Studies: theory and practice*. London: Sage. Ch.1.  
 Baudrillard, J (1998) *The Consumer Society: myths and structures*. London: Sage. Ch.4: "The Social Logic of Consumption".  
 Bourdieu, P (1984) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgment of taste*. London: Routledge. Ch.4: "The Correspondence between Goods Production and Taste Production".  
 Denyer, D and Tranfield, D. (2006) Using qualitative research synthesis to build an actionable knowledge base, *Management Decision*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp.213-227.  
 Foucault, M (1977) *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin. Pt.3, ch.1. 'Docile Bodies'  
 Said, E (1978) *Orientalism*. London: Penguin. Introduction. & Wang, Hui (2011) *The Politics of Imaging Asia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press. Ch.6: Weber and the Question of Chinese Modernity.  
 Wang, Hui (2011) *The Politics of Imaging Asia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press. Ch.6: Weber and the Question of Chinese Modernity.  
 along with selected articles from literature-review focused Journals.

## 2.8 INDICATIVE READING

Bell, J and Walters, S (2015) *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers*, 6th Edition McGraw Hill, Chapter 6 "The Literature Review"

Maier, H (2013) "What constitutes a good literature review and why does its quality matter?" *Environmental Modelling & Software* 43 3-4.

Pare´ G, Trudel M, Jaana, M and Kitsiou, S. (2015) "Synthesizing information systems knowledge: A typology of literature reviews" *Information & Management* 52 183–199

Webster, J and Watson, R (2002) "Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review" *MIS Quarterly* 26, 2 xiii-xxiii

### **Some useful resources:**

Writing a Literature Review and Using a Synthesis Matrix, Florida International University Center for Excellence in Writing: <https://writingcenter.fiu.edu/resources/synthesis-matrix-2.pdf>

The Literature Review, RMIT University

<http://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learninglab/content/literature-review-0>

Academic Phrasebank, constructed by John Morley, University of Manchester

<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>

## 2.9 ASSESSMENT

Each of the days will incorporate significant elements of group discussion and sharing of experience, with lecturer and peer evaluation of student participation contributing to 25% of the final mark for the module.

Individual assignment (contributing 75% of the final mark for the module).

Develop a brief critical literature review on a topic of your choice which encompasses and relates all three of the class themes: extra-disciplinary literature, business and management theoretical literature and contextually applied literature. This may, but need not be related to your own research topic.

Word limit: 2000 words.

**Full references are required. The bibliography is not included in word limit. An abstract is not required but if included this will not count towards word limit. If figures/diagrams used, these will not be included in the word limit.**

**The submission date is no later than Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2016. Assessments should be submitted via the class MyPlace page**

Matrix of learning outcomes/assessment

	Teaching and Learning Method	Evidence of outcome
<b>Subject specific knowledge and skills</b>		
demonstrate understanding of different kinds of literature review relevant to MRes/PhD level study	I, dr, ir, cd	cd
understand the links between a literature review, other parts of research inquiry and the actual research project	I, dr, ir, cd	cd
appreciate the significance of extra-disciplinary literature	I, dr, ir, cd	cd, ae
<b>Non-subject specific skills, knowledge and abilities</b>		
understand the distinctions between descriptive summaries of the literature, annotated bibliographies and literature reviews	I, dr, cd	cd, ae
develop a synthesis matrix	I, dr, cd	cd
become more aware of commonalities and differences between disciplinary approaches	I, dr, ir, cd	cd, ae

I – lecture, dr – directed reading, ir – independent reading, cd – class discussion, ae – assessed essay.

### 3. Research Philosophy (BF991: 20 CREDITS)

**Module Coordinator:**

Dr Viktor Dorfler (Department of Management Science), email: [viktor.dorfler@strath.ac.uk](mailto:viktor.dorfler@strath.ac.uk)

**Other lecturers:**

Prof Barbara Simpson (Department of Strategy and Organisation), email:

[barbara.simpson@strath.ac.uk](mailto:barbara.simpson@strath.ac.uk)

Prof Christine Cooper (Department of Accounting & Finance), email: [c.cooper@strath.ac.uk](mailto:c.cooper@strath.ac.uk)

Additional contributions from postgraduate research students across the Business School.

**Core/optional:** Core for Certificate, Diploma and Master's

**Pre-requisites:** Usually Research Methods

#### 3.1 RATIONALE

This module introduces debates arising from the philosophical underpinnings of the various disciplines that inform business and management research.

#### 3.2 MODULE OVERVIEW

This module provides the philosophical foundations for research methods training. It is based on the premise that an appreciation of the philosophical dimensions of research is essential if students are to make appropriate methodological choices in their research, to defend the knowledge claims of their work, and to critically evaluate the contributions of others in the research community.

#### 3.3 MODULE AIMS

The purpose of the module is to provide students with a framework within which they can map and make sense of alternative philosophical stances, and through guided discussion and written work to enable them to think through, and gain feedback on, the philosophical orientation of their own research. Students are also invited to explore the implications of these underlying philosophical considerations for their choices in research design. The content is intended to support research activities at postgraduate, doctoral, and professional levels of endeavour.

#### 3.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Subject specific knowledge and skills**

Upon completion of this module students will:

- have an awareness and appreciation of philosophical issues in business and management research
- understand the relevance and implications of fundamental philosophical concepts such as ontology, epistemology, paradigms and methodology
- be able to identify the underlying philosophical assumptions in research within their own, as well as adjacent disciplines
- appreciate the implications of these philosophical assumptions and positions for research design, conceptual constructs, methodological considerations, empirical data, analytical techniques and data interpretation.

## **Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills**

Through the module students will practice and develop their skills in the following areas:

- Formulation and presentation of philosophical arguments
- Constructive argumentation and critique of philosophical positions
- Mapping and synthesis of concepts and their implications for research process.

### **3.5 LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS**

This module will be delivered over an intensive 5 days of teaching and learning using a range of mechanisms including lectures, readings-led discussions and presentations, a panel discussion to tease out different philosophical positions, and a philosophy fayre during which students will have the opportunity to engage on philosophical matters with postgraduate researchers who are nearing the end of their doctoral studies. The learning process will continue after the end of the formal class sessions through the use of online discussion fora.

### **3.6 INDICATIVE CONTENT**

This module makes the argument that there are three distinct configurations of philosophical assumptions (namely Positivism, Interpretivism and Critical Theory) that underpin different streams of research in business and management. These configurations (or paradigms) provide a framework for thinking about research philosophies more generally. The module sets these configurations within a broad historical context that considers the development of Western thinking about the nature of knowledge. Students will be encouraged to engage with often complex issues through discussions and exercises. Typically the module content will be scheduled as follows:

<b>SESSION</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
Monday 10am-1pm	Why philosophy? Class discussion of pre-readings and a brief survey of the history of research philosophy (in the West)
Monday 2pm-5pm	Key concepts of research philosophy Lecture to lay the intellectual foundations for the class
Tuesday 10am-1pm	Positivism Lecture discussing the philosophical elements of positivist research
Tuesday 2pm-5pm	Interpretivism Lecture discussing the philosophical elements of interpretivist research
Wednesday 10am-1pm	Critical Theory Lecture discussing the philosophical elements of research informed by critical theory
Wednesday 2pm-late	Critical comparison of three research paradigms Group discussions of selected readings, followed by panel Q&A and an early evening reception
Thursday 10am-1pm	Philosophy Fayre Conversations with advanced post graduate research students
Thursday 2pm-5pm	Directed Group Work Analysis of assigned readings

Friday 9-11am	Directed Group Work (continued)
Friday 11am-1pm	Group Presentations and Feedback
Friday 2-5pm	Group Presentations and Feedback (cont.)
	Closing comments

### 3.7 INDICATIVE READING LIST

Chalmers, Alan F. (1999) *What is this Thing Called Science?* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), Buckingham: Open University Press

Crotty, Michael (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*, London: Sage Publications

Donaldson, Lex (1996) *For Positivist Organization Theory*. London: Sage.

Easterby-Smith, Mark, Richard Thorpe & Paul Jackson (2008) *Management Research: An Introduction* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), London: Sage Publications.

Gaarder, Jostein (1994) *Sophie's world: A Novel about the History of Philosophy*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Johnson, Phil & Joanne Duberley (2000) *Understanding Management Research: An Introduction to Epistemology*, London: Sage Publications.

Kuhn, Thomas S. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine & Dvora Yanow (2012) *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes*, New York & London: Routledge.

Van de Ven, Andrew (2007) *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Philosophy Bites <http://philosophybites.com/>

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

Melvin Bragg 'In our time' on BBC Radio 4 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/in-our-time/archive/philosophy>

### 3.8 ASSESSMENT

The assessment for this module comprises a group presentation, individual contributions to online wiki definitions of key philosophical terms, and an individual essay. Students must achieve a pass grade in the individual essay as part of the required 50% overall pass mark.

