

**The London Institute
of Banking & Finance**

Research-Based Dissertation



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MODULE SPECIFICATION

1. Title	Research-Based Dissertation	
2. Start date	2016	
3. Level of module	Level 6 FHEQ	
4. Number of credits	30 credits	ECTS Value
		15
5. Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core 	
6. Recommended prior modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should have completed all modules at Levels 4 and 5 	
7. Programmes of study to which module contributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc (Hons) in Banking Practice and Management (full-time) • BSc (Hons) in Finance, Investment and Risk (full- and part-time) • BSc (Hons) in Politics, Finance and Economics (full- and part-time) 	
8. Campus / Partner	N / A	
9. Syllabus overview		
<p>The Research-Based Dissertation is a core Level 6 module that will both equip students with the tools to plan and undertake a small-scale research project and give them the opportunity to put this learning into practice through designing and undertaking an extended study, working independently.</p> <p>The module provides students with the foundations of research methods in business, from defining the research question, understanding different theoretical perspectives and undertaking a review of the literature through to identifying sources of both secondary and primary data, and understanding approaches to data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Students then have the opportunity to further develop their abilities in research design, data collection and analysis, by exploring in greater depth a topic related to banking practice and of particular interest to them, consolidating and building on the learning of earlier modules, and using the relevant research methodologies to achieve this.</p> <p>The module is designed to pull together the learning of the entire course, and foster students' abilities to work independently and systematically to produce a report relevant to banking. The module also aims to give students the skills to review the research presented by others with a more critical eye.</p>		

10. Intended subject specific learning outcomes and, as appropriate, their relationship to programme learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- a) plan and undertake a small-scale research project to a standard appropriate for an honours level dissertation;
- b) demonstrate broad understanding and insight in relation to the topic of their research;
- c) demonstrate both a knowledge of a range of secondary sources related to banking, including research papers and industry reports, and the ability to evaluate the usefulness of such information for their research question or problem, whether academic or practice-based;
- d) demonstrate the broad methodological knowledge and practical skills required for the planning of research, data collection and analysis; and
- e) synthesise many of the elements covered in the earlier part of the degree.

These intended subject specific module learning outcomes contribute to the following programme learning outcomes:

- BSc (Hons) in Banking Practice and Management: 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06 and 07.
- BSc (Hons) in Finance, Investment and Risk: A1, A2, A5 and A6.
- BSc (Hons) in Politics, Finance and Economics: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6 and A7.

11. Intended generic learning outcomes and, as appropriate, their relationship to programme learning outcomes

On completion of this module, students will be able to demonstrate achievement of the following generic learning outcomes:

1. Take responsibility for independent learning using academic and industry-based resources.
2. Demonstrate an ability to work independently, showing resourcefulness in finding solutions to problems, and self-discipline in meeting deadlines.
3. Develop project planning and implementation skills.
4. Show competency in research and data acquisition.
5. Communicate effectively in a range of media and in a manner appropriate for and / or specified by the target audience.

These intended generic learning outcomes contribute to the following programme learning outcomes:

- BSc (Hons) in Banking Practice and Management: B–D.
- BSc (Hons) in Finance, Investment and Risk: B–D.
- BSc (Hons) in Politics, Finance and Economics: B–D.

12. Learning and teaching

A. Learning hours

This module is part of the full-time BSc in Banking Practice and Management and the BSc (Hons) in Finance, Investment and Risk (full- and part-time). However, because of the nature of the module, the method of study differs to that of other modules on the BSc.

Students will spend the equivalent of 300 notional learning hours on this module over the course of an academic year or sessions of study (part-time students). Learning will be through a mix of formal (online) teaching and independent study, with a bias towards the latter during the second, dissertation, stage of the module.

B. Approach

Stage one of the module introduces and covers the key areas to support the successful design and implementation of a small-scale degree-level dissertation. Students review different conceptions of research and the way these are related to research strategy and research design. They then study the main methods of data collection and analysis, both quantitative and qualitative. They also learn the value of using secondary sources, both in terms of literature review and as a means of data collection. Attention is also paid to structuring and presenting the research proposal and the dissertation.

Stage two of this module is designed to allow students to undertake an original piece of research on a small scale. This could focus on critical review and analysis of secondary sources, or might encompass a small-scale piece of data collection and analysis.

Students will demonstrate an ability to select, define and focus on an issue at an appropriate level, applying relevant methodologies to address the question. They will also demonstrate an ability to develop recommendations and / or logical conclusions from their findings with an awareness of the limitations inherent in any research.

C. Learning support

This module will be introduced towards the end of the previous semester (full-time students) or at the start of the applicable study session for students opting to study on a part-time (distance-learning) basis. For full-time students, this will enable students to consider their choice of topic and write the initial proposal during the summer vacation. Students studying on a part-time basis are encouraged to study this module over two study sessions (12 months). Throughout the summer vacation (for full-time students), the Module Coordinator / Supervisors will be available to guide and support both the initial choice and completion of the proposal. Students on the part-time programme will be assigned a supervisor at the start of the module registration period.

During semester one / the first part of the module registration period, students will attend regular weekly (online) classes as they study the foundations of research methods. Through a mix of (online) lectures, seminars, practical exercises in groups and individually, students will acquire a good grounding in the theory and practice of research.

Following successful completion and approval of their Research Proposal (see Assessment, section 13), students then undertake a piece of independent research based on that Research Proposal.

Supervision

Individual supervision is the core of the support offered to students during this module. Where possible, supervisors will be allocated to students on the basis of a 'topic proposal' that students submit. The supervisor will mark their students' Research Proposal (see Assessment, section 13), and once students start their research, supervisors will meet regularly with their students face-to-face (either one-to-one or in a small group) where possible, or in the case of part-time students, through online sessions or telephone / email communication and according to a schedule agreed between the student and their supervisor at the start of their research project.

