

Module 13: Business Research Methods

Module title			
Business Research Methods			
Module NFQ level	Module number / reference	ECTS Value	Duration
9	MSC-PBM-BRM	5	12 Weeks
Parent programme(s)		Stage of parent programme	Semester No.
Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Business Management		1	2
Postgraduate Diploma in Science in Pharmaceutical Business Management		1	2
Teaching and Learning modes	Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)		
Classroom / Face to Face	80%		
Workplace			
Online			
Other (Identify)	Blended: 20%		
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)			
Learners should normally hold an honours (NFQ Level 8) degree in a cognate or non-cognate discipline or equivalent qualification, from an approved tertiary/or professional institution.			
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module	100		
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week	3		
Pre-requisite module title(s) (if any)			
Co-requisite module title(s) (if any)	N/A		
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No		
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)			
Lecture room with internet access, audio-visual equipment and white board. Moodle Area.			
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.			
Role e.g. Tutor, Mentor etc	Qualifications & experience required:		# of Staff with this profile (WTEs)
Lecturer	<p>Lecturing staff are required to hold at least a master's degree in Business, Engineering, Management or Leadership or an equivalent professional qualification. Industry experience is beneficial but not a requirement.</p> <p>Ideally, they would also hold a third level teaching qualification (e.g. the Griffith College Certificate in Education, Learning and Development).</p>		0.25

Analysis of required learning effort		
*Effort while in contact with staff	Minimum ratio teacher / learner	Hours
Classroom and demonstrations	1:100	18
Mentoring and small-group teaching	1:20	18
Other (specify)		
Independent Learning		
Directed e-learning (hours)		-
Independent Learning (hours)		89
Other hours (specify)		-
Work-based learning hours of learning effort		-
Total Effort (hours)		125

Allocation of Marks					
	Continuous Assessment	Supervised Project	Proctored Practical Exam.	Proctored Written Exam	Total
Percentage Contribution	100%	-	-	-	100%

1.1.1 Module aims and objectives

This module initiates the preparation of learners for their Masters dissertation. It reviews business research in general and facilitates dissertation topic selection by the learner and guides their drafting of a preliminary critical literature review and the development of a conceptual framework. This will be further developed and proofed against the demands of an appropriate research design in the iterative process of proposal development.

A significant element of the module is devoted to research design issues to ensure that learners understand the significance of the process of research and its implications for how trustworthy the findings from the research can be considered. This component of the course covers, as appropriate to the learner group, research paradigms, research strategies, and quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The importance of illustrating the process in reporting and presenting the research concludes the course.

The module aims to ensure that learners:

- (i) develop an understanding of the nature, purpose and value of business and commercial research;
- (ii) are able to conduct a critical literature review using best practice in developing a critical approach;
- (iii) understand the different perspectives and approaches to business research;
- (iv) develop an in-depth knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods and understand how these can be usefully employed in carrying out a research dissertation as well as their application in the wider business context.
- (v) are equipped with a well-developed research proposal which will direct their dissertation research.
- (vi) are equipped with the research skills needed to continue into the dissertation stage successfully.

1.1.2 Minimum intended module learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

- MIMLO 13.1 Develop a dissertation topic with research questions that will guide and focus the research process;
- MIMLO 13.2 Identify relevant literature and critically review the most pertinent for their proposal and have a conceptual framework in development;
- MIMLO 13.3 Evaluate quantitative and qualitative data, and the different means to collect them;
- MIMLO 13.4 Generate and evaluate an appropriate research design and methods for data collection and analysis which are consistent with their research philosophy/paradigm and the requirements of the question;
- MIMLO 13.5 Interpret and analyse quantitative and qualitative data in a manner that addresses business and research problems;
- MIMLO 13.6 Present their work in a professional manner, communicating results clearly and confidently.

1.1.3 Rationale for inclusion of the module in the programme and its contribution to the overall MIPLOs

This module initiates the preparation of learners for their Masters dissertation. It reviews business research in general and facilitates dissertation topic selection by the learner and guides their drafting of a preliminary critical literature review and the development of a conceptual framework. This will be further developed and proofed against the demands of an appropriate research design in the iterative process of proposal development.

