Aston Business School
Birmingham

# BMM646 Analysis for Dissertation Research Projects

## Academic Year 2012/13

Number of Aston Credits: 15

Number of ECTS Credits: 7.5

## Staff Member Responsible for the Module:

Mr. Geoff Parkes, Teaching Fellow, Marketing Group
Aston Business School, Room 231
Email: parkesgs@aston.ac.uk
Availability: please see office hours or contact Marketing Group Administrator:
Samantha Doidge, ABS Room 236, Extension 3185

## Pre-requisites for the module:

None

## Mode of Attendance:

Lectures programme, Library Workshop, and Supervisors Office Hours.

It should be stressed that the Dissertation Research Project is your opportunity to undertake self-directed research on a subject of your choice. It is a demanding aspect of the programme and will require intensive and independent study.

This Module Outline should also be read in conjunction with the MSc Marketing Management Dissertation Guidelines contained in your Handbook.

## Module Objective and Learning Outcomes:

It is a requirement of the MSc Marketing Management course that participants undertake and successfully complete a Dissertation Research Project. BMM646 Analysis for Dissertation Research Project Module is therefore designed to help students understand the nature of analysis for dissertation research projects in marketing. The content will focus upon the necessary stages required for successful planning and execution of a research project.

In addition to this Module, you will be further prepared for the Dissertation Research Project by engaging in additional lectures, workshops and practical exercises as part of a compulsory BMM603 Marketing Research module in Term 2. BMM603 focuses on data collection and analysis techniques.

The Dissertation Research Dissertation Project itself provides students with the opportunity to undertake self-directed research on a subject in considerable depth.

The focus of the Module is applied. This allows Msc students to discuss the commercial implications of their work with potential employees following completion of their degree.

## Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of the Module, successful students will be able to:

- Understand the importance of information and research in marketing decisions, and the stages involved in the marketing research process.
- Assess different marketing research concepts and techniques and be able to distinguish between exploratory, descriptive and causal research.
- Critically assess decision making and using appropriate tools, be able to select the most appropriate mix of techniques.
- Examine how research influences strategy in today's organisations.

**Below are some examples of past dissertation titles:**

- *The Strategies in Competitive Positioning: a Case Study of KFC in China*
- *An Analysis of internal marketing options to promote pension products for an insurance company in India*
- *Consumer Preferences and Approaches of Major Players in the Indian Branded Snack Food Industry*
- *Exploring Marketing strategies of Multinational Retailers in China: A case Study of Carrefour*

## Supervision:

**In order for us to allocate Supervisors you must select from a range of Dissertation Research Project Topics posted on Blackboard. Please select 3. The Marketing Group will endeavor to allocate one of your first three choices of topic, but please remember this may not always be possible.**

**You must submit your selection by Friday 5pm Week 5 of Term 1.You will be given details of how to submit your selection. You will then be allocated a supervisor in Week 7 of Term 1.This allocation is final and cannot be re-negotiated.**

It is important that once your supervisor has been allocated that you arrange to meet with them to discuss your dissertation. Throughout the period it is your responsibility to arrange regular meetings with your supervisor and agree a timetable for completion of each stage of the dissertation.

Although there may be some deadlines set by the supervisor, essentially you will set the agenda for your research management. **Please refer to the Dissertation Guidelines in your Student Handbook.**

Your supervisor will comment on your ideas, help you narrow down the topic, may suggest sources of reading in the initial stages, they will provide advice on various other problems which may arise in the course of your dissertation. They should provide feedback on your work.

There is also a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on Blackboard which you should refer to with a query in the first instance. This is regularly up-dated with answers to questions that are frequently asked. Your Supervisor may refer you to these and you should have looked at these before asking your Supervisor.

## Assessment:

This module will be assessed via a Dissertation Research Project Proposal worth 100% of the final grade, together with completed Ethical Approval Form

The proposal is designed to fulfill the pedagogical objectives outlined in the learning outcomes.

