

MBAA 874

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Assignments

Individual assignments

Assignment	Assignment brief – summary	Due date
Assignment 1 (15%)	Clearly state a topic, describe a business research problem and provide a short literature review to motivate the problem (see briefing).	7 April 2021 23:00
Assignment 2 (35%)	Complete and submit the applicable revised parts of assignment 1 and the research methodology (see briefing).	4 August 2021 23:00

Summative assignment (Abridged research proposal)

Assignment	Assignment brief – summary	Due date
Assignment 3 (50%)	Complete and submit an abridged business research proposal (see briefing and template).	6 October 2021 23:00

Assignment guidelines and briefing

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

- Type the assignment with font Arial, font size 12, line spacing 1.5, page layout: Normal with the paper size A4.
- Save the assignment in Microsoft Word format (no other formats such as PDF documents will be accepted).
- Attach the Declaration and Technical care sheet as separate PDF documents.
- The assignment document should include a cover page with the following information: Surname and initials, student number, number of the assignment, and date of submission. It must be used where specific assignment and examination templates have been prescribed.
- All assignments must be appropriately referenced in-text and accompanied by a complete reference list using the NWU Referencing Guide (2020, Harvard style), reflecting all the citations made in the assignment text.
- Note that the numbering of the assignment questions should correspond to each question's numbering in the assignment [**Also note the different parts concerning the involvement of human participants or no human participants involved**].
- The assignments must be language edited. Use the English (UK) or English (South African) settings in MS Word. DO NOT use the English (US) setting.
- Download the free MS Word version of the Grammarly language editing application (<https://www.grammarly.com>). **Grammarly is a good language editor (I prefer Grammarly).**

- Submit the assignment 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 to name the Microsoft Word assignment document before submitting: Surname, initials, student number, module code, assignment number (examples: Nkosi, AB_22007123_MBAA874_Ass1 or Van Niekerk, CL_12345678_MBA874_Ass2). [This is the assignment]
- Name the Declaration form and Technical care sheet: Nkosi, AB_22007123_Declaration_Ass2; Nkosi, AB_Technical care sheet_Ass2.
- Take note that no late submissions on eFundi will be allowed. NO late assignments will be accepted, regardless of the current circumstances. Therefore, plan the submission of the assignments to avoid any disappointment. **eFundi will close at 23:00 for all the assignments and the examination project.**
- **Be aware of plagiarism. Refer to the NWU's plagiarism policy. I will check the similarity index for every submission (you need a green flag (less than 25% similarity index for the assignment document)).**
- **Kindly refer to the technical care sheet. Complete, sign and attach the sheet as an appendix to the assignment [this is compulsory].**

Individual assignment 2:

Submission date: 4 August 2021, 23:00

Project planning phase 2: Research topic and research methodology

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 the prescribed textbook, notes loaded on eFundi and the slides.

Option 1: Research with human participants

REQUIREMENT	NOTES	MARKS
Title, problem statement and study objectives [15 marks]		
1. Provide the revised research title of the study.	State the revised title based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1.	/2
2. Add or provide the revised introduction and background to the research study.	State the current or revised introduction and background to the study based on feedback and reflections by adding the headings.	/5
3. Provide the revised problem statement.	State the revised problem statement based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1.	/5
4. Provide the revised primary and secondary research objectives.	State the revised primary and secondary objectives based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1.	/3

Preliminary literature review [10 marks]		
5. Provide the updated preliminary literature review.	Present the revised and updated preliminary literature review based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1 (maximum 1 000 words).	/10
Research approach and design [5 marks]		
6. Describe the research approach that will be followed in the study.	Explain whether the study will be qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method in nature. Why? Motivate.	/3
7. Describe the research design of the study.	Will the study be experimental, cross-sectional or longitudinal? Why? Elaborate. In the case of longitudinal research, also provide the time intervals between the data points. Will the study be inductive or deductive in design? Explain.	/2
Study population and sampling [20 marks]		
8. Describe in as much detail as possible who or what the study population will be (i.e. your unit of analysis or the participants). That is, who/what will you study?	The study population or analysis of analysis/observation includes individuals (e.g. employees), organisations, industries, sectors, institutions, systems, programmes, financial reports, processes (depending on what is relevant in your study). Provide all the characteristics of the study population (unit of analysis) relevant to your study.	/5
9. Describe the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the participants.	Explain the inclusion and exclusion criteria (i.e. the characteristics) that the prospective subjects (participants) must have and the characteristics that disqualify prospective subjects (participants) from inclusion in the study. Note that the exclusion criteria is not the opposite of the inclusion criteria.	/3
10. What strategy will you follow to identify and choose the study population, sample or secondary data sources (your sampling strategy)?	Indicate and briefly describe the sampling strategy (the recruitment strategy) to be followed in this study. Will you use probability or non-probability sampling to identify the participants or respondents? Explain. Motivate in full.	/5
11. Where will you find your participants or respondents (i.e. geographically, sector, organisation)?	Explain where they are situated geographically, in an industry or sector, or in a specific organisation.	/1

