



# **Post-Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE)**

## **Module 3: Individual Project**

### **(Part-time)**

**ifs School of Finance  
MODULE SPECIFICATION**

<b>1. Title</b>	<b>Individual Project</b>
<b>2. Start date</b>	September 2011
<b>3. Level of module</b>	Level 7
<b>4. Number of credits</b>	20 credits
<b>5. Status</b>	Core
<b>6. Recommended prior modules</b>	Students should have completed modules 1 and 2 of the PGCHE.
<b>7. Programmes of study to which module contributes</b>	PGCHE

<p><b>8. Purpose/rationale/positioning</b></p> <p>The Individual Project is a Level 7 module that will both equip participants with the tools to plan and undertake an individual project based on primary and/or secondary research, and give them the opportunity to put this learning into practice through designing and undertaking a study.</p> <p>The module thus provides participants with support and development in respect of primary and/or secondary research methods in banking and finance and/or education. The module will encourage the construction and analysis of alternative perspectives, while also generating critical engagement with scholarship and data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Participants have the opportunity to explore a topic related to banking and finance and/or education of particular interest to them, consolidating and building on the learning of earlier modules.</p> <p>The module is thus designed to enhance participants' abilities to work independently and systematically to produce a report relevant to education and/or banking and finance. The module also aims to give participants the skills to review the research presented by others with a more critical eye.</p>
<p><b>9. Intended subject specific learning outcomes and, as appropriate, their relationship to programme learning outcomes</b></p> <p>On successful completion of this module, participants should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plan and undertake an individual project to a standard appropriate for level 7 in the FHEQ;</li> <li>2. Demonstrate broad understanding and insight in relation to the topic of their project;</li> <li>3. Demonstrate both knowledge of a range of secondary sources related to education and/or banking and finance (including peer-reviewed journal articles) and the ability to evaluate the usefulness of such information for their project;</li> <li>4. Demonstrate the broad methodological knowledge and practical skills required for project planning and analysis of their materials;</li> <li>5. Synthesise many of the elements covered in the earlier part of the PGCHE.</li> </ol> <p>These intended module learning outcomes contribute to the following programme learning outcomes: K1, K2, K3, K4 and K5 together with the generic programme skills set out in sections B, C, and D of the programme specification.</p>

**10. Intended generic learning outcomes and, as appropriate, their relationship to programme learning outcomes**

On completion of this module participants will be able to demonstrate achievement of the following generic learning outcomes:

- Take responsibility for independent learning using academic resources;
- Demonstrate an ability to work independently, showing resourcefulness in finding solutions to problems, and self-discipline in meeting deadlines;
- Develop project planning and implementation skills;
- Show competency in research;
- Communicate effectively in a range of media and in a manner appropriate for and/or specified by the target audience.

These intended generic learning outcomes contribute to the following programme learning outcomes: B, C and D.

## **11. Learning and Teaching – Methods of delivery**

### **Mode of Study and Learning Hours.**

This module is part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education. However, because of the nature of the module, the mode of study differs to that of other modules on the PGCHE.

Participants will spend the equivalent of 200 notional learning hours over the fourteen week duration of the module. Learning will be through a mix of supervision and independent study, with a bias towards the latter.

Participants will liaise with their supervisor in the early stages of the module, to determine the purpose, primary topic, and scope of their project. Preliminary discussions with the Personal Tutor and the Module Leaders will determine which supervisor is allocated to each participant. Regular contact will be maintained between the participant and their supervisor throughout the module. Participants opting to undertake primary research will be inducted in the B.E.R.A. guidelines and will be obliged to submit their proposed letter to participants to their supervisor beforehand.

Following successful completion and approval of their Individual Project proposal, participants then undertake independent study, which they write up for assessment. During this period they work largely on their own under individual supervision. However, opportunities to interact with their fellow participants will remain via online forums and other media.

### **Supervision**

Individual supervision is the core of the support offered to participants during the module. Supervisors will be allocated to participants on the basis of a topic proposal that participants submit early in the module, and preferably no later than the end of week 3. Supervisors will comment on their participants' proposals, and once participants start their projects, supervisors will liaise regularly with their participants, according to a schedule agreed between the participant and their supervisor in the early stages of the project, shaped substantially by the study timetable.

Supervisors will support participants in refining their topics, critiquing the literature and fine-tuning their research methodology (if appropriate). They will also provide advice on managing issues that arise, and read and comment on early drafts of their participants' work.

### **Personal Tutor**

Participants will also be able to seek advice from their personal tutor about their project. The main role of the personal tutor in this specific regard will be to act as a sounding board for the participant's ideas. The personal tutor will not be assessing their project.

### **Reading**

Participants will be expected to read and use a variety of sources pertinent to the topic they have chosen.

### **Indicative Reading**

Bell, J., (2005), *Doing your Research Project*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edn, Maidenhead. Open University Press.

### **Supplementary Reading**

There is substantial literature on both research methods and, more specifically, on writing a dissertation, encompassing both general overview texts and books focussing on specific aspects, for example, particular methodologies. The following is an indicative selection:

Bryman, A., and Bell, A., (2007), *Business Research Methods*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford: Oxford

University Press.

Collis, J., and Hussey, R. (2009), *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Field, A. (2009), *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS Student Edition, with SPSS CD Version 17.0*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, London, Sage.

Fisher, C. (2010), *Researching and Writing a Dissertation: An Essential Guide for Business Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Harlow, Pearson Education Limited.

Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (2002), *Research Methods for Managers*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, London, Sage.

Robson, C. (2002), *Real World Research*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, Oxford, Blackwell.

Saunders, M.N.K., Thornhill, A. and Lewis, P. (2009), *Research Methods for Business Students*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn, Harlow, Pearson Education Limited.

Wilson, J. (2010), *Essentials of Business Research: A Guide to Doing Your Research Project*, London, Sage.

### **Other indicative reading**

There are a number of other journals that could contain relevant material. In developing their topic and undertaking their literature review, participants may find it helpful to consider both journals orientated to research methods, and research articles in journals related to financial services, reading the latter with a critical eye to the methodology employed.

This selection provides a starting point:

#### *Financial Services, Business and Management:*

*ABA Banking Journal*

*ABA Bank Marketing*

*The Banker*

*Banking Strategies*

*British Journal of Management*

*Financial World*

*International Journal of Bank Marketing*

*Journal of Bank Regulation*

*Journal of Banking and Finance*

*Journal of Economics & Business*

*Journal of Financial Intermediation*

*Journal of Financial Services Marketing*

*Journal of Management Studies*

*Journal of Retail Banking*

#### *Research in Financial Services, Business and Management:*

*Action Research*

*International Journal of Economics and Business Research*

*Journal of Accounting Research*

*Journal of Business Research*

*Journal of Financial Research*

*Journal of Financial Services Research*

*Journal of Mixed Methods Research*

*Journal of Marketing Research*

*Organisational Research Methods*

*Qualitative Inquiry*

*Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*

*Qualitative Research*

*Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management*

*Qualitative Research in Organisations and Management: An International Journal*  
*Social Science Research*  
*Sociological Methods and Research [quantitative]*  
*World Bank Research Programme*

## 12. Assessment

Summative assessment for this module will comprise two components:

Research Proposal	400 words	10%
Individual Project	3600	90%

Along with the finished piece of work, participants will be required to submit their original proposal with their supervisor's feedback and a short piece that discusses the changes they made to their proposal as a result of that feedback, and reflects on the key points to have emerged from their project, with reference to their own professional practice.

### Pass Mark

50%

### Guidance on possible subject matter:

Listed below are some possible research topics for module three, they are included for guidance purposes only:

- The Balanced Scorecard: does it really provide an overview of the *whole* organisation's performance?
- Applying the learning styles framework to a banking and finance teaching context: good professional practice or simply following the crowd?
- Basel 1, 2, and 3: assessing the impact on regulating risk in the financial services industry.
- Analyse two or three current learning theories, with detailed reference to both established and recent scholarship. Explore the applicability of each theory to your own teaching context. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the theories in the light of your own professional practice.
- Survey a student group to explore their attitudes and practices concerning technology-enhanced learning for banking and finance. Analyse your findings in the light of at least one learning theory.
- Devise a practical strategy for maintaining currency in the subjects of banking and finance, in relation to teaching in Higher Education. Explore how the strategy can be used to enhance learning and teaching in Higher Education, with reference to your own professional practice.
- Survey a group of your teaching colleagues. What do they identify as the main impediments to effective learning and teaching in banking and finance in Higher Education? Evaluate your participants' responses. What steps would you recommend to address these impediments?
- Explore sustainability as it relates to the learning and teaching of banking and finance in Higher Education. Present your understanding of sustainability, and offer alternative understandings. Consider the extent to which your understanding of sustainability could be applied to enhance learning and teaching.

### **13. Syllabus overview**

Stage one of the module introduces participants to sample project titles, which they are welcome to use. In addition, stage 1 allows the participant to formulate their own research topic, based on interests they have developed over the first two modules, and in their professional practice.

Stage two of this module is designed to allow participants to undertake their project. This could focus on critical review and analysis of secondary sources, or might encompass a small-scale piece of data collection and analysis.

Participants will demonstrate an ability to select, define and focus on an issue at an appropriate level, applying relevant methodologies to address the topic. They will also demonstrate an ability to develop recommendations and/or logical conclusions from their findings with an awareness of the limitations inherent in a small-scale project of this kind.

### **14. Module Content**

#### **Stage One: Introduction**

Participants will be introduced to the aims and objectives of the module. Participants will also be introduced to an article which is the result of a small-scale research project (Eynon, R. [2008] 'The use of the world wide web in learning and teaching in higher education: reality and rhetoric' *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 15-23), though it will be larger than the project the participants themselves are undertaking. In addition, participants will be introduced to sample project titles, which they may use or adapt, in consultation with their supervisor. Alternatively, participants can devise their own project, again in consultation with their supervisor. At the end of this stage, participants and supervisors will agree the title and scope of the project.

#### **Stage Two: Individual Project**

Much of this stage will be managed through the participant's independent work, supported by their supervisor.

#### **Completion/Submission**

There is no formal syllabus for this stage. Each participant will be developing their knowledge and understanding of a particular topic in relation to education and/or banking and finance. In addition, they will learn, with their supervisor's support, to do the following:

1. Précis or concisely summarise the key points of a long document and main findings.
2. Identify a topic that is interesting and feasible to investigate within the scope of a small-scale project.
3. Develop an appropriate methodology and collect data if appropriate.
4. Analyse primary data, and/or critique secondary sources.
5. Present and discuss findings.
6. Recognise limitation.
7. Make conclusions/recommendations, for example, future research, for practical application.