

# Developing a Course Outline to Enhance Research Skills at Graduate School at Bugema University

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## Abstract

The classical class research lectures have a limited ability to impart comprehensive skills needed for master's students to successfully write their dissertations at the end of the two year academic engagement. The quality of research and time of compilation of research at graduate level is affected by research skill incompetence. Using the Project Action Plan model, four interrelated steps (skill audit, training workshop, evaluation and designing of a course outline) were used to identify the problem—skill gap—and design an intervention—workshop. The evaluation of the intervention demonstrates that students increased their competence considerably. A course outline was designed as a product of the research project.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The School of Graduate Studies at Bugema University (SGSBU) offers advanced education and research aimed at empowering students with the ability to generate knowledge and confront the societal challenges through collaborative learning and networking for the purpose of discovering new knowledge.

The role of the dean of the Graduate School is pivotal in supporting and motivating students' skill development and training in research methods. On assuming office, the dean was faced with the urgency of making effective training in order to improve the graduate students' research skills, and it was found important to prioritize and categorize activities into the Project Action Plan (PAP). This determination coincided with the DAAD call to the International Deans' Course which was designed for newly elected deans and vice-deans from Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. The key objective of the course was to assist deans in preparing for the challenges of holding a deanship position in a changing higher education landscape. It dealt with various issues surrounding faculty management and leadership. Issues such as strategic faculty management, financial management controls, quality assurance and leadership were key parts of this progress. Participation in the PAP project was practice oriented and mainly based on case studies. Personal experiences as a

university manager greatly contributed to this course and influenced the commencement of activities for a skill audit and the designing of a course outline model to implement at our university.

Lack of research skills among students at the graduate school was the call for which the PAP was answering. The PAP served to induce change processes of which deans felt that they were needed in the School. Since deans have a variety of tasks and goals in their schools, the decision for a project and an action plan helps to set priorities. After strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis, Bugema Graduate School identified the lack of research skills and we agreed that this problem affected the quality and completion of research projects. The general objective of the PAP was to develop a training package that enhances research skills development at Bugema Graduate School. The next section gives readers the background of Bugema University Graduate School.

## **1.2 Bugema University Graduate School**

Bugema University started in 1948 as a training school for teachers and pastors for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Africa. By then it was called Bugema Missionary Training School but later, the name changed to Bugema Missionary College and then to Bugema Adventist College. In 1978, Bugema Adventist College graduated its first degree class with a Bachelor of Theology. In 1994, Bugema Adventist College changed its status from college to university, and in 1997, Bugema University was granted a license from the Ministry of Education and Sports to operate as a university offering Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Business Administration in Management and Accounting, and Bachelor of Arts in Education with History, Religion, English and Literature as teaching subjects.

Currently, Bugema University runs Master's program at Kampala, and Arua campuses, offering Master of Business Administration, Master of Arts in Development Studies, Master of Arts in Education, Master of Public Health and Master of Science in Counselling Psychology. Bugema University envisions training for Excellence in Service through Research and Community Extension.

## **1.3 The Problem**

Graduate School master students are required to attend research seminar classes aimed at grasping more research skills which would contribute to their final thesis. This is more of an independent study with very little lecturer interceptions and no timetable hours. It involves one or more extended research projects which a student brings to fruition with the guidance of a specialized supervisor.

However, the limited student competences create research skill deficits which affect the development and completion of research projects. The same problem is often realized during student proposal and thesis defence. Corrections to students work seemed massive so that most students did not make it to graduation. The students seem to lack the techniques and skills of research which leads to poor quality of students' thesis, students abandoning the research thereby clogging the students'

academic progress, yet research is only partial fulfilment of a master's degree. This project therefore applies a PAP to develop an evidence-base course outline for training students in comprehensive research skills and techniques.

