Module 7: Research Methods

Stage	1
Semester	1
Module Title	Research Methods
Module Number	7
Module Status	Mandatory
Module ECTS Credits	5
Module NFQ level	9
Pre-Requisite Module Titles	None
Co-Requisite Module Titles	None
Capstone Module?	No
List of Module Teaching Personnel	Dr Waseem Akhtar

Contact Hours				Non-contact Hours			Total Effort (hours)
36				64			100
Lecture	Practical	Tutorial	Seminar	Assignment	Placement	Independent Work	
18	18			24		40	

Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)					
	Continuous Assessment	Research Report	Practical	Final Examination	Total
Percentage Contribution	100				100%

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module learners will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an ability to carry out in-depth research using a variety of sociological research methods.
2. Show ability to select appropriate research topics and methodologies.
3. Demonstrate an ability to critically analyse and evaluate their own work and that of others.
4. Demonstrate an ability to conduct innovative research in new and emerging areas of Creative and Digital Media.
5. Prepare and present an academic research paper.
6. Design a practical project plan using project management tools and techniques to a professional standard.

Module Objectives

This core module serves to significantly deepen the learners' research skills, both in relation to their module related assignments and later in their completion of their major dissertation / dissertation by practice. Specifically, it extends their abilities as self-directed learners by equipping them with the appropriate vocabulary for reflecting on, critiquing and evaluating their own work and that of others. Throughout the module, they are required to engage in a number of research methodologies and current research issues and trends in the digital media industry. The module also addresses the need for good project management skills and techniques for the successful delivery of any project.

Module Curriculum

Research Methods

Fundamentals of research: Primary, Secondary and Documentary, Quantitative and Qualitative modes of research. Ethnography, Observation, Focus group research
Questionnaires – design and implementation

Gathering and analysing research
Overt vs. covert research, choosing an appropriate research methodology, Use of Primary data to inform concept design

Critical analysis
Peer review its role in professional development, Vocabulary for Critique and Analysis, thinking theoretically

New approaches in Research
Understanding Creative Media, semiotics and new media analysis, Online questionnaires, Virtual ethnography, structure and strategies of Creative media industries, Industry, Content and Technology trends.

Project Management
problem and opportunity definition, strategy formulation, project scoping, stakeholder analysis, time estimation, budgeting, scheduling, resource allocation, time/cost tradeoffs, risk assessment, establishment of a balanced comprehensive project monitoring system.

Reading Lists and other learning materials

Recommended Reading

Practical research methods for media and cultural studies	Davies & Mosdell	Edinburgh UP	2006
Developing Research Proposals	Denicolo & Becker	Sage	2012
Doing your research project	Bell	OUP	2005

Secondary Reading

The Good Research Guide: for small-scale social research projects	Denscombe	Open University Press	2010
Critical Thinking Skills: Developing Effective Analysis and Argument	Cottrell	Palgrave Macmillan	2011
Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches	Cresswell	Sage	2002
Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the Internet to Paper	Fink	Sage	2004

Additional reading as recommended by lecturer, appropriate to topic.

Module Learning Environment

Lectures are carried out in class rooms / lecture halls in the College. Lab tutorials are carried out in computer labs throughout the Campus. All have the software required to deliver the programme.

Library

All learners have access to an extensive range of physical and electronic (remotely accessible) library resources. The library monitors and updates its resources on an on-going basis, in line with the College's Library Acquisition Policy. Lecturers update reading lists for this course on an annual basis as is the norm with all courses run by Griffith College.

Online Resources:

Learners are expected to make extensive use of the college's on-line research resources to assist their research and project work in this and all subsequent modules. They are also required to actively engage with the

programme by using Moodle (a Virtual Learning Environment) as a forum to contribute to and participate in wider discussions relating to their learning.

Key online resources currently provided by the college include:

The ACM Digital Library – full text access to their journals, transactions and proceedings
Business Source Premier – full text from about 4,000 journals in a wide variety of disciplines including computing and social and behavioural sciences
ABI/Inform – a prestigious and wide ranging database of about 1,500scholarly journals
Infotrac – a multidisciplinary database of approximately 7,000 full text journals
Emerald Insight – 100 core management journals
Safari Books Online – electronic texts from innovative and contemporary publishers
Design and Applied Arts Index – bibliographic data on design and plastic arts
Reuters Business Insights and **Datamonitor** – Industry quality market intelligence
LexisNexis – thousands of newspapers and news resources from all around the world, also scholarly journals in many disciplines, financial and business information, and trade journals in technology and media industries
ERIC Fulltext – the education index with fulltext

As with other programmes offered by the college, the range of electronic resources available to learners is fully expected to increase as the team's experience of delivering the programme grows,. In the event of learners seeking a resource not yet provided by the college, the interlibrary loan facility with TCD and UK libraries continue to be provided to learners without charge. In the past, this practice has been very helpful in specifying the most appropriate electronic resources to be acquired to support each learner cohort.

Module Teaching and Learning Strategy

Learners are taught using a combination of lectures, tutorials and learner-led seminars. Tutorials and seminars are used to develop and discuss information presented in lectures. The learner-led seminar where the learner presents their work to the lecturer and other members of their class in a structured fashion is a critical component of the course and is invaluable in the learner's academic and professional development. Learners present the interim findings of their research and present it to the group. They receive structured feedback on their findings.

Module Assessment Strategy

Assessment in this module is by continuous assessment. Continuous assessment develops critical analysis and academic research skills and is

based on seminar logbooks and presentations throughout the semester. The Assessment consists of three components.

Element No.	Weighting	Type	Description	Learning Outcomes Assessed
1	40%	Assignment	A research Log Book that is maintained for the Semester by the learner. Topics related to the selection of the MSc Dissertation are dealt with during lectures: for example, Topic Selection; Research Methods; the Internet as a Research Tool; Feasibility Analysis, Relevance; Statistical Data; other kinds of Data. The final part of this will be the development of a detailed project plan. The lecturer signs (but does not mark) the Log Book at regular intervals – typically after each topic – and at the end of the semester the Log Book is marked as a reflection of engagement with methods and best practice. The Log Book will be assessed in terms of: a) Engagement with different methodologies b) Attention to detail c) Working through a variety of approaches	2, 4 and 6.

			d) Back-ground research e) Selection of data f) Time management g) Other criteria h) Project Plan	

2	50%	Assignment	The learner will be required to submit an Academic Research Paper on one of the areas being researched as part of the log book exercises. This will be typically about 4000 words. This paper will typically be submitted in the third quarter of the module. The mark for this paper will represent 50% of the overall mark for the module.
			The paper will be assessed in terms of:
			  a) Background research
			  b) Sources and Referencing
			  c) Critical analysis
			  d) Conclusions
				1 and 5.

3	10%		The learners will make a presentation of the findings in their research report to a group of examiners.	3