This module supports the achievement of the following MIPLOs (per each award):

Programme Title	MIPLOs achieved
MSc in Pharmaceutical Business Management	(iii), (vii) to (xiii), (xv)
PgDip in Science in Pharmaceutical Business Management	(vi) to (x)
Certificate in Pharmaceutical Business Management	(v) to (ix)

1.1.4 Information provided to learners about the module

Learners enrolled on this module initially receive a copy of the module descriptor, assessment briefs and assessment strategy. These materials are given directly by the lecturer but also by the year head as part of the Semester Schedule Handbook for award stage modules of the programme. All content is provided on Moodle as well as access to additional content through the library and online resources. In class, learners are provided with a PowerPoint pack, and extensive reading list, incorporating professional and academic and non-academic sources. Guest lectures will be introduced to ensure practical knowledge and real-life examples will keep the content relevant.

1.1.5 Module content, organisation and structure

Module Curriculum – Indicative Content

Introduction and Topic Selection

- Overview of business research methods and the research process
- Overview of the module
- Expectations and assessment

- Process (research question and hypothesis)
- Inspiration for topics

Critical Review of Literature

- Read sources critically
- Synthesising and critiquing literature
- Understanding and developing a conceptual framework

Research Design

- Research Paradigms and Approaches
- Research Methodologies
- Enquiry Based Research
- Experimental Designs
- Survey Approach
- Case Studies
- Action Research
- Links between Paradigms, Approaches, and Methodology.

Data Collections Methods

- Overview of qualitative data collection methods
- Overview of quantitative data collection methods
- Developing data collection tools
- Asking the right questions
- Assessing the focus and logic of your data collection
- Sampling and Access
- Ethical Considerations
- Record Keeping
- Research quality

Data Analysis Approaches

- The Data Analysis process
- Quantitative data analysis techniques
- Qualitative data analysis techniques
- Preparing your data for analysis
- Exploring and Analysing your Data
- Interpreting your Data
- Presenting and displaying data - tables, graphs, charts, discussion
- Research Quality

Findings and Synthesis

- Interpreting Findings
- Findings, synthesis and triangulation
- Developing conclusions

The Dissertation Process

- Understanding the Process
- Relationships with Supervisors
- Dissertation Structure
- The Viva Process

Timetabling, Learner Effort and Credit

The contact hours, assessment and total learner effort are detailed above, and are reflective of, and appropriate for, the module ECTS.

The lectures in the first week will introduce the module to learners and cover an introduction and overview of the topic and the importance it plays within change in organisations. The lectures and tutorials of the following weeks will then turn to focus on the core content, and preparing for the assignment. The indicative teaching plan is below.

Week 1	Introduction and Topic Selection
Week 2	Topic Selection
Week 3 & 4	Critical review of the literature
Week 5 & 6	Research Design
Week 7 & 8	Data Collection Methods
Week 9 & 10	Data Analysis
Week 11	Findings and Synthesis
Week 12	Dissertation Process

1.1.6 Module teaching and learning (including formative assessment) strategy

This module is delivered through a series of seminar type lectures with an emphasis on extensive feedback for topic selection and guidance on literature selection, supported with exercise-based tutorials/workshops. Extensive discussion of examples and worksheets based on the learners' topics is used to assist learners in the design of their own research illustrating the reasoning behind the selection of the various options in each research design.

In order to obtain maximum benefit from the module and to prepare the learners effectively, the teaching plan is designed to support the development of the proposal in steps across the semester. Learners are encouraged to develop their proposal throughout the semester in order to make a constructive contribution in the lectures and to develop and justify their ideas without a "deadline" rush towards the end of the semester. In addition to the lectures, there are extensive support materials available on Moodle.

Assessment for BRM is centred on the completion of a research proposal that is used to guide and inform the dissertation. There is a strong emphasis put on the idea that there should be no "break" between the work the learner does in BRM culminating in the proposal, and the work they do for the dissertation, starting with the proposal.

1.1.7 Work-based learning and practice-placement

There is no work based learning or practical placement in the module.

1.1.8 E-learning

Griffith College uses Moodle, a virtual learning environment, to support its delivery of e-learning activities in the form of peer-to-peer support based around activities where learners give and receive feedback, forums where learners must contribute, formative quizzes and video links.

1.1.9 Module physical resource requirements

There are no special requirements for this module beyond a standard classroom set up.

1.1.10 Reading lists and other information resources

Core Reference Materials

- Collis, J., and Hussey, R. (2021) *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Students*. 5th Edition. London: Red Globe Press.
- Farrow, R., Iniesto, F., Weller, M. and Pitt, R. (2020) *The GO-GN Research Methods Handbook*. Open Education Research Hub: The Open University. Available at: https://go-gn.net/gogn_outputs/research-methods-handbook/ (Accessed: 11/07/2022).
- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 8th Edition. New York: Pearson.

