Course Guide

HU

MBIB-RS3-15
5 EC
Full time
Obligatory course
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Research Skills 3

IBMS

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1 Course Description

By developing research skills, students can have a better understanding of the importance of research is in the interests of society at large or the business community. In order to take appropriate measures in a problem situation, managers and policy makers need to know about the real-life situation they are facing. This requires not only general theoretical knowledge (on matters such as customer satisfaction) but also requires them to collect and interpret information about current developments in theory and in practice, as well as knowledge of the economic situation, the opinions of the target group, the mood among their customers and much more. You will also be confronted with these challenges. And you will also have to estimate how good and how valid your data is in order to be able to take well-considered decisions.

And secondly (and of no less importance), the skills and knowledge acquired in this course are the same as those required in Internship 2. Once you have carried out research yourself once or twice, you will start to appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods. If you have conducted a few interviews and processed and analysed the material, combining your findings with the results from desk research and analyses from surveys, you will develop a keen sense of the value and the importance of good research. This will be of great value to you in your professional career.

2 Course Goals and Learning Objectives

Objectives

This course asks the student to apply relevant scientific insights, theories and concepts, to combine several subjects, to gather information and draw conclusions in a methodical and reflective manner. It asks you to develop teh ability to work carefully and punctually in a relatively complex situation and to systematically execute a research project, report on the findings and to translate them into useful conclusions.

At the end of this course, a student can:

- Design and participate in a team responsible for a research project

- Narrowly define a research topic related to an area of interest in your studies and justify it within a suitable context

- Prepare an appropriate research strategy with a qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods research orientation

- Articulate suitable primary and secondary research questions

- Identify and critically analyse literature suitable for a research project

- Design quantitative and/or qualitative data collection instruments

- Propose analytical strategies for quantitative and qualitative data

- Understand, document and apply ethical considerations in a research project

- Consider issues of validity, reliability, credibility and generalizability within a research strategy

- Explore the implications for theory and practice in the domains associated with your research project

- Prepare a highly readable document that includes (at a minimum and where appropriate) an abstract, Table of Contents, List of Tables/Figures, Glossary, Appendices.

3 Place in the Curriculum and Related Courses

'Research Skills' is a learning line within the IBMS program with 3 courses, of which RS3 is the last. This course prepares students for the Internship 2/Graduation Project.

4   Study Burden

Total hours:	**140 hours**
Group Lectures	1,5 hours x 7
Tutorial classes	2 hours x 7
Consultation	1,5 hours x 7
Research assignment portfolio	63 hours
Research proposal	42 hours

5   Pre-requisites

This course is for fourth year students of the IBMS programme. Naturally, students must have their first-year certificate (propedeuse) and have passed Internship 1 before starting this course.

6   Exemption Possibilities

There are no possibilities for exemptions from this course.

7   Competencies

In support of the IBMS National Competency Framework, the following competencies should be demonstrated through the successful completion of both assignments and class participation.

- The ability to apply relevant scientific insights, theories and concepts, to combine several subjects, to gather information and draw conclusions in a methodical and reflective manner. The ability to act carefully and punctually and to produce output that is literate, numerate and coherent.

- To be able to present research findings and to translate them into useful information. The use of simple theoretical concepts. (Level 1)

- To be able to formulate a problem definition and research question in a relatively simple situation; the use of several information resources and to be able to assess the relevance of these sources. (Level 1)

- To be able to work in a more complex situation and to systematically execute a research, report on the findings and to translate them into useful conclusions. (Level 2)

- To use theoretical concepts and the ability to translate these concepts into an information need. (Level 2)

- To spot complex issues and to search information from a broad range of resources. To be

able to integrate theory and practice. (Level 3)

- To be able to indicate the information needs in complex situations. (Level 3)

- To draw conclusions from complex research data. (Level 3)

Beyond those listed above, the following are general competencies achievable by all IBMS students through this course:

Generic Interpersonal competency: Business Communication
- The ability to express fluently and correctly in English.
- The ability to lead discussions, express ideas, make proposals, give presentations.
- The ability to make proper use of audio/visual aids in presentations.

Task-oriented competency: Business research methods
- The ability to apply relevant scientific insights, theories and concepts, to combine several subjects, to gather information and draw conclusions in a methodical and reflective manner.
- The ability to act carefully and punctually and to produce output that is literate, numerate and coherent.

Task-oriented competency: Planning and organizing
- The ability to plan, manage, control and evaluate personal work activities and group work in projects.
- The ability to make use of relevant techniques in activities to monitor own performance.

Intra-personal competency: Learning and self-development
- The ability to know their own strengths and weaknesses and to indicate how and when they intends to improve his weaknesses; knows the limits of their competencies and can critically evaluate and account for their own actions; can take criticism and put it to good use. Takes initiative and works independently.

8   Didactic Forms

Large group lecture, tutorials, consultations, weekly assignments, and individual research proposals.

Attendance
Students are expected to attend all sessions. Students are expected to hand in assignments (x 6) and actively participate in tutorials and consultations. Students must prepare in order to receive all suitable feedback!