#### **Group Presentation (worth 10% of final grade):**

On Thursday afternoon and Friday morning, students will work in groups to evaluate the philosophical assumptions in an assigned reading, and to prepare a presentation of these findings. Presentations will be made in class and feedback will be provided in the context of class discussion. Points will be awarded for understanding of the reading, depth of philosophical analysis, coherence of argument, quality of insight and learning, and creativity of presentation.

**Wiki (worth 10% of final grade):**

Students are invited to collaborate online in developing useful definitions of key philosophical terms. Points will be awarded for substantive contributions to two or more wiki definitions.

**Wiki contributions must be completed by the essay submission deadline (see below).**

**Individual Essay (worth 80% of final grade):**

In an essay of no more than 2000 words, students are asked to reflect upon the research literature within their own discipline(s), and through a process of careful analysis, to characterise the philosophical assumptions that are dominant within the field. This argument must be supported by evidence drawn from relevant literature(s). Students are then asked to consider the fit between their own research objectives and this dominant paradigm, and to explore potential flexibilities in the underpinning philosophical assumptions that might offer the possibility of a better fit. How might these flexibilities be incorporated into a methodological argument that is appropriate for the intended research? Points will be awarded for understanding of the philosophical dimensions of research, the ability to apply these in practice, the crafting of a well-structured, critically-informed argument, and evidence of original thinking.

**The submission date is no later than noon on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017.**

**Essays should be submitted electronically via MyPlace. A penalty will be applied for excessively long essays amounting to a grade reduction of 5% for every 200 words in excess of the word limit. Students unable to meet the submission deadline should agree with the Module Coordinator in advance of this deadline an alternative submission date.**

**3.9 MATRIX OF LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Learning/ Teaching Method</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Have an awareness and appreciation of philosophical issues in business and management research	(l) (dr) (ir) (pr) (gw) (gp) (cd) (f) (ond)	(gp) (ie) (onw)
Understand the relevance and implications of fundamental philosophical concepts such as ontology, epistemology, paradigms and methodology	(l) (dr) (ir) (pr) (gw) (gp) (cd) (f) (ond)	(gp) (ie) (onw)
Be able to identify the underlying philosophical assumptions in research within their own, as well as adjacent disciplines	(l) (dr) (ir) (pr) (gw) (gp) (cd) (f) (ond)	(gp) (ie) (onw)
Appreciate the implications of these philosophical assumptions and positions for research design, conceptual constructs, methodological considerations, empirical data, analytical techniques and data interpretation	(l) (dr) (ir) (pr) (gw) (gp) (cd) (f) (ond)	(gp) (ie) (onw)
Formulation and presentation of philosophical arguments	(pr) (gw) (gp) (ie) (ond) (onw)	(gp) (ie) (onw)
Constructive argumentation and critique of philosophical positions	(pr) (gw) (gp) (ie) (ond) (onw)	(gp) (ie) (onw)
Mapping and synthesis of concepts and their implications for research process	(pr) (gw) (gp) (ie) (ond) (onw)	(gp) (ie) (onw)

l – lecture, dr – directed reading, ir – independent reading, pr – personal reflection, gw – group work, gp- group presentation, cd – class discussion, f – feedback, ie – individual essay, ond – online discussion, onw – online writing

## **4. Introduction to Quantitative Methods: Survey Design & Analysis (BF994: 10 CREDITS)**

### **Module Coordinator:**

Dr Stephen Tagg (Department of Marketing) email: [s.k.tagg@strath.ac.uk](mailto:s.k.tagg@strath.ac.uk)

### **Other lecturers:**

Donald Campbell (Accounting & Finance) email: [donald.campbell@strath.ac.uk](mailto:donald.campbell@strath.ac.uk)

**Core/optional:** Optional

**Pre-requisites:** Research Methods, Research Philosophy, basic knowledge of statistics (means and standard deviation; percentages)

### **4.1 RATIONALE**

The module introduces basic survey design and analysis and acts as a first step in providing statistical knowledge for students wanting to go on to Advanced Quantitative Methods. It will also allow students considering mixed methods to acquire skills to allow successful use of survey methods. **Students with no basic knowledge of statistics (means and standard deviation; percentages) should ensure they take a preparatory course before registering for this module (see either module coordinator or the Course Director for advice).**

### **4.2 MODULE DESCRIPTION**

The class will introduce Survey Design (Sampling, Question Design, Choice of Mode (interviewer, mail, online, cross-section/ longitudinal) and Survey Analysis – introducing usage of statistics and SPSS to cover chi-square, t-tests, correlations, simple regression, exploratory factor analysis and attitude scale construction. Two sessions will allow students to plan and execute survey research for themselves. It will prepare students with SPSS skills which will form a pre-requisite for those progressing to Advanced Quantitative Methods.

### **4.3 MODULE AIMS**

To develop quantitative business research skills at an appropriate level for doctoral research projects.

### **4.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **Subject specific knowledge and skills**

Students will acquire the basic research method and statistical skills for quantitative business research. They will acquire knowledge through examples of survey research in the varying disciplines represented across Strathclyde Business School. Students will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for understanding statistical content of research papers within their Business discipline, and they will be able to begin critical appraisal of quantitative methods in business research.

#### **Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills**

Students will develop their use of IT to handle numerical data, in using SPSS for statistical operations, information retrieval skills to use and adapt existing questionnaires, and statistical skills for sampling and survey analysis.

### **4.5 LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS**

There will be some introductory lecture and case study sessions involving example questionnaires, survey analysis reports and sampling problems (up to 10 hours). There will also be lab sessions to allow demonstration and experience of basic

business survey analysis steps from data description and entry, generation of tables and charts, exploring relationships between questions and constructing scale scores from attitude items (9 hours).

#### 4.6 INDICATIVE CONTENT

- Overview and prospect / Secondary data analysis
- Planning students' own survey research
- Sampling
- Data description and entry
- Tables and Charts
- Chi-square and t-test
- Correlations & Simple Regression
- Exploratory Factor Analysis and Scale Construction

#### 4.7 INDICATIVE READING LIST

Diamantopoulos, A. & Schlegelmilch B. (1997) *Taking the Fear Out of Data Analysis*, Thomson.

Field, A (2009) *Discovering Statistics using SPSS (Introducing Statistical Methods Series)* Sage Publications 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

#### 4.8 ASSESSMENT

There are TWO assignments.

1. An appraisal of a journal article involving the techniques taught in this class applied in a Business discipline (50%).
2. Secondary data analysis (50%). Students will choose from a list of existing business survey files and generate a presentation involving tables and charts, on an agreed analysis agenda, to show their competence in the methods. This will (if possible) be in the form of a multi-media presentation (combining power point and recording), to allow external students to participate, and for all students to learn from each other's presentation. This presentation would be between 10 and 20 slides over around 10 minutes. The preparation of tables and charts for this assessment will also be part of the laboratory sessions.

Reassessment will involve a written report reflecting on an agreed set of business secondary data analyses.

**The submission date for both assignments is no later than 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Assessments should be submitted via the class MyPlace page.**

#### 4.9 MATRIX OF LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT

	Teaching/ Learning method	Evidence of Outcome
<b>Subject specific knowledge and skills</b>		
Secondary Data Analysis	l, c, dr, ir	aa, mmp
Sampling Statistics	l, c, dr, ir	aa, mmp
Chi-square & T-test	l, c, dr, ir	aa, mmp
Data Description and Entry	l, c, dr, ir	mmp
Simple Regression and Correlation	l, c, dr, ir	aa, mmp
Scale Construction	l, c, dr, ir	aa, mmp
<b>Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills</b>		
Information management and presentation	c	mmp
SPSS skills	c, dr, ir	mmp

l – lecture, c – computer lab session, dr – directed reading, ir – independent reading, mmp – multi-media presentation, aa article analysis.

## 5. Advanced Quantitative Methods (BF998: 10 CREDITS)

**Module Coordinator:**

Dr Stephen Tagg (Department of Marketing) email: [s.k.tagg@strath.ac.uk](mailto:s.k.tagg@strath.ac.uk)

**Other lecturers:**

Giuseppe De Feo (Economics) email: [giuseppe.defeo@strath.ac.uk](mailto:giuseppe.defeo@strath.ac.uk)

**Core/optional:** Optional

**Pre-requisites:** Research Methods, Research Philosophy, Introduction to Advanced Quantitative Methods: Survey Design and Analysis

### 5.1 RATIONALE

This module provides an introduction to advanced quantitative methods in use in business and management research.

### 5.2 MODULE DESCRIPTION

The module builds on Introduction to Advanced Quantitative Methods: Survey Design and Analysis. It is designed to provide students with more advanced skills in statistical methods. The module will develop students' understanding of widely used multivariate data analysis techniques used in management research. In addition, it will introduce students to more contemporary statistical tools.

### 5.3 MODULE AIMS

The module aims to instil awareness and appreciation of the nature of advanced quantitative methods. Participants should appreciate both the challenge required to become fully proficient with the techniques and the potential contribution to research promised by the selected methods.

