

Study Guide 2020

MBAA 874 - Research Methodology

MASTERS OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)

NWU BUSINESS SCHOOL

A. Module information section

1. Module title and structure: Research Methodology

Title Code: MBAA 874

NQF Level: 9

Credits: 12

Notional Hours: 120

Duration: Year module (both semesters)

2. Word of welcome

Welcome to this module in Research Methodology which is designed to assist you experiencing an exciting research journey and in constructing a successful MBA research proposal towards finalising your mini-dissertation (MBAC 873) in 2021. MBA students often approach research methodology with fear and anxiety, where it should actually be with joy and enlightenment. Conducting business research is critical for any managers to solve critical business related problems and make informed and evidence-based decisions. This module aims to introduce you to the world of business research methodology and further expand your knowledge and skill to conduct rigorous and ethical research by applying both quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

Research is a very important part of development and is one of the critical competencies for socio-economic development. Let us develop a research culture to assist us on the path of employability and prosperity. You should develop an inquiry mind, which is all about promoting enthusiasm for reading and writing, for learning, and for living.

Enjoy this module and become the manager and responsible leader who is able to make informed decisions by conducting ethical business research to optimise performance at all levels.

3. Contact persons

LECTURERS	E-MAIL/Contact
Module coordinator/ Leader Prof Ravinder Rena Prof Ravinder Rena <i>Lecturer Mahikeng site of delivery</i> Based in Mafikeng- Leopard Park Offices	ravinder.rena@nwu.ac.za Office: 018 389 2496 Cell: 0847828059
Prof Christoff Botha <i>Lecturer Potchefstroom/Vaal site of delivery</i>	Christoff.Botha@nwu.ac.za Office: 018 299 1672 Cell: 082 737 7823

4. Rationale

There is an ongoing debate about whether Management and Business research should lead to developments in academic theory (pure/basic research), or whether it should lead to solutions of practical organisational problems (applied research). Business research mainly resides under applied research, with a theoretical foundation. Business research does not exist in isolation but represents what is going on in the real world of business and management and is conducted by applying a research process that involves a series of steps that systematically investigate a problem or an opportunity facing the organisation or business. The sequence of steps involved in the business research process are usually as follows: problem/opportunity identification and formulation, planning a research design, selecting a research method, selecting the sampling procedure, data collection, analysing and evaluating the data to finally prepare a business report, which in the MBA is the mini-dissertation within three options (Classic Chapters; Case study or Article plus supporting chapters).

The scope of research methodology is wider than that of research methods. Thus, research methodology includes not only the research methods but also the logic behind the chosen research methods, whether within a qualitative, quantitative or mixed method approach, and explains why we are using a particular method or technique and why we are not using others so that research results are capable of being evaluated either by the researcher him/herself or by others. This module will facilitate research that is enabling business improvement through innovative and applied approaches.

It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods or techniques but also the methodology. In applying business researcher you not only need to know how to develop certain indices or tests or how to apply particular research techniques, but also need to know which of these methods or techniques, are relevant and which are not, and what would they mean and indicate. You also need to understand the assumptions underlying various techniques and need to know the criteria by which to decide that certain techniques and procedures will be applicable to certain problems and others will not. This means that it is necessary for you as researcher to design a methodology suitable for his/her research problem as it may differ from problem to problem.

5. Module aims and outcomes

This module aims to guide participants to:

- Gain a foundation in business research methodology and methods within which to explore and evaluate the variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches to business research.
- Comprehend and demonstrate both argumentative and numerical information in a business context.
- Learn key methods and techniques of qualitative and quantitative (statistical) data collection and analysis of business related problems; interpretation, presentation and modelling; appreciate the influence of probability and data distributions on business decisions; understand and employ basic techniques of statistical inference.
- Conduct ethical business research by applying the business research process in solving real world business problems.
- Develop business research proposals.
- Compose a Business Research Proposal for continuation with **MBAC 873** in next year **2021**.

Module Outcomes

On completion of the module the learner should be able to:

- Demonstrate a command of the foundations of business research methodology and methods;
- Describe the role of theory, research methodology, inductive versus deductive research and the basic philosophical background to research ;
- Recognise the characteristics of a good research and publishing feasibility;
- Collect empirical data in both qualitative and quantitative or mixed and use various tools of statistical and non-statistical data analysis;
- Identify, analyse and comprehend a research problem, based upon a relatively comprehensive literature review, and formulate a scientific problem statement, research objectives, relevant hypotheses and plan a research design suitable for the problem statement;
- Demonstrate an ethical and professional code of conduct and attitude towards business research and research methodology;
- Demonstrate comprehensive and systematic knowledge and skills relevant to business research methodology and as a manager be able to apply it to compile a business research proposal in a relevant business context.