12. How difficult will it be to gain access to your study population, sample or secondary data?	Whom would you need to ask permission to gain access to participants, respondents or secondary data sources? How easily accessible is the population/sample group/data? Please explain.	/2
13. Indicate the sample size.	Indicate the sample size (number of participants or respondents) that will be included in your study. - Motivate why this is an appropriate sample size for quantitative research (i.e., performing the statistical analyses such as, for example, factor analysis). - How will you determine the appropriate sample size in a qualitative study (i.e., what criteria will you use)? Explain.	/2
14. Describe the relationship between the researcher(s) and the participants.	Explain the relationship between the researcher and the participants concerning the following: - Are there any conflicts of interest by the researcher(s) that might increase the research's risk level or increase the possibility of undue influence (e.g. an employee of the organisation where the study is planned or a hierarchical relationship with participants)? - Explain the measures that will be taken to minimise the conflict of interest.	/2
Recruitment of potential participants and data collection [15 marks]		
15. Describe the nature of the recruitment of potential participants. [Note that good ethical conduct and the POPIA Act are guiding the actions in this regard.]	Explain the following: - Who will have contact with the participants? - What will be communicated? - How will this be communicated? - What will the role of the researcher(s) and participants be?	/5
16. Describe in as much detail as possible the nature of the data you intend to collect. Explain whether the data will be in the form of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups.	- If you are using questionnaires, please indicate whether these will be existing questionnaires or self-developed instruments, and please include the concept questionnaire(s) in this assignment. Also, provide proof of the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. - When using interviews, provide the concept interview questions you intend to ask the participants.	/5

17. 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).	/5
Data analysis [15 marks]		
18. 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 in line with research objectives. • For qualitative data (e.g. interviews), indicate the method and process you will follow to analyse your textual data in line with research objectives. • Indicate the software programs to be used (where applicable).	/10
19. Explain the process that you will follow to ensure the rigour of the research.	Explain how you will build in the reliability and validity (quantitative research) and trustworthiness (qualitative research) of your data and findings.	/5
Ethical issues and informed consent [10 marks]		
20. Describe in as much detail as possible how you will deal with the ethical issues in the study.	Explain the following: • Ethical issues anticipated before beginning the proposed study (i.e., selection of worthy topic, non-intrusive topic). • Ethical issues anticipated before beginning the proposed study (i.e., recruitment and accessing of site). • Ethical issues anticipated during data collection (i.e., informed consent). • Ethical issues anticipated during data analysis (i.e., competence). • Ethical issues anticipated when reporting, sharing, and storing data (especially when organisations have access to the data) (i.e., peer review also matters here). • Provide ways in which to mitigate ethical risks during each phase of the proposed study. • How are you going to comply with the relevant issues concerning the POPIA Act?	/5

21. Provide detail on how informed consent to participate in the study will be sought.	Explain the following: • Will participants be informed on what the purpose of the study is? • Is participation in the study voluntary? • Can the participants withdraw from the study if they wish to do so? • Are participants informed that the data will be used for research purposes (research project, publication)? • How will confidentiality and/or anonymity be maintained in the study? • Will participants be rewarded or given incentives? If yes, elaborate on the nature of the reward/incentive and the process to be followed.	/5
Technical aspects [10 marks]		
22. Technical aspects.	• Layout (font, spacing, headings, logical flow) • Language (grammar, sentences, spelling). • Referencing – NWU Referencing Guide (2020, Harvard) (in-text and reference list).	/5
23. Application of the technical care sheet.	• Refer to the technical care sheet and indicate whether you followed all the guidelines. • Marks will be allocated for comprehensive, correct and honest ticks. • Include the signed care sheet as an appendix.	/5
TOTAL		/100

