

**COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT**

<b>Academic School / Department:</b>	Richmond Business School
<b>Programme:</b>	MA International Business Law
<b>FHEQ Level:</b>	7
<b>Course Title:</b>	Dissertation
<b>Course Code:</b>	MBL 7500
<b>Course Leader:</b>	Adrian Wilkins
<b>Student Engagement Hours:</b>	400 (standard 8 credit MA course)
Lectures:	30
Seminar / Tutorials:	15
Independent / Guided Learning:	355
<b>Semester:</b>	Summer
<b>Credits:</b>	40 UK CATS credits 20 ECTS credits 8 US credits

**Course Description:**

This course will provide students with the learning opportunity of performing multidisciplinary research within the international legal business environment. Students will initiate, plan and execute an individually constructed piece of research and are expected to report on their findings. Students will identify issues within their programme, and specifically within their optional subjects, to investigate with the use of appropriate research methods, either theoretical or applied, and participate in research activities which will include a literature search, the collection and analysis of data, (either primary or secondary data) and the preparation of a dissertation.

**Prerequisites:**

**MBL 701, MBL 702, MBL 703, MBL 704, MBL 705**

**Aims and Objectives:**

- For the supervisor to guide the student, as a junior research colleague, through drafting of a 1500-2000 word written research proposal and the research, writing and production of a Master's level dissertation of 10-12,000 words.

- For the student to undertake independent/autonomous research on a topic which makes a valuable contribution to the field.
- To develop skills and experience which can be applied in work placement or further graduate work.

**Programme Outcomes:**

A3, A4, A5

B1, B3, B4, B5

C1, C2, C4

D1, D2, D4

A detailed list of the programme outcomes can be found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by the Academic Registry and found at: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/admitted-students/programme-and-course-specifications/>

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

**Knowledge and Understanding (A)**

- Demonstrate a high level of theoretical and applied knowledge of legal research
- Critically discuss, select and justify research approaches and research methods in relation to an appropriately formed research proposal which addresses a relevant legal issue within the international business environment.
- Apply the steps required to create a literature review
- Apply appropriate research designs for quantitative and qualitative research.
- Demonstrate an understanding of proper structure and citation in all academic work

**Cognitive Skills (B)**

- Evaluate independently critical approaches and techniques relevant to legal issues arising from the international business reality
- Evaluate outcomes and accurately assess/report on own/others work with justification and relate them to existing knowledge structures and methodologies
- Synthesize information to arrive at a coherent conclusion
- Critically evaluate the implications for the recommendations presented

- Critically reflect on the development of knowledge, skills and techniques used during the preparation of the dissertation.

### **Subject specific, practical and professional skills (C)**

- Identify modifications to existing knowledge structures and theoretical frameworks.
- Develop and utilise theory and methodology appropriate to inquiry of an empirical subject area related to business
- Propose new areas for investigation, new problems, new or alternative applications or methodological approaches
- Select, define and focus upon an issue at an appropriate level; develop recommendations and logical conclusions; and be aware of the limitations of the research work.
- Gather, organise and effectively communicate complex and abstract ideas and diverse information with regard to a complex and specialised thesis topic.

### **General/transferable skills (D)**

- Demonstrate analytical skills, computing skills, critical reasoning, organisation and planning, report and essay writing skills, and research skills
- Evaluate the ethical dilemmas likely to arise in research and professional practice and formulate solutions in dialogue with peers, clients and others
- Exercise initiative in organising and pursuing a supervised project, while accepting full accountability for outcomes
- Demonstrate the ability for innovative and autonomous learning, normative and ethical reflection, self evaluation and engagement with disciplinary benchmarks

### **Indicative Content:**

There is no precise indicative content for individual dissertations other than the general requirement that, in consultation with the supervisor, they should address an issue, or issues, related to legal aspects of international business practice. A dissertation should contain general criteria such as an introduction, aims and objectives, a literature review, methodological justification, analytical context, conclusions and recommendations.

### **Assessment:**

This course conforms to the Richmond University Dissertation Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board (formerly Learning & Teaching Policy Committee) and located at: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/admitted-students/>

### **Teaching Methodology:**

As part of the process of completing this course, and prior to the commencement of the research, students will be engaged on a week-long research methods course.

The course will require independent research overseen by the dissertation supervisor, tutorial opportunities including with specialist faculty for more specific academic guidance, including comments on draft materials, and faculty and peer review feedback.

### **Bibliography:**

- Leetuw F, Schmeets H (2016) Empirical Legal research: A Guidance book for Lawyers, Legislators and Regulators. Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd
- Bryman, A (2015) Social Research methods. Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Bell J (2010) Doing Your Own Research Project: A Guide for First Time Researchers in Education and Social sciences, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London, open University Press)
- Berg, B. Lune H. (2013). Qualitative Research Methods for Social Sciences, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Pearson, London)
- Cryer, P. (2006) The Research Student's Guide to Success. Open University. Maidenhead
- Joyner, R(2013) Writing the Winning Thesis or Dissertation – a-step-by-step guide. Corwin Publications. London
- Levin, P (2011) Excellent Dissertations! Open University. Maidenhead
- Robson, C. (2016) Real World Research. John Wiley & Sons. London
- Rudestam, K.E. and Newtin, R.R. (2014) (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) Surviving Your Dissertation. A comprehensive Guide to Content and Process. Sage, London
- Walliman N (2005) Your Research Project: A Step-by-Step Guide for the First-Time Research. Sage. London.
- Bauer, M.W. & Gaskell, G. (Eds) (2000) Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound: A practical handbook. London: Sage.
- Burton, D. (2000) Research Training for Social Scientists: A Handbook for Post-Graduate students, Sage.
- Silverman, D (2015) Interpreting Qualitative Data. London: Sage
- Yin, Robert (2013), Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Sage Publications, Newbury Park.

See syllabus for complete reading list

### **Indicative Text(s):**