## 2 Brief Literature Review

Research skills and knowledge development by graduate students have been on a rising demand in the recent decade. As research extends the boundaries of understanding, it is necessary to equip researchers with the skills and tools to identify problems and look for practical solutions in a systematic way. Research is a "hunt for the truth" (Katamba & Nsubuga 2014), it is a systematic investigation, testing and evaluating, designed to develop and contribute to generalizable knowledge (UNCST, 2016). The process of teaching graduate students involved in investigation offers practice in the application of important research skills (Feldon, D. F. et al 2011). It consists of activities that take more time and entails different research skills than the final step of writing the paper (Abba, K. A. 2015). The development of basic skills has been motivated by the belief that there are skills which all graduate students should possess and which would be applicable to a wide range of tasks and contexts beyond the university setting (Balatti 2004). Several studies use pre- and post-test methods to assess the success of skill training in student's completion (Powers 1987). A common theme from studies of graduate students self-report survey designed to capture graduate students assessment of their research skills, indicate that several factors contribute to graduate students perceptions of their research and teaching skills such as their personal values and research and teaching practices (Gilmore and Feldon 2010).

There is an underlying assumption that students that undertake graduate studies are competent in skills of conducting research, however this assumption has been challenged (Williams, 2000). As Bradigan et al. (1987) observed, students come to graduate study with much different levels of preparation and may be unaware of the deficits in their research skills and techniques. Research supervisors encounter these deficiencies in research skills first hand during supervisions.

## 3 Methodology

In order to achieve the PAP objectives there was a need to come up with a roadmap which was composed of tasks to achieve along the journey. The first task was to raise awareness of the project. It all started with presenting a written report to the Vice Chancellor who serves as the chief executive of the university. It followed a lengthy discussion and several informal interactions with the DVC Academics. From here I was requested to introduce the PAP to the University faculty and staff. Another presentation to the deans and the heads of departments in the University was done. This resulted in the call from the DVC Academics office requesting all school deans

to develop PAP as their management tools used to address challenges in their departments, at this point my PAP was used as Case Study. It benefited from contributions from the other deans. Further to this, graduate council awareness was raised and in respect to the above task, awareness created and a dedicated team led by the Dean appointed by Graduate School Council to push the Project came in to existence.

### 3.1 Activities undertaken in the PAP/Achievements

**Table 1:** Activities as part of the PAP

Activity	Activity description	Person in charge
DAAD Dean's Course in Germany	Attending workshop and a report written and presented to the Vice Chancellor upon return from Germany	Vice Chancellor
Stakeholder meetings	Discussion with DVC Academics about the PAP. Presented PAP to the graduate school council seating Introduced the PAP to the faculty and staff of graduate school	DVC, Graduate School Council
Implementation of PAP	Established a committee to oversee the development and implementation of PAP and it was tasked with the following tasks: Skill Audit/Needs Assessment of Students and Lecturers Develop a training package for the needed skills Implementation of workshops and evaluation of the content	PAP committee
	Interviews were carried with the lecturers at graduate school inquiring of the skills a master student should possess	
	Documentary review (course outline content for research seminar), Benchmark and review literature	
	The PAP committee reviewed the skill audit questionnaire Skill Audit/Needs Assessment of Students and Lecturers to be identified through documentary review, interviewing and filling questionnaire	
	Skill audit introduced to Students on the 13/Dec 2017 a workshop was held to introduce the students to the skill audit Printed and Distributed questionnaire to the current research student	
	Contact the experts to provide content for training	
Training package and deliver a training workshops	Finalize the skill package and present to the senate for approval Disseminate the skill package	Dean Graduate School
	Plan for the workshops and request the professors to deliver the training in theory and practice	

(Continuing table 1)

Activity	Activity description	Person in charge
Evaluation	Evaluation tool available in appendix	Dean Graduate School and PAP committee
Outcome	Details of the course outline; Course outline is adopted and available for use in graduate school seminars and later use them in our research seminar class	DVC, Graduate School Council

### 3.2 Skill Audit and Identified themes

All masters' students planning to attend research seminar were required to complete a skills audit as part of their research seminar class. This application was a great opportunity for self-assessment of skills and being aware of training opportunities to enhance skill areas where they consider there is scope for development. Themes were identified after conducting interviews and group discussions on what skills a master student should possess as they conduct their research. The skills audit was followed by a rigorous process of identifying themes emerging from the students' report on skill gaps. After a thorough sorting, coding, categorization, the following themes emerged:

