

1. Research Methods and Management Skills

Module Number: TBA	Module Title: Research Methods and Management Skills	
Module Status: Core		
Semester: 1	Level: M (7)	Credits: 15
Module Leader: Gerry Conyngham & Angela O'hUiginn		
Direct/Assisted Learning Hours: 48	Lectures: 36 Seminars/Workshops 12	Independent Student Learning: 104
Assessment Mode & Weighting: Class Participation 10%; Coursework 90%;		
Prerequisites: None Concurrent Module: None Post Requisites: Project Management, Research Dissertation Advisory Constraints: None		

1. Rationale for Module

Research design and implementation is a very important element of all strategic business decisions. This is particularly true in International Business. It is essential therefore for students to have thorough grounding in all available scientific and technological tools used for research in this sector. Additionally, a major element of this Masters Degree is the presentation of a significant research dissertation. This module is designed to equip the students with the necessary tools for completing this task.

In relation to Management Skills, the twenty-first century brings new intercultural challenges to communication in the work place and market place. Two trends of particular importance are market globalization and cultural diversity. The key to overcoming these new challenges is an understanding that diversity in the work-place goes beyond race and gender. Companies of the 21st century will need managers with a reputation for inclusiveness reflected through high levels of skill in communicating with staff across diverse areas of management practice. Moreover, this diversity is not limited to the work environment but is equally reflected in increasingly diverse markets and customers who now generate significant annual spending power.

The Management Skills element of this module was conceived to encourage graduates to think about their career path and the communication and 'people' skills they will need to be successful in management positions in a changing multicultural environment. It is designed to provide practical personal, interpersonal and group skills in diverse areas of management practice.

In the assessment of this module, students will be able to apply research skills to course work that will also include a presentation assessing management skills and in this way the both elements of the module will reinforce each other. By incorporating this element into

the first semester, students will be able to develop practical skills to assist in their coursework. Management Skills seminars will also be organised occasionally in semester 2 to reinforce the skills learnt in semester 1.

2. Principal Module Aims

The module will explore some of the available approaches to research in Business and specifically in International Business. It provides prescriptive guidelines for conducting Research and describes the Research Process as it is regularly carried out by Business Researchers.

The principal aims of the Research Methods element are

- To provide students with a detailed understanding of the research process
- To detail the different approaches for conducting research in business and to outline the procedure for selecting the appropriate techniques
- To provide students with the tools to enable them to critically examine research articles
- Outline the methodologies and techniques used in Qualitative and Quantitative Research
- Provide the students with the necessary practical skills for conducting a major research project.
- Introduce the students to a number of IT tools used in the Research Process.

The Management Skills element will:

- Teach a set of skills grounded in behavioural science theory and research that are essential for a successful career in management.
- This skills-based approach advocates that proficiency is best accomplished through high student involvement and the development of participation-based action learning, closely linking the conceptual and practical components of the module.
- This will be achieved through skill assessment, skill learning, skill analysis, skill practice, and skill application in a combination of traditional and experiential learning environments

3. Principal Learning Outcomes

Research Methods Element

By the end of the module the student should have the theoretical tools and the necessary practical skills to design, implement and present a major research project.

More specifically, by the end of the module the student should

- have the ability to critically assess a wide range of business research articles **(RML1)**
- be able to conduct a thorough literature review on a given topic **(RML2)**
- choose an appropriate research design for a selected research topic **(RML3)**
- be able to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data **(RML4)**
- report research findings and present results in an intuitive and concise form **(RML5)**
- have a detailed knowledge of the IT tools available for research **(RML6)**
- be able to utilise these tools efficiently in a research project **(RML7)**

