APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2011/2012

GRA 6721 Research Methodology for Logistics and Strategy

Programme
Master of Science in Business and Economics (Logistic - Supply Chains and Networks),
Master of Science in Business and Economics (Strategy)

Responsible for the course
Johannes Brinkmann, Marianne Jahre

Department
Department of Strategy and Logistics

Term
According to study plan

ECTS Credits
6

Language of instruction
English

Introduction
Students participating in this course will be guided towards the completion of a research proposal. The main aim of the course is to provide students with the knowledge and skills in order to successfully complete a master's thesis.
The first part of the course covers the philosophical underpinnings of research in the logistics and strategy fields. This includes the fundamentals of research design. The main section of the course covers both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The course will be taught in two parts. Part One will be taught jointly for both the logistics and strategy students. In Part Two, the course will split into 2 streams, one each for logistics and strategy respectively.

Learning outcome
Acquired knowledge
(i) To understand how to write a research proposal.
(ii) To gain knowledge of concepts and tools to collect and analyse data for research in logistics and strategy.
(iii) To understand and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of different methodologies and data sources.
(iv) To gain a broader understanding of advanced information search strategies.

Acquired skills
(i) To be able to compare and contrast different research designs.
(ii) To be able to compare and critique different research designs, methodologies and data collection methods.
(iii) To be able to design samples, research questions and research proposals appropriately.
(iv) To be able to use and evaluate advanced methods for information 'harvesting' and search techniques, and critically evaluate information sources.
(v) To understand what a critical literature review is and how it can be designed and executed.

Reflection
(i) To understand how research design influences and is influenced by the theme of interest.
(ii) To appreciate how to conduct original research at the MSc level and evaluate the research process.

Prerequisites
A Bachelor's degree qualifying for admission to the Master programme. Students should have basic knowledge in statistics and in the use of library sources and search techniques. To be a student on the Logistics major or the Strategy major. Or to be an exchange student majoring in logistics or strategy at their home institution.

Compulsory reading
Books:
Bryman, Alan and Emma Bell. 2011. Business research methods. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press
Viescas, John L., Jeff Conrad. 2007. Microsoft Office : Access 2007 inside out. Microsoft

Press. As detailed in the course outline

Collection of articles:
Various authors. Various articles. As detailed in the course outline

Other:
During the course there may be hand-outs and other material on additional topics relevant for the course and the examination.
Saunders et al. 2009. Research Methods for Business Students. Pearson. Essex, UK. Chapter 3: Critically reviwing the literature, pp. 58-101. Available electronically

Recommended reading

Course outline

PART ONE

Introduction to the Research Process - philosphy of science, research proposals, research process, research ethics
Research Design - problems, questions, collection and design
Secondary Research and Analysis - literature searching, literature reviews, review articles, database management
Qualitative Research - assumptions, ideas, methodologies and methods
Computer-assisted data analysis
Research ethics

PART TWO

Stream A: Logistics
Quantitative Methods - assumptions, ideas, methodologies and methods
Database Management - database capabilities, creating a database, importing data, simple queries

Stream B: Strategy
Quantitative methodology with a focus on the needs of strategy research

During the semester there will be thesis seminars to guide the students towards writing a thesis registration form. This is conducted outside the course.

Computer-based tools
Tools will be used for database searching (ISI, etc), for qualitative data analysis and for database management. To some extent, generic statistics software such as SPSS.

Learning process and workload
A course of 6 ECTS credits corresponds to a workload of 160-180 hours.
Students are expected to participate actively and to be well prepared before attending class.

Please note that while attendance is not compulsory in all courses, it is the student's own responsibility to obtain any information provided in class that is not included on the course homepage/It's learning or text book.

Examination
Term paper (55%)
Class participation (35%)
A completed and approved work assignment given by the library (10 %)
Completion of a thesis registration form – pass/fail

Specific information regarding student evaluation beyond the information given in the course description will be provided in class. This information may be relevant for requirements for termpapers or other hand-ins, and/or where class participation can be one of several elements of the overall evaluation.

Examination code(s)
GRA 67211 for the thesis registration (pass/fail)
GRA 67212 for the final letter grade in the course counting 100%

Examination support materials
Not applicable, no written exam.

Exam aids at written examinations are explained under exam information in our web-based Student handbook. Please note use of calculator and dictionary.
http://www.bi.edu/studenthandbook/examaids

Re-sit examination
It is only possible to retake an examination when the course is next taught.
The assessment in some courses is based on more than one exam code.
Where this is the case, you may retake only the assessed components of one of these exam codes.
Where this is not the case, all of the assessed components of the course must be retaken.
All retaken examinations will incur an additional fee.

Additional information
Honor Code
Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and represent values that are encouraged and promoted by the honor code system. This is a most significant university tradition. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the ideals of the honor code system, to which the faculty are also deeply committed.

Any violation of the honor code will be dealt with in accordance with BI's procedures for cheating. These issues are a serious matter to everyone associated with the programs at BI and are at the heart of the honor code and academic integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honor code, please ask