- Statistical skills
- Data analysis (quantitative and qualitative techniques)
- Report writing skills (preparing essays and reports, Microsoft Word, how to embed diagrams and graphs, choosing the right language )
- Citing literature
- Referencing techniques (referencing your sources)
- Critical review of documents/critical analysis
- Analysis of research problems
- Selection of an appropriate study design
- How to make conclusions and recommendations of studies
- Use of English language in research
- Research presentation (e. g. power point, how to communicate your research)
- Communication skills
- Data collection skills
- Result interpretation skills
- Electronic data searching engines
- Basic computer skills
- Developing a conceptual frame of your research/conceptualization skills
- Learning from feedback (acting upon your markers feedback)
- Paraphrasing (learning how to paraphrase an original text effectively by using synonyms, changing verbs to nouns or the sentence structure)
- Introduction to reference software
- Constructing an argument (how to identify and construct an argument, introducing a critical and analytical thinking and going beyond description)

### 3.3 Evaluation (Research Seminar Evaluation Form)

The evaluation form was designed as a feedback tool. It was distributed to workshop attendees at the end of a training session. The form consisted of eleven questions (see appendix 1).

### 3.4 Development of the Course Outline

The course outline (see appendix 3) was developed by experts who had participated in the training sections. A draft of the outline was reviewed by the authors and submitted for review and approval by the university organs. The course outline was designed to offer research skills training in the period of: three (3) hours per week (which is 15 weeks in a Semester = 45 Hours). The mode of delivery is lectures, class presentations and discussions while the mode of assessment include: Workshop presentations, assignments, oral Presentations, mini thesis and, and research proposal.

## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Conceptualization of PAP Process

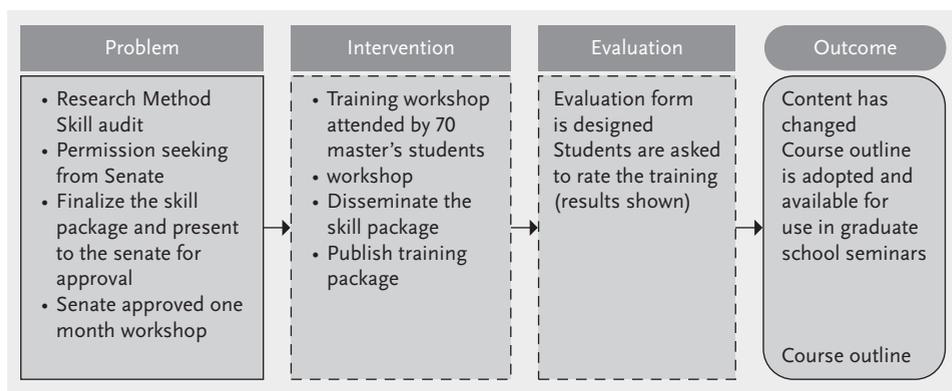


Figure 1: The PAP process

### 4.2 Research skills landscape

Baseline skill audit –Step 1: The project started with a baseline skill audit on various research skills possessed by students at the Graduate School of Bugema University. The first task was to design a skill audit survey to assess the extent to which students rated their research skill competence and abilities based on 19 broad research skills themes (i. e., ranging from interpersonal skills to referencing). Data were collected on the skills using self-report survey questionnaire (see appendix 2, which was completed by students.

- Engaging specialized trainer– Step 2: The first step of the project was conducted in the Graduate School with a goal of identifying specialized trainers for the workshop. A training program was developed to train students during the summer break. It concentrated on finding specialized trainers. The trainers were re-

quested to prepare more of practical training than theoretical materials to facilitate practical skill development.

- The training Workshop–Step 3: this step focused on the provision of a series of trainings on skills gaps identified in the self-assessment skill audit. The training workshops were designed to address the practical needs of the students in an interactive environment.
- Evaluation of the workshop– Step 4: With the focus on practice, the researchers were interested in feedback on the progress and effectiveness of the intervention (workshop). An assessment tool was designed (see appendix 1) to obtain feedback from participating students. The major focus of this step of the project was to ensure that the workshop addressed the skill gaps identified and that the students reported on their obtained level of competence.
- Designing a course outline – Step 5: this was an outcome step. The purpose was to document the skills in form of a research seminar program and course outline to integrate the identified skills into the curriculum. A team of specialized trainers were allocated units for teaching. The designed course outlines (see appendix 3) were integrated into research training to improve research at the graduate school.