Option 2: Research with NO human participants (i.e. secondary data)

REQUIREMENT	NOTES	MARKS
Title, problem statement and study objectives [15 marks]		
1. Provide the revised research title of the study.	State the revised title based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1.	/2
2. Add or provide the revised introduction and background to the research study.	State the current or revised introduction and background to the study based on feedback, adding the headings and reflections.	/5
3. Provide the revised problem statement.	State the revised problem statement based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1.	/5
4. Provide the revised primary and secondary research objectives.	State the revised primary and secondary objectives based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1.	/3
Preliminary literature review [10 marks]		
5. Provide the updated preliminary literature review.	Present the revised and updated preliminary literature review based on feedback, reflections and assignment 1 (maximum 1 000 words).	/10
Research approach and design [5 marks]		
6. Describe the research approach that will be followed in the study.	Explain whether the study will be qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method in nature. Why? Motivate.	/3
7. Describe the research design of the study.	Will the study be experimental, cross-sectional or longitudinal? Why? Elaborate. In the case of longitudinal research, also provide the time intervals between the data points. Will you follow an inductive or deductive design? Explain briefly. If you are estimating a model, specify the model to be estimated. Justify the variables you are including.	/2

Data source [30 marks]		
8. Describe the nature of the data/information that will be used in the study.	• Explain the nature of the data/information used in the study (content analysis, a systematic review or other secondary data). • Where will the data/information be sourced from? • Is this data/information publicly available? • If using secondary data – how many observations are available? E.g. Weekly time-series data on stock market prices ranging between 2010 and 2020. Or: Panel data on countries' GDP for 20 developing countries between 1990 and 2019. • If estimating a model, will your observations allow for enough degrees of freedom, given the model you would like to estimate?	/10
9. Describe whether the study will require permission from a gatekeeper/entity/organisation to access the data/information?	• Will the study require permission from a gatekeeper/entity/organisation? • If yes, explain the nature of the access required.	/5
10. In the case of using secondary data, describe how data will be obtained from the source.	Explain in full the following: • How will the data be obtained from the source (the process of getting access to the data)? • Is it clear how the source from which you are collecting data from has obtained their data? Is it a reliable source? E.g. StatsSA uses consumer surveys to obtain data on consumer prices in the economy and provide access to full methodology papers on their website so that it is possible to verify the exact method used to generate data.	/15
Data analysis [20 marks]		
11. Describe in as much detail as possible the data analysis and further processing of data.	Explain the data analysis or further processing of data by referring to the following: • Indicating the data analysis techniques and methods to be used. • Indicate the formulas or other techniques to be used to draw conclusions from your data. • Also provide details regarding possible software programs to be used (where applicable).	/15
12. Explain the process that you will follow to ensure the rigour of your research.	Explain how you will build in the reliability and validity (quantitative research) and trustworthiness (qualitative research) of your data and findings.	/5

Ethical issues [10 marks]		
13. Describe in as much detail as possible how you will deal with the ethical issues in the study.	Explain in full the following: • Ethical issues anticipated before beginning the proposed study (i.e., selection of worthy topic, non-intrusive topic). • Ethical issues anticipated before beginning the proposed study (i.e., the source of the data, public available data). • Evaluating ethical issues during the collection of the data to be used (i.e., ethics approval, consent, POPIA Act). • Ethical issues anticipated during data analysis (i.e., competence of the researcher). • Ethical issues anticipated when reporting, sharing, and storing data (especially when organisations have access to the data) (i.e., peer review also matters here). • Provide ways in which to mitigate ethical risks during each phase of the proposed study. • Explain how you will comply with the applicable issues in the POPIA Act.	/10
Technical aspects [10 marks]		
14. Technical aspects.	• Layout (font, spacing, headings, logical flow) • Language (grammar, sentences, spelling). • Referencing – NWU Referencing Guide (2020, Harvard) (in-text and reference list).	/5
15. Application of the technical care sheet.	• Refer to the technical care sheet and indicate whether you followed all the guidelines. • Marks will be allocated for comprehensive, correct and honest ticks. • Include the signed care sheet as an appendix.	/5
TOTAL		/100

[Note that it is essential that you only complete one of the options.]