

Module 11

6.11.1. Dissertation

Module title						Dissertation					
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)						9					
Module number/reference						MA11					
Parent programme(s)						Master of Arts in Accounting and Finance					
Stage of parent programme						1 & 2					
Semester (semester1/semester2 if applicable)						Semesters 2, 3 & 4.					
Module credit units						ECTS					
Module credit number of units						25 (5 credits in semester 2, and 10 each in 3 and 4 respectively)					
Duration of the module						Three semesters.					
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week						3					
Analysis of required learning effort											
Effort while in contact with staff											
Classroom and demonstrations		Mentoring and small-group tutoring		Other (specify)		Directed e-learning (hours)	Independent learning (hours)	Other hours (specify)	Work-based learning hours of learning effort	Total effort (hours)	
Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher/learner						
108	1:40	36	1:20				481				625
Allocation of marks (within the module)											
						Continuous assessment	Supervised project	Proctored practical examination	Proctored written examination	Total	
Percentage contribution							100%			100%	

Minimum intended module learning outcomes

On the successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- MIMLO 11.1** Perform supervised, self-directed enquiry through proposing, planning, managing and completing a small-scale research project.
- MIMLO 11.2** Demonstrate a capacity for working independently, maintaining communication with their supervisor and meeting agreed-upon deadlines.
- MIMLO 11.3** Construct a literature review through sourcing, critically evaluating and synthesising relevant scholarly texts.
- MIMLO 11.4** Gather empirical data relevant to a specific research question(s) using rigorously selected qualitative or quantitative methods *or* a mixed methodology.
- MIMLO 11.5** Analyse data to produce meaningful findings using rigorously selected data analysis methods.
- MIMLO 11.6** Integrate knowledge from across the programme and use this knowledge in the interpretation of a specific research problem/topic/question.
- MIMLO 11.7** Discuss and critically evaluate emergent issues – both national and international - in corporate financial strategy.
- MIMLO 11.8** Communicate research findings both orally and in writing *and* assess the implications of these findings for interested stakeholder/scholarship.
- MIMLO 11.9** Plan and write a dissertation which demonstrates a logical consistency in approach and structure, and which rigorously reconstructs each element of the research process.

Module content, organisation and structure

Module Timeline

Semester	Milestone/Activity
Semester One	Topic Development: Learners develop a research topic and submit a proposal as part of the pre-requisite 'research methods' module.

	<p>Students will also attend workshops with the college's director of academic affairs – professor Darach Turley – during this time.</p>
Semester Two	<p>'Dissertation' Module Commences: Students commence the 25 credit/ three semester dissertation module.</p>
	<p>January – Proposal submitted - Students research proposals are submitted in January of semester two and are reviewed by the 'research methods' and 'dissertation' module coordinators and members of faculty with appropriate subject specialisms.</p>
	<p>February – Formative Feedback: Students receive formative feedback on their proposal. This does not contribute towards their grade for the dissertation module but is intended as guidance for learners to use to develop their proposals and, where relevant, address highlighted weaknesses in the project's proposed design.</p>
	<p>February – Supervisors Appointed: A suitably qualified member of staff is appointed as the supervisor for each project.</p> <p>During this time, learners will meet regularly with their supervisors to agree actions, dates and deliverables.</p>
Semester Three	<p>Weekly tutorials: Learners attend weekly tutorials with the module coordinator for the 'dissertation' module. These offer a mix of expository lecture, participative workshop, and individualise and group-facilitated feedback.</p> <p>During this time, learners will meet regularly with their supervisors to agree actions, dates and deliverables.</p>
	<p>Progress Report: The learner and supervisor will complete a progress report before the end of semester three. This will be reviewed by the module coordinator and students provided with an actionable plan for improvement where it is felt that adequate progress has not been made.</p>
Semester Four	<p>Learners will continue to attend weekly tutorials and meet regularly with their supervisors to agree actions, dates and deliverables.</p>

	Submission: Learners will submit their dissertation in August, following semester four.
--	--

A more recent, and detailed, schedule from the current dissertation module is provided below:

<i>Dissertation Schedule for Sep 2018 – 2020 students</i>		
Semester 1 of Year 2	Module Lectures: Dissertation module weekly lectures.	Sep – Dec 2019
Semester 2 & 3 of Year 2	Dissertation Tutorials: Dissertation tutorials for group and one-to-one discussions and formative guidance with module leader	January - August 2020
Semester 2 of Year 2	Research Proposal Submission	Submission in January 2020
Semester 2 of Year 2	Proposal Feedback: Research Proposal formative feedback and grade provided to students	February 2020
Semester 2 of Year 2	Supervisor: Supervisor allocated to each student	February 2020

Semester 2 of Year 2	<p>Research Proposal Draft 2:</p> <p>Students improve their research proposal following initial proposal feedback.</p> <p>Students submit this proposal to their research supervisor and module leader for further feedback</p>	March 2020
Semester 2 of Year 2	<p>Approval Granted:</p> <p>Students begin their dissertation research following approval of research plan by supervisor and module leader as a result of students improving their proposal after initial proposal feedback</p>	March 2020
Semester 2 & 3 of Year 2	<p>Dissertation Research:</p> <p>Students begin their research and receive weekly formative feedback from their module leader and supervisor in tutorials and meetings</p>	March 2020 – August 2020
Semester 3 of Year 2	<p>Submission of Final Dissertation:</p> <p>Electronic submission to be made and hard copy submissions. One electronic copy (MS Word document [.doc or .docx]).</p> <p>Three hard copy (printed) submissions to be made. Two soft bound print outs and one hard bound print out.</p>	<p>Due date:</p> <p>15 August 2020</p>

