Unit Outline*

FINA7590

Research Methods in Accounting & Finance

Semester 1, 2011
Crawley Campus

Unit Coordinator:
Associate Professor Marvin Wee

Business School
www.business.uwa.edu.au

* This Unit Outline should be read in conjunction with the Business School Unit Outline Supplement available on the StudentNet website http://www.business.uwa.edu.au/studentnet
I would like to acknowledge the generosity of Professor Izan who kindly provided her RM 2009 unit outline and course material.

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UNIT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Welcome to FINA 7590 Research Methods in Accounting and Finance. Most of you will be completing a thesis as part of your Honours year and I hope that this unit assists you in thinking about your research project and provides you with an appreciation and understanding of the broader research framework.

Unit content

FINA7590 Research Methods in Accounting and Finance provides an overview of the common research approaches adopted in empirical based research in accounting and finance. You will also be given an overview of the databases currently available in the Business School that are widely used by research students, and an introduction to ‘Endnote’, a tool that research students are expected to use in their thesis preparation.

The goal of the unit

FINA7590 Research Methods in Accounting and Finance introduces you to the research process and what is involved in conducting an empirical study in accounting and finance. The unit is designed to get you to start thinking about your research project and give you exposure to various tools and techniques that may help you with your research project.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:
• develop an appreciation of the research process and the fundamentals of research design
• critically evaluate research papers for an appreciation of the papers’ strengths and weaknesses, their methodological approach and their main findings
• prepare and explain a proposal for a research project
• apply research techniques commonly used in empirical based research in accounting and finance
• apply a referencing tool commonly used in academic writing.

Educational principles and graduate attributes

In this unit, you will be encouraged to develop the ability to:
• critically evaluate research papers
• develop more effective communication skills through class participation and the presentation of your research proposal
• demonstrate self-management and independent learning skills through the development of your research proposal.
TEACHING AND LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching and learning strategies

FINA7590 Research Methods in Accounting and Finance is conducted as a seminar. In some weeks, the seminar time will be used to accommodate laboratory sessions. As this unit is conducted as a seminar, and not a lecture, you are expected to actively participate in all activities and discussion that ensues during class. The laboratory sessions provide you with “hands-on” experience with databases and data analysis.

In addition to the seminar, it is expected that all students will attend the weekly Accounting & Finance Research Seminar Series. The Research Seminar Series is held on Fridays, and provides students with exposure to different research approaches and an appreciation of the different types of research being done in accounting and finance.

Teaching and learning evaluation

You may be asked to complete two evaluations during this unit. The Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) and the Students’ Unit Reflective Feedback (SURF). The SPOT is optional and is an evaluation of the lecturer and the unit. The SURF is completed online and is a university wide survey and deals only with the unit. You will receive an email from the SURF office inviting you to complete the SURF when it is activated. We encourage you to complete the forms as your feedback is extremely important and can be used to make changes to the unit or lecturing style when appropriate.

Attendance

Participation in class, whether it be listening to a lecture or getting involved in other activities, is an important part of the learning process. It is therefore important that you attend classes. More formally, the University regulations state that ‘to complete a course or unit students shall attend prescribed classes, lectures, seminars and tutorials’. Students should not expect to obtain approval to miss more than two classes per unit unless there are exceptional circumstances.
CONTACT DETAILS

We strongly advise students to regularly access their student email accounts. Important information regarding the unit is often communicated by email and will not be automatically forwarded to private email addresses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit coordinator/Lecturer</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong> Marvin Wee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong> <a href="mailto:Marvin.Wee@uwa.edu.au">Marvin.Wee@uwa.edu.au</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phone:</strong> (08) 6488 5860</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation Hours:</strong> By appointment. Appointments can be made via email.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CLASS TIME AND VENUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINA7590 Seminar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time:</strong> Mondays 3pm – 6pm</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Venue:</strong> Business School: Case Study Room G42 Or Computer labs G85 and G86</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accounting &amp; Finance Research Seminar Series</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time:</strong> Fridays 11am – 12.15pm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Venue:</strong> BUSN 2.01 Case Study Room 201, UWA Business School</td>
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</table>
TEXTBOOK(S) & RESOURCES

Unit Website

The website for FINA 7590 Research Methods in Accounting and Finance is located at http://www.webct.uwa.edu.au

Recommended/required text(s)


Additional resources & reading material

The assigned readings for FINA 7590 Research Methods in Accounting and Finance provide you with an overview of the topic materials. However, there are many additional readings and texts that you may find useful. As a starting point, you should refer to the holdings in the Reid Library. You should also note that you will often need to refer to more advanced and specialised resources and reading materials for the specific research tools and techniques that you apply to your research project.

