



BUSINESS SCHOOL
Te Kura Pakihi

COURSE OUTLINE

Department of Accountancy & Finance

ACFI459 Advanced Research Methods

Semester One, 2021

Paper Description and Aims

ACFI459 is a 20 point fourth-year paper for intending Honours and graduate students who carry out research. The primary objective of the course is to provide students with an understanding of the research process and of research method, particularly in relation to, but not exclusive to, the disciplines of Accountancy and Finance.

Learning Outcomes

Students in ACFI459 will develop the ability to:

1. appreciate the philosophy of science and develop an analytical framework for evaluating accounting and finance research,
2. understand and critically appraise relevant academic and research literature in the fields of Accountancy and Finance and their sub-disciplines,
3. develop data acquisition and management skills,
4. discuss and evaluate statistical methods appropriate to research in Accountancy and Finance,
5. develop written communication and presentation skills,
6. develop, structure and present a research proposal, and
7. learn and research independently.

Teaching Staff

Paper Coordinator

Dr. **Marinela** Adriana Finta (MAF)

Room: OBS 3.12

Phone: 479-5299

Email: marinela.finta@otago.ac.nz

Office hours: By email appointment Tuesday 14:30pm to 16:30pm; Thursday 14:30pm to 15:30pm

A student should contact the Paper Coordinator in case he or she has enquiries about the paper, e.g. tutorial changes, or requests for late submission of assignments. [Margaret Grundy](#) should be contacted regarding any administrative enquiries.

There are two class meetings (“lectures”) each week, as detailed below.

Day	Time	Room
Tuesdays*	12:00 pm - 1:50 pm	OBS 229
Thursdays	12:00 pm - 1:50 pm	OBS 230

****** When required by the lecturer or when there is a guest lecture, the Tuesday session will be one hour long.**

The “lectures” will follow one of several formats depending on the style of the facilitator; in some cases they will be standard, formal lectures; in others they will be interactive sessions, conforming more to a seminar format.

This course emphasizes student-centered learning. Although the facilitators will provide brief material reviews, the main aim of the course is that students *learn by doing*. **A primary outcome and assessment for the course is a written research proposal for a research study in Accountancy or Finance.**

Students are expected to prepare for and attend all classes to gain full benefit from the course.

The course is intended to promote an active engagement with the material it contains, both in terms of assimilating and critically evaluating the material and in terms of students' engaging with their peers, tutors, and Departmental staff.

The Course Programme (in this outline and online on *Blackboard*) gives days and dates of lectures, lecture topics, and due dates for assignment work. The programme may change as the course proceeds, but notice will be given both in lectures and on *Blackboard* of any change.

Course Materials and Course Resources

The set textbook for the course is:

- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., Thornhill, A., (2019), **Research Methods for Business Students**, Financial Times Press, Pearson, London (8th Edition).

Typically, a reading that is not from the set textbook will be posted to *Blackboard*.

It will not be possible for a student to succeed in the course if he or she does not print off a copy of each reading and study it thoroughly in advance of the class meeting for which it was set.

Blackboard

Blackboard, <https://blackboard.otago.ac.nz/>, provides students with access to course materials and class notices; all such material will be posted on *Blackboard*. *Blackboard* is used to email the whole class so it is important that a student check his or her student email and *Blackboard* regularly, or use eVision to redirect his or her emails to the appropriate personal account. Students will find helpful links to the Library referencing page, the Student Learning Centre, and writing resources on *Blackboard*.

Student Webmail

We will use your student email account to email you information relevant to your programme. Forward your University email address to an email address that you use regularly as follows:

1. Log into your StudentMail account (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/smlanding/>) using your student username and password
2. Click **Cog button (top right corner) > Options**
3. Under **Account**, select the **Forward your email** shortcut under the **Short Cuts** menu on the right side of the screen.
4. Under the Forwarding heading, type in the email address you want your email to be forwarded to. You can also choose to have a copy of these emails kept on your StudentMail account, so please check the box if you would like this.
5. Click the **Start forwarding** button.

Assessment

There are 4 assessment tasks (ATs) that are formally assessed as follows:

Title	What	When	Weight
AT1	First Assignment	Thursday 25 March	10%
AT2	Second Assignment	Thursday 15 April	25%
AT3	Essay	Thursday 13 May	25%
AT4	Research Proposal	Thursday 3 June	40%
Total			100%

AT1 is the reverse-engineered (RE) pitching assignment. Students must complete the pitching research template for a paper of their choice from a top journal (a list of the papers will be provided). The purpose of this assignment is to initiate the process of research topic selection and familiarize with pitching ideas to peers.

AT2 is the pitching research template of students *own* ideas. Students must provide **2 research ideas** and thus, complete **2 pitching templates**. Students must **pitch** their research ideas.

AT3 is a critical essay on a topic to be determined. Students must present the essay.

AT4 is the formal research proposal that builds on the AT2 research idea. It is due on Thursday 3 June, or 1 week after its presentation, whichever is the later date. Students must present the research proposal.

In addition, the following **requirements** are part of this paper:

- Students must have an attendance record that will allow them to engage with the material in a meaningful way
- Students must attend at least one on Department of Accountancy and Finance Research Seminar
- As part of AT2, AT3 and AT4 students must present their essay and research topic. The presentation should be used as an opportunity to get feedback on the proposed area of research from peers and lecturers.
- As part of AT2, AT3 and AT4 students must attend the presentations of their peers. They are also expected to actively, critically and constructively participate in the discussion of peers' research proposals when they present their essay and research idea.