Specific Content Outcomes

- Display a working knowledge of business research principles and practices and how to ethically apply them.
- Demonstrate an understanding of a research proposal and its contents
- Critically evaluate the business research process and distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research.
- Develop a relevant business research topic argument and state a title
- State a relevant business research problem (Problem statement)
- Conduct a comprehensive and topical literature review in support of the research problem
- Generate appropriate research questions/hypotheses
- Select an appropriate research design, sampling method, data collection and analysis methods in support of the research question/hypothesis
- Develop and propose a research design, sampling method, data collection and analysis based on the problem statement and research questions/hypotheses
- Demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics of business research rigour and ability to critically assess and review research of others.
- Acquire the basic competence to conduct business research through various methods related to quantitative and qualitative approaches with special focus on: questionnaire design, data analysis, interview skills, content analysis and case study research.
- Develop and complete a sound business related research proposal that could be further developed in conjunction with an assigned research supervisor for ethical approval and continuation of the research towards completion of MBAC 873- MBA mini-dissertation in the consecutive year in any of the follow three formats: Classic Mini-dissertation / Article option / Business Case study option.

6. Module plan

Activity	Study Units / Outcome	Date <i>Time table will be communicated.</i>
<u>Study School 1:</u> Mandatory attendance in <u>Potchefstroom.</u> All MBA's	Study unit outcomes • Introduction to Business Research- Overview • Research proposal outline • Topic/Scope of research (Identify business/topical area of research) • Accessing NWU Library and on- line search of data bases • Ethics in research Literature research and Review • Problem statement • Business Research Methodology ○ Research Design	27 January- 31 January 2020 (Potch and Vaal students Compulsory week)
Assignment 1: Individual Assignment 1 (25%)		Due: 10 April 2020
Proposal planning phase	Identify your research Topic Areas, Scope and Problem. Include a basic Literature study on topic and key variables/concepts in order to define the research problem (see briefing of Assignment 1). • Topical area and proposed Title of research with basic literature to substantiate a research problem • Clear Problem Statement • Research questions/Objectives • Scope/ Delimitation	Submit on eFundi Use Template Assignment 1
Class and Workshop 1: Weekend Mafikeng- Leopard Park Practice session: Compulsory	• Class on Business Research Design • Literature review • Library in Mafikeng: Search engines, EndNote referencing, Harvard referencing • Academic writing skills • Research Proposal Planning improvement	20 - 22 March 2020 Details will be confirmed
Class and Workshop 2 Mafikeng Leopard Park Same as Study School 2 in Potch	• Research Approaches Review ○ Quantitative, ○ Qualitative and ○ Mixed • Population and Sampling • Data collection process and methods • Data analysis process and methods ○ SPSS (Quantitative) ○ Content analysis (Qualitative) • Writing a Business Research Proposal	24-26 April 2020

<u>Study School 2</u> <u>Potchefstroom</u> Mandatory attendance for Potch/Vaal students	• Research Approaches Review ○ Quantitative, ○ Qualitative and ○ Mixed • Population and Sampling • Data collection process and methods • Data analysis process and methods ○ SPSS (Quantitative) ○ Content analysis (Qualitative) • Writing a Business Research Proposal	20-24 July 2020
Workshop 3: Compulsory Weekend- <u>Mafikeng</u> Leopard park	Analysis SPSS practice Preparation for examination-Research Proposal Supervisor allocation	03-04 August 2020
Assignment 2: Individual		Due: 7 August 2020
<u>Assignment 2</u> (25%) Project planning phase 2:	Building from Assignment 1 to Assignment 2 =Planned research: First Draft Business Research Proposal (see Assignment Requirements and Template)	7 August 2020 Submit on eFundi Assignment 2 Template
Examination (50%)	Examination - Business Research Proposal (see Template) with ethical application (see Ethical Application Form and Consent form)- all on eFundi	9 October 2020 Submit on eFundi

Unlike the other modules of the MBA-programme, this module demands mostly self-study and stretches over one year. You will attend classes at every study school/session (as per site) and proceed through the module by completing your instructions and assignments as indicated in this study guide. The final product will be a business research project plan (Business Research Proposal), submitted in October as your 'examination' for the module. Passing this module affects your final progress to MBA2 as it is the input into MBAC873 which is your research dissertation that you must submit at the end of your final MBA year.

The research project plan (proposal) serving as the summative assessment of the module is the point of departure for your research component, since your empirical research should be guided by this project plan.