### 5.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### Subject specific knowledge and skills

Students will be aware of and able to handle basic analyses in the following techniques:

- Variance analysis
- Exploratory factor analysis
- Cluster analysis
- Multiple regression analysis
- Logistic & Logit and other regression variants
- Confirmatory Factor Analysis Partial Least Squares & SEM
- Ideographic quantitative techniques

#### Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills

Successful students will require:

- The ability to understand the relationship between Data Sources and Structure, Research Design and the choice of Analysis.
- SPSS skills for the analysis of current management research datasets
- Relevant IT and skills in interpretation allowing participants to make critical use of the results of quantitative methods

## 5.5 LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

Lectures, round table discussions, interpretation of program output, hands-on laboratory sessions with SPSS and AMOS: discussion of articles on each technique (one for each Business Faculty department).

## 5.6 INDICATIVE CONTENT

- Regression Analysis –multiple, logistic, logit, ordinal and nominal
- Cluster Analysis. 3 types of SPSS cluster analysis – introduction to latent class analysis
- Confirmatory factor Analysis – CFA uses in scale construction using AMOS and introduction to Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) & PLS (partial least squares)
- Variance Analysis – ANOVA, ANCOVA, MANOVA
- Ideographic quantitative techniques – Repertory Grids

## 5.7 INDICATIVE READING

Byrne, B.M. (2009) *Structural Equation Modelling With AMOS: Basic Concepts, Applications, and Programming*, Second Edition (Multivariate Applications Series)

Diamantopoulos, A. & Schlegelmich, B. (1997) *Taking the Fear Out of Data Analysis*, London: Dryden/ Thomson.

Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B., Anderson, R. E.(2010) *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., New York: Pearson Global Edition.

## 5.8 ASSESSMENT

There are TWO assignments.

1. Evaluate a business journal article using one of the taught techniques (50%). This will be a 1,000 word review focusing on the quantitative techniques.
2. Students are required to run either on their own or on supplied data one of the Business data secondary analyses completed in a lab class (50%). Rather than simply providing the program output, the report will assess whether the student is able to selectively interpret and evaluate the analysis. This will assess the understanding and application of the statistical method rather than merely the ability to run an analysis. This will be a written report with a maximum of 5,000 words.

**The submission date for Assignment 1 is no later than Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017.**  
**The submission date for Assignment 2 is no later than Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2017.**

**Assessments should be submitted via the class MyPlace page.**

## 5.9 MATRIX OF LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT

	Teaching/ Learning method	Evidence of Outcome
<b>Subject specific knowledge and skills</b>		
Learning selected advanced quantitative techniques	l, c, ir	ar
SPSS usage	l, ir	r
<b>Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills</b>		
Statistics	dr	ar, r
Interpretation	l, c, ir	r

l – lecture, c – computer lab session, dr – directed reading, ir – independent reading,  
r – report, ar – article review

## 6. *Advanced Qualitative Methods (BF995: 20 CREDITS)*

**Module Coordinator:**

Dr Alastair Wilson (School of Education) email: [al.wilson@strath.ac.uk](mailto:al.wilson@strath.ac.uk)

**Other Lecturers:**

Dr Allan Blake (School of Education) email [a.blake@strath.ac.uk](mailto:a.blake@strath.ac.uk)

**Core/optional:** Optional

**Pre-requisites:** Research Methods, Research Philosophy

### 6.1 RATIONALE

This module is intended to ensure high standards of practice and understanding where Master's students and doctoral researchers adopt qualitative methods in their own research. The module will provide knowledge and understanding of advanced qualitative methods and develop skills in the implementation of a variety of such methods. In particular, links will be explored between methodological position and methods adopted as a basis for developing and defending the student's own methodological position and choice of methods applied. It will also build students' ability to critique qualitative research in extant literature and consider the methodological foundations for such studies.

### 6.2 MODULE DESCRIPTION

This module provides students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to design and conduct qualitative methods of data collection and analysis in business and management contexts. Building on the Research Philosophy module, this class will revisit methodological (ontology and epistemology) positional and other issues peculiar to conducting research in business and management contexts.

### 6.3 MODULE AIMS

The class aims to develop a deeper understanding of particular qualitative approaches building the skills required to implement them. The class will also consider the contribution of qualitative methods to business and management research.

### 6.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### **Subject specific knowledge and skills**

Upon completion of this module students will have:

- an understanding of the principles, applications and implications of qualitative research methods, with specific reference to preparation/design, data collection, analysis, interpretation/reflection
- an appreciation of the methodological foundations on which various advanced qualitative methods are defended
- a systematic understanding and critical awareness of the strengths and limitations of qualitative methods
- confidence in the use of qualitative methodology and methods in their own research
- the ability to evaluate their practical fieldwork.

## **Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills**

The objectives of the module are:

- to build skills in the critical analysis of research
- to develop self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and to encourage autonomy in planning and implementing.

### **6.5 LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS**

Interactive lectures will feature in the first half of the module but much of the learning will be achieved through practical exercises and workshops designed to provide students with the opportunity to apply a range of methods, build and refine their skills in preparing, collecting, analysing and validating qualitative research. This approach will also enable students to discover the difficulties encountered in application of the methods and reflect on their respective strengths and weaknesses.

### **6.6 INDICATIVE CONTENT**

Overview of Empirical Research Process:

- What is Data? Data Collection, Analysis, Interpretation/Reflection
- Research Strategy, Preparation and Design
- Qualitative Data Software lab based workshop

Research Methods:

- Ethnography, Observation and Storytelling
- Focus Groups:
- Discourse Analysis

Practical Fieldwork:

- “Hands-on” Fieldwork design
- “Hands-on” Preparation and Data Collection
- Student-led “Hands-on” Analysis
- Tutor-led “Hands-on” Reflection and Feedback

### **6.7 INDICATIVE READING**

Bach, H. (2007) 'Composing a visual narrative enquiry', in Clandinin, D. J. (ed.) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 280-307.

Boje, D.M. (2001) *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research*, London: Sage.

Boje, D.M. (2008) *Storytelling Organizations*. London: Sage.

Bolger N, Davis A and Rafaeli E (2003) 'Diary Methods: Capturing Life as it is Lived', *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 54 pp. 579-616.

Breakwell G M and Wood P (2000) 'Diary Techniques', chpt 21. In Breakwell G M, Hammond S and Fife-Schaw C F (Eds) *Research Methods in Psychology*, Sage Publications, London pp. 294-302.

Brewer, J. (2004) Ethnography, in: Cassell, C. & Symon, G. (Eds), *Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, London: Sage.

Brown, S.D. & Middleton, D. (2005) The baby as virtual object: Agency and difference in a neonatal intensive care unit, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23: 695-715.

- Czarniawska, B. (2008) Organizing: How to study it and how to write about it. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 3(1): 4-20.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004) *Narratives in Social Science Research*. London: Sage.
- Fairclough, N. (1992), *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity, Cambridge
- Fairclough, N. (1995), *Critical Discourse Analysis*, Longman, London
- Fairclough, N. (2003), *Analysis Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*, Routledge, London
- Goodson, L. and Phillimore, J. (2004) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies*. Routledge, London.
- Henderson, K. (1995) The political career of a prototype: Visual representation in design engineering, *Social Problems*, 42 (2): 274-299.
- Herrmann, A.F. (2011) Narrative as an organizing process: identity and story in a new nonprofit. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 6(3):246-264.
- Knoblauch, H. (2009) 'Videography: Focussed ethnography and video-analysis', in Knoblauch, H., et al (eds.) *Video Analysis: Methodology and Methods: Qualitative Audiovisual Data Analysis in Sociology*. Peter Lang: Frankfurt, pp. 9-28.
- Krueger, R. A. and Casey, M. A. (1999) *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, Sage, London.
- Morgan, D. L. (1997) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, London: Sage.
- Pink, S. (2007) *Doing Visual Ethnography*. 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Reissman, C. K. (2008) *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Schwartzman, H.B. (1993) *Ethnography in Organisations*, Qualitative Research Methods Series 27, London: Sage.
- Steyaert, C., Marti, L. and Michels, C. (2012) Multiplicity and reflexivity in organizational research: Towards a performative approach to the visual. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 7(1): 34-53.
- Thompson, Craig J and Zeynep Arsel (2004) The Starbucks Brandscape and Consumers' (Anticorporate) Experiences of Globalization, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31, 631-642
- Wheeler L and Reis H T (1991) 'Self-Recording of Everyday Life Events: Origins, Types and Uses', *Journal of Personality*, Sept, Vol.59, No. 3 pp. 339-354.
- Wiseman V, Conteh L and Matovu F (2005) 'Using Diaries to Collect Data in Resource-Poor Settings: Questions on Design and Implementation', *Health Policy Plan*, Vol. 20, No. 6 pp. 394-405.
- Ybema, S., Yanow, D., Wels, H. and Kamsteeg, F. (eds.) (2009) *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexities of Everyday Life*. London: Sage.