Management Skills Element

- Translate business and communication theories into applicable action steps to implement in the workplace. **(MSL1)**
- Conduct a Personal Assessment of Management Skills (PAMS) **(MSL2)**
- Prepare a range of written business communications, eg Presentations, Reports and Memoranda. **(MSL3)**
- Prepare for and deliver oral and visual presentations and be familiar with the essential elements of effective presentations. **(MSL4)**
- To understand the principles of rational negotiation and have the ability to apply negotiation strategies and tactics in practical situations. **(MSL5)**
- To develop conflict handling skills and techniques & group problem solving tasks **(MSL6)**
- Assess individual stress management and time management skills. **(MSL7)**
- Show a greater understanding of the extent of their own and others' cultural conditioning and its influence in intercultural interactions. **(MSL8)**

4. Indicative Module Content

Research Methods Element

- **The Nature of Research**
Identifying the underlying conceptual elements of the research issue; Analysing a Research Issue; The aims of research, Theoretical Approaches to Research
- **Research Designs**
Experimental Designs, Survey method; Rationale behind choosing an appropriate Research Design for different types of Research Study
- **Review of the Instruments for Measuring Respondent Communication**
Questionnaire Design; Interviews; Other techniques
- **Qualitative Research Methods**
A case study approach; data collection; analysis and presentation of results in qualitative studies.

- **Selecting Subjects for a Research Study**
Definition of research population, Sampling techniques, Sample size, Non-Response, Measurement error and bias in surveys
- **Statistical Estimation**
Understanding the nature of sampling error; Estimation of sampling error for several parameters
- **Statistical Significance and Statistical Testing**
General steps in a Statistical test; Understanding statistical significance; Review of a number of statistical tests widely used in business research
- **Review of Multivariate Statistical Techniques**
What is a causal relationship; examining causal relationships; review of a number of multivariate statistical techniques widely used in business research.
- **Reporting and Presentation of Research Findings**

This will be driven by a number of case studies using international business articles and large quantitative data sets

Additionally students will be:

- trained in the use of relevant statistical software for analysing and presenting quantitative research data.
- shown how to conduct an extensive literature review of their chosen research topic

Management Skills Element

- **Developing Self-Awareness:** Promote self-awareness regarding student's opinions on defining issues, their cognitive style, locus of control, tolerance for ambiguity, and interpersonal relations orientation. Examine four core aspects of the self-concept: values, attitudes, cognitive style and interpersonal needs. Introduce six behavioral guidelines for developing self-awareness.
- **Health and Quality of Working Life:** Workplace stakeholders of the future will collaborate to address all aspects of the newly emerging health & wellbeing and quality of working life problems. Assess individual stress management and time management skills.
- **Making Oral and Written Presentations:** Use of power point and other visual aids, essential elements of effective presentations; structure and style; behavioural guidelines.
- **Conducting Interviews:** Interview techniques, different types of interview structure.
- **Communicating Interculturally:** Trends in intercultural business communication; The importance of recognizing cultural differences; the

differences between high- and low-context cultures; Ethnocentrism and “stereotyping”

- **Solving Problems Analytically and Creatively:** Understand the four separate and sequential stages in problem solving. Recognize situations that call for creative problem-solving skills.
- **Coaching, Counselling, and Supportive Communication:** Recognize barriers to effective communication. Develop communication skills that support positive interpersonal relationships. Learn how to identify and avoid dysfunctional communication. Motivating Others.
- **Managing Conflict:** Develop effective analytical and behavioral conflict management techniques; how to identify source and focus of conflict; implementing strategies to solve conflict; the collaborative approach to conflict management.
- **Managing Negotiation;** Assertiveness in workplace environment; Recognising different types of behaviour; Communicating a point of view in a direct and effective manner; understanding of the principles of rational negotiation and the ability to apply negotiation strategies and tactics in practical situations.
- **Building Effective Teams and Teamwork Teams and Team working** Learn how to facilitate group development and how to help groups evolve through the four distinct stages. Understand the three critical skills to high-performance teams: leading teams, being a team member, and team development. Belbin Self-perception Inventory
- **Conducting Productive Business Meetings:** Identify the four Ps of effective meetings. Learn how participants can help increase meeting effectiveness.
- **Marketing Communications Skills:** Public Relations; Selling and Sales; Direct Marketing; Cyber marketing; Mediated Communications; Advertising Communications

5. Method of Assessment

The aim is to ensure that, as much as possible, course work will incorporate both the Research Methods and Management Skills elements in joint assessments. For example students will use Research skills to prepare a group project that will be assessed using criteria taught in the Management Skills element.