The lecturer will act as facilitator and not as an instructor. The lecturer is not the sole provider of knowledge or insight, but creates the challenge whereby learning about business research methodology and methods becomes an enjoyable process that adds value to the learner.

7. Prerequisites

The following are prerequisites to enter into this module and should be acquired before commencement of this module in January 2019:

- Selected into the NWU MBA programme and registered as student at the NWU.
- Registered on the NWU library system.
- Registered to access eFundi
- Computer literate in MS Office
- Broad band internet access.
- English language proficiency in reading, writing and oral presentation.

8. Study Material

As this is a master's class any suitable and relevant materials can be used in your preparation. However you have to purchase the prescribed handbook before entering the formal class/contact sessions. Learners will receive a selection of literature and other resources on eFundi, not mentioned in this study guide, that are related to the module. Learners are encouraged to search for additional sources on the on-line library services provided by NWU. This will enable the learner to prepare for class by reading relevant sources before attending classes in order to fully participate in discussions.

The following book is prescribed for this module:

Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2017). *Research Methodology: Business and Management Contexts*, Oxford University Press: Southern Africa, ABC Press: Cape Town. ISBN 978-0-19907613-0
Some useful websites:

Jones, J. (2013). *Statistics: Lecture Notes*. <http://people.richland.edu/james/lecture/m170/>
 -accessed September 12 2015

Emerald (2015). Research methods and methodology. Available at:
<http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/research/guides/methods/>

Hofstee, E. (2006). *Constructing a Good Dissertation: A Practical Guide to Finishing Master's, MBA or PhD on Schedule*, <http://www.exactica.co.za/>

9. Assessment

Due dates have to be adhered to at all times. Assessment will be via two assignments that have to be submitted on eFundi (dates in schedule). In addition to the two assignments you will also need to submit a summative assessment (Examination proposal) which will count 50% towards your final mark.

A student has to obtain at least 40% for assignments to enter into the "examination". A subminimum of 45% for examination and an aggregate mark for all assessments not less than 50%. Only students who failed the first opportunity will be afforded a second opportunity for "examination by project".

- Assignments: 50% weight
- Summative assessment (Business Research Proposal) – "Examination": 50% weight

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment	Assignment Brief- summary	Due date
Assignment 1 (25%)	Clearly state a topic, describe a business research problem and provide a short literature review to motivate the problem (See Briefing).	10 April 2020
Assignment 2 (25%)	Complete and hand-in your First Draft Business Research Proposal (see Briefing – Template)	7 August 2020

Assignment Guidelines and Briefing

Please note that all assignments must be in the following format:

- Typed with font Times New Roman, font size 12, line spacing 1.5, page layout: Normal.
- Saved in Microsoft Word (no other formats such as PDF documents will be accepted).
- Include a cover page with the following information: Surname and initials, student number, number of the assignment and date of submission. Where specific assignment and examination templates have been prescribed it must be used.
- All assignments must be appropriately referenced in text and accompanied by a full reference list using the Harvard referencing style, which reflects all the citations made in the assignment text.
- The numbering of the questions in your assignment should correspond to the numbering of each question provided in the assignment.
- Submitted to eFundi under the correct assignment before or on the indicated due date. No assignments submitted in hard copy or via email will be accepted.
- Please use the following format for naming your Microsoft Word document before submitting: Surname, initials, student no., Module code, Assignment number (examples: Nkosi_AB_22007123_MBAA874_Ass1 or Van Niekerk_C_12345678_MBA874_Ass2).
- Important: eFundi will not allow any late submissions, and thus NO late assignments will be accepted, regardless of the current circumstances. Therefore, plan all your assignments ahead to avoid any disappointment. **eFundi will close at 23:00 for all assignments and examination project.**

Assignment 1: Briefing (due 10 April 2020) – See below

Project planning phase 1: Identify your research Topic and Research Problem

For this assignment, please follow the instructions. Complete the requirements as thoroughly as possible in correspondence with the weighting allocated to each requirement. Read the suggested literature in preparation for this assignment by referring to Module MBAA 874 Reader (available on eFundi) and the prescribed textbook. The suggested reading relevant to this assignment is provided at the end of the assignment.