The baseline skill audit was undertaken to audit the research skill levels of continuing master’s students. 19 skills of doing research were assessed; each of these skills was given key components that students ranked. The results of the research skill audit are presented here below:

**Table 2:** Analysis of research skills

SKILLS	BASELINE RESULTS	
<b>1. Interpersonal skills</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
1.1. Listening skills	77.9 ± 16.7%	Overall Mean Score = 70.5 ± 14.1% Distribution: Majority 92.9% scored average and above (≥ 50%)
1.2. Verbal communication	65.9 ± 18.3%	
1.3. Emotional intelligence	63.6 ± 20.1%	
1.4. Working in groups or team	75.6 ± 20.3%	
<b>2. Use of English language in research</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
2.1. Speaking and listening	71.3 ± 15.6%	Overall mean Score = 65.1 ± 14.6 % Distribution: A biggest percentage (78.6) of the participants scored average and above
2.2. Writing skills	57.5 ± 18.1%	
2.3. English Grammar	62.2 ± 19.5%	
2.4. Reading-manage texts and recommended reading	66.3 ± 18.4%	

(Continuing table 2)

SKILLS	BASELINE RESULTS	
<b>3. Basic computer skills</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
3.1. Microsoft office	67.3 ± 21.7%	Overall mean score: 54.1 ± 17.9% Distribution: Most participants (66.7%) scored average and above
3.2. Power point	51.8 ± 26.1%	
3.3. Spreadsheets	41.1 ± 22.6%	
3.4. Email	70.7 ± 22.3%	
3.5. Use of Graphs	39.9 ± 25.9%	
<b>4. Report writing skills</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
4.1. Preparing essays and reports	51.8 ± 16.2%	Overall mean score: 47.1 ± 15.5% Distribution: Most participants (52.4%) scored average and above.
4.2. Proporsal and dissertation writing	43.5 ± 19.9%	
4.3. Basic report structure, numbering and designing	44.0 ± 21.2%	
<b>5. Research work planning</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
5.1. Designing a research plan	42.5 ± 22.1%	Overall mean score: 52.4 ± 19.7% Distribution: Majority participants (57.1%) scored average and above
5.2. Time management	65.0 ± 23.2%	
5.3. Budgeting for research	48.8 ± 24.0%	
<b>6. Managing feedback</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
6.1. Learning from feedback	61.1 ± 25%	Overall mean score: 57.5 ± 21.5 Distribution: Many participants (66.7%) managed to score average and above
6.2. Reacting to your markers' feedback	54.6 ± 20.0%	
<b>7. Analysis of research problem</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
7.1. Identifying the background information (context of the study)	53.8 ± 18.6%	Overall mean score: 52.8 ± 15.8 % Distribution: Majority participants (71.4%) scored average and above
7.2. Identifying the research gap	50.6 ± 18.3%	
7.3. Justification of the research problem	53.8 ± 16.6%	

(Continuing table 2)

SKILLS	BASELINE RESULTS	
<b>8. Developing a conceptual framework of your study</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
8.1. Definition of concepts	51.3 ± 17.4%	Overall mean score: 46.3 ± 16.4 % Distribution: Most participants (61.9%) scored below the average
8.2. Mind mapping	41.9 ± 19.9%	
8.3. Conceptualisation	45.6 ± 21.1%	
8.3. Identifying variables and the relationship between variables	45.6 ± 21.1%	
<b>9. Literature review</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
9.1. Identify related literature	56.3 ± 23.2%	Overall mean score: 48.6 ± 18.7% Distribution: Many more participants (54.8%) scored below the average
9.2. Grouping relevant literature	50.6 ± 24.7%	
9.3. Analysing literature basing on 5Ws	43.1 ± 23.3%	
9.4. Electronic data searching engines	43.8 ± 21%	
<b>10. Paraphrasing and handling quotations</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
10.1. Can paraphrase an original text effectively by using synonyms, changing verbs to nouns or the sentence structure	52.6 ± 20.5%	Overall mean score: 44.7 ± 16.7 % Distribution: A bigger number of participants scored below the average
10.2. In-text quotes	47.5 ± 21.8%	
10.3. Indirect quotes	45.6 ± 20.3%	
10.4. Direct quotes	45.6 ± 20.3 %	
10.5. Standalone quotation	37.8 ± 18.0%	
<b>11. Selection of appropriate study design</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
11.1. Method and tools of conducting research	51.9 ± 19.1%	Overall mean score: 51.5 ± 16.8% Distribution: An average score and above was got by the majority participants
11.2. Method and tools of conducting research	49.4 ± 18.6%	
11.3. Procedure of research	54.4 ± 15.9%	