Supervisors will support students in refining the research question(s) they developed for their Research Proposals, critiquing the literature and fine-tuning their research methodology.

Dissertation handbook

All students will be provided with a dissertation handbook that will guide them through the academic, practical and administrative aspects of dissertation development and writing.

D. Reading

Students will be provided with one core text, as given below, but will be expected to read and use a variety of sources pertinent to the research topic they have chosen. Supervisors will also recommend further reading during the course of the module.

Essential reading

- Wilson, J. (2014) *Essentials of Business Research: A Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. 2nd Edn. London: Sage Publications

Further reading

There is a great amount of literature on research methods and, more specifically, on writing a dissertation, encompassing both general overview texts and books focusing on specific aspects, for example, particular methodologies. The following is an indicative selection:

- Bell, J. (2005) *Doing your research project*. 4th edn. Open University Press.
- Bryman, A. and Burgess, P. (2007) *Business research methods*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2009) *Business research: A Practical Guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Field, A. (2013) *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. 4th edn. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Fisher, C. (2010) *Researching and writing a dissertation: An essential guide for business students*. 3rd edn. Pearson Education.
- Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (2002) *Research methods for managers*. 3rd edn. London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Robson, C. (2002) *Real world research*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

In developing their research topic and research question and undertaking their literature review, students may find it helpful to consider both journals orientated to research methods, and research articles in journals related to financial services, reading the latter with a critical eye to the methodology employed.

Journals (financial services, business and management):

- ABA Banking Journal
- ABA Bank Marketing
- The Banker
- Banking Strategies

- British Journal of Management
- Financial World
- International Journal of Bank Marketing
- Journal of Bank Regulation
- Journal of Banking and Finance
- Journal of Economics & Business
- Journal of Financial Intermediation
- Journal of Financial Services Marketing
- Journal of Management Studies
- Journal of Retail Banking

Research (financial services, business and management):

- Action Research
- International Journal of Economics and Business Research
- Journal of Accounting Research
- Journal of Business Research
- Journal of Financial Research
- Journal of Financial Services Research
- Journal of Mixed Methods Research
- Journal of Marketing Research
- Organisational Research Methods
- Qualitative Inquiry
- Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal
- Qualitative Research
- Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management
- Qualitative Research in Organisations and Management: An International Journal
- Social Science Research
- Sociological Methods and Research [quantitative]
- World Bank Research Programme

13. Assessment

Summative assessment for this module will comprise two components:

Component	Duration / Length	Weighting
Component 1 Research Proposal	750 words	0%
Component 2 Dissertation	7,500 words including quotations and in-text citations	100%

Completion of the Research Proposal is a prerequisite for continuing to the dissertation since it will itself underpin that dissertation. Students must 'meet expectations' in the Research Proposal element, although this element does not count towards the final module mark.

Formative assessment will comprise individual and group practical exercises during semester one / session one. Further ongoing formative assessment will continue throughout to the completion of the dissertation and will contribute to the overall learning of this module.

Students should be aware of the regulations governing the award of credit and the arrangements for compensation, condonement and the capping of marks. Students should also be aware of the regulations relating to the resitting of assessment components and / or the retaking of modules. This information is contained within The London Institute of Banking & Finance's General and Academic Regulations for Students sections 7, 8 and 9.

Module Grading

A student's module performance grade is determined by their overall weighted average percentage score in accordance with the following:

3 rd	40%	-	49%
2.2	50%	-	59%
2.1	60%	-	69%
1 st	70%	-	100%

14. Syllabus

Foundations of research methods

1. Introduction to research in a business context. Overview of the theories and methodologies. Ethical and practical considerations (eg access).
2. Reviewing the literature to identify a topic and support design. Developing a researchable question, planning a research project.
3. Research strategies and designs.
4. Sampling.
5. Data collection I: Surveys and questionnaires, interviewing and observation.
6. Data collection II: Secondary sources, archives and official statistics.
7. Quantitative data analysis.
8. Qualitative data analysis.
9. Developing the Research Proposal.

Research in practice – the small-scale dissertation

Much of this element will be managed through the students' independent research and work with their supervisor.

Taught sessions

- At the start of semester one / the first session of study: Getting Started on Your Research, including review of key issues related to access, data collection, schedules; project management; dealing with problems and working with your supervisor.
- Towards the end of semester one / the first session of study: Writing up and presenting your research, including getting started, structuring the dissertation, developing your writing 'voice', writing an abstract, presentational aspects, presenting the research in different formats (eg for an oral presentation) and for different audiences (eg for a potential employer).

Dissertation: research and presentation

There is no formal syllabus for this stage. Each student will be developing their knowledge and understanding of a particular area of banking, accounting, financial services related to their chosen research topic. In addition, they will learn, with their supervisor's support, to do the following (relevant section of dissertation in parentheses):

1. Précis or concisely summarise the key points of a long document and main findings (abstract, introduction).
2. Identify an area of research that is interesting and feasible to investigate within the scope of a small-scale degree-level dissertation (development of focused research questions).
3. Set an issue in an academic and / or business-related context (background to the topic of study with a literature search and discussion related to the topic area; comparison or analysis of trends, approaches, perspective, problems etc).
4. Develop an appropriate methodology and collect data (methodology and data collection).
5. Analyse data, whether qualitative, quantitative or a mixture (analysis).
6. Present and discuss findings (including discussion of whether and how they address the research question(s) or hypothesis).
7. Recognise limitation (critical discussion of the approach and any limitations).
8. Make conclusions / recommendations, for example, future research, for practical application (conclusions).