



MN3202 – Research Methods 2

Designing a research proposal

MODULE TYPE/SEMESTER: Junior Honours/Core (20 Credits)/Semester 2

PRE-REQUISITE(S): MN3201

MODULE REQUIRED FOR: MN4301

MODULE CO-ORDINATOR: Dr Cailean Gallagher cg257@st-andrews.ac.uk
MODULE LECTURER(S): Dr Cailean Gallagher cg257@st-andrews.ac.uk

AIM:

The aim of this module is to provide students with the opportunity to: (1) explore a social or managerial phenomenon of their choice and develop a research proposal; (2) work one-to-one with an academic staff member to develop their proposal; (3) experience working on a project in an independent manner.

THE MODULE IN CONTEXT

This module is the second of a sequence of three linked modules that introduce ideas of knowledge creation, application and use in the context of responsible enterprise. The first module (MN3201) explores how we can come to know the world empirically, through systematic study. It emphasises the importance of theory and meta-theory in the creation of these understandings, introduces notions of methodological rigour and critical appraisal, and highlights the political and ethical connotations of knowledge.

This second module builds on new understandings and skills learned in MN3201 by encouraging students to think through how they would investigate a social or managerial phenomenon of their choice. In doing so, students are encouraged to reflect critically on methodological underpinnings and choice of methods, the importance of research ethics, and the politics of use of any knowledge generated. In developing their proposals, students are also introduced to practical issues such as reflexivity, self-management and getting the best out of supervision.

The final (optional) module in this suite (MN4301) can be accessed by those students who wish to operationalise their planned project from MN3202 (after reflections on any appropriate modifications). Here, intensive self-study under close one-to-one supervision allows development and execution of the project outlined as a proposal. This module again strengthens independent learning, appreciation of ethics, and reflexivity, as well as exposing students to the wide range of practical challenges encountered during data gathering, analysis and interpretation.

METHOD OF TEACHING & LEARNING:

There are 14 hours of scheduled learning time which involve interactive workshop-style activities that rely on student preparation and participation. There are 2 optional consultative hours weekly.

From Week 4 onwards: students are expected to meet regularly with their individual supervisors to discuss the development and progress of their proposals. There will be at least 3 of these meetings to be arranged at mutually agreeable times. The module co-ordinator will be available to students by appointment throughout the module and during office hours.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Synthesize appropriate literature in order to develop research questions on a relevant topic
- Create a research proposal with alignment of theory, methodology and methods
- Identify and reflect on ethical issues and responsible conduct in research
- Communicate constructively with peers and academic supervisors in order to meet project requirements and deadlines
- Develop critical thinking and reflection skills, as well as skills for independent learning
- Identify future application of their learning and any further learning needs

INDICATIVE TOPIC OUTLINE:

Lecture topics per week:

Week 1: Introduction to developing your research proposal: selecting a research topic, research aims and questions (2 hours).

Week 2: Doing and writing a literature review (2 hours).

Week 3: Finding the literature (2 hour clinic with library staff).

Week 4: Research Workshop (2 hours).

Week 5: Research Workshop (2 hours).

Week 6: Research ethics and quality (2 hours).

Week 7: Writing a research proposal and working with your supervisor (2 hours).

ASSESSMENT:

A 5,000 word research proposal (100% of the module mark)

This proposal will incorporate a critically engaged literature review relevant to the proposed area of research; and a review of the methodological/methods literature, leading to a proposed methodology and methods approach pertinent to the proposed study. The proposal will be first marked by your supervisor and moderated by the module co-ordinator.

CORE READING LIST:

There is no set textbook for this module. The following texts will give some essential background as well as an introduction to many of the areas covered in the course. However, students are expected to identify additional reading on their own initiative and as guided by their supervisor. Students will also refer to notes from MN3201.

- Adams, J., Khan, H., Raeside, R. and White, D. (eds), 2007. Research Methods for Graduate Business and Social Science Students, Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. 2015. Business Research Methods. 4th ed. Oxford: OU Press.
- Cassell, C. and Symon, G. 2004. Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research. London: Sage.
- Dolab, P. and Donnelly, P. (eds) 2009. Approaches to Qualitative Research Theory and its Practical Application: A guide for dissertation students, Cork: Oak Tree Press
- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P.R. 2012. Management Research. 4th ed. London: Sage.
- Fisher, C. 2010. Researching and Writing a Dissertation for Business Students. 3rd ed. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Hart, C. 2001. Doing a Literature Search. Sage Publications.
- May, T. 2001. Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process. 3rd ed. Buckingham: OU Press.
- Punch, K.F. 2016. Developing Effective Research Proposals. 3rd ed. London: Sage.
- Robson, C. 2011. Real World Research. 3rd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rog, D. and L. Bickman (eds). 2009. The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2019. Research Methods for Business Students. 8th ed. FT/Prentice Hall.
- Wallace, M. and Wray, A. 2011. Critical Reading and Writing for Postgraduates. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For those students intending to proceed to MN4301: Research Project, the School acknowledges that the presentation of work for that module will almost certainly contain material previously submitted for MN3202: Research Methods 2, namely aspects of the Literature Review and the Methodology. Students will not therefore be penalised for this inclusion, where it occurs, under the terms of the University's Academic Misconduct Policy.

Organisation of courses may be subject to change without notice.