



Study Guide 2021

PGRE521 - Research Methodology



**Postgraduate Diploma in
Management (PGDIP)**



Shaping Executive Minds in Africa

Preface by the programme manager

Dear Student

A warm word of welcome from the NWU Business School. May your studies here be both enriching and pleasant. I hope that your association with the Business School will be to your advantage as well as to that of your business.

The NWU is reckoned as one of the best managed universities in South Africa. The NWU Business School has been delivering competent graduates to Southern Africa who, in return, are making a proven contribution to social and economic growth in the region. The NWU Business School aims to provide professional postgraduate management leaders. The faculty of the NWU Business School is therefore focused on combining theory and practice, in order to fully develop the strategic leadership potential of business managers. The programme content and standard of the NWU Business School's PGDM ensures that participants acquire skills with regard to best business practice and thought-leadership that can successfully be applied to the multi-disciplinary challenges encountered.

North-West University (NWU) is our parent institution and is recognised as one of the best-managed and most innovative universities in South Africa. The NWU continues to celebrate and encourage multiculturalism, multilingualism and multinationalism. It aspires to be "an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care".

The PGDM qualification plays a significant role as part of the Business Schools' programme offerings. It started as a contact full-time, post-graduate qualification on the Potchefstroom Campus in 2013. Since the beginning of 2016, it is also offered on a contact part-time basis in Potchefstroom, Mafikeng and Vanderbijlpark. From 2018 the PGDM is also delivered on the distance mode,

The NQF levels of South Africa could be compared with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. Within the European Framework, qualifications are defined according to levels of complexity and difficulty. Generic descriptors of the requisite learning outcomes at each level have been defined. These descriptors (Dublin descriptors) are broadly applicable in all national contexts and consist of the following elements:

Knowledge and understanding;

Applying knowledge and understanding;

Making judgements;

Communication skills;

Learning skills.

LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme is designed to provide students with an advanced academic understanding of management processes at higher level thinking and problem solving skills. There is an emphasis on developing advanced professional skills for those looking to enhance career prospects and those in employment.

The learning outcomes are that should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of fundamental concepts and principles of the business world and the functioning thereof.
- can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in environments related to the field of management;
- have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity,
- reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and findings;
- encourage students to think broadly and bridge gaps between theories and the actual practice of effective management, and;
- Be able to function in a group, engage and communicate with other stakeholder and presentation of their knowledge and findings.

Within this framework we encourage students to develop their knowledge and skills. Therefore, it is important to also develop technological – soft skills and to be able to work independently as well as in groups.

We hope that this journey in the programme will enlighten all your areas needed for development and that you will be able to go back to your communities, business or workplace and be a positive energy that will contribute to the economy of South Africa.

Kind regards.

Prof Nelda Mouton
Programme Manager: PGDM

1 WELCOME

I want to extend a warm welcome to all of you who will be participating in this module.

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2 RATIONALE OF THE MODULE

The module aims to give a student a good grounding in research methods and how they have been used to carry out research in management and organisational settings. It introduces students to the field of research management and business research and some of the main research paradigms and theoretical traditions. It examines the strengths and weaknesses of competing approaches to research and some of the main ethical and practical problems that you are likely to confront as a researcher. Assignment Project Module is for academically capable and strongly motivated individuals who want to develop new and creative approaches that extend existing knowledge and practice and advance their careers in business research in, industry, private and the public sector.

3 MODULE OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand and apply the fundamentals of research design and methodology
- conduct a literature review for your project
- evaluate different research designs and methodologies
- design and develop a qualitative or quantitative research project
- present business or social research project

4 PREREQUISITES AND REQUIREMENTS

- Prior understanding of basic statistics
- Undergraduate degree or diploma within the management discipline, and working experience is needed

5 RECOMMENDED STUDY MATERIAL

- Cooper, D. and Schindler, P.S. 2014: *Business Research Methods* New York, McGraw-Hill/Irvin, 12th Edition.
- Neuman, W. 2009. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (2nd Edition). Boston, Allyn and Bacon.

- McMillan, James and Schumacher, Sally. 2014: *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*, Pearson Education Limited, Harlow Essex, 7th Edition.

6 ADDITIONALE READING MATERIAL

The additional reading material for the study units will be uploaded on eFundi.

7 ASSESSMENTS

Formative – formative assessments are about checking for understanding in an effective way in order to guide instruction. Formative assessment is a proven strategy for engaging students, eliciting evidence of student learning, and moving students forward to meet their learning targets and personal goals.

- class exercises and participation
- practical work
- group work

Refer to the formative (continuous) assessment plan on eFundi.

Summative – Summative assessment plays a critical role in information gathering process. By conducting a variety of forms of summative assessment (also known as assessment of learning), the facilitator will have a good grasp of where their students are in the learning process.

Refer to the eFundi page for the summative assessment structure and mark allocation.

8 STUDY UNIT OUTCOMES

STUDY UNIT 1

- Understand the concept of research
- Understand the characteristics of research
- Understand the difference between business and social research
- Understand the paradigms of research
- Understand the philosophical underpinnings of research
- Define and compare different types of research questions
- Formulate your research topic (choose between business or social research)
- Formulate the research problem

STUDY UNIT 2

- Understand the review of literature
- Understand the purpose of the literature review
- Understand the search step when conducting a literature review
- Understand the types of literature reviews
- Refine your research problem
- Conduct a literature review for your project

STUDY UNIT 3

- Understand quantitative research design
- Align quantitative research with its philosophical underpinnings

- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative research
- Understand sampling for quantitative research design
- Understand data collection techniques in quantitative research
- Understand how to construct a research hypothesis
- Understand data analysis techniques in quantitative research
- Understand technical adequacy in quantitative research: validity, reliability, impact of research
- Understand the importance of ethics in quantitative research
- Understand how to present your results in quantitative research

STUDY UNIT 4

- Understand qualitative research design
- Align qualitative research with its philosophical underpinnings
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research
- Understand sampling for qualitative research design
- Understand data collection techniques in qualitative research
- Understand data analysis techniques in qualitative research
- Understand technical adequacy in qualitative research
- Understand the importance of ethics in qualitative research
- Understand how to present your findings in qualitative research

STUDY UNIT 5

- Finalise your research problem
- Finalise the literature for your project
- Develop the objectives for your research
- Develop the research design and methodology for your project
- Develop the technical adequacy for the research project
- Develop the ethical considerations for your project
- Complete the research project
- Present the research project