Week 1

- Chapter 5 “The Literature Review and Ethical Concerns” from Neuman, W. L., 2005. Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Allyn & Bacon. (Read pp.95-116)

Week 2


Week 3

- Endnote handout – to be distributed by library staff during workshop.

Week 4


**Week 5**
• TBA

**Week 6**

**Week 7**
• Gujarati & Porter Chapters 1-3, 7-8.

**Week 8**
• Gujarati & Porter Chapters 10-12.

**Week 9**
• Gujarati & Porter Chapters 10-12.

**Week 10**
• TBA

**Week 11**
• TBA

**Week 12**
• TBA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| 1    | 28 Feb     | Introduction to the unit  
Assessment expectations  
The research process |
| 2    | 7 Mar      | The research process (continued)  
Research design         |
| 3    | 14 Mar     | Endnote (to be held at Business Library)                             |
| 4    | 21 Mar     | Presentation of Data  
Statistical Analysis and Interpretation                               |
| 5    | 28 Mar     | Library Databases (Business Librarian)  
UWA Accounting and Finance Databases  
Laboratory Tutorial |
| 6    | 4 Apr      | Tests of Association  
Laboratory Tutorial                                                     |
| 7    | 11 Apr     | Regression analysis  
Laboratory Tutorial (Lab session with Assoc/Prof Yihui Lan)            |
| 8    | 18 Apr     | Regression analysis  
Laboratory Tutorial (Lab session with Assoc/Prof Yihui Lan)            |
|      | 25 Apr     | Study Break                                                          |
| 9    | 2 May      | Limited Dependent Variables  
Laboratory Tutorial (Lab session with Assoc/Prof Yihui Lan)            |
| 10   | Thursday 12 May  
9am-12pm  
BUSN:242  
Friday 13 May  
9am-12pm  
BUSN:242 | Special Topics: Information Economics (with Prof Greg Clinch, The University of Melbourne)  
Session 1 – Irrational Expectations  
Session 2 – Voluntary Disclosures |
| 11   | 16 May     | Research Design: Experiments and Questionnaires,  
Qualitative (with Prof Juliana Ng, The Australian National University) |
| 12   | 23 May     | SIRCA Databases (SIRCA Representative)  
Research proposal requirements: A refresher                             |
| 13   | 30 May     | No seminar                                                            |
## ACCOUNTING & FINANCE RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Area/Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 March</td>
<td>Bala Balachandran</td>
<td>Dividend Reduction and Signalling in an Imputation Environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>La Trobe University</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11 March</td>
<td>Andrew Ferguson</td>
<td>Non-GAAP voluntary disclosure in an unregulated financial statement void</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>University of Technology, Sydney</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18 March</td>
<td>John Zhang</td>
<td>Accounting for securitizations: The measurement of corporate liabilities through the latest business cycle.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Australian National University</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25 March</td>
<td>Amy Kwan</td>
<td>Finance – Topic to be confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>University of New South Wales &amp; Capital Markets CRC Limited</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 April</td>
<td>Alexey Feigin</td>
<td>Daily and Intraday Market reactions to a Star Resource Analyst's Recommendations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>University of Technology, Sydney</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8 April</td>
<td>Ronny Hofmann</td>
<td>Finance - Topic to be confirmed</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Maastricht University</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>15 April</td>
<td>Raymond Liu</td>
<td>Finance - Topic to be confirmed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Australian National University</em></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>22 April</td>
<td>Good Friday</td>
<td></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>29 April</td>
<td>Study Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6 May</td>
<td>Jodie Nelson</td>
<td>Accounting – Topic to be confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Queensland University of Technology</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>13 May</td>
<td>Greg Clinch</td>
<td>Master Class</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>The University of Melbourne</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>20 May</td>
<td>Sue Wright</td>
<td>Accounting – Topic to be confirmed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Macquarie University</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>27 May</td>
<td>Charles Devilliers</td>
<td>Corporate Social Disclosures: Country Determinants</td>
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<td><em>University of Auckland</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3 June</td>
<td>Andrew Ainsworth</td>
<td>Credit Default Swaps and Analyst Earnings Forecasts</td>
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<td><em>University of Sydney</em></td>
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ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

The purpose of assessment

There are a number of reasons for having assessable tasks as part of an academic program. The assessable tasks are designed to encourage you to explore and understand the subject more fully. The fact that we grade your work provides you an indication of how much you have achieved. Providing feedback on your work also serves as part of the learning process.

