

### MODULE SPECIFICATION FORM

Module Title: Dissertation	Level: 7	Credit Value: 60
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Module code: BUS775	Cost Centre: GAMP	JACS2 code: N200
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Semester(s) in which to be offered: N/A	With effect from: January 2015
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<b>Office use only:</b> To be completed by AQSU:	Date approved: July 2013 Date revised: January 2015 Version no: 2
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Existing/New: New	Title of module being replaced (if any): n/a
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Originating Department: Business and Management	Module Leader: Jan Green
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Module duration (total hours): 600	Status: core/option/elective (identify programme where appropriate): Core
Scheduled learning & teaching hours: 60	
Independent study hours: 540	
Placement hours: 0	

Percentage taught by Departments other than originating Department (please name other Departments): None
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Programme(s) in which to be offered:	Pre-requisites per programme (between levels):	Co-requisites per programme (within a level):
Executive Master of Business Administration	None	None

#### Module Aims

The dissertation module enables students to comprehensively explore the purpose of and methods used in conducting academically rigorous management research. These skills will be the subject of the three compulsory Research Methods sessions scheduled throughout the programme.

Students will first be required to design a research proposal that will be used as the basis for investigating and resolving contemporary management/business problems within the dissertation. Progression through to the dissertation itself enables students to:

1. Develop a critical understanding of the philosophical, practical and ethical concepts of research within the context of the business and management environment.
2. Gain a practical knowledge of the appropriate software available to analyse data as an intermediary in the search for business solutions.
3. Devise and undertake a personal programme of academically based business or management research in order to enhance and utilise independent study skills, develop conceptual thinking and problem-solving abilities to produce practical and applicable conclusions of relevance to business and management.

Students will present the dissertation in approved format and chapter sequence and provide additional detail through the medium of the dissertation handbook.

Glyndŵr University will provide the necessary academic supervision and support throughout the compilation and submission of the dissertation.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this module, students should be able to:

#### **Knowledge and Understanding:**

1. Establish the purpose and context of academic research and select appropriate research methodologies.
2. Critically review published academic literature within the body of knowledge relating to the subject areas of business and management.
3. Demonstrate a critical insight into the philosophical and conceptual traditions underpinning academic research.
4. Undertake meaningful selections from a range of research options and data collection methods.
5. Formulate an answerable research question with a supporting aim and objectives that complies with academic research ethics and present a solution in a manner that is rigorous, reliable, valid and authentic.
6. Utilise appropriate software to analyse research data in order to analyse findings, reach conclusions and identify solutions to the research question.
7. Plan, manage and write a structured dissertation that complies with the guidance provided in the dissertation handbook to develop study skills, empirical work and research skills within a defined business area.

#### **Transferable/Key Skills and Other Attributes:**

- Use information and knowledge effectively in order to abstract meaning.
- Solve complex problems using appropriate decision-making techniques.
- Communicate effectively using listening, oral, written and media techniques.
- Effectively use Communications Information Technology tools and packages.
- Demonstrate effective performance within a team environment.
- Select appropriate leadership styles for different situations.

- Recognise and address ethical dilemmas and corporate social responsibility issues.
- Manage creative processes, organise, synthesise and critically appraise.

## Assessment

Student supervision and support will commence at the start of the module to provide guidance for the design, structure and completion of individual research proposals. The research proposal will be subject to approval by the Dissertation Module Leader or other designated academic supervisors drawn from the programme team and is designated as a formative assessment. A clear business problem with objectives and a research framework form the recommended content of the proposal that is expected to have an approximate word count of 2,000. The dissertation requires students to undertake an in-depth research exercise involving a review of relevant literature followed by the selection of appropriate research methods leading to the collection and analysis of empirical data as a foundation for solutions and recommendations.

Assessment	Learning Outcomes to be met	Type of assessment	Weighting	Duration (if exam)	Word count or equivalent if appropriate
One	1,2,,3,4,5,6,7,	Dissertation	100%		15,000

## Learning and Teaching Strategies

Research methods techniques and concepts will be delivered via a progressive three-block sequence of lectures interspersed throughout the programme to provide students with the skill base to design a research framework based on a research problem drawn from an organizational context with which they are familiar. Students will be actively encouraged to discuss, explore and question to develop their own personal reflections and gain an appreciation of the links between management and business theory and practice which will involve drawing on their own experiences.

Case studies, numerical activities and practical computing exercises, using software packages form an integral aspect of the block delivery to enable students to experience and work with various research methodologies and techniques. Students will be advised to search the internet to source additional relevant material and identify the most suitable research methods for their personal research question. Through the adoption of these strategies an active learning environment will be created to provide a rich and meaningful learning experience for all module participants with a focus on the evaluation of prevailing business problems and concerns.

This approach provides a foundation for specialist and focused research proposals that reflect the individual business priorities and concerns of the Executive MBA cohort and ensure they are linked to and derived from the bodies of knowledge that students have studied during the taught elements of the programme.

Academic supervision on a group and individual basis will be provided via a sequence of pre-arranged appointments during and following the submission and approval of the research proposal. Supervision will encompass monitoring student progression, providing feedback, support and discussion.

## **Syllabus Outline**

1. Critical academic writing
2. The research question and hypotheses, justification, aim and objectives
3. Research methodology, concepts, definitions
4. Research design
5. Research Ethics
6. The literature search and review
7. Inductive and deductive concepts
8. Sampling methods
9. Data collection techniques
10. Qualitative and quantitative methods
11. Inferential statistical analysis
12. Application of analytical tools using relevant and appropriate software packages
13. Research ethics
14. Objectives, content and structure of the dissertation
15. The research proposal as a distinct framework and foundation for the dissertation
16. The research plan
17. The role of the supervisor

## **Bibliography**

### **Essential reading:**

Cameron S. (2011) The MBA Handbook, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Pearson Education, Harlow  
Saunders M., Lewis P. and Thornhill A. (2012) Research Methods for Business Students 6<sup>th</sup> Edition., Pearson Education, Harlow  
Masters Dissertation Handbook (2013) Business and Management, Glyndŵr University

### **Other indicative reading:**

Alvesson M. and Sandberg J, (2013) Constructing Research Questions, Sage Publications, London  
Binsardi A. and Green, J. (2012) Research Methods for Management, Pedagogic Teaching Series, Volume 2, Northwest Academic Publications, London ISBN: 978-1-78233-003-5.  
Booth A., Papaioannou D. and Sutton A. (2012) Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review, Sage Publications, London  
Bryman A and Bell E (2011) Business Research Methods 3<sup>rd</sup>Edn. Oxford University Press, New York  
Burns RP. and Burns R. (2008) Business Research Methods & Statistics Using SPSS, Sage Publications, London  
Denicolo P. and Becker L. (2012) Developing Research Proposals, Sage Publications, London  
Easterby-Smith M., Thorpe R. and Jackson P. (2012) Management Research 4<sup>th</sup> Edn. Sage Publications, London  
Landers RN. (2013) A Step-by-Step Guide to Statistics for Business, Sage Publications, London  
Myers MD. (2013) Qualitative Research in Business and Management, Sage Publications, London  
Smith M. (2011) Research Methods in Accounting, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Sage Publications, London

**Journals:**

- Journal of Advances in Management Research
- Journal of Mixed Methods Research
- Management Research Review
- Organizational Research Methods
- Qualitative Inquiry
- Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal
- Qualitative Research
- Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management
- Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal
- Statistical Modelling