REQUIREMENT	NOTES	MARKS
1. Formulate a descriptive title consisting of no more than 14 words for your research project.	Follow the guidelines for formulating a title by referring to your MBAA 874 Module Reader (available on eFundi) and the prescribed textbook.	/3
2. Give a Brief literature review on the topic in 750 - 1000 words what exactly it is you are interested in	Note that no more than 1000 words will be assessed for marks. This needs to include referencing in Harvard referencing style from	/10

studying to support the research problem.	sources to substantiate your claims and arguments. It is not acceptable to only present your problem from your own experience and opinions.	
3. Research Problem Statement.	It must be a problem not an objective. e.g. The problem this study aims to address is that 80% of employees in the call centre industry have indicated that they have the intention to quit, resulting in a managerial dilemma that needs to be addressed	/5
4. Based on the above, formulate a primary research question that clearly illustrates the research problem you intend to study.	This should be stated as a single question, and not in paragraph format. Also, this does not constitute what you intend to ask your participants, but should rather reflect the purpose of your research project). Follow the guidelines for formulating a research question by referring to your MBAA 874 Module Reader (available on eFundi) and the prescribed textbook.	/3
5. Describe why it will be necessary for management to have your research question answered.	That is, what will your study contribute to the organisation and your field of study?	/3
6. Indicate why you believe this research topic is executable.	Follow the guidelines for assessing the executability, suitability and feasibility of your study by referring to your MBAA 874 Module Reader (available on eFundi) and the prescribed textbook.	/5
7. Please indicate the discipline/field of study/Cluster under which this study can be classified.	E.g. Operations Management, IT, HRM, marketing, business management, etc.	/1
8. Indicate whether this study will follow a quantitative or qualitative or mixed approach. Motivate your answer.	That is, will a quantitative or qualitative design answer your research question? And why?	/2
9. Please indicate the dissertation format you are most likely to follow in your study, and why?	For example mini-dissertation, article format or case study, motivate.	/3
10. Technical aspects	Layout (Font, spacing, headings, logical flow), language (grammar, sentences and spelling), referencing-Harvard style (in-text and List).	/5
TOTAL		/40

Suggested Reading

TOPIC	READER SOURCE
Planning a research project	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press. (pp. 69-86)

Identifying a topic	Welman, C., Kruger, F. & Mitchell, B. (2011). Research Methodology (3 ed., 10th impression). Oxford University Press: South Africa. (p. 13)
Choosing a topic	Whitley, B. E., Jr. (2002). Principles of research in behavioral science (2nd ed). New York: McGraw-Hill. (pp. 91-92)
Origins of research problems	Welman, C., Kruger, F. & Mitchell, B. (2011). Research Methodology (3 ed., 10th impression). Oxford University Press: South Africa. (pp. 19-22)
Suitability of a research problem	Brynard, P. A., & Hanekom, S. X. (2006). Introduction to research in management-related fields (2nd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. (p. 14)
Formulating the research question	Whitley, B. E., Jr. (2002). Principles of research in behavioral science (2nd ed). New York: McGraw-Hill. (pp. 92-94)
Qualities of a good research question	Maree, K. (2007). First Steps in Research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. (pp. 3-5)
Titles	- Hartley, J. (2008). Academic writing and publishing: A practical guide. Oxon, OX: Routledge. (pp. 23-27); - Els, C. (2012). Wording the title. North-West University course material.

Assignment 2 - Briefing
Project planning phase 2: Planned research method

This assignment follows on Assignment 1. For this assignment, please follow the instructions. Complete the requirements as thoroughly as possible in correspondence with the weighting allocated to each requirement. Read the suggested literature in preparation for this assignment by referring to your **MBAA 874** Module Reader (available on eFundi) and the prescribed textbook. The suggested reading relevant to this assignment is provided at the end of the assignment. For the purpose of this assignment a unit of analysis is described as: The *who* or *what* that you will analyse in your study. It represents the major entity that you are analysing in your study (Trochim, 2006).

REQUIREMENT	NOTES	MARKS
Title and Problem statement		
1. Provide your current / revised research title.	State your current or revised title based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1.	/2
2. Provide your current / revised primary research question.	State your current or revised research question based on any feedback, reflections and assignment 1.	/3
Research design		
3. Indicate whether your study will be qualitative or quantitative in nature. Why? Motivate your answer.	Provide your answer by making reference to the nature of your data that you will be collecting.	/2
4. Will your study be cross-sectional or longitudinal in nature? Why? Elaborate. In the case where you have indicated longitudinal research, also provide the time intervals between the data points.	Provide your answer by making reference to the nature of what you are interested in studying.	/2
Unit of analysis/ Sampling		
5. Describe in as much detail as possible who or what your study population will be (i.e. your unit of analysis). That is, who/what will you study?	The unit of analysis includes individuals (e.g. employees), organisations, industries, institutions, systems, programmes, financial reports, processes, etc. (depending on what is relevant in your study). Provide all the characteristics of the unit of analysis relevant to your study.	/10
6. Indicate the number of units of analysis that will be included in your study (i.e. sample size).	For example, how many individuals/organisations/systems, etc. will be analysed in your study.	/1
7. What strategy will you follow to identify and choose your unit of analysis? (i.e. Sampling strategy).	Indicate and briefly describe the sampling strategy to be followed in this study.	/2
8. Where will you find your unit of analysis (i.e. geographically)?	For example, where are they situated geographically? Will the information about your unit of analysis be in the public domain or private institution?	/3
9. How difficult will it be to gain access to your unit of analysis? Please explain.	E.g. who would you need to ask permission to gain access to participants or	/2