(Continuing table 2)

SKILLS		BASELINE RESULTS	
<b>12. Data collection skills</b>			
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):	
12.1. Gathering data	51.9 ± 24.3%	Overall mean score: 52.1 ± 19.6% Distribution: The majority participants scored average and above	
12.2. Designing a data collection tool (i. e.: questionnaire and interview guide )	46.1 ± 21.4%		
12.3. Interview skill	57.1 ± 19%		
<b>13. Data analysis skills</b>			
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):	
13.1. Transcribing, editing, sorting and code, categorization, theme development	36.6 ± 24.4%	Overall mean score: 51.6 ± 21.9% Distribution: More than a half of the participants (52.4%) scored average and above Processes of analysing and interpreting qualitative data are less known	
13.2. Result interpretation	41.9 ± 20.7%		
<b>14. Critical thinking and analysis</b>			
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):	
14.1. Evaluating and weighing different studies of an argument	42.1 ± 19.7%	Overall mean score: 45.1 ± 16.7% Distribution: A bigger number of participants scored below the average (59.5%)	
14.2. Applying reason and logic	46.3 ± 22.7%		
14.3. Drawing and evaluating conclusions	48.2 ± 20.2%		
14.4. Ability to ask why? (critiquing)	54.5 ± 22.1%		
<b>15. Statistical skills</b>			
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):	
15.1. Knowledge of statistical program	28.0 ± 23.8%	Overall mean score: 32.4 ± 22.5% Distribution: Most participants scored below the average	
15.2. Descriptive and inferential statistics	36.9 ± 24.7%		
<b>16. Research presentation</b>			
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):	
16.1. Use power point presentation	50.6 ± 25.6%	Overall mean score: 51.5 ± 19.9% Distribution: Majority of participants scored average and above.	
16.2. Communicating your research	52.4 ± 20.5%		
<b>17. Conclusion</b>			
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):	
17.1. Restate the thesis and sum-up the main finding to the read	48.1 ± 22.2%	Overall mean score: 46.8 ± 23.8% Distribution: Majority participants (61.9%) scored average and above.	
17.2. Synthesis of the key points	45.5 ± 26.2%		

(Continuing table 2)

SKILLS	BASELINE RESULTS	
<b>18. Recommendations of studies</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
18.1. Can you make critical suggestion regarding the best course of action based on your research findings?	51.2 ± 22.7%	Overall mean score: 51.2 ± 22.7% Distribution: The biggest percentage of participants scored average and above (73.8%)
<b>19. Referencing techniques</b>		
Component elements:	Mean Score(s)	Remark(s):
19.1.Citing literature	54.9 ± 21.1%	Overall mean score: 51.3 ± 17.8% Distribution: The majority participants (52.4%) scored below the average
19.2.Referencing your sources	51.8 ± 21.2%	
19.3.Knowledge of plagiarism	54.4 ± 22.56%	
19.4.Use referencing software	51.8 ± 21.2%	
19.5. Referencing, e. g., APA. Harvard, MLA etc.	53.8 ± 23.3%	

N = 70

From a sample of 70 graduate students interviewed, the results in the table above suggest that students had diverse research skills needs. Participants had high scores in interpersonal skills, English language, basic computer skills while a majority scored slightly above average in skills related to literature review, feedback, analysing of a research problem, referencing and presentation of findings. Much emphasis was needed to improve the low scores in core research skills such as data collection and data analysis, statistics, interpretation of findings, critical thinking and data analysis.

### 4.3 Scoring the intervention based on content, time management and venue

Over 80 percent of the attendees reported that their expectations were met.