## 6.8 ASSESSMENT

The module is assessed by 100% individual coursework. Two assignments, each assignment of approximately 1500 words are to be submitted as follows (further guidance will be posted on the MyPlace class page):

### **Assignment 1**

Students will write up an account of the research method they undertake for research fieldwork, as part of the “hands-on” exercise. This is to include their reflection on each stage of the qualitative research process (preparation/design, data capture/collection, analysis and interpretation/reflection) and a consideration of the validity of their findings in relation to that method (50%).

Three options are available for study: A. Ethnography, Observation and Storytelling  
B. Focus groups C. Discourse Analysis

### **Assignment 2**

Students will critique a key academic journal text reporting empirical research based on one or multiple qualitative research methods. The article will be chosen by the student from a list of texts (A-C) supplied during the module. This critique will involve a discussion and evaluation of the research methodology and methods and the validity of research findings. Particular emphasis should be placed on an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen method and the methodological justification for its use in the study in question (50%).

Note: if a student fails an assessment they are entitled to **ONE** resubmission.

**The submission date is no later than Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017**  
**Assignments should be submitted electronically via MyPlace.**

## 6.9 MATRIX OF LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT

	<b>Learning and Teaching Method</b>	<b>Evidence of Outcome</b>
<b>Subject specific knowledge and skills</b>		
An understanding of the principles, applications and implications of qualitative research methods, with specific reference to preparation/design, data collection, analysis, interpretation/reflection	l, dr, cd, h-ogw	ld, ct
A systematic understanding and critical awareness of the strengths and limitations of qualitative methods	l, dr, rp, ir, cd	ld, ct
Confidence in the use of qualitative methods in their own research	h-ogw	ld
The ability to evaluate their practical work	h-ogw, cd	ld
<b>Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills objectives</b>		
An appreciation of the methodological foundations on which various advanced qualitative methods are defended	l, dr, ip, rp, h-ogw	ld, ct, gp
To build skills in the critical analysis of research	l, dr, rp, ir, cd	ld, ct
To develop self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and to encourage autonomy in planning and implementing	h-ogw, cd	ld

l – lecture, dr – directed reading, ir – independent reading, rp- research papers, gp- group presentation, cd – class discussion, h-ogw – ‘hands on’ group work, ld – learning diary, ct – critique of text.

## 7. Research Colloquium (BF984: 10 CREDITS)

**Module co-coordinator:**

**TBC**

**Core/optional:** Core for Diploma and MRes

**Pre-requisites:** Research Methods, Research Philosophy

### 7.1 MODULE DESCRIPTION

The Research Colloquium is the capstone class in the School's postgraduate research training schedule. It is intended to provide an integrative and reflective opportunity for students to draw together their learnings across all of the taught components of the MRes / PGDiploma / PGCertificate. The vehicle for this integration is the presentation of a research proposal, or a methodological argument, to a critical academic audience. This presentation should demonstrate how ideas learned in the various taught classes of the MRes curriculum will be applied in the student's own research.

The Research Colloquium is organised as a mini-conference where students have the opportunity to present their proposed research, to receive feedback, and to discuss research-related issues with peers, supervisors, and other members of academic staff from across the Business School. Students may alternatively choose to make their research presentation at an external colloquium or conference that has been pre-approved by the Module Coordinator. In either case, credits for the Research Colloquium are awarded on the basis of the assessments specified below.

### 7.2 MODULE AIMS

The module aims to provide students with an opportunity to present and prosecute their proposed research and to reflexively develop their appreciation of research-related issues – methodological and conceptual - in the context of their own project. It requires participation in a colloquium setting with other research student peers and academics, and the submission of two pieces of written work.

### 7.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### **Subject-specific knowledge and skills**

On completion of this module students will be able to:

- formulate research problems, questions and/or hypotheses in a clear and concise fashion
- demonstrate understanding of research philosophy, including a critical awareness of alternative epistemological positions and their implications for theory development and research design, analysis and interpretation
- show originality in the application of research methodologies
- present a proposal for research that will make an original contribution to theory and/or practice.

#### **Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills**

On completion of this module students will be able to:

- demonstrate oral and written presentation skills required for the organisation and dissemination of knowledge in academic and non-academic context
- explicate a chosen research approach, verbally and in writing.

## 7.4 LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The class involves (a) attendance at the SBS research colloquium or an external conference (b) the presentation of research students' proposals to peers and academics, and (c) submission of a written report and a reflection on learning.

## 7.5 INDICATIVE CONTENT

The colloquium day splits students into streams from various disciplines/departments with some commonality in research methods or foci. Within each stream, students will present their proposal and have time for discussion with other students, the Chair of the session and their supervisors.

It is expected that at least 20 contact hours are delivered through interaction with the student's supervisor during preparation of the research proposal, presentation and written assignment, or drawn from independent learning during other classes which are part of the Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma or MRes.

## 7.6 ASSESSMENT

The class is assessed on the basis of: (1) a written Research Proposal or other substantive methodological argument (75%), and (2) a Reflection on Learning (25%). Students must submit a credible attempt at both parts of the assessment in order to attain a pass in this class.

### **Part I: Written Research Proposal (75% of the final grade)**

A full proposal for the student's planned research will:

- start with a working title for the proposed research;
- set the research in context and provide a rationale for the work;
- define the aims and objectives of the research and articulate research question(s);
- identify the broad areas and characteristics of literature that will inform the research;
- specify and justify the nature of the intended research site, methods that will be used, and the analytical approach to be taken;
- show the potential for a contribution to knowledge;
- detail a timeline for completing the work, showing significant milestones along the way;
- provide an indicative list of references.

The proposal should be a maximum of 3,000 words long, excluding references. It should be submitted through **MyPlace** and it will be marked by supervisors.

### **Part II: Reflection on Learning (25% of the final grade)**

Students are asked to write a reflexive piece of no more than 1,000 words that examines their own responses to their colloquium presentation and to the questions and feedback received from the audience. What lessons were learned; what insights have been gained; how will these feed in to future developments of the research? Also consider in what ways the present proposal differs from the initial research proposal that was submitted to gain entry into the PGR programme? Through a process of critical reflexive thinking, students should endeavour to surface new understandings about their own personal development and learning processes. This short essay should be submitted through **MyPlace** and will be marked by the Module Coordinator.

**The submission date for both pieces of assessment is no later than noon on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017.**

**7.7 MATRIX OF LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT**

	<b>Learning/ Teaching method</b>	<b>Evidence of Outcome</b>
<b>Subject specific knowledge and skills</b>		
Formulate research problems, questions and/or hypotheses in a clear and concise fashion	ip, dip, rid, wp, ir, pr	ip, rid, wp
Demonstrate understanding of research philosophy, including a critical awareness of alternative epistemological positions and their implications for theory development and research design, analysis and interpretation	ip, dip, rid, wp, ir, pr	ip, rid, wp
Show originality in the application of research methodologies	ip, dip, rid, ir, pr	ip, rid, wp
Present a proposal for research that will make an original contribution to theory and/or practice	ip, wp, ir, pr	ip, wp
<b>Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills</b>		
Demonstrate oral and written presentation skills required for the dissemination of knowledge in academic and non-academic context	ip, wp, ir	ip, wp

ip – individual presentation, dip – discussion of individual presentations, rid – research issues class discussion, wp - written proposal , ir – independent reading, pr – personal reflection

## **8. Researcher Professional Development Elective (RD905: 10 credits)**

### **8.1 MODULE DESCRIPTION**

This class is a vehicle that allows students to accumulate a portfolio of at least 10 credits of researcher training by selecting from the wide range of learning opportunities within the University's Researcher Development Programme ([www.strath.ac.uk/rdp/](http://www.strath.ac.uk/rdp/)). The exact configuration of any student's activities in this class will uniquely reflect their specific interests and development needs.

### **8.2 MODULE AIMS**

The class is intended to enhance students' competency in one or more domains of the Researcher Development Framework.

### **8.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills**

- Enhanced knowledge and intellectual abilities needed to be able to carry out excellent research
- Enhanced personal qualities, career and self-management skills required to take ownership for and engage in professional development
- Enhanced knowledge of the standards, requirements and professional conduct that are needed for the effective management of research
- Enhanced knowledge, understanding and skills needed to engage with, influence and impact on the academic, social, cultural, economic and broader context

### **8.4 LEARNING & TEACHING METHODS**

All learning focuses on broad cognitive abilities, non-subject specific skills and graduate attributes

### **8.5 INDICATIVE CONTENT**

Students engage in a portfolio of activities appropriate to their discipline,. The only requirement of any activity, and its associated assessment, is that it is consonant with any one of the learning outcomes of the class.

There is no set type of activity and no set duration. The class is effectively a container for a very wide-range of activities, which can be selected online at <http://www.strath.ac.uk/rdp/courseevents/>. The following classes are particularly relevant to SBS students:

- Becoming and engaging researcher
- Interdisciplinary collaborative research
- Knowledge exchange and innovation training
- Writing and presenting research

### **8.6 READING**

Specific to each taught element.