9   Assessments

Term	Type of Assessment	Term Weighting	Course Weighting	Minimum Mark
D	Research Assignment Portfolio	100%	60%	5.5
D	Research	100%	40%	5.5

	Proposal			

The final grade for this course is based on two grades: one for the Research Assignment Portfolio (60%) and one for the Research Proposal (40%). Students need at least 5.5 for each of these two assignments to pass the course. Each assignment in the Research Portfolio is worth 10 points. Failure to submit an assignment for the Portfolio will result in an automatic zero.

Details concerning group work
Students are encouraged to work with 1 other person on their portfolio but individually on their research proposal.

Choosing topics
The focus / topic of the portfolio **must be different** than the research proposal. Students are directed to pick topics for both the portfolio and the proposal that correspond with their studies. They are also encouraged to pick a topic that is suitable for their graduation internship. If their internship company has not yet been secured, students are encouraged to pick a topic that might be adapted to their future company needs (although it is understandable if a match isn't possible). Please speak to a member of the course team with any questions.

Research Assignment Portfolio
6 assignments on research elements: topic definition, research question(s), literature review, data collection, data analysis, ethics

Deadlines: The deadline for each assignment will be announced in the first tutorial of the course and posted on the SharePoint site.

Submitting your assignments / Portfolio / Proposal
All assessments should be emailed to your teacher. Name your file with both last names and the number of the assignment: **Last name_Asgn1.doc**

Research Proposal
The details of your proposal are included in an Appendix of this guide.

Deadline*:*
  * Final version: Friday, 19th January before 12.00 to your teacher. No paper versions will be accepted!

Resit possibilities
  * If you get 5.5 or more for an assignment (within the Portfolio), you may not resit it.
  * It is not possible to resit any individual assignment within the Portfolio.
  * If you get less than 5.5 for the Research Assignment Portfolio or the Research proposal, you must resit it or you will fail the course.
  * You have one resit opportunity for the Portfolio and one for the Research Proposal per year.

Fraud
The research assignment portfolio and research proposal will be digitally assessed for fraud using *Ephorus.* Cases of fraud are treated very seriously and will be referred to the Exam Board.

10 Course Material and Literature

BOOK (Required reading)					
Title:	Doing a successful research project: Using qualitative or quantitative methods				
Author(s):	Martin Davies and Nathan Hughes				
ISBN:	978-1-137-30642-5	Edition	2nd	Publisher	Palgrave/MacMillan

Multiple case studies will be introduced every week in the large group lecture. Additional articles and materials (including examples of past proposal elements) that need to be studied can be found at Sharepoint. Students are expected to look up and review additional literature for the research assignment portfolio and the research proposal.

Many journals are published that provide unique and detailed insights into the field of research methods including: *Field Methods, Journal of Mixed Methods Research, Organizational Research Methods,* and *Qualitative Research.* SAGE Publishing hosts a valuable site called *SAGE Research Methods (*http://methods.sagepub.com)

Students will be expected to search these and/or other relevant journals in support of their course assignments.

11 Course Evaluation

Multiple opportunities for course feedback will be available at the end of the term. Students are encouraged to use these channels.

Appendix

Research Skills 3: Proposal Assignment

The research proposal must be 1,500 words (+/- 5%). It must be emailed to your teacher (hard copies or Dropbox versions will not be accepted). It should contain the following elements.

1) Introduction
2) Company description
3) Background to research interest
4) Problem statement: What part of the problem will the research focus on?
5) Research objective(s)
6) Literature Review
    a) What are the main issues as described by experts?
    b) What issues are not explored, in your opinion?
7) Research questions: primary and secondary
8) Research orientation: qualitative, quantitative, mixed?
    a) Conceptual model
9) Data collection methods
    a) Participants, population and sample
    b) Ethical considerations
    c) Constraints and limitations/delimitations
10) Data analysis strategy
11) Possible outcomes and/or recommendations

Notes for completing research proposal

- Company Description including sector, activity, specialty, geographical area, age, size, etc.

- Summary of Background to area of interest
    - What are the general ideas, issues and accepted practices in the activity you will be looking at?

- Problem Statement
    - What is missing, where is the client failing to reach a desired objective, what challenge needs tackling?
    - What part of the problem will the research focus on?
    - Narrow down the area of the challenge or problem that you will investigate this time.

- Research objective
    - What does the client want to be able to do after your research has been completed?

- Main research question (PolIcy Making/recommendation)
    - Use the format 'What steps should (client) take in order to solve (the problem)?' Aim to include the SMART features where practical.
    - Sub-questions (Exploratory, Descriptive or Explanatory)

- Scope of the research
    - Which parts of the problem area will you focus on, and which will you put to one side? What the experts say about the problem

- Literature
    - A mini review of the literature to update the reader on the latest thinking about the narrow problem area, and to identify who the key writers are, where they agree and disagree, with commentary. Look for texts about similar companies in similar situations.
    - Gaps in what the experts say about the problem
    - Where are there gaps or disagreements in the literature about your specific problem?

- Data collection methods
    - Consider all methods to determine which will give the most reliable findings
    - Participants, population and sample
    - How many people will participate in your research? Specify numbers for the different data collection methods. What is the population that your research focuses on? And how will you create your sample?

- Data analysis methods
    - What will you do with the data to extract reliable meaning from it?

- GANTT CHART
    - List the main tasks and use horizontal bars to show what happens when.