

**ifs School of Finance  
MODULE SPECIFICATION**

<b>1. Title</b>	<b>Research Methods</b>
<b>Short code</b>	7-RMET
<b>2. Start date</b>	Term 3 or 4 (part-time); Term 1 (full-time)
<b>3. Level of module</b>	Level 7
<b>4. Number of credits</b>	15 credits
<b>5. Status</b>	Compulsory
<b>6. Recommended prior modules</b>	None
<b>7. Programmes of study to which module contributes</b>	MSc in Banking Practice and Management PGDip in Banking Practice and Management

**8. Purpose/rationale/positioning**

The aim of this module is to give students the knowledge, skills and understanding they will need to design, implement and write up a research project and to critically review the research presented by others.

**9. Intended subject specific learning outcomes and, as appropriate, their relationship to programme learning outcomes**

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

1. Plan a research project appropriate for a Masters level dissertation, including locating their project within a particular tradition, designing researchable questions and developing a research proposal.
2. Plan and conduct a systematic search of the literature and other secondary sources, and critically evaluate the usefulness of such information for their research question or problem, whether academic or practice-based;
3. Critically evaluate, and apply sound judgement in using research and other industry reports, papers and resources, encountered in their day-to-day work;
4. Demonstrate the broad methodological knowledge and practical skills required for the planning of research, data collection and analysis.

These intended module learning outcomes contribute to the following programme learning outcomes: K2, I1, I5, P2, P3, P4

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

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

- Take responsibility for their independent learning using academic and industry-based resources;
- Work independently, exercising initiative and personal responsibility to meet deadlines;
- Show competency in research and data acquisition;
- Communicate effectively in a range of media and in a manner appropriate for the audience and purpose.

These intended generic learning outcomes contribute to the following programme learning outcomes: T1, T2, T3, T4

## 11. Methods of delivery

**Total learning hours:** 150

### Learning and Teaching

The learning and teaching strategy is designed to support students' understanding of key concepts and the development of their intellectual, practical and transferable skills as stated in the module aims and learning outcomes.

There are two distinct modes of study.

For part-time students, learning and teaching will be via a blend of intensive face-to-face block teaching at *ifs'* City campus and online distance learning centred on *ifs'* virtual learning environment, and supported by students' independent study.

For full-time students, the learning and teaching will be via face-to-face sessions at the *ifs'* City campus, supported by access to the *ifs'* virtual learning environment and students' own independent study.

All students will have access to study guide materials (provided in both printed and online format). These will "set the scene" for the module, introduce the different themes, provide an overview of the key challenges in the area and critically support the self-learning elements of the module.

Materials referred to will either be freely available or available via *ifs KnowledgeBank*, the *ifs'* online library.

The e-Learning support via the *ifs'* virtual learning environment will include:

- Learning materials
- e-book and e-Journal access
- Discussion forums and activities
- Lecturer/tutor support

Guidance on approaches to study and how to best use these materials will be provided in the MSc Programme Handbook in accordance with the principles set out in the *Learning and Teaching Strategy*.

Students will also be encouraged to identify and share relevant readings and other links with the course group to support their own knowledge creation.

### Practice-orientated Learning

Lecturers on the module will have a good understanding of both theory and practice. Examples will be drawn from research practice within business and management, financial services, and more broadly within the social sciences.

### Required Reading

Field, A. (2013) *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Saunders, M.N.K., Thornhill, A. and Lewis, P. (2012) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 6th Edition. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

### Supplementary reading

There is a huge literature on research methods, encompassing both general overview texts and books focusing on specific aspects. The following is an indicative selection, and other readings will be referenced as relevant in the course materials:

- Bell, J. (2010) *Doing your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Open University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2011) *Business Research Methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2009) *Business Research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fisher, C. (2010) *Researching and Writing a Dissertation: An Essential Guide for Business Students*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Pearson Education.
- Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (2010) *Research Methods for Managers*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Robson, C. (2011) *Real World Research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rowntree, D. (2000) *Statistics without Tears – An Introduction for Non-Mathematicians* London: Penguin.
- Wallace, M. and Wray, A. (2011) *Critical Reading and Writing for Postgraduates*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Sage.
- Wilson, J. (2010) *Essentials of Business Research: A Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. London, Thousands Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd.

### Other indicative reading

There are a number of other journals that could contain relevant material. For this module, students will 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 short selection provides a starting point:

#### Financial Services, Business and Management:

*British Journal of Management*

*Financial World* (students will receive this automatically as members of **ifs**)

*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 Programm*

## **12. Assessment**

Summative assessment for this module will comprise two components:

Assignment	2,000 words	30%
Research Proposal	2,500 words	70%

Formative assessment will comprise individual and group practical exercises.

### **Pass Mark**

50%

### **Grading of module performance**

The module will be graded Pass, Merit or Distinction.

### **13. Syllabus overview**

This module introduces and covers the key areas to support the successful design and implementation of a Masters level dissertation. Students explore different conceptions of research and the way these are related to research strategy and research design. They study the main methods of data collection, and both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Particular attention is paid to using secondary sources, both in terms of critical literature review and as a means of data collection. Attention is also paid to structuring and presenting the research proposal and the dissertation.

### **14. Syllabus**

1. Planning a research project
2. Conducting a literature review
3. Theory, Methodologies and Ethics in Research
4. Research Strategies and Designs
  - 4.1. Primary data collection
    - 4.1.1. Quantitative methods: surveys and questionnaires
    - 4.1.2. Qualitative methods: observation, interviews and case studies
  - 4.2. Secondary data collection
  - 4.3. Quantitative data analysis
  - 4.4. Qualitative data analysis
5. Managing and Writing up the Research Project