# MODULE DESCRIPTOR

## SECTION A: MODULE DETAILS

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Module Title** | **Dissertation** | | |
| **Short Title** | **Dissertation** | | |
| **Module Code** | **BM634** | **Date of First Approval** | **September 2018** |
| **Responsible Department** | **Business, Law & Computing** | **Date of Version** | **September 2018** |
| **FHEQ Level** | **Level 6: Honours** | **Version No.** | **1** |
| **Credit Value** | **30 Credits** | **Expected Length** | **15 weeks** |
| **Status** | **Approved** | **Regime of Delivery** | **Campus Based** |

| Semester taught | S1 ☒ | S2 ☒ | S3 ☐ | SB ☐ | S1A ☒ | S2A ☒ | SBA ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | T1 ☐ | T2 ☐ | T3 ☐ | T4 ☐ | Other ☐ | Other ☐ | Other ☐ |

## SECTION B: MODULE DESCRIPTION

### Brief Description

The dissertation is a research project which is based around a topic to be investigated and the outcome is likely to be answers to a set of research questions. The dissertation is expected to be submitted in the form of a thesis*. This thesis will demonstrate research data gathering and analysis skills, as well as depth of understanding of the topic area. Formative feedback is provided by regular discussions with the dissertation supervisor and through comments received on draft chapters.

The students are required to select a feasible topic for study related to their degree programme and plan and carry out a piece of independent research with guidance from an allocated dissertation supervisor. The student will be allocated a dissertation supervisor who will work with the student initially in small groups and then on a one-to-one basis to provide specific guidance for the student's own dissertation providing guidance about the submission requirements.

The students can choose any area of study, which is of particular interest to them, provided that the core of the Dissertation falls within the single, major or joint field of study. Ideally the topic should be based around a question so that the students can put forward an argument and discuss the benefits and drawbacks, or exceptions and limitations, challenges and comparisons.

*Alternative summative assessment methods may be used to allow for originality, creativity, diversity, access and learning needs by agreement with the module leader and in consultation with the faculty.

### Indicative Content

- Development of a clear rationale for the research, aim statements/terms of reference, research questions and objectives
- Constructing of a literature review, synthesis and analysis relevant material
- Completion of primary research activities
- Critique of effectiveness of research methodologies in addressing the research problem and areas/scope for future/further research.
- Critically analysing information to extract important findings and presenting these.
- Development of key findings and conclusions along with recommendations

- Gaining access to research populations through negotiations.
- Time management and project planning with the use of Gantt charts.
- Professional image and approaches to external agents and actors.

## SECTION C: MODULE OUTCOMES

| **On successful completion of the module, the student will be able to:** |
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| 1. Critically review and analyse literature pertaining to the topic area selected for the overall research aim and objectives of the Dissertation |
| 2. Critically evaluate the performance of the primary research tool and identify weaknesses in the design, execution and findings produced by the research tool and make recommendations for future research opportunities |
| 3. Critically analyse the primary research findings in relation to theories and concepts to arrive at a set of evaluative conclusions and recommendations, where appropriate |
| 4. Demonstrate transferable skills including time management, project management, listening, negotiation, written communication skills, independent learning and advanced research skills. |

| **Key Skills Matrix** | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Developed* | *Assessed* |
| Information Acquisition | ☒ | ☒ |
| Critical thinking, analysis and synthesis | ☒ | ☒ |
| Self-reflection | ☒ | ☒ |
| Communication Skills: Oral | ☒ | ☐ |
| Communication Skills: Written | ☒ | ☒ |
| Information & Communications Technology (ICT) | ☒ | ☐ |
| Numeracy & Quantitative Skills | ☒ | ☐ |
| Problem Solving & Decision Making | ☐ | ☒ |
| Independent & Self-managed Learning | ☒ | ☐ |
| Working with Others | ☒ | ☐ |

## SECTION D: MODULE STRATEGY

| **Employability / Career Development Statement** |
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| The students are actively encouraged to pursue topics that relate directly to their chosen degree areas and targeted, where possible, at specific employers and their USP. This relates directly to using the topic of the dissertation as a focal point for the students' CV and job application where they can showcase their knowledge, skills and value added knowledge from their primary research. This approach encourages the students to research the issues that the industry is focussed on and allows them to research the present practice and issues the employers would be potentially interested in.<br><br>Experience of work-life is not specifically taught, but it is encountered through primary research activities with both organisations and consumers where appropriate. Working with peers is accomplished through group workshops with dissertation supervisors as well as research populations where negotiation for access and conducting the primary research is required. |

The development of degree subject area knowledge, understanding and skills are accomplished through the self-directed learning activities of the dissertation process that encourages the students to investigate the topic in real time through primary research activities and secondary research of up-to-date journals and research reports.

Generic skill development is accomplished through research, analysis, evaluation of primary research, at the same time report writing skills, time management and project management skills will be acquired, as well as interview and possibly questionnaire design and analysis skills. Independent learning skills are developed throughout the course to allow the students to become more self-reliant and plan and use their time accordingly. The students are also encouraged to be adaptive to the changing environment in which they are conducting their research due to the time scale involved in completing their dissertations.

The students are encouraged to develop their emotional intelligence throughout the course in order to be able to relate and interact with peers, the dissertation supervisor and the module leader as well research populations in order to generate answers to their research questions, which may be of a sensitive nature.

