

SAULT COLLEGE OF APPLIED ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO



Sault College

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE TITLE: Business Research

CODE NO. : BUS 233 SEMESTER: Three

PROGRAM: Business

AUTHOR: Jack Boushear

DATE: June PREVIOUS OUTLINE DATED: June
2001 2000

APPROVED:

DEAN

DATE

TOTAL CREDITS: 3

PREREQUISITE(S): None

HOURS/WEEK: 3 hours/week
for 15 weeks

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School of Business and Hospitality

Centre of Specialization for Natural Resources

(705) 759-2554, Ext.688

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Code No.

I. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course helps students develop skills in acquiring business information specifically for small and medium sized businesses. Students will become familiar with the resources, tools, theories and techniques used in business to generate information useful in decision-making.

The objective of this course is to familiarize the student with a variety of popular techniques used in the collection and analysis of information.

It is our purpose to develop a sense of purpose and caution in planning and carrying out studies. In addition, it is expected that the student will be a better consumer of claims and findings of findings offered by others, especially those inevitable sources that are either downright unethical, or well meaning, but unscientific in their approach.

II. **LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE:**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will demonstrate the ability to:

1. **Plan and design a survey**

Potential Elements of the Performance:

- Explain why surveys are conducted.
- Discuss the advantages and limitations of survey research.
- Describe the roles of research participants.
- Identify problem areas that are likely to be studied.
- To explain the types of information that can be gathered and to identify relevant secondary sources.
- Outline the steps in the survey process.
- Articulate the information needs in a clear and concise manner.
- Plan the survey elements.
- Estimate accurately timing and costs.
- Develop a comprehensive project plan.
- Explain the rationale behind sampling.
- Differentiate between reliability and validity.
- Determine a sufficient sample size
- Select an appropriate sampling method
- Select a sampling procedure

2. **Develop survey instruments.**

Potential Elements of the Performance:

Course Name

Code No.

- Compose questions with focus, clarity and brevity.
- Select appropriate question grammar and vocabulary.
- Identify and explain the concepts of instrumentation error and bias.
- Identify and take steps to reduce response bias.
- Identify and explain the criteria for question format development.
- Explain the concept of scaling.
- Generate examples of the conventional scale types.
- Explain how to create effective scales.
- Build, create and organize a questionnaire.
- Direct response flow through branching.
- Appropriately conclude a questionnaire.
- Precode and pretest a questionnaire.

3. **Collect and process data.**

Potential Elements of the Performance:

- Design an effective instrument to collect information by mail.
- Differentiate between the various mailing piece components.
- Select inducements to respond.
- Gather information through the interview method.
- Manage the interview process.
- Identify the sources and methods for reducing interviewer error.
- Differentiate between telephone and personal interviewing techniques.
- Central and field edit the questionnaires.
- Postcode surveys
- Process the data.

4. **Interpret and report results.**

Potential Elements of the Performance:

- Understand and explain the basics of statistical tool selection.
- Differentiate between measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion.
- Explain the significance of the shape of the distribution curve.
- Explain the relationship between variables. (Dependent, independent, moderating, extraneous and intervening)
- Explain the basics of statistical measures of association.
- Explain the difference between analysis and interpretation.
- Explain the basics of descriptive statistics.
- Explain statistical inference. (Error of the estimate and confidence)
- Write a report of the findings.

Course Name

Code No.

5. **Generate information by observation and focus groups**

Potential Elements of the Performance:

- Explain the advantages and disadvantages of focus groups.
- Identify the requirements of a focus group.
- Develop a focus group discussion guide.
- Select and screen focus group candidates.
- Define the qualities of a focus group moderator
- Interpret focus group proceedings

6. **Understand the basics of experimentation**

Potential Elements of the Performance:

- Define experimentation and discuss the value of experiments as a data gathering technique.
- Explain the concept of causality and the conditions of causality.
- Discuss the basic issues and terminology associated with experimentation.
- Describe the types of experimental design.
- Relate the concept of validity to field and experimental design.
- Outline the guidelines for conducting experimental research.
- Identify the limitations of experimental design.

