Module Guide

Business Research Methods

BBS_6_REM

Business School

Level 6

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1.   MODULE DETAILS

Module Title:	Business Research Methods
Module Level:	6
Module Reference Number:	BBS_6_REM
Credit Value:	20
Student Study Hours:	200
Contact Hours:	60
Private Study Hours:	140
Course(s):	International Business Management (top-up) BA Business Management suite of courses
Year and Semester	2019 - 2020 Semester 2
Module Coordinator:	Dr Valerio Ficcadenti; third floor, Business School
MC Contact Details (Tel, Email, Room)	ficcadv2@lsbu.ac.uk
Subject Area:	Business and Enterprise
Summary of Assessment Method:	100% Coursework
External Examiner:	Dr Sunita Dewitt, Coventry University

2.   SHORT DESCRIPTION

This final year module introduces students to the academic research process and covers the approaches, tools and techniques of research within a business discipline. Students will study the skills and knowledge necessary to undertake an independent small-scale research project, with a business or management focus.

The module may also serve as a preparation for academic study at postgraduate level.

3.   AIMS OF THE MODULE

The aims of the module are to ensure that students:

- Acquire a thorough understanding of the approaches, tools and techniques of academic research within a business discipline,
- Demonstrate a good understanding of the research process and the ability to use relevant information sources effectively,
- Develop analytical and presentational skills such that they can write up their research study.

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Knowledge and Understanding

On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

A1: Critically evaluate different theoretical approaches to business research and be able to select a research topic appropriately, carry out a research study and identify ethical issues, risks and resource implications.

A2: Collect, interpret, analyse and present research results effectively.

4.2 Intellectual Skills

Students will be expected to:

B1: Identify a suitable research topic, define its boundaries and select, evaluate and justify an appropriate methodology for the topic.

B2: Critically analyse the students' own strengths and weaknesses in the conduct of the research and evaluate the research findings in the context of established theory.

4.3 Practical Skills

On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

C1: Develop communication skills, particularly in collecting data and presenting findings and use statistical techniques for data analysis.

C2: Apply technology effectively for the use of research and information gathering, data analysis and presentation.

4.4 Transferable Skills

Students will acquire and develop transferrable skills to be able to:

D1: Apply analytical and critical thinking and use effective written communication of theory, ideas and research results.

D2: Demonstrate the ability to use self-managed learning time.

5. ASSESSMENT OF THE MODULE

The coursework is a self-managed small-scale research project, set up and conducted by the student. The unit assessment is aggregated into two elements: formative assessments and feedback during the weekly seminars/workshops and one piece of coursework forming the summative assessment. Please find the assessment schedule on p. 8. The assessments are as follows:

5.1 Formative Assessment

This year's module will comprise two components of formative assessment. The assessment is structured as one pilot study and one 10-minute presentation on your own project. The pilot study is to dive into how to do research in a practical manner and comprises a data gathering as well as an analysis and interpretation part. This learning-by-doing approach will get you ready for your own project.

The schedule is as follows:

Weeks 1-3 - Pilot study: data gathering
(questionnaire distribution and gathering responses; we will start during seminar time of week 1)

Week 3 - Pilot study: data submission via moodle
(nothing more to do here for you)

Week 4 - Pilot study: data analysis and interpretation
(during the seminar time of week 4)

Weeks 9 – 10 – 10 minutes Individual Oral Presentation
(10 minutes outline of your project on the topic, research question, objectives, aims, contribution, relevant literature areas and indicated methodology)

Formative feedback will be given each week in the seminars. Students will discuss the progress of their own research projects, starting with identifying potential topics, developing aims and objectives, onto designing a suitable methodology and putting together a literature review and then collecting, analysing and presenting the findings.

At each of these stages, informal feedback can be given to help the student develop the research report. This will be done during seminar time as a result of group discussion and one-to-one discussions with the tutor.

5.2   Summative Assessment - Research Project Report

100% - 5,000-Word Individual Written Research Project Report
(±10%, excluding cover page, references and appendices)

The module will consist of one assessment worth 100% which is a research report of 5,000 words. This is to include an introduction to the research topic and the aim and research questions set. Then a literature review discussing relevant recent literature around the topic, a methodology detailing the research methods chosen and why, followed by results discussions addressing the research aim and questions set and conclusions. Please find the assessment marking criteria within the appendix.

6.   <u>FEEDBACK</u>

Feedback for the summative assignment (due 22.05.2020) will be placed on the module VLE site at the latest on the 12.06.2020.

Feedback on formative assessments is normally given during the seminar/workshop sessions. All students discuss the seminar activities together to brainstorm possible solutions and the seminar leader provides guidance and direction on how the seminar activities may be tackled.

7. INTRODUCTION TO STUDYING THE MODULE

7.1 Overview of the Main Content

The delivery of this unit's content is carried out as follows:

- The nature of business and management research
- The research problem and research process
- Theoretical framework
- Writing a literature review
- Research philosophy and methodologies
- Research strategies and ethics
- Qualitative and quantitative data analysis
- Presentation of research results
- Writing a research report

7.2 Overview of Types of Classes

The teaching programme is delivered in a 4-hour block over a 12-week period comprising:
- One two-hour lecture.
- One two-hour interactive seminar.

Students will receive seminars to develop practical skills and so to carry on with their research projects. Furthermore, they will have practical sessions on the key methodologies covered in the module.

Directed private study will include relevant research and data collection using Moodle and other online resources as appropriate.

7.3 Importance of Student Self-Managed Learning Time

Student responsibility in the learning and development process will be emphasised. Students are required to undertake directed self-study and prepare solutions/discussions to questions relative to various topic areas. Students will be encouraged to identify for themselves particular problems of difficulty and to use seminar discussions, where appropriate, for the resolution of these. Students must regularly access the Moodle site for this module. They should download the class/lecture material and do the recommended reading before each lecture/class.