## 8.7 ASSESSMENT

Students must complete any assessment tasks associated with individual taught elements. The overall assessment for this class should be undertaken once Researcher Development Programme activities amounting to at least 10 credits have been completed. The assessment is a 1000 word reflexive essay accompanied by a portfolio of evidence for the activities completed (e.g., poster, presentation, blog, vlog, screenshot of mybookings).

The reflexive essay should describe how the student's activities helped to meet one or more of the learning outcomes for this class. As well as describing the activities, it should reflect on what went well, what could be changed, and how this learning will be useful in future. There is a 300 word limit on the description of activities. The remaining 700 should be reflective. In particular, the essay should:

1. describe which learning outcomes were met, and what aspects of each activity contributed to the learning outcome;
2. make reference to why these particular activities were chosen as part of the student's researcher training portfolio;
3. reflect on the new skills acquired during each activity, or how existing skills might be applied to new situations;
4. reflect on how the new knowledge acquired during the activities may contribute to professional development beyond the current research project;
5. describe the student's expectations of the activity, and whether those expectations were met;
6. make reference to the supporting documents provided in the portfolio of evidence.

This essay should be submitted through NEPTUNE and will be marked by the student's supervisor. There is no specific deadline for submission, but this work must be completed before the student's thesis can be examined.

## **9. Special Topics I, II & III (BF977, 978 & 979: 20 CREDITS)**

**Any student interested in these modules must first seek approval from the Course Director.**

### **9.1 RATIONALE**

These modules are designed to allow students some flexibility in focusing their research inquiry during the course of their studies. They also fit the requirements for the DBA degree, where students are required to take a minimum of 60 credits of classes in the form of directed study in relevant areas of specialist knowledge.

### **9.2 MODULE DESCRIPTION**

These are generally readings based modules guided both by the Primary Supervisor and by the student's own inquiry. They are intended to provide a structured format within which students can gain the necessary content knowledge in order to pursue their chosen area of research inquiry. The initial phase of this will be the specification of a learning contract, which sets out learning objectives, workplan and mode of assessment, to be agreed between the supervisors and the student. The mode of assessment may include but is not restricted to essays, client reports and presentations.

### **9.3 MODULE AIMS**

To lay down the conceptual foundations for higher research.

### **9.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **Subject specific knowledge and skills**

- Identification of relevant materials
- Subject expertise

#### **Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills**

- Critique, analysis and synthesis of relevant literatures.

### **9.5 LEARNING & TEACHING METHODS**

Directed reading and student led inquiry.

### **9.6 INDICATIVE CONTENT**

Subject-dependent. Examples of activities include essays, client reports, and presentations.

### **9.7 READING**

Subject specific.

### **9.8 ASSESSMENT**

As specified by the agreed learning contract.

## 9.9 MATRIX OF LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT

<b>Subject specific knowledge and skills</b>	<b>Learning/ Teaching method</b>	<b>Evidence of Outcome</b>
Identification of relevant materials	ir	
Subject expertise	dr, ir	
<b>Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills</b>		
Critique, analysis and synthesis	dr, ir	

dr – directed reading, ir – independent reading

## **10. ISM-PhD Training & Supervision Workshop (EX938: 20 credits)**

**Any student interested in taking this module must first seek approval from the Course Director.**

### **10.1 RATIONALE**

This 5-day module is taught by Strathclyde's research training partner in Dortmund at the International School of Management (ISM). The module includes four one-day seminars and ends with final discussions and presentations on the last day. It may appeal to students who are resident in, or travelling through Germany during the period of their researcher training. Students will participate in research seminars on a variety of topics including

- Communication Management
- Political Economy
- Applied Qualitative Methods
- Applied Quantitative Methods

Details of the topics to be covered may change from year to year.

### **10.2 MODULE DESCRIPTION**

The seminars will compare and contrast traditional ideas about research with more contemporary and critical positions. The focus of the first part of the seminar is on concepts for corporate communication in complex situations such as different forms of crisis. Students will learn what managing corporate communications in international firms' means. In the second seminar students will be provided with an overview of the classical approaches of political economy as well as with an introduction into the more current research controversies. The focus of the third seminar will be applications of structured and semi-structured interviews. The fourth seminar gives an overview of theory basics and practical skills for applications of multiple regression analysis. Students will be actively engaged in the seminar discussions.

In 2016/17 this module will be taught in the week beginning 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

### **10.3 MODULE AIMS**

Each seminar aims to develop specialist skills and knowledge to support practical applied research. Therefore, the purpose of the seminar "Communication Management" is to convey basic knowledge and skills concerning corporate communications that will enable students to understand the growing importance of communications in today's society and to judge strategies developed by the communications department. The purpose of the seminar "Political Economy" is to provide students with knowledge of the meta-theoretical foundations of different research traditions in the field of political economy. Participants will learn how these foundations are used in the specific theories and thereby provide them with shortcuts to the strengths and weaknesses of the competing approaches. The purpose of the seminar "Applied Qualitative Methods" is to provide students knowledge of theory basics and practical skills for applications of qualitative research. Students will be able to select suitable approaches and instruments according to specific research questions and to derive recommendations for stakeholder. The purpose of the seminar "Applied Quantitative Methods" is to provide students knowledge of theory basics and practical skills for applications of multiple regression analysis. Students will be able to construct efficient designs of applications and to use statistical methods for analysis. Moreover, the students will be capable to analyse own data, recode it for the purpose of analysis and use adequate statistical software.

### **10.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this module students will:

- Be able to develop basic strategies based on communication theory basics suitable for solving communication problems
- Be able to identify strengths and weaknesses of the different political economy traditions and will be empowered to set up their own consistent research design in line with salient questions of current issues
- Be able to select and apply appropriate qualitative methods according on one hand to greater research context and on the other to the respective research topic
- Be able to apply sufficiently suitable methods and to develop an optimal design of questionnaires and apply statistical analysis

## 10.5 LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The teaching methods consist of different mechanisms including lectures, reading of journal articles and group-discussions on specific issues of political economy theories and methods. The learning process combines theory based learning with interactive applications, mainly connected to the indicative reading list. The learning process will continue after the end of the formal class sessions through the use of online discussion fora.

## 10.6 INDICATIVE READING

- Aguilera, R. V., & Jackson, G. (2003). The cross-national diversity of corporate governance: Dimensions and determinants. *Academy of management review*, 28(3), 447-465.
- Argenti, P. A. (2012): *Corporate Communication*. 6th edition, McGraw Hill Book Co.
- Bansal, P. T., & Corley, K. (2011). The coming of age for qualitative research: Embracing the diversity of qualitative methods. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 233-237.
- Beckert, J. (2009). The social order of markets. *Theory and society*, 38(3), 245-269.
- Brinkmann, S. (2014). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Broom, G. (2013): *Cutlip & Center's Effective Public Relations*. 11th Ed. Harlow. Pearson Education Limited.
- Bujosa, A., Riera, A., Hicks, R., 2010. Combining discrete and continuous representations of preference heterogeneity: A latent class approach. *Environmental and Resource Economics* 47, 477–493, 10.1007/s10640-010-9389-y.
- Campbell, D., Doherty, E., Hynes, S., van Rensburg, T. M., 2010. Combining discrete and continuous mixing approaches to accommodate heterogeneity in price sensitivities in environmental choice analysis. 84th Annual Conference, March 29-31, 2010, Edinburgh, Scotland 91723, Agricultural Economics Society.
- Coombs, W. Timothy / Sherry J. Holladay (2011): *The Handbook of Crisis Communication (Handbooks in Communication and Media)*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Sage Publ. Inc.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity. Chapter I+II.
- Fiebig, D. G., Keane, M. P., Louviere, J., Wasi, N., May 2010. The generalized multinomial logit model: Accounting for scale and coefficient heterogeneity. *Marketing Science* 29, 393–421.
- Fink, S. (2013): *Crisis Communications: The Definitive Guide to Managing the Message*, McGraw Hill Book Co.
- Fosgerau, M., Hess, S., 2009. A comparison of methods for representing random taste heterogeneity in discrete choice models. *European Transport- Trasporti Europei* 42, 1–25.
- Grunig, J. E. / Hunt, T. T. (1984): *Managing Public Relations*, Wadsworth Inc Fulfillment.
- Hall, P. & Soskice, D. (2001): *An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism*. In: dies. (Hg.), *Varieties of Capitalism. The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Page 1-33.
- Hall, P. A. & Taylor, R. C. (1996). Political science and the three new institutionalisms. *Political studies*, 44(5), 936-957.
- Harrison, S. H., & Rouse, E. D. (2014). Let's dance! Elastic coordination in creative group work: A qualitative study of modern dancers. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57, 1256-1283.
- McFadden, D., 1974. Conditional logit analysis of qualitative choice behavior. In: Zarembka, P. (Ed.), *Frontiers in econometrics*. Academic Press, pp. 105–142.
- Patton, M. Quinn (2014). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. Sage Publ. Inc.

Scarpa, R., Willis, K., 2010. Willingness-to-pay for renewable energy: Primary and discretionary choice of British households' for micro-generation technologies. *Energy Economics* 32 (1), 129–136.