Table 3: Seminar feedback

Item 4, 5 and 6	Strongly agree	agree	Not sure	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
The seminar content was relevant to the need.	▲▲▲▲▲▲	▲			
time was well managed.	▲	▲▲▲	▲	▲	
The venue was accessible to me	▲	▲▲	▲▲	▲	

▲ = 10 points scored in that respective category, the point score equals the number of respondents

The scores show that the content of the seminar was very relevant to the needs of the attendees (50 points). This result can be attributed to the rigorous skill audit that proceeded and informed the intervention. Time management and accessibility of the venue score relatively high, a few respondents registered disagreement with the time management and venue accessibility.

#### **4.4 Course outline**

The researcher used participatory methods to design a course outline that incorporates the critical skills identified in the skill audit and workshops. Unlike the previous research seminars, the designed course outline strikes a balance between theory and practice. In a period of 14 week, the facilitators cover the basic skill of research methods and provide hands-on training and group learning methodologies. The expected outcomes are three holistic items, namely:

1. To demonstrate the role of research, purpose of research, the functions, scope and the managerial value of research.
2. To develop an appropriate full research or thesis proposal in strict accordance with the Research Format of Bugema University, School of Graduate Studies.
3. To develop and carry out a mini thesis (as will be guided by the instructors). The purpose is to demonstrate how to analyse data, write and disseminate scientifically generated findings.

## **5 Constraints Affecting Research Skill Development Project**

### **Research**

This section will address some of the more significant constraints to research skill development at individual, departmental and institutional level; emphasis is put on the environmental and stakeholders' expectations.

Environmental factors: alignment with the institutional agenda: In the course of the project it became clear that one of the main constraints at institutional level was the environment in which research training was undertaken. The implementation of the project depends hugely on the ability of the project team to generate support at all levels of the university. Equally gaining widespread acceptance by academic staff of the importance of including practical skills in the curriculum were: (a) resistance to change; (b) a perception of additional responsibility; and (c) poor attendance or rejection. This explains why the current project started with reporting to the Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor, and then the lecturers were contacted.

It is important that different departments buy into the projects. The ability of the project team to change perceptions of those who are expected to make decisions and those involved in training is critical. In the case of this project, the authors-, organized individual meetings, committee dialogues and met the top management. By meeting these stakeholders, what seemed initially as a constraint turned into a posi-

tive outcome from the project, as academic staff got involved in designing training materials and defining skills. The team therefore embarked on refining and modifying the identified skills.

The third constraint is institutional culture and stakeholders' expectations. Our main stakeholders were the institution, staff, students, but another important group of stakeholders comprised the members of the financial departments of the institution. The designing and implementation of this project required funding to compensate and motivate the project teams and experts involved in training.

## 6 Conclusion

Graduate studies focus on research skills development and practice, therefore master's and doctoral students are supposed to be competent in research skills in order to indulge consistently in research activities. This studies employed the Project Action Plan (PAP) model to identify the research skills gap and design a research skills training and course outline. At all levels, the processes involved a number of university stakeholders, experts in research methodology and a large cohort of continuing master students to: identify their research needs, organize the training, undertake a self-assessment and evaluation of the training, and lastly experts were involved in designing of a new course outline. The strengthen of the findings lies in the extensive pre-training skill audit and post-training evaluation by participants, as well as the involvement of experts in the training sessions. The limitation of the results is that the study was undertaken in a single university setting among master's students. Further studies may include students from various universities and or students at doctoral research level.

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# Appendix 1: Research Seminar Evaluation Form

BUGEMA UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
Summer 2017/2018

*Your feedback is critical to ensure we are meeting your research needs. We would appreciate if you could take a few minutes to share your opinions with us so we can serve you better.*

1. Gender     Male     Female

2. What is your main field of specialization:

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3. Were your expectations for this seminar met?

Yes     No

4. The seminar content was relevant to the need.

5. Strongly agree    4. Agree    3. Not sure    2. Disagree    1. Strongly Disagree

5. Time was well managed.

5. Strongly agree    4. Agree    3. Not sure    2. Disagree    1. Strongly Disagree

6. The venue was accessible to me.

5. Strongly agree    4. Agree    3. Not sure    2. Disagree    1. Strongly Disagree

7. List the three major benefits that you have acquired from this seminar.

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8. What have you liked about this seminar?

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9. What haven't you liked about this seminar?

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10. In what areas would you like to have seminar in?

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11. What recommendations do you have?