III. TOPICS:

1. Initiating a survey
2. Planning the project
3. Designing the sample
4. Composing questions
5. Creating item scales
6. Building questionnaires
7. Mail data collection
8. Gathering interview data
9. Processing the data
10. Analyzing the results
11. Interpreting statistics
12. Reporting the Information and presenting the results.
13. Conducting Focus groups
14. Experimentation

IV. REQUIRED RESOURCES/TEXTS/MATERIALS:

The Survey Research Handbook 2nd edition, Pamela L. Alreck and Robert B. Settle, Irwin Publishing 1995

Course Name

Code No.**V. EVALUATION PROCESS/GRADING SYSTEM:**

3 tests @ 25% 75%
1 group assignment 25%

Tests – Each test will cover approximately 1/3 of the course material. The tests will be mutually exclusive and practical in nature. That means students can expect apply the text material rather than memorize points. Each test will be comprised of a variety of measuring devices. Test material will include supplemental handout material.

Classroom preparation – Students should read and reflect on textbook material before coming to class. A tentative timetable is distributed with this outline in order to encourage planning your reading and study schedule.

Missed tests – Students who miss tests should be prepared to provide a written explanation of their absence. An alternative but different test will be administered to students who have a reasonable explanation of their absence before the end of the semester. Students in most cases will only be allowed to rewrite one missed test during the semester. Permission to rewrite a test may be denied to students who do not provide a reasonable explanation for absence or who by lack of attendance (less than 80%) have demonstrated unacceptable work effort. An 'E' (see attendance below is not included in the attendance calculation).

Attendance – Students are required to attend class on a regular basis because that is consistent with the “real world”. Missed classes deprive others of your insight and perspective and you are deprived of their insight and perspective. Modern business practices and learning principles support the concept of participation. Attendance is recorded as 'P' – present, 'A' – absent, or 'E' excused (absent with an acceptable written explanation.) To be excused students must provide an acceptable written and dated explanation of their absence – one note for each absence either before the absence (if it can be reasonably anticipated) or within a day or two upon returning. A verbal explanation is always appreciated but it is considered insufficient to change your record from an 'A' to an 'E'. Chronic absenteeism may require further documentation (evidence). It is my intention to record attendance in every class. If for some reason I fail to distribute the attendance sheet it is in your best interest to remind me.

Behaviour – Students should respect the diversity and dignity of others in the class.

 Course Name

 Code No.

The following semester grades will be assigned to students in postsecondary courses:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Grade Point Equivalent</u>
A+	90 - 100%	4.00
A	80 - 89%	3.75
B	70 - 79%	3.00
C	60 - 69%	2.00
R (Repeat)	59% or below	0.00
CR (Credit)	Credit for diploma requirements has been awarded.	
S	Satisfactory achievement in field placement or non-graded subject areas.	
U	Unsatisfactory achievement in field placement or non-graded subject areas.	
X	A temporary grade. This is used in limited situations with extenuating circumstances giving a student additional time to complete the requirements for a course (see <i>Policies & Procedures Manual – Deferred Grades and Make-up</i>).	
NR	Grade not reported to Registrar's office. This is used to facilitate transcript preparation when, for extenuating circumstances, it has not been possible for the faculty member to report grades.	

VI. SPECIAL NOTES:

Special Needs:

If you are a student with special needs (e.g. physical limitations, visual impairments, hearing impairments, or learning disabilities), you are encouraged to discuss required accommodations with your instructor and/or the Special Needs office. Visit Room E1204 or call Extension 493, 717, or 491 so that support services can be arranged for you.

Retention of course outlines:

It is the responsibility of the student to retain all course outlines for possible future use in acquiring advanced standing at other postsecondary institutions.

Course Name

Code No.

Plagiarism:

Students should refer to the definition of “academic dishonesty” in *Student Rights and Responsibilities*. Students who engage in “academic dishonesty” will receive an automatic failure for that submission and/or such other penalty, up to and including expulsion from the course/program, as may be decided by the professor/dean. In order to protect students from inadvertent plagiarism, to protect the copyright of the material referenced, and to credit the author of the material, it is the policy of the department to employ a documentation format for referencing source material.

Course outline amendments:

The Professor reserves the right to change the information contained in this course outline depending on the needs of the learner and the availability of resources.

Substitute course information is available in the Registrar's office.

VII. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT:

Students who wish to apply for advanced credit in the course should consult the professor. Credit for prior learning will be given upon successful completion of a challenge exam or portfolio.

VIII. DIRECT CREDIT TRANSFERS:

Students who wish to apply for direct credit transfer (advanced standing) should obtain a direct credit transfer form from the Dean’s secretary. Students will be required to provide a transcript and course outline related to the course in question.