

**MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SCIENCES**

Paper Number & Title: 158.750 Information Sciences Research Methods

Credits Value: 15 **Semester:** 2

Campus: Albany **Mode:** Internal

Calendar Prescription: A study of information science (including Computer Science, Information Technology, Data Science and Software Engineering) research, its methods, practices, social context and relationships to other fields of study. Research skills including research design, literature evaluation, data collection, data analysis and publication are practised in this paper.

Requirements

Note: You may enroll in a postgraduate paper (that is a 700-, 800- or 900-level paper) if you meet the prerequisites for that paper and have been admitted to a qualification which lists the paper in its schedule.

- **Prerequisite(s):** Graduate Status and Permission
- **Restriction(s):** 157.750

Online component:

Partially Taught Online - As part of the paper is taught online, broadband access is required. In addition to accessing the Paper Guide, students will be required to access core and supplementary digital study resources, contribute to discussion fora and complete online activities and assessment tasks. Core study resources that can be published in print will be supplied to the students who request them.

Paper Coordinator:

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Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete this paper should be able to:

- Design research questions.
- Develop research proposals including research questions and appropriate methodologies.
- Apply analytical methods to research data.
- Critically evaluate published IT research.

Please note: Learning Outcomes are subject to change until the beginning of the semester in which the paper is delivered.

Assessments

During this course, the following assessments will contribute to your final mark.

Assessment		Learning outcomes assessed	Week Due	Weighting
1	Preliminary Research Proposal	1, 2, 4	Week 5	20%
2	Research Proposal and Report	1, 2,3, 4	Week 12	40%
3	Presentation	1, 2, 3, 4	Week 11	40%
Note	All assessments are compulsory			

Deadlines and Penalties:

One mark will be deducted per day late, unless the Paper Coordinator grants an extension, which will only be considered in extenuating circumstances, and accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence, such as a medical certificate.

Requirements to Pass the Paper:

To gain a “C” pass on this paper, students must gain at least 50% of the total marks available from all assessment components.

Learning Programme and Schedule:

See separate course schedule on Stream.

Student Time Budget:

It is expected that students will complete of the order of 150 hours of work on this paper during the semester, i.e. 15 weeks at 10 hours per week. This includes time in preparing for all types of assessments, formally- timetabled lectures, and time scheduled by the student him/herself.

Timetable:

See Stream

Proposed Feedback and Support for Student Learning:

The turnaround time for assignments will be no more than two weeks from the due date. It is important to note that the specified timeframe applies only to those assignments submitted by the due date, and does not necessarily apply to those submitted late. Students are able to meet with the Paper Coordinator and other staff associated with the paper during prescribed office hours, or at other mutually agreeable times, as negotiated by email or telephone contact.

Textbook and Other Recommended Reading:

There are no set texts for this paper. Other readings will be notified as the course progresses and will normally be provided on Stream.

Conditions for Aegrotat Pass:

If you are prevented by illness, injury or a serious crisis from attending an examination, or another compulsory assessment element that occurs at a fixed time and place, you may apply for an aegrotat consideration. To qualify for an aegrotat pass on the final examination, you must have attempted **at least 40%** of the total formal assessment and your performance must be well above the minimum pass standard, so that the examiners can be confident that you would have passed the paper if you had completed the final examination. You may also apply for aegrotat consideration for other compulsory assessment elements (such as Semester Tests) that occur at a fixed time and place if you are prevented by illness, injury or a serious crisis from attending. You must apply on the form available from the Examinations Office, the Student Health Service or the Student Counselling Service.

Conditions for Impaired Performance:

If you consider that your performance in, or preparation for, an examination, or another compulsory assessment element that occurs at a fixed time and place, has been seriously impaired by illness, injury or a serious crisis, you may apply for an impaired performance consideration. You must apply on the form available from the Examinations Office, the Student Health Service or the Student Counselling Service.

Plagiarism:

Massey University, College of Sciences, has taken a firm stance on plagiarism and any form of cheating. Plagiarism is the copying or paraphrasing of another person's work, whether published or unpublished, without clearly acknowledging it. It includes copying the work of other students. Plagiarism will be penalised; it is likely to lead to loss of marks for that item of assessment and may lead to an automatic failing grade for the paper and/or exclusion from enrolment at the University.

Grievance Procedures:

A student who claims that he/she has sustained academic disadvantage as a result of the actions of a University staff member should use the University Grievance Procedures. Students, whenever practicable, should in the first instance approach the University staff

member concerned. If the grievance is unresolved with the staff member concerned, the student should then contact the College of Sciences office on his/her campus for further information on the procedures, or read the procedures in the University Calendar.

