BMA401
Research Methods in Management

Semester 1, 2011

Teaching Team:
Dr Megan Woods

CRICOS Provider Code: 00586B
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Consultation Time: By appointment
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Unit Description

This unit covers major issues connected with the research process in Management and related fields, including qualitative and quantitative research. The unit is designed to equip students with a sound understanding of theory building and the research process, with emphasis both on qualitative and quantitative applications of research methods in Management. After completion of the unit, students will have the methodological understandings to plan their Honours dissertation research project, as well as the necessary skills to conduct the research and report the findings. During the year, ad hoc seminars may be conducted to allow students to further develop their understanding of effectively communicating their research strategy through the presentations of their research proposals and findings.

Pre-Requisite/Co-Requisite Unit(s)

Completion of BBus, BTourism, BBA, or equivalent, and approved entry into the Management Honours program.

Enrolment in the Unit

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, students should not enrol in BMA units after the end of week two of semester, as the School of Management cannot guarantee:

- That any extra assistance will be provided by the teaching team in respect of work covered in the period prior to enrolment; and
- That penalties will not be applied for late submission of any piece or pieces of assessment that were due during this period.
## Intended Learning Outcomes and Generic Graduate Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment Criteria – In assessing this learning outcome I will be looking at student ability to:</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Graduate Attribute Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In this unit students will learn:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The assessments and teaching activities in this unit have been designed to develop the following graduate attributes in students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About key concepts, processes and considerations in research design</td>
<td>• Design research which applies key concepts, facilitates the research process and addresses relevant considerations</td>
<td>Written proposal</td>
<td>Knowledge (3) The ability to transfer knowledge to complex and uncertain business situations and transmit that knowledge to professional peers for critical discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research studies</td>
<td>Proposal presentation</td>
<td>Effective functioning knowledge in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify and explain issues involved in conducting a qualitative or quantitative study</td>
<td>Research critique</td>
<td>• Their specific discipline and its application to the business environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrate the ability to plan, execute and evaluate qualitative or quantitative research</td>
<td>Written proposal</td>
<td>• The legal, regulatory and ethical framework of business organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To critically evaluate research practice and the presentation of research in</td>
<td>• Critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research studies</td>
<td>Proposal presentation</td>
<td>Functional lifelong learner for professional and personal career aspirations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Findings presentation</td>
<td>Communication (3) –The ability to engage in persuasive, succinct oral and written discussions to communicate and defend a position held individually, and to effectively respond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| academic journal articles |   | Proposal presentation | to audience questions.  
|---------------------------|---|----------------------|-------------------  
| To effectively explain their research focus, design, method and findings | • communicate effectively using oral and written mediums and to present a well-reasoned justification of their research approach in a logical and coherent manner | Proposal presentation  
|                           |   | Findings presentation | Written communication skills to create clear and detailed analyses and non biased recommendations for executives and CEOs.  
|                           |   |   | **Problem solving** (3) The ability to apply logical, critical and creative thinking to complex business related problems.  
|                           |   |   | – A critical grasp of theoretical frameworks and practices and the ability to integrate and apply them to problem resolution in a business context.  
|                           |   |   | The ability to locate, analyse, evaluate and effectively use information from a range of media and in a number of different formats.  
|                           |   |   | **Social responsibility** (2) – the ability to apply ethical values to business decision making. An awareness and consideration of the public interest in business practices and decision making.  
| To identify and accommodate ethical considerations in research design and practice | Identify ethical issues relevant to their research and accommodate such issues in their research design | Written proposal  
|                           |   | Proposal presentation |
Learning Expectations and Teaching Strategies/Approach

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a sound understanding of the research process and research methodology in Management
- Demonstrate the ability to critically analyse published research in Management
- Demonstrate skills in effective written communication of your research proposal
- Demonstrate skills in effective oral communication of your research proposal and findings

In order to achieve these learning outcomes, the unit will comprise a one-week full-time intensive teaching program prior to the commencement of Semester One. The assessment of the learning outcomes will occur through four pieces of assessment: 1 written assignment, 1 written research proposal, 1 presentation of your research proposal, and 1 presentation of your research findings.

