MN3201 – Research Methods 1

MODULE TYPE/SEMESTER: Junior Honours/Core (20 Credits)/Semester 1

PRE-REQUISITE(S): Entry to a Single Honours Management or Management Science Degree

CO-REQUISITE(S): MN3202

MODULES REQUIRED FOR: MN4301

MODULE CO-ORDINATOR: Professor Huw Davies

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AIM:
The module seeks to provide students with an introduction to social science research approaches, methodologies, methods, and application; and to inculcate critical appraisal skills in the reading and interpretation of published research.

METHOD OF TEACHING & LEARNING:
Taught components; student-led small-group work; practical critical appraisal; independent study. Please note: much of the learning from this module comes from interactive discussions and notes developed in class. While some formal presentations will be used, not all of the material shared will readily transfer to Moodle. Students are strongly advised to attend all sessions for maximum learning benefit.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the module, students should be able to:
• demonstrate understanding of different research approaches, methodologies and methods;
• appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of key methodologies and methods;
• show some understanding of the issues involved in designing and delivering research projects
• explain the role of research in organisations and management;
• present and discuss key issues in research methodology;
• critically appraise published empirical research studies.
INDICATIVE TOPIC OUTLINE:
Lecture Topics per week:

Week

1  Introduction: Finding things out through structured enquiry – an introduction to research and an agenda for the course.

2  Research paradigms and philosophical underpinnings: How do we know what we know, and what might we do with that knowledge?

3  “There’s nothing as practical as a good theory”: Theory as understanding; theory as research tool.

4  Counting & measuring: Why do quantitative research and what methods are available?

5  Rich description and lived experience: Why do qualitative research and what methods are available?

6  Independent Learning Week: Student-led learning and work on first assessed coursework

7  Developing critical appraisal skills: What questions should be asked of published empirical research?

8  Practical critical appraisal: Reviewing the theoretical and empirical literature.

9  Practical critical appraisal: Facing up to (or facing down?) statistical analyses.

10 Mobilising knowledge for policy and management practice: Understanding the connections between academic research and non-academic research application (research use, influence and impact).

11 Self-study for assessed Critical Appraisal

12 Student support session for assessed Critical Appraisal

ASSESSMENT:
Continuous assessment is employed throughout. There will be two pieces of assessed work, which are equally weighted (50% + 50%):

- An essay-based question exploring some aspect of research approach and methodological considerations.
- A practical test of critical appraisal skills.

CORE READING LIST:
There is a vast array of research methods textbooks available, and students are encouraged to explore a wide range of these to ensure that they read on the topics presented from several different angles. In addition, students are expected to identify relevant readings as part of their preparation for student-led sessions. Many relevant texts are available from the library and from Blackwells.

Three key texts that will provide a good background are:

- Management research / Mark Easterby-Smith, Richard Thorpe and Paul R. Jackson (Sage, 2008)
- Doing critical management research / Mats Alvesson and Stanley Deetz (Sage, 2000)

Additional readings may be suggested as part of each class session.