Class Participation 10%

Research Methods Element

- Students will be assessed using a piece of course work, worth a total of **45%** of the overall module result.
- The course work will examine the student’s quantitative research skills. This will take the form of a Case Study, where students will be presented with a large database and asked to test several research hypotheses using the quantitative techniques they have acquired in the module.

(Learning Outcomes: RML1 – RML7; MSL3)

Management Skills Element

As part of their on-going assessment, students will submit and present one **research based** group project on subject matter from the module syllabus; a progress diary of personal learning and development summarizing and integrating the materials and discussing students' application experiences; one piece of individual work/project; class participation will also be assessed and there will be a final exam.

Individual Project 5%
(Learning Outcomes: MSL2; MSL4; MSL6; MSL7; RML5)

**Corporate Life Group Project & Diary (detailing the students' individual
experience and contribution to the group) 20%**
(Learning Outcomes: RML5; RML7; MSL3; MSL4; MSL5; MSL6; MSL8)

Final Exam 20%
(Learning Outcomes: MSL1; MSL3; MSL8)

Group Project

Each group will make an in-class PowerPoint presentation of about 30 minutes, in PowerPoint on a real or fictitious organizational problem. The purpose of this assignment is to give students a work-team experience. The group must assume the role of a consulting firm called in to solve a specific problem in an organization. Students will need to use skills acquired from the Research Methods element to prepare the report. To arrive at a realistic problem, each group member should interview at least one manager from industry to discuss problems and possible solutions. Groups should also use descriptions of current management practices reported in business periodicals. All projects must be approved by the instructor before being started.

The presentation will be followed by 15 minutes of questions from the class playing the role of an Executive Management Committee representing the "problem company." The group must hand in during the class period preceding their presentation 40 copies of the assigned "Fact Sheet" describing their organization and problem. They should also submit a group project report, which includes a detailed outline of the presentation, description of specific tasks performed by each group member, sources of information (persons interviewed and bibliography), and a paragraph summarizing what the group learned from the project.

The presentation should roughly follow this format: (1) nature and background of firm; (2) description of their problem; (3) proposed remedy (including a convincing justification based on successes in other firms or accepted management principles); (4) plan for implementation; and (5) question-and-answer period.

The individual project will be a research based assignment and presentation based on any seminar discussion area. It will be assessed in the same manner as the group project.

Projects/ Assignment Length: 3000 words (min.) – 5000 words (max.)

Examination Length: 3 hours

6. Indicative Reading/Research

Research Methods Element

Essential Texts

Hair JF et al, Essentials of Business Research Methods: International Edition, Wiley (2003)

Indicative Texts

Saunders M, Research Methods for Business Students, Prentice Hall (2002)

Piekarri R, Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business, Edward Elgar (2004)

Sukaran U, Research Methods for Business: A skill building approach, Wiley (1992)

Rudestam K, Surviving your Dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process, 2nd ed, Sage (2001)

Jankowicz AD, Business Research Projects, 2nd Ed, Chapman and Hall (1995)

Moser CA et al, Survey Methods and Investigation, 2nd Ed, Dartmouth Publishing (1993)

Bryman A, Doing Research in Organisations, Routledge (1988)

Cresswell JW, Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Wiley (1994)

Brannick T et al, Business Research Methods: Strategies, Techniques and Sources, Oak Tree Press (1997)

SPSS Base 12.0 Users Guide, SPSS Publications (2003)

Gill J. et al, Research Methods for Managers, Paul Chapman Publishing (1997)

The module will make also extensive use of current articles from Business Research, in particular those with an International element.