Expectations

The University is committed to a high standard of professional conduct in all activities, and holds its commitment and responsibilities to its students as being of paramount importance. Likewise, it holds expectations about the responsibilities students have as they pursue their studies within the special environment the University offers. The University’s Code of Conduct for Teaching and Learning states:

Students are expected to participate actively and positively in the teaching/learning environment. They must attend classes when and as required, strive to maintain steady progress within the subject or unit framework, comply with workload expectations, and submit required work on time.

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)

The University is committed to providing a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. In addition to specific requirements of this unit you should refer to the University’s policy at: http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/pol_proc/ohs.pdf

Learning Resources

Prescribed Text


Please note: students do not need to acquire a copy of this text but should arrange access to a copy.

Other materials will be supplied.
Recommended Texts


1. Paradigms and Philosophies of Research


2. Methodologies


3. Writing Up Research


My Learning Online (MyLO)

MyLO software has been incorporated into the delivery of this unit to enhance the learning experience by providing access to up to date course materials and by allowing for online discussion through this web based environment.

To access MyLO from your own computer you will need the appropriate software, and hardware to run that software. See Learning Online at http://uconnect.utas.edu.au/ for computer software you will need.

Note: Older computers may not have the hardware to run some of the required software applications. Contact your local IT support person or the Service Desk on 6226 1818 if you experience difficulties. The School of Management has prepared a MyLO Information Sheet which includes access guidelines and contact information. It is available to download as a word document from the School of Management website: http://www.utas.edu.au/mgmt/student.htm

Privacy Policy and Notice

The School of Management takes the utmost care to protect the privacy and security of your personal information and to ensure its accuracy. If you have any concerns about your privacy in MyLO please contact the unit coordinator of this unit or view the University of Tasmania MyLO Privacy Policy Statement available from the university website on http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/privacy.htm.

Details of Teaching Arrangements

Intensive teaching week

The intensive teaching week will comprise 4 days (Tuesday 15th February to Friday 18th February) of classes scheduled from 10am to 5pm each day.

Communication, Consultation and Appointments

The unit co-ordinator is available for consultation by appointment and will respond to email communication within two business days.
Assessment

Assessment Schedule
In order to pass this unit you must achieve an overall mark of at least 50 per cent of the total available marks. Details of each assessment item are outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research critique</td>
<td>30 marks</td>
<td>Monday 21\textsuperscript{st} March</td>
<td>3000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research proposal</td>
<td>30 marks</td>
<td>Monday 18\textsuperscript{th} April</td>
<td>3000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of research proposal</td>
<td>20 marks</td>
<td>Friday 27\textsuperscript{th} May</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of research findings</td>
<td>20 marks</td>
<td>Friday 30\textsuperscript{th} September</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Word Limit: The word count includes such items as headings, in-text references, quotes and executive summaries. It does not include the reference list at the end of the assignment.

Assessment Item 1 – Research critique

Task Description: Using two of the research articles provided, critically analyse the methodologies employed in developing a research program to answer the research questions and hypotheses. Identify those factors that may have affected the generalisation of the research outcomes and provide a design that may have provided a better outcome. You may choose to analyse a selection of other articles with the approval of the lecturer-in-charge.

The basic aim is provide a critique of the articles provided (or any you have chosen instead of the “standard package”). Issues to consider in the critique include:

1. What is the research question(s) and does this follow logically from the literature? Does it fulfil the requirements of a good research question? Are there any hypotheses and what is their quality? What type of research question is used (that is, exploratory, descriptive, explanatory)?

2. What is the methodology employed (in terms of interpretive versus positivist approaches, or qualitative versus quantitative), and does this suit the research question?

3. Who are the participants and what impact does this have on generalisability? Does the choice of participants fulfil the requirements of the research question?

4. How is data collected and does this suit the research question?

5. How is data analysed and interpreted and is this logical? Are there any problems in interpretation?
6. What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of the research?

7. What suggestions would you make in terms of improving any stage of the research process followed?

In terms of references, please focus on the methodologies that are used in each of the research articles (not so much the content of the research, but the process).

**Assessment Criteria:** Will be provided

**Task Length:** 3000 words

**Due Date:** Monday 21st March

**Value:** 30 marks

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### Assessment Item 2 – Research proposal

**Task Description:** You are required to write and submit a research proposal for the dissertation project that you are going to conduct. This should be developed in association with your supervisor. The purpose of this proposal is:

1. to establish clearly the nature of your research area of interest, the work you intend to undertake, and the rationale for this;

2. to provide you and your supervisor with direction and focus for your literature review and subsequent research work; and

3. to provide a basis for your submission for ethics approval if necessary.