Sriramesh, K., Vercic, D. (2009): *The Global Public Relations Handbook: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Routledge Chapman & Hall.

## **10.7 ASSESSMENT**

Seminar work consisting of paper presentation and term paper

# **11. MRes in Business and Management Dissertation (120 CREDITS)**

## **11.1 RATIONALE**

The dissertation is an independent, in-depth piece of work that demonstrates a high level of research competence. It comprises the 60 credits of the Postgraduate Certificate plus a significant 60 credit research project that demonstrates awareness, understanding, and the use of specialised theories, principles and concepts of business and management related research methods and methodology.

It is recognised that there is no single template for a research project, which is why students should develop effective working relationships with supervisors as early as possible. They can be expected to provide broad advice on the overall viability and acceptability of research designs in particular contexts. However, the supervisor's role is not one of controlling or directing and overall responsibility for successful completion of the research project lies with the student.

## **11.2 MODULE DESCRIPTION**

The aim of the dissertation is to demonstrate master's level academic and professional capabilities as a 'thinking practitioner'.

A dissertation should be a record of original research or a critical review of existing knowledge, or a combination of both. This involves developing and applying research skills particularly in the areas of literature search, problem definition, data collection, analysis and argument. The dissertation thus provides the opportunity to demonstrate qualities of scholarship, such as discriminating use of reading and the presentation of well researched, coherent and well supported analysis. The degree of sophistication to be attained for a dissertation should be commensurate with the SCQF level 11.

Additional guidance on the research project is provided in Appendix 1 of this Handbook.

## **11.3 MODULE AIMS**

- To develop research skills particularly in the areas of literature search, problem definition, data collection, analysis and argument.
- To enable students to deepen and widen experience/understanding of research issues.

## **11.4 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **Subject-specific knowledge and skills**

Upon completion of this module student will have developed/demonstrated:

- Awareness and appreciation of philosophical issues in management research
- Understanding of the fundamental concepts of ontology, epistemology, paradigms and methodology
- The ability to identify the underlying philosophical assumptions when addressing their particular research questions
- Appreciation of the implications of these philosophical assumptions and positions for research design, theoretical constructs, methodology, empirical data, analytical techniques and interpretive methods.
- A basic understanding of a range of methodological approaches and the knowledge claim implied by each

- An understanding of alternative options for enacting the generic tasks of research: collecting data, accessing data, using subject literature and external research, research design, using methodology, analysis and theory building, and writing
- An understanding of and the ability to articulate the basis of methodological choice
- An ability to formulate research problems, questions and/or hypotheses in a clear and concise fashion
- Originality in the application of research methodologies
- A proposal for research
- Critical understanding and use of theories, principles and concepts of business and management related research methods and methodology
- Critical understanding and use of specialised theories, principles and concepts of business and management related research methods and methodology
- Extensive, detailed and critical understanding of issues and debates in the field
- Appropriate application of standard and specialised techniques of inquiry in the field.

### **Cognitive abilities and non-subject specific skills**

Through the module students will practice and develop their skills in the following areas:

- Formulation and presentation of philosophical argument
- Constructive critique of philosophical positions
- Mapping and integration of concepts and their implications for practice
- An ability to explicate a chosen research approach, verbally and in writing
- An ability to cope with ambiguity caused by indistinct boundaries between methodological options in management research
- Ability to debate methodological issues
- Oral and written presentation skills required for the organisation and dissemination of knowledge in academic and non-academic contexts
- An appropriate level of successful independent working
- A high level of research competence.

## **11.5 STRUCTURE OF MODULE**

The development of the dissertation is normally conducted in five stages.

### **Stage 1 Research Methods (20 credits)**

This stage considers the research methods appropriate for conducting the research.

### **Stage 2 Reviewing Literature for Business Subjects (10 credits)**

Here the student develops and demonstrates the skills required to select and critically evaluate relevant literature.

### **Stage 3 Research Philosophy (20 credits)**

The purpose of this stage is to provide students with a framework within which they can map and make sense of alternative philosophies, and through a practical exercise and written work to enable them to think through, and gain feedback on, their own position.

### **Stage 4 Research Colloquium (10 credits)**

This stage aims to provide students with an opportunity to present and prosecute their proposed research and to develop their appreciation of research-related issues – both methodological and conceptual - in the context of their own project.

### **Stage 5 Research Project (60 credits)**

The research project should be approximately 20,000 words in length. It is recognised however that research projects may involve the analysis and presentation of different types of data and therefore this word limit is indicative only. What is important is the degree of sophistication and complexity evident in the research.

## 11.6 SUGGESTED READING

Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2009) *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Hart, C. (2005) *Doing a Literature Review*, London: Sage.

Hart, C. (2003) *Doing your Masters Dissertation*, London: Sage.

Maylor, H. and Blackmon, K. (2005) *Researching Business and Management*, London: Palgrave.

Potter, S., (ed.) (2006) *Doing Postgraduate Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Sage

Riley, M. Wood, R.C., Clark, M.A., Wilkie, E. and Szivas, E. (2000) *Researching and Writing Dissertations in Business and Management*, London: Thomson.

## 11.7 ASSESSMENT

Each stage must be successfully completed. For details of the assessment at each stage please refer to the assessment for the associated module listed.

Stage 1: Research paper on the topic of the student's research area (see Research Methods module).

Stage 2: Class discussions and the construction of a critical literature review (see Reviewing Literature for Business Subjects module)

Stage 3: Group presentation, wiki entries and an individual essay (see Research Philosophy module).

Stage 4: A written report and an essay reflecting on the experience of making a research presentation to an audience of peers (see Research Colloquium Module).

Stage 5: 20,000 word research project.

# APPENDIX 1: Guidelines for the Research Project

## Introduction

This document is designed to provide a framework for the completion of the MRes research project. It is definitive in some areas, but it also provides more general guidance, which students will have to interpret in the context of their own chosen projects. The document is intended to describe the expectations of a successful MRes research project.

The research project is an independent, in-depth piece of work that demonstrates a high level of research competence. The student must plan and execute a significant project of research or investigation, demonstrating awareness, understanding and use of specialised theories, principles and concepts of business and management related research methods and methodology.

It is recognised that there is no single template for a research project, which is one of the reasons why students should develop effective working relationships with supervisors as early as possible, since they can be expected to provide broad advice on the overall viability and acceptability of research project designs in particular contexts. However, the supervisor's role is not one of controlling or directing and overall responsibility for successful completion of the research project lies with the student.

To be eligible for consideration to progress from the Diploma to the MRes, a student must have successfully undertaken the Diploma elements to the required standard. The pass mark for each class of the Diploma is 50%. However to be eligible to proceed to the research project, a minimum mark of 60% is required for each of the two compulsory classes: Research Methods and Research Philosophy. In addition a research project should not be started without a proposal being accepted by the supervisor and the Course Director.

## Key stages

The research project articulates with the four other stages of the MRes Dissertation.

### **Stage 1: Research Methods (normally in October)**

This module allows students to consider the appropriate research methods for conducting the proposed research.

### **Stage 2: Reviewing Literature for Business Subjects (normally in November)**

Here the student develops and demonstrates the skills required to select and critically evaluate relevant literature.

### **Stage 3: Research Philosophy (normally in December)**

This module aims to provide students with a framework within which they can map and make sense of alternative philosophies, and through a practical exercise and written work to enable them to think through, and gain feedback on, their own position.

### **Stage 4: Research Colloquium (normally May)**

This module aims to provide students with opportunity to present and prosecute their proposed research and to develop their appreciation of research-related issues –both methodological and conceptual - in the context of their own project.

### **Stage 5: Research project (normally August)**

The final stage is completion of the research project which ordinarily should be approximately 20,000 words in length. It is recognised however that research projects can involve the analysis and presentation of different types of data and therefore this word length guide is only indicative. What is important is the degree of sophistication and complexity evident in the

research project. Students should send a 400 word abstract outlining the intended topic to the course assistant by **1<sup>st</sup> April**.

## **Nature and Objectives**

The aim of the research project is to demonstrate masters level academic and professional capabilities as a 'thinking practitioner'.

A research project should be your own work and offer either a record of original research or a critical review of existing knowledge, or a combination of both. This involves developing and applying research skills particularly in the areas of literature search, problem definition, data collection, analysis and argument. The research project thus provides the opportunity to demonstrate qualities of scholarship, such as discriminating use of reading and the presentation of well researched, coherent and well supported analysis. The degree of sophistication to be attained for a research project should be commensurate with the SCQF level 11 guidelines which are included as Appendix 2 in this Handbook.

## **Objectives**

- To develop practical research skills particularly in the areas of literature search, problem definition, data collection, analysis and argument.
- To enable students to deepen and widen their experience and understanding of research issues.

## **Empirical or Theoretical Emphasis?**

A distinction is often made between an empirical research project, which is largely based on data, and a theoretical research project, which seeks to build new theory largely from existing conceptual work. Both forms are acceptable, but they are not mutually exclusive. For example, a good empirical study will have to contain adequate theoretical foundations to support or contrast with its findings.