	respondents? How easily accessible is the population/sample group?	
10. Please explain why you believe that this particular unit of analysis will be the most suitable to answer your primary research question.	In this question you are expected to explain why you have chosen your specific unit of analysis.	/3
11. Could an alternative unit of analysis also be appropriate to answer your primary research question? Please elaborate.	In this question you are expected to explain whether it could be feasible to rely on another unit of analysis.	/2
Data collection		
12. Describe in as much detail as possible the nature of the data you intend to collect. Explain whether your data will be in the form of questionnaires, interviews, financial reports or historical data, etc.	- If you will be using questionnaires, please indicate whether these will be existing questionnaires or self-developed instruments, and please include the questionnaires in this assignment. - When using interviews, provide all the interview questions you intend to ask the participants. In the case where it will not be any of the aforementioned, provide an example of the data you intend to collect as part of your study.	/10
13. Explain the process through which you intend to collect your data.	Explain how you intend to gather the data (for example, will you deliver questionnaires by hand or email/how you will contact the individuals for interviews/how you plan on obtaining your financial or other information).	/2
Data analysis		
14. Describe in as much detail as possible how you will analyse your data by indicating the data analysis techniques and methods you will use. Also provide details regarding possible software programs to be used (where applicable).	- If you are analysing quantifiable questionnaire data, indicate the statistical procedures and tests you will apply in your data analysis. - For qualitative data (e.g. interviews) indicate the method and process you will follow to analyse your interviews. - For other types of data (i.e. analysing financial reports, historical data, etc.) indicate for example the formulas or other techniques you will apply to draw conclusions from your data.	/10
Technical aspects		
15. Technical aspects	Layout (Font, spacing, headings, logical flow), language (grammar, sentences and spelling), referencing- Harvard style (in-text and List).	/5
TOTAL		/60

Prescribed Reading (You should read these as provided in the reader on eFundi)

TOPIC	READER SOURCE
Research design	

Qualitative and quantitative research approaches	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press. (pp. 29-53)
Qualitative and quantitative research cycles	Whitley, B. E., Jr. (2002). Principles of research in behavioral science (2nd ed). New York: McGraw-Hill. (pp. 32-34)
Time in research	Trochim, W., & Donnelly, J. P. (2007). The research methods knowledge base (3rd ed.). Cincinnati, OH, Atomic Dog Publishing. (p. 6)
Unit of analysis	
Sampling	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press. (pp. 165-189)
Unit of analysis	Long, K. J. (2004). Unit of analysis. In M. S. Lewis-Beck, A Bryman, & T. F. Liao (Eds.), Encyclopedia of social science research methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
Population & sampling	Berg, B L. (2001). Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (pp. 29-31)
Sampling	Bickman, L. & Rog, D. J. (Eds.) (2008). The handbook of applied social research methods, second edition. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications. (p. 235)
Sampling	Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). Research methods for business students (5th ed.). Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited. (pp. 210-250)
Sample size	Maree, K. (2007). First Steps in Research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers. (pp. 178-180)
Selecting a case	Silverman, D., & Marvasti, A. (2008). Doing qualitative research: A comprehensive guide. London, United Kingdom: Sage Publication Ltd. (pp. 161-174)
Data collection	
Choose method	Silverman, D., & Marvasti, A. (2008). Doing qualitative research: A comprehensive guide. London, United Kingdom: Sage Publication Ltd. (pp. 143-158)
Data collection	- Bickman, L. & Rog, D. J. (Eds.) (2008). The handbook of applied social research methods, second edition. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications. (pp. 235-236) - Lancaster, G. (2005). Research methods in management: A concise introduction to research in management and business consultancy. Oxford, England: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann. (pp. 64-77)
Surveys and questionnaires	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press. (pp. 190-212)