Where appropriate, students are also expected to download the relevant seminar questions and study them in advance of each seminar, in order to derive maximum benefit from seminar time. The programme of teaching, learning and assessment gives guidance on the textbook reading required for each week, the purpose of which is to encourage further reading both on and around the topic.

7.4 Employability

This module brings together many of the key graduate skills developed elsewhere on the course including those of information searching, critical thinking and problem-solving. Students are required to identify a

current topic suitable for research and conduct a theoretically sound and well-structured study in a business environment. These are highly desirable employment skills.

8.   PROGRAMME OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

This is the intended lecture and seminar outline for this semester.

Week	Date	Lecture	Seminar	Submission schedule
1	27/01/2020	Introduction to research methods	Your first pilot study and Google modules	
2	03/02/2020	Research process and problem formulation	First pilot study; Literature searching and referencing.	7th Feb 2 pm: Compulsory formative submission of gathered data.
3	10/02/2020	Data analysis workshop and class discussion.	Data analysis at the lab	
4	17/02/2020	Writing a literature review	How to write a literature review.	
5	24/02/2020	Research philosophy and methodology	Data analysis at the lab	
6	02/03/2020	Research design, primary and secondary data	Research projects progress assessment	
7	09/03/2020	Research strategies and sampling	Research projects progress assessment	
8	16/03/2020	Qualitative and quantitative data analysis	Research projects progress assessment	
9	23/03/2020	Project outline presentations and feedback session.		Compulsory formative project presentation.
10	30/03/2020	Project outline presentations and feedback session.		
Easter Vacation				
11	27/04/2020	Data interpretation and report write-up interactive session.	Literature Review helps and QandA	

12	04/05/2020	Data interpretation and report write-up interactive session.	
13	11/05/2020	Please make an appointment to see me this week via ficcadv2@lsbu.ac.uk for any last-minute questions.	
14	18/05/2020	Drop-in but no classes.	Summative: Report submission

9.   STUDENT EVALUATION

The evaluation of related prior taught modules through evaluation questionnaires, the course-boards, the anecdotal feedback and end of module discussion highlighted that students found this module to be challenging with particular emphasis on the needed depth of reading and research, and the compressed pressure of one report at the end.

Therefore, this year's students will be provided with more hands-on research from the beginning; much in a learning-by-doing fashion.

10.   LEARNING RESOURCES

Reading List

The reading list is available via moodle. For this:

- Log into your Moodle account.
- Find the module Business Research Methods **BBS_6_REM** on your dashboard (if you cannot find it please contact your module leader or course director).
- On the module's home page, please find the box **'Reading Lists'** on your right-hand side.
- Clicking on it opens the full reading list in another tab. Online materials can be accessed this way.

A Brief Description to LLR Services

Library and Learning Resources (LLR)

Library webpage: https://libguides.lsbu.ac.uk/subjects > select your subject guide (e.g. Accounting and Finance). On every subject guide, you can:

- Search for books and e-books, journal articles and industry reports;
- get help about Harvard referencing and how to avoid plagiarism;
- contact us for training and 1:1 support

Electronic resources are available 24/7 and are accessible from home.

Library support for students:

Learn how to find research materials and reference them: MyLSBU > Library > Events and Workshops

Visit the drop-in Research Help Desk located on Level 3 Bridge in the Perry Library (open Monday-Friday 11:00-16:00 term time).

If you would like further help, please contact the Information Skills Librarian at LLRbus@lsbu.ac.uk and or digitalskills@lsbu.ac.uk.

Students IT support and training

Students can contact LRC for IT issues such as LSBU account, printing, and accessing wifi network: LLRithelpdesk@lsbu.ac.uk. IT workshops can be booked via MyLSBU > Library > Events and Workshops.

If you need further help in using a particular software (e.g. Excel or SPSS) or application, please contact IT and Digital Skills Training team: digitalskills@lsbu.ac.uk

Self-learning materials on https://www.linkedin.com/learning

LSBU has subscribed to a video platform called Lynda.com. It has 4000+ video courses in different business and technology subjects including social media, project management and Excel applications.

How to sign up: go to https://www.linkedin.com/learning and click "Log In". To Long in use your organization LSBU credential.

APPENDICES

Coursework Assessment Criteria

Coursework Assessment criteria	Total Mark (%)	Actual Mark (%)	Comments
Introduction and background Problem formulation and background; original and valid choice of topic; forming and developing the problem and question to be analysed; the clear scope of the work with concise objectives and aims.	10%		
Literature review Understanding and application of appropriate theory and framework. An initial discussion on the related academic literature and theoretical underpinning relevant to the research topic. This includes a variety of academic sources of information.	15%		
Methodology Appropriateness and soundness of chosen research methods; supporting rationale for choices (relating back to research question, objectives and aims); viability of methods applied.	20%		
Data presentation, analysis and interpretation The extent to which the main body covers stated objectives, use of evidence discussion and analysis of results (triangulation). This includes a discussion of the developed findings with past academic results and secondary data in light of the study's aims and objectives.	30%		
Conclusion and recommendations Strength and appropriateness of conclusion; relevance and practicability of recommendations derived from the developed findings.	15%		
Presentation of the whole work Structure of the research report including chapter and paragraph structure, formatting and attention to detail, clarity of expression, coherence of the argument, choice of title, use of appendices; appropriate and LSBU required referencing in Harvard style.	10%		
Total	100 %		

Turn-it-in Report

The research report will be submitted electronically through the module's Moodle site. This submission will automatically be assessed through Turnitin for non-original content. Any indication of plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct will be dealt with through the university's academic misconduct procedures.