However, the two broad types of study will differ in where they place their emphasis.

1. An empirically oriented research project will need to place a good deal of weight on the credibility of the evidence collected. Accordingly, the way, in which the problem is conceptualised, how it fits into the existing literature, the choice of research methods used and the validity and reliability of the data will all be important.
2. On the other hand, a theoretically focussed research project may rely on the evaluation of the arguments in other studies. Here there will be more emphasis on a comprehensive and discriminating reading of the relevant literature. Different theoretical approaches may be examined and their respective merits evaluated in the light of the coherence of their arguments and the available evidence.

Please bear in mind that empirical research projects also need a very competent literature review and that a theoretical research project must contain a high quality literature review, both comprehensive and critical.

## **Choosing a Topic**

Students are required to complete a research project using research methods/methodology relevant to Business and Management. This field is widely defined and there is scope for bringing a variety of perspectives to bear on the choice of topic. Your research project can be located in a functional business and management area, for example Marketing or HRM,

but it must demonstrate awareness, understanding and use of the specialised theories, principles and concepts of business and management as well as related research methods and methodologies.

Your choice of topic is likely to be based on a number of considerations. For example a good topic may be one that fits with an existing research interest or programme of study. However it must also contain material that is distinct from that already included, or might be included, in any other degree for which you have studied or intend to study. Alternatively you may wish to explore another area of interest or you may wish to explore a particular theoretical or conceptual concern.

Prior to commencing the research project, students are required to provide a 400 word abstract outlining the intended topic. This abstract should state what is being studied, why and how. It should be sent to the course assistant by **1<sup>st</sup> April**. It will then be sent to the Course Director and the student's supervisor for approval. If a student does not have a supervisor, one will be allocated at this stage. You will not be allowed to commence your research project without approval of this topic.

### **Planning and Time Management**

Completing the research project is also a test of project planning and time management skills. To ensure the best use of time, it is important to be as clear as you can about how any particular activity fits into the overall schedule for completion.

Textbooks on research methods tend to suggest that we plan the research project as a series of stages in a linear sequence. For example:

- Selecting a topic
- Reviewing the literature
- Organising files and records
- Negotiating access for research
- Researching the context
- Writing an outline proposal
- Deciding on a theoretical framework
- Choosing methods of data collection
- Collecting research data
- Analysing data
- Discussion and conclusions

Planning the stages in this linear fashion may be very helpful as it gives shape to the research effort and allows time to be allocated for each phase. However most projects will be more complex for several reasons:

- It may be necessary to go backwards and forwards in the sequence when obstacles are encountered.
- Several stages can be in process at the same time.
- The literature review stage is often under-estimated.
- Although useful as a point of departure, the plan is likely to be revised throughout the research project.

### **Ethics form**

Before beginning any empirical work that involves human participants, research students are required to submit a Research Ethics Form. The University's policy, 'Code of Practice on Investigations on Human Beings', and the Ethics application form can be found at: <http://www.strath.ac.uk/ethics/>. Usually, your application can be considered by your Departmental Ethics Committee. You should consult with your supervisor on this issue.

## **Some helpful readings**

Below is a short, useful reading list. It is not exhaustive, only indicative, and there are other readings listed throughout in the MRes handbook that might be useful to you.

Collis, J. & Hussey, R. (2009) *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Hart, C. (1999) *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*, London: Sage.

Hart, C. (2005) *Doing your Masters Dissertation*. London: Sage.

Maylor, H. and Blackmon, K. (2005) *Researching Business and Management*, London: Palgrave.

Riley, M. Wood, R.C., Clark, M.A., Wilkie, E. and Szivas, E. (2000) *Researching and Writing Dissertations in Business and Management*, London: Thomson.

Murray, R. (2006) *How to Write a Thesis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Potter, S., (ed.) (2006) *Doing Postgraduate Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Sage.

Remyeni, D., Williams, B., Money, A. and Swartz, B. (1998) *Doing Research in Business and Management*, London: Sage.

## Guidance on Research Project Supervision

At the start of the research project, students should agree a plan of work with their primary supervisor and agree on the nature and frequency of contact between them. Involvement of the second supervisor varies according to the requirements of the topic area, but you should make sure to agree this early in the process. For example, your second supervisor may be an expert in one area of your research on which they can advise.

A record of meetings should be kept by the student and agreed with the supervisor(s). Students are encouraged to keep minutes and upload these to Neptune which will automatically inform supervisors. Students should remember that the research project is intended to be a demonstration of not only the student's intellectual capacity but also his/her capacity to undertake independent study. The research project should include a separate page with signed statement from the student affirming that the research project is his/her own work (refer to end of section 6).

Your supervisor is there to help you, especially in the early stages. However it is important you recognise that you have overall responsibility for producing a research project that satisfies the Examination Board. It is particularly important that you arrange suitable meeting dates during the summer period.

Once your research project proposal has been accepted you should arrange a meeting with your supervisor to agree the nature and frequency of your supervision meetings. It is your responsibility to maintain contact with your supervisor by:

- Emailing - this is often the easiest way to stay in touch with your supervisor
- Ensuring that you leave messages in the office if you have been unable to establish contact or are unable to keep appointments
- Ensuring that you request appointments to see your supervisor at appropriate stages in your research.
- Ensuring that your supervisor knows if you are having problems that might affect your work.

The stages at which your supervisor will be available to give you guidance are:

1. Formulation of objectives for your research project and the consolidation of your research ideas

Following the allocation of your supervisors, at the initial meeting your supervisor(s) will encourage you to choose an appropriate and manageable piece of work. The nature of the research project, i.e. empirical or theoretical, must be discussed and decided. Furthermore, you will discuss and agree an appropriate and manageable topic, and you will consider the nature of the literature (rather than specific books/articles). At the first meeting your supervisor(s) will also discuss with you the methods you intend to use, for any primary research that you may be planning to undertake. You will then make a work plan.

Please note that you have **approximately four months** from completion of the required taught modules to finish the research project, although you will already have carried out substantial development work. This is ample time to meet the required standard if you work systematically throughout the year, and with a proper plan. Please also keep in mind that the supervisor is not there to determine what to do, but to offer guidance and advice.

2. Reaching the middle stage of your research project

Once you have made considerable progress with your research for the project, you must arrange another meeting with your supervisor to discuss your progress, raise any issues or problems that may have arisen, and submit written work that reflects your progress up to that point. Normally this meeting takes place when you have prepared a draft version of your literature review and methodology for empirical projects, or a substantial part of the review of

the literature for theoretical projects. In this meeting, an assessment of progress will be made and corrective action may be suggested. For example, the supervisor may suggest corrections or changes that need to be made either in the direction of writing or, more rarely, in the direction of research.

It is strongly advised that you submit your work to the supervisor well in advance of meetings (i.e. at least ten days) to allow sufficient time for the preparation of meaningful feedback.

Nevertheless, it is primarily the student's responsibility and not the supervisor's, to plan, design and execute a competent research project. Your supervisor will advise you on the depth and breadth of the chapters in relation to the set objectives, and will also be able to advise you in relation to the style and credibility of evidence provided. You may well wish to seek advice from your supervisor on draft chapters from your research project. Remember that your supervisor is not there to correct your grammar or spelling or make detailed suggestions for improvement.

### 3. Complete draft

When you have written all your chapters you should submit the draft to your supervisor and arrange a meeting to receive feedback. Your supervisor will, at this stage give feedback on:

- Logical sequencing of chapters.
- Major weaknesses in the research project, for example weaknesses in arguments.
- Any weaknesses in the level of evidence provided.

***This meeting is essential and should be made in good time before the final submission date to allow time for revisions.***

Bear in mind that you should submit your draft well in advance before the meeting to allow your supervisor sufficient time to prepare meaningful feedback. Furthermore, this final meeting must be made in good time before the final submission date to allow you sufficient time for amendments. After the final feedback stage, it is then your responsibility to judge when you have carried out sufficient work on your research project. Your supervisor will not read the research project again until after formal submission.

## Examination Process

Successful completion of the MRes is based on the 120 credit dissertation (as outlined in Section 2: Key stages) and 60 credits of approved options. This involves two elements:

- Confirmation of satisfactory completion of the required and optional modules (taught elements) takes place at the September exam board.
- The completed research project is examined separately by an Examining Committee comprising an external and internal examiner. The Examining Committee members indicate their assessment of the research project based on the Examiners' Report for the Degree of Masters of Research. This indicates successful completion of the research project component of the Masters.

An external and internal examiner, as well as a Convenor of the Examining Committee, will be appointed in Spring/Summer. This is something that you can discuss with your supervisor(s). It is the responsibility of your primary supervisor to contact the examiners and arrange for a Convenor to be appointed using the appropriate University forms which must be returned to Student Business (Registry). The Examination process is detailed in the University's Policy and Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes (<http://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/policies/academic/>)

It is recommended that you work towards a deadline for submitting the research project of **end of August**. This will allow confirmation of your module credits at the September Exam Board for the Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma and allow 4-6 weeks for your Examining Committee to return their assessment and the necessary form to the Convenor of the Committee. Completion of the Masters may be a requirement for entry into a PhD programme in October. Any extensions on this submission date must be approved by your supervisors and the Course Director.