Secondary reading and eResources

- Cottrell, S. (2017) *Critical Thinking Skills: Effective Analysis, Argument and Reflection*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Creswell, J. W. and Creswell, J. D. (2018) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Denscombe, M. (2019) *Research Proposals: A Practical Guide*. 2nd Ed. London: McGraw-Hill Education
- Denzin, N.K., and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (2017) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 5th Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Efron, S.E. and Ravid, R. (2019) *Writing the Literature Review: A Practical Guide*. Guilford Press: New York.
- Gray, D.E. (2021) *Doing Research in the Real World*. 5th Edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M., and Saldana, J. (2019) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. 4th Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Scherbaum, C., and Shockley, K. (2015) *Analysing Quantitative Data for Business and Management Students*. London: Sage
- Additional reading is recommended by the lecturer, appropriate to topics and to each learner's area of research.

eResources

The learner is expected to make extensive use of the College's online research resources (including LinkedIn Learning: [LinkedIn.com /learning/](https://www.linkedin.com/learning/)) to assist their research and project work in this and all other modules. They are also required to actively engage with the programme by using Moodle as a forum to contribute to and participate in wider discussions relating to their learning.

1.1.11 Specifications for module staffing requirements

Lecturer and other personnel should hold a Masters Level (Level 9) qualification in Business, Engineering, Management or Leadership or an equivalent professional qualification. Industry experience is beneficial but not a requirement.

Ideally, they would also hold a third level teaching qualification (e.g. the Griffith College Certificate in Education, Learning and Development)..

1.1.12 Module summative assessment strategy

Assessment for BRM is centred on the completion of a research proposal that is used to guide and inform the dissertation. There is a strong emphasis put on the idea that there should be no "break" between the work the learner does in the BRM module ending in the proposal, and the work they do for the dissertation, starting with the proposal.

As the module is 100% continuous assessment, with no exam, there is a considerable effort made to ensure learners understand the importance of class participation and the incremental development of their proposal. Quality class participation is essential and the guiding rule for assessing quality is the potential of the learner themselves and other learners to learn and develop from such participation. There is a significant component of the marks for participation in in-class workshops and activities designed to support the incremental development of the research proposal.

In order to support the teaching and learning strategy of the module, and provide regular opportunities for formative feedback the assessment has been divided as follows

No.	Type	Description	Weighting	Indicative Due Date
1.	Workshops & In Class Activities	Successful Participation in Proposal Development Activities.	15%	Throughout
2.	Proposal Part 1	Topic Overview, Aims, Objectives, Literature Review, Conceptual Framework	50%	Week 7
3.	Proposal Part 2	Research Design and Plan	35%	Week 12

Constructive Alignment of Assessment

In designing the assessment for the module, a conscious effort is made to ensure that each of the intended learning outcomes is assessed in the proposal. The following table of grading criteria for the proposal provides an indication of how the intended learning outcomes for the module are aligned with the assessment criteria used to assess the proposal.

It should be recognised that, strictly speaking and consistent with the overall aim of the module, some of the intended learning outcomes are assessed to a fuller extent at the dissertation stage. This would apply in particular to the interpretation of data.

Intended Learning Outcome	Grading Criteria for Proposal
MIMLO 1 MIMLO 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of the topic for research Quality and suitability of the aims and objectives Justification of the purpose of the research academically Justification of the research business case Coherent approach to all aspects of the research proposal; linking RQs to the literature review, research design, and analysis plan High quality professional presentation.
MIMLO 2 MIMLO 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts a critical literature review of pertinent sources Identifying the gaps and core debates in the literature RQs/Objectives clearly embedded in the literature review Has started to develop a reasoned conceptual framework that will assist in linking the literature to the research design Relevance and quality of the sources used High quality professional presentation
MIMLO 3 MIMLO 4 MIMLO 5 MIMLO 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops a suitable, achievable research plan Plan suitable to address the research questions Consistency between Paradigm, Approach, Methods, Sampling, Analysis Plan Ethics treated appropriately

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research quality issues clearly considered• Data Collection tools in development• High quality professional presentation• [It is not possible or indeed appropriate to assess some of the intended learning objectives at this stage as it would require the research to be complete.]
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Reassessment/Repeat assessment strategy: Griffith College regulations state that learners must pass all component elements of the module to be deemed to have passed the module.

- In the event of a learner failing components of / this module, they will be required to submit a new individual repeat assignment which will be made available on Moodle to learners, and which must be submitted as per faculty instructions.