Management Skills Element

Essential Texts/Articles:

Whetten & Cameron; 2000; Developing Management Skills, Fifth Edition, Addison Wesley Longman, London

Thill John V Bovee Courtland L.; **Excellence in Business Communication, (5th Edition)** Prentice Hall, London (2001)

Ober, Scot “**Contemporary Business Communication**” (4th Edition) Houghton and Mifflin, New York (1999)

Engleberg, Daly; **Presentations in Everyday Life**; Houghton Mifflin, New York (2001)

Pfeiffer, William, Sanborn; “**Pocket Guide to Technical Writing**”, (3rd Edition) Prentice Hall, London (2001)

Chaney, Lillian H; Martin, Jeanette S.; **Intercultural Business Communication (3rd Edition)** Prentice Hall, London (2002)

Sorenson, Ritch; **Business and Management Communication: A Guide Book, (4th Edition)** Prentice Hall, London (2002)

Tropman, J. (1998), **Managing ideas in the creative organization**, Westport, CT: Quorum
Braman, S. **Globalisation, Communication and Transnational Civil Society**, Hampton Press, 1996.

Corcoran, F. **RTE and the Globalisation of Irish Television**. Intellect Books, 2004

Hamelink, C. **The Politics of World Communication**, Sage, 1994.

McPhail, T. **Global Communication**. Allyn & Bacon, 2002.

Bennett, M. (Ed.) (1998). **Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication**. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press.

Condon, J. & Gudykunst, W.B. & Kim, Y.Y. (1992). **Communicating with Strangers**. (2nd Edition). London: McGraw-Hill

John Hayes [Interpersonal Skills at Work](#) (Second Edition) – (2002), Routledge

Kolb, David, [Experiential Learning - Experience as the Source of Learning and Development](#) - Prentice-Hall 1984

Brealey, Nicholas [Riding the Waves of Culture - Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business - Cultures and Organizations](#), HarperCollins Business 1994

Back, K and Back, K; [Assertiveness at Work](#) - McGraw Hill 1991

Huff, Darrell; [How to Lie with Statistics](#); Penguin Books 1991

Atkinson, Gerald G M; [The Effective Negotiator](#) –Quest 1997

McCormack, Mark H; [McCormack on Negotiating](#) –Arrow Books 1996

Useful Internet Addresses:

Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland

www.asai.ie

Association of Advertisers in Ireland

www.aai.ie

BUBL Link (academic modules directory)

www.bubl.ac.uk

Central Bank of Ireland

www.centralbank.ie

Central Statistics Office

www.cso.ie

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

www.entemp.ie

Economic and Social Research Institute	www.esri.ie
The Economist	www.economist.com
Enterprise Ireland	www.enterprise-ireland.com
European Commission in Ireland	www.euireland.ie
FACTfinder (Irish business database)	www.factfinder.ie
Finfacts (gateway to Irish business information)	www.finfacts.ie
Foras (national advisory board for enterprise)	www.foras.ie
Government of Ireland	www.irlgov.ie
Higher Education Authority	www.hea.ie
HEAnet (Higher Education Research network)	www.heanet.ie
Information Society Commission	www.isc.ie
Industrial Development Authority	www.idaireland.ie
Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland	www.iapi.ie
Institute of Public Relations	www.Ipr.org.uk
International Monetary Fund	www.imf.org
The Marketing Institute	www.mii.ie
OECD	www.oecd.org
National Development Plan	www.ndp.ie
Public Relations Institute of Ireland	www.prii.ie
RDN (academic modules directory)	www.rdn.ac.uk
Small Firm Association	www.sfa.ie
SOSIG (gateway to social sciences and business)	www.sosig.ac.uk
Tourism Ireland	www.tourismireland.ie
University of Maryland (research skills tutorials)	www.umuc.edu/library
The World Bank	www.worldbank.org
World Trade Organisation	www.wtc.org

