MN3202 – Research Methods 2

Module Type/Semester: Junior Honours/Core (20 Credits)/Semester 2

Co-requisite(s): MN3201

Module Required for: MN4301

Module Co-ordinator: Dr Lisi Gordon

Teaching Team: Dr Lisi Gordon; Dr Fergus Neville; Dr Vicky Ward; Dr Keyan Lai; Dr David Dowell

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AIM:
This module builds on the material from MN3201. It consolidates key research competencies in problem definition, literature review, project management and study design. These competencies will be further developed using a combination of class lectures, progress meetings, one-on-one work with members of staff, and self-directed research. Students are expected to explore library research techniques, including the use of electronic resources in research; literature analysis and synthesis; research problem formulation; and the preparation of clear and focused proposals. Upon successful attainment of these objectives students may choose to proceed to implement their proposals as dissertations through MN4301 in their final year, provided they have a mark of 14 or above for MN3202.

Method of Teaching & Learning:
There are twelve hours of direct contact time which involve interactive class discussions and rely on student preparation and participation.

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 a research proposal; selecting a research topic.
Exploring research aims and questions (2 hours).
Week 2: Finding the literature: narrowing the topic (1 hour with library staff).
Week 3: Synthesising literature: writing a literature review
Revisiting research questions (2 hours)
Week 4: Quantitative Research Workshop (2 hours).
Week 5: Qualitative Research Workshop (2 hours).
Week 6: Research ethics and quality (2 hours)
Week 7: Writing a research proposal (1 hour)

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.


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.