Levels of measurement (Quantitative research)	Welman, C., Kruger, F. & Mitchell, B. (2011). Research Methodology (3 ed., 10th impression). Oxford University Press: South Africa. (pp. 138-141)
Measuring instruments(Quantitative research)	Welman, C., Kruger, F. & Mitchell, B. (2011). Research Methodology (3 ed., 10th impression). Oxford University Press: South Africa. (pp. 149-152)
Measuring (Quantitative research)	Welman, C., Kruger, F. & Mitchell, B. (2011). Research Methodology (3 ed., 10th impression). Oxford University Press: South Africa. (pp. 163-174)
Interviews and focus groups	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.(pp. 213-240)
Interviews (Qualitative research)	Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2006). Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (pp. 39-45)
Ethnography and observations	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.(pp. 242-264)
Observations(Qualitative research)	Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2006). Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (pp. 46-49)
Secondary data (other sources)	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.(pp. 266-281)
Collecting secondary data	Lancaster, G. (2005).Research methods in management: A concise introduction to research in management and business consultancy. Oxford, England: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann. (pp. 80-94)
Documents	Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2006). Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (pp. 51-55)
Data analysis	
Qualitative data analysis	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.(pp. 298-206; 335-371)
Thematic analysis (qualitative data)	Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. (2012). Applied thematic analysis. London, UK: Sage. (pp. 3-20)
Quantitative data analysis	Bryman, A., Bell, E., Hirschsohn, P., Dos Santos, A., Du Toit, J., Masenge, A., Van Aardt, I., & Wagner, C. (2014). Research methodology: Business and management contexts. South Africa, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.(pp. 309-333)

Summative assessment (Examination)

Business Research Proposal

Complete your Business research proposal on the required template (Examination Template) for examination and submit on eFundi due date: **9 October 2020**

Below is a research project plan template. Please provide a final business research proposal based on your revised and combined assignments completed throughout the year. This will count 50% towards your final mark, and should be used as the foundation of your mini-dissertation (MBAC 873) in the final year, if acceptable.

Please note that all exams must be:

- Typed with font Times New Roman, font size 12, line spacing 1.5, page layout: Normal.
- Saved in Microsoft Word (no other formats such as PDF documents will be accepted).
- Include a cover page with the following information: Surname and initials, student number, number of the assignment and date of submission. Where specific assignment and examination templates have been prescribed it must be used.
- All assignments must be appropriately referenced in text and accompanied by a full reference list using the Harvard referencing style, which reflects all the citations made in the assignment text.
- The numbering of the questions in your assignment should correspond to the numbering of each question provided in the assignment.
- Submitted to eFundi under the correct assignment before or on the indicated due date. No assignments submitted in hard copy or via email will be accepted.
- Please use the following format for naming your Microsoft Word document before submitting: Surname, initials, student no., Module code, Exam (examples: Nkosi_AB_22007123_MBAA874_Exam or Van Niekerk_C_12345678_MBA874_Exam).
- Important: eFundi will not allow any late submissions, and thus NO late assignments will be accepted, regardless of the current circumstances. Therefore, plan all your assignments ahead to avoid any disappointment.

Headings in Proposal (Refer to Template and apply as such)

These are just an indication as in Examination Template - follow Examination Template and indexing

Title of the research

Please provide a title for your research project that clearly describes what you intend to study. This title should be not more than 15 words.

The research problem

Describe what exactly it is you are interested in studying (i.e. your research problem, with between 750 and 1000 words). See reader for an extract of Kotze's guidelines on eFundi which could serve as a possible guideline.

Primary research question

Formulate a primary research question that clearly illustrates the research problem you intend to study. This is stated as a single question, and not in paragraph format. The stated research question should clearly and logically flow from your research problem.

Research objectives

Provide all the specific research objectives you intend to reach in your research project. This should correspond well with your research problem, and the formulated primary research question.

Literature Review to show significance of study proposed

Provide solid reasons for why this study is necessary substantiated by Literature

Research design

Please indicate whether your study will be qualitative or quantitative in nature and indicate whether a cross-sectional or a longitudinal research design will be followed.

Unit of analysis

Provide a comprehensive description of your unit of analysis that will be investigated in your study. You should provide detailed information regarding the nature and characteristics of the unit of analysis, as well as provide an estimate of the number of units to be included in your research. Also, indicate what your sampling strategy will be to identify the units of analysis.

Data collection

Describe in as much detail as possible the nature of the data you intend to collect. Attention should be given to the type of data you will collect (which should be described in detail), as well as a comprehensive description of the process of data collection to be followed.

Data analysis

Describe in as much detail as possible how you will analyse your data by indicating the data analysis techniques and methods you will use. Also provide details regarding possible software programs to be used (where applicable).

Managerial implications of the research

Briefly describe why it will be necessary for management to have your research question answered. Thus, provide a description of what the practical contribution of your study will be to the organisation and management. Be careful not to make promises that you will not be able to deliver through your research.