Assessment mechanism summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weighting (%)</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar homework</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>During semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection of seminar presentation (one selected from weeks 1 to 4)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Thursday 31 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection of seminar presentation (one selected from weeks 5 to 11, excludes week 10)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Thursday 26 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Monday 13 June 9am Case Study Room 2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal (written proposal)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Monday 25 July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal (presentation)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Thursday 28 July and Friday 29 July 2-5pm Case Study Room 2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Note 1: Results may be subject to scaling and standardisation under faculty policy and are not necessarily the sum of the component parts.

Note 2: Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning outcomes as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of Business School programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the unit.
Assessment components

1. SEMINAR HOMEWORK

The purpose of the seminar homework is to enable students to apply the concepts discussed during the seminars. The homework will help to prepare you for the research proposal.

The requirements (i.e., task/s, formatting, due date) for each homework will be made known at the end of each seminar. Depending on the topics covered, homework will not be assigned in some weeks.

2. SEMINAR REFLECTIONS

The purpose of this assessment is to enable students to critically evaluate research papers for an appreciation of the papers’ strengths and weaknesses, their methodological approach and their main findings.

During the course of the semester, you are to select, and reflect on, two papers presented at the Accounting and Finance Research Seminar Series (one must be selected from presentations in weeks 1 – 4, and the other from weeks 5 – 11, except week 10). The schedule of presentations for Semester 1, 2011 is provided on page 9 of this unit outline.

Your seminar reflection is expected to address the following aspects:

- What was (were) the research question(s) addressed in the paper?
- Was the motivation and significance of the paper well articulated? Explain why or why not. How can it be improved?
- Was the literature and their relevance to the current research well explained? Are there areas for improvement?
- Was the research design appropriate for the topic at hand? Were the hypotheses clearly stated? Were there any issues in the testing of the hypotheses? Elaborate on each.
- Were the results clearly presented? Were there any issues that could have lead to some doubts on the reliability of the findings and conclusions?
- What other suggestions do you have to improve the paper?

Maximum length: 2,000 words.

3. FINAL EXAM

The purpose of this assessment is to test students’ understanding of issues covered in lectures. The exam covers the whole semester, and will be held on Monday 13 June 2011 9am in Case Study Room 2.01. More details of the test will be disseminated in due course.
4. RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Written Proposal
There are several objectives for the research proposal. As you will be conducting your own research study, the aim of the research proposal is to:

- help students outline and clarify their proposed thesis topic and the research question(s) to be answered and the contribution to literature
- enable students to learn how to prepare a research plan for answering the question(s)
- ensure that students have read relevant literature and able to relate past work to research at hand
- ensure that students have identified data sources necessary for the project (i.e., is project feasible)
- ensure students are able to justify their ideas, define limits to the project, and identify the necessary steps to complete the research project.

The word limit for the proposal is 5,000 words.

Presentation
You are also expected to present your proposal to an audience comprising academic staff members and your peers. The purposes of the proposal presentation are to:

- allow students to explain and justify to an audience the aims and contributions of their research projects and to receive feedback
- test students’ understanding of the literature in their respective dissertation areas
- enable students to gain feedback from academics and fellow students on their proposal

The presentation is an integral part of the learning process. Hence, all students are expected to present and will be assigned a presentation slot. The presentation of your proposal allows you to share your idea with a larger informed audience, and through the interaction and feedback you receive, enables you to enhance your research project and facilitates the progress of your project.

Submission of assignments
All assignments should be submitted by email to Marvin Wee (marvin.wee@uwa.edu.au). You will need to send through the document in both Word and PDF formats. Also, if Endnote has been used, you will need to attach the Endnote library.

Student Guild
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