The proposal should be fully referenced. The length of this proposal should be not more than 3000 words and should outline:

1. the general nature and aims of your intended work, and the relationship of this work to the disciplinary area and body of literature of interest to you;

2. your anticipated research question(s);

3. the method by which you intend to answer the question(s); and

4. the anticipated outcomes and contribution of your work to the relevant disciplinary area.
Make a careful choice of the research method you intend to use, for example, interviews, surveys/questionnaires, focus groups, case studies, observation, content analysis, and so forth. Make sure you provide a critical review of the method. Explain the research orientation(s) for which the method can be used; the manner of research question(s) that can be answered, and the type(s) of data produced.

**Assessment Criteria:** Will be provided

**Task Length:** 3000 words

**Due Date:** Monday 18th April

**Value:** 30 marks

### Assessment Item 3 – Presentation of research proposal

**Task Description:** Your first presentation will present your research proposal to the School of Management. Presentations will be delivered via video-conference between the Hobart and Launceston campuses. All members of the School of Management, and guests, are invited to attend, so this means that the audience will likely include academic staff members, research higher degree students (e.g. PhD students) and your fellow Honours students. Your presentations will bring staff up to date on your research and allow academic staff and other students to make suggestions as to pitfalls or possible improvements in your research. The presentations are also designed to develop your skills in communicating your research to others in an interesting and accessible manner. These skills are vital for business professions, and are a critical aspect of academic life.

Your first presentation will outline the background to your project and your plan for conducting the research. Your presentation should address the following:

- What is your topic?
- Why you chose your topic?
- What are the key issues in the literature?
- Why is this topic a good area for study?
- What is your research question(s)?
- What methods will you use to answer the research question(s)?
- How do these methods answer the research question(s)?

You will submit a short synopsis of your presentation one week prior to the scheduled date of the presentation. The synopsis should be no longer than 250 words, and should provide a summary of what will be covered in the presentation. Synopses will be circulated to all School staff, research higher
Assessment Item 4 – Presentation of research findings

Task Description: Your second presentation will present your research findings to the School of Management. Presentations will be delivered via video-conference between the Hobart and Launceston campuses. All members of the School of Management, and guests, are invited to attend, so this means that the audience will likely include academic staff members, research higher degree students (e.g. PhD students) and your fellow Honours students. Your presentations will bring staff up to date on your research and allow academic staff and other students to make suggestions as to pitfalls or possible improvements in your research, and to suggest alternative interpretations of your data. The presentations are also designed to develop your skills in communicating your research to others in an interesting and accessible manner. These skills are vital for business professions, and are a critical aspect of academic life.

Your second presentation focuses on the results of your data collection and analyses and the conclusions you can draw from your data. Your presentation should address the following:

- Brief overview of your topic, research question(s), methods
- What data analysis techniques did you use?
- What have you found?
- Why have you analysed the data in your chosen way?
- How do the results relate to your research question(s)?
- What conclusions can you draw?

You will submit a short synopsis of your presentation one week prior to the scheduled date of the presentation. The synopsis should be no longer than 250 words, and should provide a summary of what will be covered in the presentation. Synopses will be circulated to all School staff, research higher...
degree students, and fellow Honours students prior to the seminar. You must also provide your presentation slides to Megan Woods no later than 9am on the morning of your presentation so that copies can be provided to the audience.

**Assessment Criteria:** Will be provided in advance of the presentations.

**Task Length:** 15 minutes + 5 minutes for questions from the audience

Synopsis: 250 words max.

**Due Date:** Friday 30th September

**Value:** 20 marks

### Special Consideration and Student Difficulties

If a student is experiencing difficulties with their studies or assignments have personal or life planning issues, disability or illness which may affect their course of study, they are advised to raise these with their lecturer in the first instance. Students may also contact the Student Adviser, who will be able to help in identifying the issues that need to be addressed, give general advice, assist by liaising with academic staff, as well as referring students to any relevant University-wide support services. The Student Adviser is located in room 318a in the Commerce Building in Hobart and is contactable by phone on 6226 1916. In Launceston the Student Adviser is located in room A168 in Building A and is contactable by phone on 6324 3312. There is also a range of University-wide support services available including Student Services, International Services and Learning Development. Please refer to the Current Students homepage at: [http://www.utas.edu.au/students/index.html](http://www.utas.edu.au/students/index.html)