Course Pass Requirements

To pass the course, a student must:

- (i) prepare and present the essay and research ideas,
- (ii) prepare and present a research proposal, and
- (iii) gain an average of at least 50 percent overall (on the four assessment tasks).

Honours students in both disciplines are reminded that a requirement for progression in the Honours course is usually a B+ average across all papers in their subject.

Assessment Grid

Learning Outcome	AT1: First Assignment:	AT2: Second Assignment	AT3	AT4: Proposal	Total
Appreciate the philosophy of science and develop an analytical framework for evaluating accounting and finance research			√	√	
Understand and critically appraise relevant academic and research literature	√	√	√	√	
Develop data acquisition and management skills			√	√	
Discuss and evaluate statistical methods appropriate to research in Accountancy and Finance			√	√	
Develop written communication and presentation skills	√	√	√	√	
Develop, structure and present a research proposal		√	√	√	
Learn and research independently	√	√	√	√	
Total	10%	25%	25%	40%	100%

Grading System

The grading scheme used at Otago is:

A+	90-100	C+	60-64
A	85-89	C	55-59
A-	80-84	C-	50-54
B+	75-79	D	40-49
B	70-74	E	<40
B-	65-69		

Department Seminar

Attendance at a minimum of one Departmental seminar is expected of all students.

The seminar is usually at 2 pm on Fridays in the School of Business on the third floor, room 3.37. A Seminar schedule for 2021 can be found on level three.

Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism)

Students should ensure that all submitted work is their own. Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct (cheating). It is defined as copying or paraphrasing another's work and presenting it as one's own. Any student found responsible for academic misconduct in any piece of work submitted for assessment shall be subject to the University's dishonest practice regulations, which may result in serious penalties, including forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the paper, or in extreme cases, exclusion from the University. The University of Otago reserves the right to use plagiarism detection tools.

Students are advised to inform themselves about University policies concerning dishonest practice and take up opportunities to improve their academic and information literacy. If necessary, seek advice from academic staff, or the Student Learning Centre. The guideline for students is available at this link: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity/index.html>.

Student Feedback

We encourage your feedback. This can be in the form of contacting staff, participating in course evaluation surveys and communicating with class representatives. Continual improvements will be made to this course based in part on student feedback.

Class Representatives

The class (or student) representative system is an avenue for encouraging communication and consultation between staff and students. It provides you with a vehicle for communicating your views on the teaching and delivery of the paper and provides staff with an opportunity to communicate information and gain constructive feedback from students. It contributes to the development of a sense of community within a department and it adds a further dimension to the range of support services offered to students. Volunteers for the role of class representatives will be called early in the semester. Your class representative's name and contact details will be posted on Blackboard early in the semester.

Disclaimer

While every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate, it is subject to change. Changes will be notified in class and via Blackboard. Students are encouraged to check Blackboard regularly. It is the student's responsibility to be informed.

Course Calendar

May be subject to some change and additional readings will be issued from week to week.

Week	Session	Date	Topic (Reading)	Lecturer	Assignment Due
1	1	2-Mar	Introduction to the course Research Careers	MAF	
	2	4-Mar	The Research Process (Saunders et al., Chapter 1) Generating Research Ideas I (Saunders et al., Chapter 2)		
2	3	9-Mar	Generating Research Ideas II How do you pitch the Research Idea? Pitching Template I <i>AT1 guidance</i>	MAF	
	4	11-Mar	How do you pitch the Research Idea? Pitching Template II <i>AT1 guidance</i>		
3	5	16-Mar	Research design (Saunders et al., Chapter 5) <i>AT2 guidance</i>	MAF	
	6	18-Mar	Critiques of research in Accounting and Finance (Swann 2006 and others)		
4	7	23-Mar	Critically Reviewing Literature (Saunders et al., Chapter 3)	MAF	25-Mar AT1
	8	25-Mar	Critically Reviewing Literature (Saunders et al., Chapter 3) <i>AT3 guidance</i> Engaging with the Department (recent student experiences)		
5	9	30-Mar	Session on library databases and Endnote 1 <i>(NOTE: This session will be held at the Robertson Library Seminar Room)</i>	Scott Venning	
	10	1-Apr	Session on library databases and Endnote 2 <i>(NOTE: This session will be held at the Robertson Library Seminar Room)</i>	Scott Venning	
6		5-Apr to 9-Apr	Mid-semester Break		

Week	Session	Date	Topic (Reading)	Lecturer	Assignment Due	
7	11	13-Apr	Philosophy, Research and Theory I (Saunders et al., Chapter 4)	MAF		
	12	15-Apr	Philosophy, Research and Theory II (Saunders et al., Chapter 4)		15-Apr AT2	
8	13	20-Apr	Research quality and data (Saunders et al., Chapter 7, 10) <i>AT4 guidance</i>	MAF		
	14	22-Apr	Data and programming continued (Saunders et al., 10)			
9	15	27-Apr	Data and programming continued (Saunders et al., Chapter 8, 12 (12.1, 12.2))	MAF		
	16	29-Apr	Programming/AT3/Introduction to critical readings			
10-12	17-22	4-May & 6-May 11-May & 13-May 18-May & 20-May	Critical readings on a topic to be determined	MAF		13-May AT3
13-14	23-26	25-May & 27-May 1-June & 3-June	Presentation of Research Proposals	MAF		3-June AT4

Lectures End Thursday 3 June 2021
University Exam Period is Wednesday 9 June - Wednesday 23 June