Ethical consideration

Suggested time frame/Project schedule

Please provide a detailed research project schedule for your intended research. This schedule should reflect all the activities related to your research, the duration for each of the activities as well as the intended dates on which you intend to engage in each of these activities.

Examination: Research Proposal assessment criteria (See Template B)

ASPECT TO BE EVALUATED	WEIGHT
Technical care - Layout of title page /1 - Spelling and grammar /3 - Other technical care aspects /2 - Correct in-text references and list of references (Harvard method) /4	10
Proposed title and introduction (incl. problem statement, primary research question and objectives) - Title of the research • /2 - The research problem • /8 - Primary research question • /2 - Research objectives • /3	15
Delimitations and assumptions	5
Definitions of key terms and list of abbreviations	5
Literature review to show significance of study	20
Research design and methods	
- Description of overall research design and Unit of analysis /5 - Sampling design /5 - Data collection and Data analysis including the 1st draft of the data collection instrument in Appendix A (where applicable) /10 - Managerial implications of the research /5 - Assessing and demonstrating the quality and rigour of the proposed research design /5 - Research ethics (including Appendices B- Consent letter and C- Ethical application) /10	40
Suggested time frame- Project Plan for Completion of Study	5
TOTAL	100

10. Feedback

Feedback on assignments will be given within 4-6 weeks.

11. Work programme

Each student must please ensure that the due dates are scheduled on their learning programme and that they adhere to these dates.

Study Units	
Study Unit 1: Introduction to research	Study School 1: January/February 2019- Potchefstroom Class and workshops 15-17: March 2019- Mafikeng
Study Unit 2: Research design	
Study Unit 3: Sampling and Data collection	Study School 2: 22-26 July 2019- Potchefstroom Class and workshop 2: 26-28 April 2019 and 3: 03-04 August 2019 - Mafikeng
Study Unit 4: Data- analysis and Measurement	

12. List of action words (verbs) used in the study guide

The following action verbs are included to give you clarity so you know what is expected of students/learners. Please take thorough notice of them. When you come across these action verbs in the outcomes, learning activities, self-evaluations and exam, you can refer back to the definitions listed here so you can determine how you must interpret the questions so that your answers correspond to what is expected of you.

- **Analyse**

Identify the parts or elements of a concept.

- **Comment**

Give in short your opinion on a topic.

- **Compare**

Show the resemblances (aspects that are the same) and the differences between objectives, ideas or perspectives. When you compare two or more objectives, you must do it systematically – complete one aspect first. It is always better to do it in your own words.

- **Criticise**

This means you must indicate whether you agree with a perspective or not. Thereafter you must describe your refutation or corroboration of your point of view and give reasons for your point of view.

- **Debate**

Take a critical stand and make a formal argument. Present more than one point of view, debate the pros and cons of each and reach and motivate a conclusion.

- **Define**

Explain the correct meaning of a concept by conveying the necessary characteristics.

- **Demonstrate**

Give and discuss examples. You must give evidence that you have knowledge of how the process works or how a concept is applied in a real situation.

- **Describe**

Say exactly how something is, give a report on the characteristics of something, and describe how something works. No view or argument is needed.

- **Discuss**

Discuss something in your own words. It sometimes requires the debating of two points of view or two different possibilities.

- **Evaluate**

Discuss the importance of a case through a well-thought-out discussion of the case where you discuss the importance or value of something.

- **Exemplify**

A practical illustration of a concept is required.

- **Explain**

Make something clearer or simplify it in such a way that it is easier to understand.

- **Identify**

Give the necessary characteristics or aspects of a phenomenon.

- **Indicate**

Indicate, make known, and explain in short.

- **List**

Simply provide a list of names, facts or items asked for. A specific category or order might be required. No discussion or explanation is necessary.

- **Mention**

Name something in short without providing more detail.

- **Motivate**

You must justify the reasons for your statements and points of view. You must try to convince the reader of your point of view.

- **Write an essay**

A detailed description of a subject is required.

13. Warning against plagiarism

Copying of text from other students or from other sources (for instance the study guide, prescribed material, books or directly from the internet) is not allowed – only brief quotations are allowed and then only if indicated as such. Learners are expected to reformulate existing text in their own words in order to prove understanding of what they have read.

It is not acceptable to retype existing text and just acknowledge the source in a footnote. Learners should be able to relate the idea or concept, without repeating the original author to the letter. The aim of the assignments is not the reproduction of existing material, but to ascertain whether learners have the ability to understand and integrate existing texts, add their own interpretation and/or critique of the texts and offer a creative solution to existing problems.

