



UK

SYLLABUS 2025-2026

Research Methodology

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Module Code	2526_REC_2_EN_007
Campus	Oxford
Department(s)	Research and Dissertation Methodology
Level / Semester	Masters Year 2 (M2); Equivalent to FHEQ level 7 Semester 08
Language of Instruction	English
Teaching Method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-person (face-to-face) <input type="checkbox"/> Distance learning (live online) <input type="checkbox"/> e-Learning (asynchronous) <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid: _____
Pre-requisite(s)?	The students should have writing and analytical skills (ability to synthesise ideas and write analyses), proficiency in office tools (Word, Excel, etc.), understanding of the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods, and knowledge of key approaches (surveys, interviews, observations, statistical analyses)
ECTS <i>Reminder: 1 ECTS = between 20 and 30hr- student workload</i>	2
Equivalent FHEQ credits	4
Study Hours	50 hours which comprise of 14 directed learning and 36 independent learning/assessment hours

MODULE DESCRIPTION

Module Aims	This module develops students' advanced understanding of research principles in management, with a focus on methodological and epistemological foundations. It trains students to critically evaluate and justify research designs while progressively constructing a
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	<p>research poster that demonstrates methodological rigour and originality. Interactive tools, including AI-supported applications, are integrated to support independent and collaborative learning. Learning activities include video resources, quizzes, gamified tasks, and group work to encourage engagement and critical reflection. The module prepares students for the greater independence and depth of enquiry required in the Master’s thesis during the second year (M2).</p>
Teaching Arrangement	<p>The module will be delivered through an interactive and participatory approach that incorporates discussions, debates, and case studies to stimulate collaborative thinking and foster active understanding. It will include a blended learning approach, combining in-person classes with digital resources (videos, Learning Center Tutorials) to enable a flexible and personalised learning experience.</p>
Learning Outcomes	<p>By the end of this module, students should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formulate and justify a clear, relevant, and researchable question within the field of management. 2. Critically identify, evaluate, and synthesise scholarly literature to identify gaps and position their research. 3. Apply advanced cross-referencing strategies to compare, contrast, and integrate diverse theoretical and empirical sources. 4. Design and structure a literature review that demonstrates methodological rigour, coherence, and critical insight. 5. Select, present, and interpret qualitative and/or quantitative data using appropriate analytical approaches. 6. Apply AI tools in an ethical and transparent manner to support the research process. 7. Communicate research effectively through the design and presentation of a scholarly poster that demonstrates clarity, originality, and methodological robustness.
Competency Goals <i>(Knowledge, expertise and interpersonal skills)</i>	<p>PGE_M_CG01 - To be equipped with efficient business skills</p>
Alignment with Programme Learning Goals	<p>PGE_M_CG01_LO05 - To identify the appropriate methodology to solve a problem</p> <hr/> <p>PGE_M_CG01_LO05_I02 - To select the appropriate methodological approach and data processing</p>

SESSION TOPICS / MODULE SCHEDULE

(Please note, a session/sequence may be more than one scheduled class)

<p><u>Session 1: Introduction to Research and Theses</u> <i>Content:</i></p>

- Module presentation: objectives, structure, types of dissertations (professional, academic), academic standards, writing steps, etc.
- Definition and importance of academic research
- Distinguish between applied and basic research, giving examples and explaining why they fall into one or the other category
- AI and research opportunities: identifying opportunities and risks
- Interactive quiz/gamification on topics covered above

References:

- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research methods for business students*. 9th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson. (Chapters 1 and 6)

Assignments:

- Group workshop: choice of research area and brainstorming on possible themes
 - Think and ask yourself questions about how to identify research topics

Session 2: Formulation of a Research Question

Content:

- Objective: learn how to structure a relevant research question
 - Definition, importance, relevance criteria, and sources of inspiration
 - Specification, typologies (exploratory, descriptive, casual), articulation with hypotheses/research proposals
 - What makes a good research question?
 - Techniques for reformulating and refining a problem