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## Appendix 2: Skills Audit Summary

### Skill Audit assessment Form

All Masters Students planning to attend research seminar are required to complete a Skills Audit as part of their research seminar class. This application is a great opportunity to self-assess your own skills and be aware of training opportunities to enhance skill areas where they consider there is scope for development

In each of the following skills listed below, how would rate your level of competence in research based on the Likert scale of 1–5, where 1 = no skill, 2 = low skill, 3 = average 4 = strong 5 = very strong

Skill	Elements	Level of competence				
		1	2	3	4	5
Inter personal skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening Skills</li> <li>• Verbal Communication</li> <li>• Emotional Intelligence</li> <li>• Working in Groups and Teams</li> </ul>					
Use of English language in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking and listening</li> <li>• Writing skills – learn to plan and structure essays</li> <li>• Grammar – learn correct use of English grammar</li> <li>• Reading – manage texts and recommended reading materials</li> </ul>					
Basic computer skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microsoft Office</li> <li>• PowerPoint</li> <li>• Spreadsheets</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Use of Graphs</li> </ul>					
Report writing skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing essays and reports</li> <li>• Proposal and dissertation writing</li> <li>• Basic report structure , numbering and designing</li> </ul>					
Research work planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing a research action plan</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Budgeting for research</li> </ul>					
Managing feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from feedback</li> <li>• Reacting to your markers feedback</li> </ul>					
Analysis of research Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the background information (context of the study)</li> <li>• Identifying the research gap</li> <li>• Justification of the research problem</li> </ul>					
Developing a conceptual framework of your study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of concepts</li> <li>• Mind mapping</li> <li>• Conceptualization</li> <li>• Identifying variables and the relationship between variables</li> </ul>					
Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify related literature</li> <li>• Grouping relevant literature</li> <li>• Analysing literature basing on the 5 Ws</li> <li>• Electronic data searching engines</li> </ul>					

(Fortsetzung Tabelle)

Skill	Elements	Level of competence				
		1	2	3	4	5
Paraphrasing and handling quotations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can paraphrase an original text effectively by using synonyms, changing verbs to nouns or the sentence structure</li> <li>• In-text quotes</li> <li>• Indirect quotes</li> <li>• Direct quotes</li> <li>• Standalone quotation</li> </ul>					
Selection of appropriate study design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Method and tools of conducting research</li> <li>• Method and tools of conducting research</li> <li>• Procedure of research</li> </ul>					
Data collection skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gathering data</li> <li>• designing a data collection tool ( i. e.: questionnaire and interview guide)</li> <li>• interview skill</li> </ul>					
Data Analysis skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribing, editing, sorting and code, categorization, theme development</li> <li>• Result interpretation</li> </ul>					
Critical thinking and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluating and weighing different sides of an argument</li> <li>• Applying reason and logic</li> <li>• drawing and evaluating conclusions</li> <li>• ability to ask why (critiquing)</li> </ul>					
Statistical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of statistical programs, like SPSS,STATA</li> <li>• Descriptive and inferential statistics</li> </ul>					
Research presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use power point presentation</li> <li>• communicating your research</li> </ul>					
Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restate the thesis and sum-up the main finding to the read</li> <li>• Synthesis of the key points</li> </ul>					
Recommendations of studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you make critical suggestion regarding the best course of action based on your research findings</li> </ul>					
Referencing techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citing literature</li> <li>• referencing your sources</li> <li>• Knowledge of plagiarism</li> <li>• Use of referencing software</li> <li>• Referencing style , e. g., APA, Harvard, MLA etc.</li> </ul>					

## Appendix 3

BUGEMA UNIVERSITY – KAMPALA CAMPUS – SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Course Outline for:

**EDMN 632/CNSL 601/DVMC 612/MBARST 702/BMPH 631**

**Research Seminar**

WEEK-END PROGRAMME

1<sup>ST</sup> Semester, 2018/2019 Academic Year

August – November, 2018

Lecturers Names & Academic Qualifications:	As per the details on Time Table
Contact Hours:	Three (3) hours per week; 15 weeks in a Semester = 45 Hours
Tutorial Hours	To be arranged where possible
Timing and Location:	As per the Time Table.
Mode of Delivery:	Lectures, Class Presentations and Discussions.
Mode of Assessment:	Workshop presentations, assignments, oral Presentations, mini thesis and, and research proposal
Consultation Time:	Immediately after lectures

### Course Description

The role of research in education, business arena and society in general, procedures in the selection and evaluation of research projects, and techniques of data analysis will be examined. Advanced topics of data collection and analysis will be considered. It will also emphasize how to write and present scientific information in a clear and interesting way. It requires individual writing projects, oral presentations, concise books on good writing to develop skill for community scientific ideas, design, results and theories.

