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Course Name

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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. **Conduct Exploratory (Qualitative) Research and Observation**

#### Potential Elements of the Performance:

- Explain the difference between qualitative and quantitative research and quantitative research.
- Describe the various forms of qualitative research including direct procedures such as focus groups and depth interviews, and indirect methods such as projective techniques.
- Describe focus groups in detail with an emphasis on planning and conducting focus groups, and their advantages, disadvantages and applications.
- Describe depth interviews in detail, citing their advantages, disadvantages and applications.
- Explain projective techniques in detail and compare association, completion, construction and expression techniques.
- Discuss the considerations involved in conducting qualitative research in an international setting.
- Explain the ethical issues involved in conducting qualitative research
- Discuss the use of the Internet and computers in obtaining and analyzing qualitative data.
- Explain and classify the different observation methods used by business researchers and describe personal, mechanical observation, audit, content analysis, and trace analysis.
- Identify the criteria for evaluating observation methods, compare

the different methods, and evaluate which if any is suited for particular a research project.

- Describe the relative advantages and disadvantages of observation methods and compare them to survey methods.

## 2. **Develop business experiments**

### Potential Elements of the Performance:

- Define the basic concepts of experimentation.
- Explain the concepts of experimentation and causality.
- Describe the distinction between laboratory and field experiments.
- Discuss the various types of experimental validity
- Discuss the factors that can jeopardize internal and external validity.
- Explain and justify experimental designs in the context of typical business research projects.

## 3. **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

## 4. **Develop survey instruments.**

### Potential Elements of the Performance:

- 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.

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- Explain the concept of scaling.
- 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.

5. **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.
- 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.

6. **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 basics of descriptive statistics.
- Write a report of the findings.

**III. TOPICS:**

1. Conducting Exploratory research - Handout
2. Develop business experiments - Handout
3. Initiating a survey
4. Planning the project
5. Designing the sample
6. Composing questions
7. Creating item scales
8. Building questionnaires
9. Mail data collection
10. Gathering interview data
11. Processing the data
12. Analyzing the results - basic
13. Reporting the Information and presenting the results.

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Code No.**IV. REQUIRED RESOURCES/TEXTS/MATERIALS:**

The Survey Research Handbook, Second Edition, Pamela L. Alreck and Robert B. Settle, Irwin Publishing, 1995.

**V. EVALUATION PROCESS/GRADING SYSTEM:**

3 tests @ 25%	75%
1 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. There are four levels at which the mind works. Input and retention, which are referred to as learning; and judgment and creativity, which are referred to as thinking. Students will be expected to prepare for class by learning so that valuable class time can be spent on the thinking components.

**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 demonstrate a lack of initiative.

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**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.) There are occasions where it is impossible to attend classes for legitimate reasons, such as class conflicts. In those circumstances, it would be in your best interest to **both** talk to your professor **and** provide a written explanation (before the absence or within a day or two of returning to class) for your professor’s files. A verbal explanation is always appreciated but it is considered insufficient to change your record from an ‘A’ to an ‘E’. 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.

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 &amp; Procedures Manual – Deferred Grades and Make-up</i> ).	

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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.

### 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.

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**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.