College of Sciences

Approach to applying grades to marks

The approach, described below, is the system used in College of Sciences-hosted qualifications to ensure your grades are fair, consistent, and defensible across offerings and cohorts. The resultant grades are an accurate reflection of your performance and deriving them aims to be as equitable as possible to the relative performance of cohorts of students over time. The approach aims to ensure you do not gain from or be penalised by your choice of courses, or differing practices in the College.

Each qualification is managed by a Programme Committee and the Chair of the Programme Committee, the Programme Director/Leader, is the chief examiner for that qualification. Although each Course Coordinator is the examiner for the course they coordinate, overall responsibility is with the Programme Director. The Programme Director/Leader ensures the processes have been followed, but accomplishes this through the examinations section of our Student Administration Unit.

If you are not happy with the grade you are given, then you should, in the first instance, contact Student Administration about that. They will then ensure your complaint is followed up and a response provided. Once final results are provided you should not contact the Course Coordinator (examiner) directly.

Process of applying grades followed in the College:

- a. Raw marks for each assessment are totalled according to the weighting specified in the Course Information and Course Details, to give a raw total score.
- b. The minimum raw total score for a passing grade of C minus is normally set at 50%, but is sometimes adjusted if there is evidence that the assessments were unexpectedly difficult for that offering. In other words, sometimes students are able to pass with raw total scores that are less than 50%. The performance of the class as a whole is one of the aspects considered in making a decision about whether assessments were unexpectedly difficult.
- c. Grades of “C minus” and above are then awarded so that the resulting grades reflect the Examiners’ judgements about the quality of performance a certain raw total score represents, based on College and University guidelines. The [University marking scheme](#) is used as a guide, but cut-off points are adjusted if necessary to account for differences in the difficulty of the assessment using the College grading guidelines (see below). This means that students are not penalised if an assessment was particularly difficult one year, and also do not achieve high grades just because a particular examiner is very lenient. These processes help ensure comparability between the grades achieved by students irrespective of their choice of course or offering, or year of study.
- d. Grading guidelines are as follows in Table 1. These are used as a guide to help determine if assessments were unusually difficult or easy and are not strict requirements for the distribution of grades within a class. Course co-ordinators make careful consideration about whether other distributions are defensible, based on all the information, including their knowledge of the performance of the class as a whole and other classes.

Table 1: Guidelines for distribution of passing grades for undergraduate courses at different levels. Note that all grade guidelines are percentages of all **passing undergraduate** students.

Grade	Percentage of Passes		
	100-Level	200-Level	300-Level and above
A grades	5-20%	5-25%	5-30%
B grades	30-50%	30-55%	30-55%

Points to note about this process

Examination performance is often lower than internal assessment performance

Although Programme Committees try to provide you with different approaches to demonstrate your learning, experience has shown that your performance in a final examination is often slightly below what you can achieve in internal assessment. Put another way, internal assessment may not be a reliable predictor of final examination performance. If you have been doing really well in your internal assessments and you “ease up” for the final exam, your mark may drop. If you want an “A” then you need to aim to achieve consistently well across all your assessments.

Some assessments such as final examinations have minimum mark requirements

It is worth noting that many courses require a minimum mark in assessments such as final examinations. If your performance falls below the specified minimum mark then you’ll be awarded a failing grade for the courses, regardless of your total mark. For example, a course may have a 40% minimum specified for its final examination and the examination may contribute 30% to the final mark of a course. A student achieving 50 out of 70 for the internal assessments of the course and 38% in the final examination, would have a final total mark of 61.5%, but would receive a failing grade “D” because the examination mark was below the minimum requirement for that assessment.

Illness and critical personal circumstances

If you are unable to sit the final examination, you may apply for an aegrotat assessment, but in order for the Course Coordinator to make a decision, you need to have submitted assessment for that course in that enrolment period. An aegrotat cannot be made with nothing to base a decision on. You may apply for an impaired performance consideration if your performance in an examination is in some way limited by critical circumstances beyond your control. In both these cases, you need to take action using the [approved systems](#).

What to do if you disagree with your final grade

Finally, while your teaching staff support your learning during the semester by providing feedback, discussing problems, etc., once your final grades are available, in terms of the grade you are awarded, this interaction should stop. Your teachers are part of the formal examinations process, in which checks and balances have been applied to ensure equity of outcome is achieved. If you feel your grade is inappropriate, then you need to challenge the system not your teachers: you need to do that by contacting Student Administration (not your Course Co-ordinator). Finally, if that process still doesn’t produce an outcome you think is fair, and you still feel your academic performance has been disadvantaged, you may pursue a grievance.