The Dissertation proposal should describe the marketing topic and analysis the student intends to conduct for the remainder of the academic year in completion of the dissertation itself. A Dissertation Research Project Template is included on Blackboard.

A Marking Criteria Guide is also attached.

**The Dissertation Research Project Proposal must be submitted to the Exams Office by Friday 4pm of Week 15. Your submission must include:**

1. Your Proposal
2. Completed Ethical Approval Form (this will be **unsigned** by your Supervisor)
3. Mark Sheet

Note the following which are all available on Blackboard:

Ethical Approval Form
Mark Sheet
Dissertation Research Project Proposal Template
BMM646 Marking Scheme

## Method of Teaching:

The Lecture programme will introduce students to the required stages in conducting market research and students will gain an understanding of how data collected can be analysed to complement strategic decision making.

The Lectures feature a blended format of material including practical detail on the content of good dissertation design together with information from Library Services on how to use resources effectively.

| Week | Lecture Content | Readings |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Introduction**<br>Research Methods and Practice Based Dissertations<br><br>Mr Geoff Parkes | Lee and Lings Chapter 1 |
| 2 | **The Literature Review**<br><br>Nick Lee | Lee and Lings Chapters 4 |
| 3 | **Secondary Resources: Finding and Referencing Information**<br><br>Library and Information Services | Library Workshops – see timetable |
| 4 | **Introduction to Qualitative Research**<br><br>Dr Ian Combe | Lee and Lings Chapters 9 and 10 |
| 5 | **Introduction to Quantitative Research**<br><br>Dr Andrew Farrell | Lee and Lings Chapters 11 and 12 |
| 6 | **Theory and Practice**<br>Guest Speaker Dr John Rudd discusses the integration of theory and practice | |
| 7 | **Managing your Supervisor**<br><br>Mr Geoff Parkes | |
| 8 | Supervisor Office Hours | |

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| 9 | **Summary and Assessment Details**<br>Mr Geoff Parkes | Course Notes |

## Corporate Connections:

Guest lectures focusing on the practical use of research analysis are used to address the class during the module.

## International Dimensions:

As students are free to select whichever organization they like for the purposes of their dissertation, attention is drawn to the issues involved in conducting market research planning and cross national research.

## Contribution of Research:

This module will draw on the wealth of experience and work of the Module Contributors and Guest Lectures. The Links between Theory and Practice are developed in the Course of the Module.

## Ethics, Responsibility & Sustainability:

As a price of research, this module involves the preparation and completion of an Ethical Review process. Students must take due regard to ethical considerations and the impact these will have on all stakeholders involved in a project.

Sustainability and corporate responsibility is a recurring theme running through all marketing modules and it is expected that students will integrate these topics in relevant in project research.

**STAFF AVAILABILITY DETAILS**

You should arrange Office Hours with your Supervisor via the On-Line Diary system – http://preview.tinyurl.com

It is important to organize your time and to plan ahead. Your supervisory meeting should be scheduled well in advance. It is likely that faculty will attend international conferences to present their work and hence will not be on-site all year.

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## Learning Hours:

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| Lectures: | 26 |
| Drop in Sessions | 8 |
| Directed reading (for classes) | 26 |
| Self-Directed reading / research | 50 |
| Dissertation Proposal preparation: | 40 |
| **Total:** | **150** |

**The following essential and recommended readings are subject to change. Students should not therefore purchase textbooks prior to commencing their course. If students wish to undertake background reading before starting the course, many of the chapters/readings are available in electronic form via on-line library catalogues and other resources.**

## Essential Reading:

The core texts for this module are:
Lee, Nick with Ian Lings (2008) Doing Business Research, London: Sage.

Other Useful Information Sources:
Journal of Marketing
European Journal of Marketing
California Management Review
Harvard Business Review
Long Range Planning
The Financial Times (FT)
The Economist

## Other Useful Information:

http://www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/studentsupport/studyskills/ (Aston Library's website offering help with study skills, group work, and plagiarism)