The students are required to produce a reflective career skill development summary as part of their dissertation final submission in order to allow them to reflect on the journey they have been on and the skills they have developed over the years at University. This summary is intended to allow the students to be able to talk with confidence about the skills they possess and knowledge they have acquired that would be of use to an employer. This also supports the development of the students' self-esteem and confidence as they embark upon the next stage of their life post university.

### Learning & Teaching Strategy

The teaching and learning strategy is based around a short lecture series running through the semester comprising approximately 15 two-hour lectures, and module leader guidance on an individual basis within some of these sessions. The lectures are based on knowledge development and application of theory to the students' own dissertation topic areas. During the semester the students will write their literature reviews and start to collect and analyse their own primary data and lecture sessions will focus on these aspects, whilst introducing the students to the development of conclusions and recommendations.

As the semester nears to its end and the final submission deadline approaches the students are given more one to one time to address specific issues with their work before the final run of lectures that focus on the final submission requirements and skill development review that the students can use in their interviews and job applications.
The lecture content and delivery are designed to be informative and where possible interactive and applicable so the students can quickly grasp the core aspects of the lecture topic and then set about using the knowledge and information to develop their own work, whilst encouraging question and answer sessions where necessary.

The students are assigned their own personal dissertation supervisor who they will meet with on a regular basis driven by the student's use of time management to take ownership of their relationship and work load throughout the semester.

The students need structured and developmental tutorials in order to front load the skill and confidence building in order to support them as well as provide equality and opportunity to succeed for all students including those with learning needs.

A comprehensive module handbook is provided that covers much of the content and process for completion of the module and this form much of the independent learning aspect of the module.

| Assessment Strategy |
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| The assessment strategy for this module is one summative assessment point comprising a 10,000-12,000 word dissertation*.

The formative assessment is the dissertation in total assessing the following components;
Introduction of approximately 2,000 words to present the research idea, problem definition/statement including context and rationale with evidence to support the authors views, overview of any organization or organizations being used as the focus of the research, TOR/aim statement and research questions and research objectives;
A 4,000 word literature review using a justified approach relevant to the focus and topic of the research that may result in, but not exclude alternative types of literature review – Systematic Literature Review; Narrative Literature Review; Integrative Literature Review; Theoretical Literature Review; Thematic Literature Review, Meta-analysis and or Meta-synthesis reviews.
A critique of the research tool, application and results noting any original insight and areas for future research as well as any weaknesses in the research findings.
Presentation and discussion of results using appropriate quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods integrating literature themes.
Development of conclusion and appropriate actionable recommendations where appropriate with costings, time scales and KPI.
A detailed reference list formatted in the Harvard style.
A range of appendices illustrating the research tool/s, evidence of primary research activity including where necessary a selection of interview transcripts, permissions from participating organizations and participants, completed research ethics checklists, skills review and additional research material, supervisor meeting diary, research project Gantt chart.

*Alternative summative assessment methods may be used to allow for originality, creativity, diversity, access and learning needs by agreement with the module leader and in consultation with the faculty. |

# SECTION E: SCHEDULED LEARNING AND TEACHING

| Notional Hours | |
|---|---|
| 1 Credit is equivalent to 10 notional learning hours (30 credits = 300 learning hours). All hours should be calculated based on what an individual student might be expected to receive. | |
| *Category (Please refer to QAA Guidance in completing this section)* | *Total Hours* |
| **Scheduled Learning and Teaching Activities (SLTA)** | |
| Lectures (incl. virtual and face to face contact) | 30 |
| Seminars (incl. virtual and face to face contact) | |
| Tutorials – per individual student (incl. virtual and face to face contact) | 15 |
| Project supervision (incl. virtual and face to face contact) | |
| Demonstration (incl. virtual and face to face contact) | |
| Practical classes and workshops | |
| Supervised time in studio/workshop/rehearsal space | |
| Fieldwork, e.g. survey work, data collection | |
| External visits, e.g. visits to sites, museums or collections | |
| **Sub-total: SLTA** | **45** |
| **PLUS Guided Independent Study (GIS)** | **255** |
| **PLUS Placements / Study Abroad / Work based Learning** | |
| ***TOTAL (Sub-total of SLTA plus GIS, plus Placements)*** | ***300*** |

# SECTION F: ASSESSMENTS

| | Summative Assessment Regime | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ID | KIS Category/Activity Type & Brief Description<br>(Please refer to: QAA Guidance in completing this section) | Learning Outcomes Assessed | Weighting % or P/F | Indicative Week No. |
| CW1 | Coursework: Dissertation: completed dissertation of 12,000 words* with appendices and personal skills development review. | 1-4 | 100% | 13-15 |
| CW1* | Alternative summative assessment methods may be used to allow for originality, creativity, diversity, access and learning needs by agreement with the module leader and in consultation with the faculty. | 1-4 | 100% | |
| **Module Pass Requirements:**<br>Module cannot be compensated | | | | |

# SECTION G: ACADEMIC RESOURCES

| **Key Texts** |
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| • Greetham, B. (2009) *How to Write Your Undergraduate Dissertation.* Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.<br>• Horn, R. (2009) *Researching & Writing Dissertations: A complete guide for business and management students.* London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.<br>• Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research Methods for Business Students.* 5th ed. Harlow: Prentice Hall. |
| **Journals** (including e-Journals) |
| • Harvard Business Review<br>• Personnel Today<br>• The Economist |
| **Databases** |
| • Mintel<br>• ABI Proquest |
| **Websites** |
| • Purdue University http://owl.english.purdue.edu/sitemap/<br>• The Financial Times http://www.ft.com/home/uk |

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