Should a student require assistance in accessing the Library, visit their website for more information at [http://www.utas.edu.au/library/](http://www.utas.edu.au/library/)

Students who have completed their examinations and who feel that they have been disadvantaged due to illness or other circumstances affecting their study, may fill out a form to request that their lecturer takes this into consideration when marking the examination. Forms should be submitted directly to the relevant school, accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation, as soon as possible after the completion of the examination. Granting of special consideration is at the discretion of the lecturer and school. The relevant form can be found at the following website: [http://www.studentcentre.utas.edu.au/examinations_and_results/forms_files/index.html#eits](http://www.studentcentre.utas.edu.au/examinations_and_results/forms_files/index.html#eits)

Students with a non-English speaking background may be permitted to take a bilingual dictionary into an exam. This dictionary must not be annotated, that is, it must have no notes written in it. In order to use a bilingual dictionary students must request permission from the Student Centre.
Submission of Coursework

Lodging Coursework

All Coursework must have the School of Management Assignment Cover Sheet and Title Page attached, both of which are available as a blank template from the School of Management website: http://www.utas.edu.au/mgmt/student.htm. All assignments must include the tutor’s name on the assignment Cover Sheets when they are submitted. If this is not done the assignment will not be accepted and therefore marked.

Please remember that you are responsible for lodging your Coursework on or before the due date. We suggest you keep a copy. Even in the most ‘perfect’ of systems, items sometimes go astray.

Assignments must be submitted electronically through the relevant assignment drop box in MyLO. All coursework must be handed in at 2.00 pm on the due date.

Requests for Extensions

Written Coursework:

Extensions will only be granted on medical or compassionate grounds and will not be granted because of work or other commitments. Requests for extensions should be made in writing to the unit coordinator prior to the due date. Medical certificates or other evidence must be attached and must contain information which justifies the extension sought. Late assignments which have not been granted an extension will, at the lecturer’s discretion, be penalised by deducting ten per cent of total marks for each full day overdue.

Assignments submitted more than five days late will normally not be accepted by the unit coordinator.

Faculty of Business Late Assessment Policy

A full copy of the Faculty of Business late assessment policy is available from the Faculty homepage - http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/business/business/policies.asp.

Academic Referencing and Style Guide

Students must obtain the following electronic publications which are available from the School of Management website: http://www.utas.edu.au/mgmt/student.htm.

- Writing Assignments: A Guide
- School of Management Referencing Style

These resources should be used when completing coursework in this unit.
Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

**Academic misconduct** includes cheating, plagiarism, allowing another student to copy work for an assignment or an examination and any other conduct by which a student:

(a) seeks to gain, for themselves or for any other person, any academic advantage or advancement to which they or that other person are not entitled; or

(b) improperly disadvantages any other student.

Students engaging in any form of academic misconduct may be dealt with under the Ordinance of Student Discipline, and this can include imposition of penalties that range from a deduction/cancellation of marks to exclusion from a unit or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline – Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see [http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/](http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/).

**Plagiarism** is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else’s thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own, for example:

- using an author’s words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source;
- using an author’s ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation; or
- copying another student’s work.

If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at [http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html](http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html).

The intentional copying of someone else’s work as one’s own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University.

The University and any persons authorised by the University may submit your assessable works to a plagiarism checking service, to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference database. It is a condition of this arrangement that the original author’s permission is required before a work within the database can be viewed.

For further information on this statement and general referencing guidelines, see [http://www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism/](http://www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism/) or follow the link under ‘Policy, Procedures and Feedback’ on the Current Students homepage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day of Intensive Teaching Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assessment Due Dates:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Tuesday 15th February</td>
<td><strong>Orientation to Honours program</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Research process</td>
<td>Research critique - Monday 21st March&lt;br&gt;Research proposal - Monday 18th April&lt;br&gt;Presentaion of research proposal - Friday 27th May&lt;br&gt;Presentation of research findings - Friday 30th September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Wednesday 16th February</td>
<td><strong>Qualitative Approaches</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong> Thursday 17th February</td>
<td><strong>Quantitative Approaches</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> Friday 18th February</td>
<td><strong>Ethical research conduct</strong></td>
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