Indicative Syllabus:

1 Research Proposal

- **Research Topic and Objective Selection:** Research scope and feasibility analysis. Research topics, hypotheses, objectives and questions; rationalization, justification, and selection.
- **Research Methodology Selection:** Research philosophies, epistemology, ontological considerations, deductive and inductive approaches, qualitative and quantitative research. Analysing, critically evaluating, selecting, and justifying effective methods for scientific inquiry.
- **Research Ethics Considerations:** ethical issues in research and gaining research ethics approval. Plagiarism awareness and prevention. Informed consent for research purposes.
- **Literature Reviewing:** Citing and referencing styles, referencing software, using research databases, library resources, locating, critically appraising, synthesizing and reporting on secondary research literature.
- **Research Project Planning:** terms of reference, resource requirement planning, gaining access, task dates, review dates, monitoring/reviewing process, research and supervision strategy

2 Research Dissertation

- **Research Project Management:** Refining and developing research projects and objectives, resource requirement management, project management, and management of the supervisor-student relationship. The stages of a research project.
- **Research Methods Workshops:** qualitative and quantitative research, applying specific research methods to collect and analyse data, terminology, validity, generalisability and reliability

3 Reporting Research Findings

- **Structuring a Research Dissertation.**
- **Reporting:** Evidence-based findings, concepts and theories. Presenting scientific research results, making conclusions and recommendations.
- **Reporting Results:** Reporting qualitative and quantitative results.

6.11.7 Module teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

Lectures and tutorials: This module will be delivered using a combination of lectures and directed tutorials, the latter of which will present students with opportunities to engage in the application of scientific research techniques under the supervision of the module lecturer and in conjunction with peers.

Research Proposal: Students will prepare a research proposal, which will receive a grade and specific formative feedback intended to aid the student in developing their proposal into a rigorous complex research project.

Formative Feedback and Supervision: Students will show their work as it develops to the module leader and to their supervisor. Continuous formative feedback on the development of their research project will be provided to each student by the module leader and the student's supervisor(s) from idea generation through the proposal stage until submission of the dissertation and completion of the module with summative assessment feedback.

Supervised Dissertation: In broad terms, each student will produce a dissertation in line with one of three types:

Type 1: Theory and Practice Empirical Dissertation. A theoretical framework of a subject area is constructed following a rigorous literature review. Empirical evidence is gathered from a large sample to answer a specific research question(s). Comparison between primary research findings and literature lead to extension of understandings of the theoretical area and of the practical issue being studied. Findings are intended to be generalisable and empirical-evidence-based.

Type 2: Theory Only Dissertation. A rigorous exploration of theory around a specific research question is carried out. A conceptual model capturing the field's theoretical complexity is developed to improve understandings of the research topic. The study is non-empirical. The student will extend upon the theoretical field providing new concepts based on rigorous examination of the literature and through argumentation.

Type 3: Case Study or Qualitative Interpretive Dissertation: Rather than using large samples, case study or qualitative interpretive methods involve an in-depth examination of a single instance or event, a case, or a smaller sample than may be required for findings to be generalisable. The dissertation will provide deep rich findings which explain what is happening in the research site in great detail. Findings are based on empirical evidence. However, generalisability of findings is not the objective.

Reading lists and other information resources

Title	Author	Publisher	Year
Essential:			
Exploring Research 9/E	Salkind, Neil J	Pearson Education	2017

Research Methods for Business Students, 7th Edition	Saunders, M. Lewis, P and Thornhill, A	Pearson	2015
Business Research Methods	Bryman, A. & Bell, E.	Oxford University Press	2015
Researching and Writing a Dissertation: A guidebook for business and accounting learners 3/E	Fisher, Colin	Pearson Education	2010
Recommended:			
Doing your Research Project, 6 th Edition	Bell, J. & Waters, S.	Open University Press	2014
Statistical Techniques in Business and Economics	Lind, D. A., Marchal, W. G., & Wathen, S. A.	McGraw Hill	2017
Essentials of Statistics	Triola, M. F.	Pearson Education	2018
Fundamentals of Statistics: International Edition	Sullivan, M.	Pearson Education	2017
Quantitative Methods for Business, Management and Finance	Swift, L. & Piff, S.	Palgrave Macmillan	2014
Research Dissertation	BPP	BPP Publishing	2008
Business Research Methods	Quinlan, C.	Cengage	2011
Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students	Collis, J. & Hussey, R.	Palgrave Macmillan	2014
A Gentle Guide to Research Methods	Rugg, G. & Petre, M.	Open University Press	2010
How to Research	Blaxter, L., Tight, M. & Hughes, C.	Open University Press	2011
Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches	Poth, C. N. & Creswell, J. W.	Sage	2017
Qualitative Data Analysis: A	Miles, M. B., Huberman,	Sage	2015

Methods Sourcebook	A. M, & Saldana, J.		
Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory	Corbin, J. & Strauss, A.	Sage	2015