References:

- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research methods for business students*. 9th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson. (Chapters 2 and 3)

Assignments:

- Exercise: choose 2 concept keywords and 2 context keywords, then formulate a research question
- Pitch game: presentation and improvement of research questions in a group

Session 3: Literature Review and Selection of Sources

Content:

- Objectives:
 - Master documentary research and source evaluation
 - Debate on the use of AI to write a literature review
- Objectives of a literature review and criteria for selecting sources
- Literature search methods (databases, libraries, academic sources)
- Standards of citation and scientific writing
- Introduction to literature review models (narrative, systematic, meta-analysis)
- Selection of relevant articles according to objective criteria (example of cross-reading on 3 academic articles)
- Take advantage of the “Embedded Librarian” option: a member of the Learning Centre speaks to the students or students are encouraged to contact the Learning Center and have them assist them with their research

References:

- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research methods for business students*. 9th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson. (Chapters 2 and 3)

- Clark, T., Foster, L., Sloan, L. and Bryman, A. (2021) *Bryman's social research methods*. 6th edn. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. (Chapter 5)

Assignments:

- Hands-on workshop: testing an AI tool to generate a summary of articles
- Debate and examples: "AI: opportunity or threat/weakness to write a literature review?"

Session 4: Start Working on the Poster

Content:

- Explanation of the poster sections and expectations

References:

- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research methods for business students*. 9th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson.

Assignments:

- Individual work on concepts/context keywords
 - Review choice of keywords

Session 5: Identification of Articles and Research Questions (Work on the Poster)

Content:

- Support for students to advance on the poster

References:

Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research methods for business students*. 9th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson. (Chapter 3)

Assignments:

- Select 10 academic articles and justify their relevance
- Identify one main research question and two secondary research questions
- Review with students the choice of keywords

Session 6: Critical Analysis and Cross-Reading (Work on the Poster)

Content:

- Presentation of critical analysis techniques and cross-reading
- Support for students to advance on the poster

References:

- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research methods for business students*. 9th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson. (Chapters 12 and 13)

Assignments:

- Write a first version of the literature review
 - Techniques for critical analysis of articles
 - Research proposals or hypotheses
 - Justification and articulation of concepts in the literature review
 - Conceptual models, construction of the analytical framework, identification of variables/concepts
 - Establishing a common thread and structuring the arguments coherently

Session 7: Planned Field of Investigation (Work on the Poster)

Content:

- Support for students to advance on the poster

Assignments:

- Objective: justify one’s research methodology
- Context: luxury, automotive, start-up
- Nature of the research: quantitative or qualitative (justify)
- Collection of qualitative and quantitative data (refer to the thesis guide to justify the number of people to be interviewed)
- Presentation of qualitative and quantitative data

Session 8: Research Design with the Support of Generative AI (Work on the Poster)

Content:

- Generation of results with generative AI (transcription of interviews, statistical analyses, etc.)
- Interpretation of results with generative AI (coding qualitative data, identification of relationships between variables in quantitative survey, etc.)
- Critical analysis of the interpretation of generative AI
- Collective discussion on best practices for integrating AI without compromising scientific rigor
- Discussion of the relevance and fidelity of results generated

References:

- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research methods for business students*. 9th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson.

Assignments:

- Comparison of the results obtained with manual analysis
- Can AI identify biases or hidden variables?
- Reliability of interpretations generated without taking into account the specific context of the study
- Verify the consistency of the results with the literature review and the theoretical framework

KEY TEXTS

1. Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) *Research methods for business students*. 9th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson.

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

1. Clark, T., Foster, L., Sloan, L. and Bryman, A. (2021) *Bryman’s social research methods*. 6th edn. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

MODES OF ASSESSMENT

Continuous Assessment (40%)	Poster review
Final Exam (60%)	Poster presentation

MODULE DESIGN TEAM

- Author: *Nizar Ghamgui*
- Reviewer: *Hendrik Lohse*
- External Reviewer: *TBA*