Explicit warning: No student may copy any part of hard copy or electronic information in academic or non-academic textbooks, articles, assignments, dissertations and other copyrighted sources without acknowledging or referencing the author. A student who copies from another student, or permits a fellow student to copy their own original work will be committing misconduct. A student may not pay another person to complete any part of an assignment or dissertation on his or her behalf. Any student who submits plagiarised academic work will be dealt with in terms of policy on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty or misconduct.

B. The Study Unit Section

Notional hours for the module = 120 hours (+- 8 hrs a week -including time spend on proposal)

Study units:	Notional hours:
1. Introduction to Business Research	30 hrs
2. The Main Steps and Design of Business Research and Literature study	20 hrs
3. The Data Collection methods	20 hrs
4. Data Analysis methods	20 hrs
5. Writing the Examination Business Research Proposal	30 hrs

The following study units will be dealt with in this module and should be self-studied thoroughly:

UNIT	TOPIC	TEXTBOOK REFERENCE (CHAPTER)
1	What is Business Research and why is it important?	1

UNIT	TOPIC	TEXTBOOK REFERENCE (CHAPTER)
Introduction	- The Foundations of Business Research - The Research Process	
	Research Approaches: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed methods research	2-3
2 The Main Steps and Design of Business Research	Getting started- 'rules of the game' Think like a researcher	4
	The Research Proposal Research Problem and the Research Question	5
	Research Design	6
	The Ethics in Business research	7
	Writing up	8
3 Data Collection methods	Sampling and Unit of analysis	9
	Surveys and Questionnaires Measurement and Measurement scales	10
	Interviews and Focus groups	11
	Field work	12
	Secondary data	13
	e-Research	14
	Content analysis	15
4 Data Analysis methods	Quantitative data analysis: Statistical analysis: uni-, bi-and multi-variate analysis	16
	Qualitative data analysis: Coding and methods	17

1 STUDY UNIT ONE: Introduction to Business Research

1.1 Introduction to Study Unit 1

The aim of this study unit is to introduce the MBA learner to the fundamentals of Business Research methodology and methods and how to distinguish between the various research approaches.

1.2 Unit outcomes

- Display a working knowledge of business research principles and practices
- Critically evaluate the business research process
- Distinguish between qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research approaches.

1.3 Core Learning Material (as indicated per assignments)

2 STUDY UNIT TWO: The Main Steps and Design of Business Research

2.1 Introduction to Study Unit

The aim of this study unit is to comprehend the main steps and various business research designs in order to ethically conduct and write up business research.

2.2 Unit outcomes

- Develop insight and critical thinking about business research
- Describe and motivate a business research problem
- State a relevant business research problem (Problem statement)
- Develop a relevant business research topic argument
- Conduct a comprehensive and topical literature review in support of the research problem and apply Harvard research referencing style
- Generate appropriate research questions/hypotheses
- Describe and identify different business research designs
- Demonstrate an understanding of a research proposal and its contents
- Display how to ethically apply business research methods.

2.3 Core Learning Material (as indicated per assignments)

2.4 Articles

To be provided on eFundi - Reader

3 STUDY UNIT THREE: Data Collection methods

3.1 Introduction to Study Unit

3.2 Unit outcomes

- Select an appropriate sampling method and data collection methods in support of the research question/hypothesis
- Develop and propose a sampling and data collection method(s) based on the problem statement and research questions/hypotheses
- Acquire the basic competence to conduct business research through the following data collection methods: surveys and questionnaire design, interview and focus group skills and content analysis.

3.3 Core Learning Material (as indicated per assignments)

3.4 Articles

To be provided on eFundi - Reader

4 STUDY UNIT FOUR: Data Analysis methods

4.1 Introduction to Study Unit

4.2 Unit outcomes

- Select appropriate data analysis methods in support of the research question/hypothesis
- Develop and propose data analysis based on the problem statement and research questions/hypotheses
- Demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics of business research rigour and ability to critically assess and review research of others.
- Acquire the basic competence to conduct business research through data analysis (SPSS) and content analysis.

4.3 Core Learning Material (as indicated per assignments)

4.4 Articles

To be provided on eFundi - MBAA 874 Module Reader

- Develop and complete a sound business related research proposal in conjunction with an assigned research supervisor for ethical approval and continuation of the research towards completion of an MBA mini-dissertation.

C. Learning

1. Learning activities

Students must read and prepare thoroughly before study schools as per study unit topic outcomes. Each student must be actively involved in class and group discussions E.g. group work in class, assignments, quality circles and case studies.

2. Self-assessment

To determine if outcomes were achieved each student can assess themselves by answering the questions and cases at the end of the chapter as per prescribed book. Further learning can take place by doing the exercises as per topic in the study units by completing the self- assessment exercises in the prescribed book.