The University of Southern Queensland

Course Specification

Description: Psychology Doctorate Project A

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<th>Subject</th>
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Academic Group: FOSCI
Academic Org: FOS005
HECS Band: 1
ASCED Code: 090701

STAFFING
Examiner: Peter Terry
Moderator: Grace Pretty

RATIONALE
The scholar-practitioner model of training in psychology has broad consensual acceptance within the applied profession. The professional doctorate therefore requires the student to be proficient in critically reviewing relevant theory and research to assist in the identification, investigation and resolution of current issues within the practice of psychology. This course provides the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive theoretical and empirical literature review related to a specific problem the student wishes to investigate and to design a research program consisting of at least two studies to investigate identified theoretical and practical issues.

SYNOPSIS
This is the first of four project courses that contribute to the professional doctorate. The course involves selecting a topic and supervisor, conducting a thorough literature review, and developing a detailed thesis proposal that critically summarises the current substantive, practice and research methodology issues. The student will be expected to exhibit competence in conducting a thorough literature search using various data bases, identifying pivotal issues, formulating appropriate research questions and hypotheses derived from theory and empirical findings, and designing methods appropriate to investigating the research question(s). A written report (up to 8,000 words) will be submitted to the supervisor.
OBJECTIVES
On successful completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate competencies in critically reviewing literature to address theoretical and practical questions and issues in the field, and designing research programs to further investigate these questions and issues. These skills are identified in the Australian Psychological Society Competencies for Psychologists (1996) and the following research competencies identified for the related Colleges of Community, Health and Sport Psychology:

- demonstrate analytical, critical and creative thinking in postulating research hypotheses and problems;
- postulate new directions of research and new unsolved problems;
- write and summarise concepts in a professional and scientific manner;
- demonstrate competence in identifying and choosing procedures appropriate for addressing hypotheses, awareness of the limitations of the research plan they have chosen and account for these weaknesses and limitations; competence in assessing and addressing ethical concerns in research.

TOPICS
Description Weighting (%)
1. The subject of the thesis proposal will be proposed by the student and after consultation, will be finally determined by the student's supervisor. 100.00

REFERENCE MATERIALS
Reference materials are materials that, if accessed by students, may improve their knowledge and understanding of the material in the course and enrich their learning experience.


STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS
ACTIVITY HOURS
Private Study 157
Supervisor Consultation 13

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks Out of</th>
<th>Wtg(%)</th>
<th>Required</th>
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<tr>
<td>DISSERTATION PROPOSAL</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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OTHER REQUIREMENTS

1. It is the students' responsibility to participate actively in any workshops scheduled for them, and to study all material provided to them or required to be accessed by them to maximize their chance of meeting the objectives of the course and to be informed of course-related activities and administration.

2. The DISSERTATION proposal shall include: a comprehensive critical review of research in the field; a discussion of relevant theoretical and practical issues; a description of how the dissertation will make a contribution to the field; a list of all references cited; selection criteria for participants, describe the variables chosen, instruments/interview procedures to be used, interventions/treatments to be applied, administration procedures for consent of participants, and proposed methods for data analysis. Scientific justification of each segment of the research plan is essential. The document "Ethics Committee Application for Ethics Clearance for Investigations Involving Human Research" must be submitted and approved. The report will conform with guidelines on the content, style and format of reports issued from time to time by either the USQ or the Psychology Department. The USQ Ethics Approval will conform to the procedures issued by the USQ Office of Research and Higher Degrees. The completed manuscript will not exceed 8,000 words. The manuscript will be submitted in duplicate to the Supervisor. Evaluation will be completed by the Supervisor and one other member of the Department. The student will be graded as either Pass or Fail for this course upon approval of the proposal and Ethics Application.

3. The due date for assessments is the date by which a student must despatch an assignment to the USQ. The onus is on the student to provide proof of the despatch date, if requested by the Examiner. In accordance with the University's Policy on Assignments (Regulation 5.6.1), the Examiner of a course may grant an extension of the due date of an assignment in extenuating circumstances. This policy may be found in the USQ Handbook, the Distance Education Study Guide and the Faculty of Sciences' Orientation Handbook for new on-campus students. All students are advised to study and follow the guidelines associated with this policy. An extension will be considered in extraordinary circumstances only. The extension period will not last beyond the end of the fourth week after the end of the examination period of the semester.