Upon completion, two soft-bound copies of the research project should be submitted directly to Student Business (Registry) along with the Higher Degree Thesis Submission form. Upon successful assessment, one copy of the research project is then hard-bound by the student and submitted to Registry.

## Assessment Guidelines

Generally, at Master's level a student should demonstrate:

- an appropriate level of successful independent working.
- a high level of research competence.
- critical understanding and use of theories, principles and concepts of business and management related research methods and methodology.
- critical understanding and use of specialised theories, principles and concepts of business and management related research methods and methodology.
- critical awareness of current issues and debates in the field.
- extensive, detailed and critical understanding of issues and debates in the field.
- appropriate application of standard and specialised techniques of inquiry in the field.

More specifically, students should bear in mind the following:

- a. Coverage and Scope: is the research project on a well-balanced and defined topic or is it too general or too narrow in focus? Is there a set of aims and objectives laid out in terms of what the research project is trying to achieve? Have you located the topic in a wider policy / organisation context?
- b. Methodology: is a suitable methodology of enquiry with associated methods explained, justified and evaluated? Examiners will expect this to reflect knowledge and skills gained from attending the course as well as readings on research methodology and methods textbooks and relevant journal articles.
- c. Structure: effective organisation; use of introduction and conclusions; the distinctions you make between prescriptive, predictive, descriptive and evaluative material; and the distinctions between the positions, problems, propositions and proposals that you articulate. You need to think about how the material is best divided into interlocking chapters.
- d. Clarity and Fluency: always think about how you express yourself - is it clear what you are saying? People can have different views about 'good' style but remember that a research project is a substantial piece of written work, and how the overall product reads is very important. You should be consistent and coherent in what you are saying.
- e. Understanding and accurate presentation of main arguments / literature in the area. We look for evidence that you have read and can demonstrate an understanding of the relevant ideas in the topic of your choice.
- f. Fieldwork where appropriate. It is often highly appropriate and feasible to conduct some original research to develop your topic, e.g. a survey or interviews. However, this may not always be the case, so it is important you discuss any ideas you have with your supervisor.
- g. Objectivity: it is important that your arguments are supported by the evidence you use.

Whilst there may be no right answer, this is not the same as saying every view is worthwhile. We expect you to back up your interpretation in the light of theoretical and empirical material. It is always important to use and to cite the sources you rely on to support your arguments. This enables us to judge how you have interpreted material.

- h. Originality and analysis: this is particularly important and often marks the distinction between a reasonable research project and an excellent one. Use your reading and any original research to develop well-argued reflections on issues and themes rather than simply describing or summarising material.

## Structure, Layout, Referencing

### Structure & Layout

The topics of student research projects vary greatly and no single model or layout can be suitable for all. However, the model suggested below could be a useful starting point.

- a. Introduction and statement of the intentions of the study. This section should be specific rather than vague and provide an overview of the complete research project. It should signal your aims and objectives, a rationale and the structure of the research project.
- b. A review of the relevant academic and other literature from which theories and empirical findings can be brought to bear on the subject of the study. The literature review should provide the material for a **model or a conceptual/theoretical framework**, which forms the intellectual basis of the study.
- c. An explanation of the methodology and methods of inquiry. This should make clear **what approaches and techniques were used** to collect the data and should advance arguments to justify the use of these particular techniques. Due reference should be made to any unavoidable sources of bias. These methods should be explained in some detail.
- d. Presentation of data and its analysis. Data should be presented in such a way that a reader can examine it to see if the conclusions drawn by the writer are justified or not. Tables, charts, and diagrams can often be used to present the data. Where a conceptual framework or model has been constructed (under (b) above) this should be used to **order** the data and **shape** the analysis. A wide-ranging discussion of the findings should then follow.
- e. Discussion and Conclusions. Interpretation of your data and Conclusions must flow logically from the data and its analysis. A Discussion relates your findings back to your conceptual framework. A good concluding section will include a summary, the key points in relation to the initial problematics and literatures, the strengths and weaknesses of the research and/or its process, and might signal future or further research directions and issues.

### Referencing

Proper academic conventions must be observed throughout the research project. All material used in the research project must be acknowledged and the source or evidence for every assertion should not be taken as common knowledge. Thus every research project must have an approved reference system and a bibliography.

Whatever method you choose, be consistent and clear. The following simple method is recommended to avoid a surfeit of numbered footnotes or endnotes.

- (a) **In the text**

When you refer generally to the work or arguments of an author, state the author's name and the date of the publication e.g.:

As Murray (2006) argues, the PhD is an introduction into academia  
or  
It is argued that the PhD is an introduction into academia (Murray 2006)

When you quote an author directly, either by repeating text or referring to statistics given, state the author's name, date of publication and the page number e.g.:

It has been suggested that 'the PhD is primarily an introduction into an academic career' (Murray 2006 p.33)

(b) **In the Reference List**

***Journal Articles***

Thompson, P., Warhurst, C. and Callaghan, G. (2001) 'Ignorant Theory and Knowledgeable Workers: Interrogating the Connections Between Knowledge, Skills and Services', *Journal of Management Studies*, 38:7, 923-942.

***Magazine Articles***

Gennard, J. and Kelly, J. (2002) 'Top guns', *People Management*, 30 May, 25-27.

***Books***

Murray R. (2002) *How to write a thesis*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

***Book Chapters***

Warhurst, C. (2001) 'Using Debates in Developing Students' Critical Thinking' in M. Walker (ed.) *Reconstructing Professionalism in University Teaching*, Buckingham: Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education.

***Conference Papers***

*Newsome, K, Gennard, J & Baldry, C (2000). The organisational structure of the graphical industries: Trends and patterns. Paper presented at the Conference on Strengthening Social Dialogue and Cross Border Trade Union Networks in the Graphical Industry, Quorn Grange, Leicestershire, UK.*

***Newspaper Articles***

Schwartz, J. (1993) 'Obesity affects economic, social status', *The Washington Post*, 30 September, pp A1,A4.

***Electronic Journal or Magazine***

Miller, K. (1999) 'Mentoring via Mouse', <http://www.startribune.com>, 9 September.

**Research Project Format**

The general requirements for the submission and formatting of the research project are detailed in Regulation 20.6 of the University Calendar.

Two soft-bound copies of the research project are required for examination purposes. Upon successful assessment, the student will submit one hard-bound copy and a digital copy in pdf format for retention by the University.

The research project must be printed single-sided and double spaced on A4 paper with a left hand margin of 4cm, a right hand margin of 2.5cm, and a font size of no less than 12 point. Each page must be numbered. The research project must include:

- An Abstract
- Title Page
- Acknowledgements
- A declaration of authenticity and author's rights as follows:

'This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.'

'The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts as qualified by University of Strathclyde Regulation 3.50. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.'

Signed:

Dated:

## **APPENDIX 2: Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)**

### **SCQF Level 11 (PG Dip, PG Cert, MA, MSc)**

Note that the learning outcomes outlined below relate to sub-doctoral postgraduate qualifications. A full outline can be obtained from the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) for doctoral candidates but is not included here. Students wishing to proceed to doctoral study will find it a useful guide and should consult the SCQF website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

Characteristic outcomes of learning at each level include the ability to demonstrate and/or work with:

- Knowledge that covers and integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of a subject/discipline – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions
- A critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts
- A critical understanding of a range of specialised theories, principles and theories
- Extensive, detailed and critical knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, much of which is at or informed by developments at the forefront
- Critical awareness of current issues in a subject/discipline and one or more specialisms.

#### **Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding**

- Use a significant range of the practical skills, techniques, practices and/or materials which are associated with a subject/discipline
- Use a range of specialised skills, techniques, practices and/or material which are at the forefront or informed by forefront developments
- Apply a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry
- Plan and execute a significant project of research, investigation or development
- Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, understanding and/or practices
- Practice in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional level contexts.

#### **Generic Cognitive Skills**

- Apply critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis to issues which are at the forefront or informed by developments at the forefront of a subject/discipline
- Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues
- Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues
- Critically review, consolidate and extend knowledge, skills practices and thinking in a subject/discipline
- Deal with complex issues and make informed judgments in situations in the absence of complete or consistent data/information.

#### **Communication, ICT and numeracy skills**

- Use a range of advanced and specialised skills as appropriate to a subject/discipline – for example:
- Communicate, using appropriate methods, to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise
- Communicate with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists
- Use a wide range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify new software or refinements/improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness
- Undertake critical evaluations of a wide range of numerical and graphical data.

### **Autonomy, accountability and working with others**

- Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities
- Take responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others
- Take responsibility for a significant range of resources
- Demonstrate leadership and/or initiative and make an identifiable contribution to change and development
- Practice in ways which draw on critical reflection on own and others' roles and responsibilities
- Deal with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.