### General Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of research procedures, forms of evaluation, and various types of techniques used for research data collection. The foundation and framework for the conceptualization of a thesis or thesis project will be the main focus of assignments, discussions, and overall coursework.

## Specific Objectives and Expected Course Outcomes

Specific Objectives	Expected Course outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To develop a problem statement that is researchable based on current professional practice and literature;</li> <li>2. To formulate testable hypotheses and/or research questions that target the problem statement;</li> <li>3. To review and analyse professional literature that is relevant to the problem statement using APA style;</li> <li>4. To write research methodology;</li> <li>5. To develop a research design that is appropriate for a thesis/thesis project;</li> <li>6. To be able to use various data analysis techniques used in research;</li> <li>7. To generate a list of references showing the sources and methods used in the literature search;</li> <li>8. To appreciate different thesis writing styles</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate the role of research, purpose of research, the functions, scope and the managerial value of research.</li> <li>2. To develop an appropriate full research or thesis proposal in strict accordance with the Research format of Bugema University, School of Graduate Studies.</li> <li>3. To develop and carry out a mini thesis (as will be guided by the instructors). The purpose is to demonstrate how to analyse data, write and disseminate scientifically generated findings.</li> </ol>

## COURSE CONTENT DETAILS

Course Timing		Topics to be covered and students' activities
Month	Week	
19 <sup>th</sup> Aug.	Wk 1	Overview of the course. (Course orientation, unfreezing session, course content presentation and students' suggestions & views, emphasis will be based on Academic bulletin, Research/Thesis writing procedures and rules, course requirement and exam grading)
26 <sup>th</sup> Aug.	Wk 2	<p>Presentation on how to conceptualise a research problem, formulating of a good Thesis title (features of a good title)</p> <p>Practical exercise by the students on the conceptualisation of their intended research problems.</p> <p>Expected outcome: student are able to identify a research problem.</p>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sept.	Wk 3	<p>Presentation on what is a theory, conceptual framework, how to construct a conceptual framework (the independent, dependent and other variables), operational definition of terms.</p> <p>Presentation on how to undertake a qualitative study.</p> <p>Practical exercise by the students- identifying, the appropriate theory, and constructing the conceptual framework.</p>
9 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Wk 4	<p>Presentations how to write chap 1 including research questions, Specific objectives and hypotheses.</p> <p>A take home exercise by the students on how to write chapter.</p>
16 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	WK 5	<p>With consultation of the advisors, the students perfect the writing of chapter 1 of their research proposals.</p> <p>Expected outcome: the students have a complete chapter 1 (introduction).</p>

(Fortsetzung Tabelle )

Course Timing		Topics to be covered and students' activities
Month	Week	
23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept.	Wk 6	Students submit chapter one for grading
30 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Wk 7	Presentation on how to undertake literature review (source, identify sources, processing – including use of the online sources, use of APA guidelines in the literature review.
7 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Wk 8	Students are expected to present a full draft of Chapter 2 (Literature review) for grading. Referencing Sources /avoiding Plagiarism
14 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	Wk 9	Presentation on research design, How to undertake sampling procedure in both quantitative and qualitative studies, Quality control, ethical issues in research.
21 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Wk 10	Introduction to critical thinking
28 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	Wk 11	Presentation on introduction data analysis in both qualitative and quantitative studies.
4 <sup>th</sup> Nov.	Wk 12	Students submit draft of methodology chapter for grading.
11 <sup>th</sup> Nov.	Wk 13	Presentation on guide to construct research instruments in (qualitative and quantitative) are constructed. Practical session on how to construct instruments.
18 <sup>th</sup> Nov.	Wk14	Computer lab session for practical in quantitative data analysis and Improving presentations with Power point 2010 Preparing research report with word2010 (page numbering margins, saving files). Academic writing ( paragraph writing)

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