

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Course Outline

Part I

Programme Title	: Bachelor of Arts in Personal Finance
Programme QF Level	: 5
Course Title	: Capstone Project I: Research Methods and Proposal
Course Code	: BUS4063
Department/Unit	: Department of Social Sciences and Policy Studies
Credit Points	: 3
Contact Hours	: 39
Pre-requisite(s)	: <i>(If applicable)</i>
Medium of Instruction	: English
Course Level	: 4

Part II

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Sub-degree, Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate, Professional Doctorate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):

- Professional Excellence;
- Ethical Responsibility; &
- Innovation.

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:

1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills
- 4a. Oral Communication Skills
- 4b. Written Communication Skills
5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

1. Course Synopsis

This course aims to develop students as learners, researchers, inquirers and knowledge creators in personal finance and its related disciplines; and prepare them for conducting a research-based or an inquiry-based project in Capstone Project II: Research Report. It consists of two parts. Part A “Generic Research Methods” introduces basic research knowledge and principles of research methods for students to use and/or conduct research in personal finance and related disciplines, and ethical issues in the research process. The assessment tasks include online and in-class exercises on research methods. Part B “Methods for Specific Area in Preparation of Capstone Project” prepares students to develop a proposal for conducting a research-based study in their chosen areas. Topics may include understanding the purposes and methods of sampling, quantitative research methods, qualitative research methods, mixed-methods research, and research in comparative studies. Students will be guided to identify a topic, conduct a literature review, select appropriate methods of data collection and analysis/inquiry, and write a proposal.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CILO₁ demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of research methods in education and related disciplines, both qualitative and quantitative;
- CILO₂ show analytical skills in research and the awareness of research ethics;
- CILO₃ write a literature review to examine the existing theories and knowledge in relation to the research topic;
- CILO₄ select appropriate methods for the collection and analysis of data;
- CILO₅ write a proper and clear research proposal to form the basis of the study in Honours Project II: Research Report.

3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
Part A “Generic Research Methods” (1.5 cps)		
Fundamental elements in research <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Introduction to research process– Literature search and review– Identifying research topic and question	CILO ₁	Online lessons, tutorials, and group discussions
Approaches to research <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Introduction to personal finance research– Fundamentals of research paradigms (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, and action research)– Major methodological approaches to personal finance research– Reliability and validity	CILO ₁	
Ethical considerations in the research endeavour <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ethics for student research project with a focus on human participants	CILO ₂	Lectures and tutorials

Part B “Methods for Specific Area in Preparation of Honours Project” (1.5 cps)		
Understanding of research methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Basic concepts on the procedures, designs and methods, such as sampling methods. – Major research methods, such as quantitative research methods (e.g. survey research, experimental study), qualitative research methods (e.g. interview, observation), and mixed-methods research – Skills for data analysis and presentation 	<i>CILO₃₋₅</i>	Lectures, tutorials, literature review, case studies, group discussions, presentations and self-study
Understanding of research proposal writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Major concerns of proposal writing (content, structure and ethical issues). – Research proposal development: statement of the problem, research design and literature review. 	<i>CILO₅</i>	Tutorials, workshops, presentations and consultations

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
In-class and after-class exercises The exercises are related to Generic Research Methods, including literature review and research design	40%	<i>CILO₁₋₅</i>
A 2,000-word (or 3,500 Chinese characters) project proposal which includes the statement of the problem, a review of literature, and the design of the research	60%	<i>CILO₁₋₅</i>

Please note: Students are required to obtain a Pass in both Part A and Part B in order to get a Pass in CP I. As CP I is a pre-requisite for CP II, students must obtain a Pass in CP I in a given Specific Area in order to progress to CP II of the same Specific Area. Students who fail either Part A or Part B may be given the opportunity to do the remedial works/assignments.

5. Use of Generative AI in Course Assessments

☐ **Not Permitted:** In this course, the use of generative AI tools is not allowed for any assessment tasks.

☒ **Permitted:** In this course, generative AI tools may be used in some or all assessment tasks. Instructors will provide specific instructions, including any restrictions or additional requirements (e.g., proper acknowledgement, reflective reports), during the first lesson and in relevant assessment briefs.

6. Required Text(s)

Nil

7. Recommended Readings

- Babbie, E. R. (2016). *The Practice of Social Research* (14th ed.). Nelson Education.
- Bell, J., & Waters, S. (2018). *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers* (7th ed.). London: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (2010). *How to Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The Craft of Research* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Cohen, L., Bray, M., Adamson, B., & Mason, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Comparative Education research: Approaches and methods* (2nd ed.). Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong, and Dordrecht: Springer.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education* (8th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2023). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Doumpos, M. & Zopounidis, C. (2014). *Multicriteria Analysis in Finance*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Hair, J. F. et al. (2019). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (8th ed.). Andover, Hampshire: Pearson Education Limited.
- Keestra, M., Uilhoorn, A., & Zandveld, J. (2022). *An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Research* (2nd revised ed.). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Repko, A. F., & Szostak, R. (2021). *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Ryan, B., Scapens, R.W., & Theobald, M. (2002). *Research Method and Methodology in Finance and Accounting* (2nd ed.). London: Thomson.
- Silverman, D. (2017). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook* (5E). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Smith, J. A. (Ed.). (2015). *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Stringer, E. T., & Ortiz Aragón, A. (2021). *Action Research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- 王文科，王智弘（2014）。《教育研究法》。臺北市：五南圖書出版股份有限公司。
- 馬經標（2008）。《社會科學研究的基本規則》（原作者：Bell, J.）。北京市，北京大學出版社。
- 張宇樑，吳楯椒（2011）。《研究設計：質化， 量化及混合方法取向》（原作者：John W. Creswell）。台北市：學富文化。
- 葉重新（2018）。《教育研究法》（第3版）。臺北市：心理出版社股份有限公司。
- 楊孟麗，謝水南（2013）。《教育研究法：研究設計實務》（原作者：Fraenkel, JR, Wallen, NE, Hyun, HH）。臺北市：心理出版社股份有限公司。

8. Related Web Resources

The European Financial Review: <https://www.europeanfinancialreview.com/ethics-in-finance-why-is-it-such-a-problem/>

Financial Planning Association – 2018 Personal Finance Year in Review: <https://www.onefpa.org/journal/Pages/JAN19-2018-Personal-Finance-Year-in-Review-.aspx>

Library Resources for Personal Finance: Key Resources: <https://researchguides.dartmouth.edu/personalfinance>

Financial Capability Resources for Teachers: <https://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-resources/Financial-capability/Resources-for-teachers/Online>

Journal of Accountancy – Topics in Personal Financial Planning: <https://www.journalofaccountancy.com/topics/personal-financial-planning.html>

Web Center for Social Research Methods: <https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/>

9. Related Journals

The Journal of Personal Finance

Journal of Financial Planning

Journal of Finance

International Journal of Qualitative Methods

Journal of Accounting

Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting

International Journal of Managerial Finance

Finance Research Letters

The Review of Financial Studies

10. Academic Honesty

The University upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. Please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity* (<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/uploads/docs/000000000016336798924548BbN5>). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

11. Others

Nil

Last updated on 22 July 2025