



# AFCP8065

## Individual Research Project A

AFC term 1, Infrequent attendance, Melbourne 2020

*Department of Applied Finance*

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## General Information

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Credit points

5

Prerequisites

(Admission to MAppFin or MAppFin(Adv) or GradDipAppFin) and permission by special approval

Corequisites

Co-badged status

### Unit description

This unit is an alternative to a coursework elective for students with a minimum credit average, and who have completed an elective unit relevant to the area of the research topic prior to enrolment. Two options are available.

Option #1: Identify an industry issue from the field of applied finance, critically analyse its current status, present and critically evaluate possible responses. Students are required to analyse the current state of industry practice, and critically review both the academic and industry relevant literature. Where appropriate, the research project should include a case study or pilot empirical analysis. Successful students will have the opportunity to undertake a more detailed investigation using quantitative analysis, or resolution by developing an analytical or other solution, by enrolling in Individual Research Project B.

Option #2: Produce a business case study, focusing on an applied industry issue and an individual organisation affected by that issue. The case study will be informed by reviewing relevant literature and interviewing industry practitioners, and will cover the current status of the issue and the implications for the organisation. A critical analysis of the issue will be provided by a supporting case study explanatory note. This option will not be recognised as a prerequisite for enrolment in Individual Research Project B.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

**ULO1:** Critically analyse the application of theory and practice when undertaking independent original research.

**ULO2:** Analyse the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature and the current debate in the context of relevant principles taught in Applied Finance units.

**ULO3:** Apply good academic research practice, including the ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.

**ULO4:** Communicate to a diverse audience the nature of the research topic, its importance and issues involved in resolving or addressing the research topic.

## Assessment Tasks

### Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Assessment details are no longer provided here as a result of changes due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Students should consult [iLearn](#) for revised unit information.

[Find out more about the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and potential impacts on staff and students](#)

## General Assessment Information

Students can choose one of two options for completing this unit:

**Option #1:** Requires a student to identify an industry issue from the field of applied finance, critically analyse the current status of the issue, and present and critically evaluate possible responses. In addition to analysing the current state of industry practice, the project will require students to critically review not only academic, but also industry relevant, literature. Where appropriate, the research project should include a demonstration of possible responses by including a case study or pilot empirical analysis. Successful students will have the opportunity to further explore the topic by enrolling in Individual Research Project B, which will require more detailed investigation of the issue using quantitative analysis or resolution by developing an analytical or other solution.

**Option #2:** A student can produce a business case study and supporting explanatory note as a supervised research project. The case study writing option will require the presentation of an applied finance industry issue with a focus on an individual organisation affected by that issue. The case study will cover the current status of the issue, the implications for the organisation and be informed by reviewing relevant literature and interviewing industry practitioners. The supporting case study teaching note will provide a critical analysis of the issue drawing upon relevant academic literature and appropriately assess and respond to the issue. This option will not be recognised as a pre-requisite for enrolment in AFCP8066 Individual Research Project B.

*Assessment Tasks for Option #2 are described in an addendum to this Unit Guide.*

### Summary of Assessment Tasks

#### Research Proposal (10%)

The Research Proposal should clearly describe the research opportunity and how it will achieve the stated learning outcomes for the unit. The proposal should demonstrate that the project is feasible, and include a schedule for completion of the project, and any resources, data, software or other material which are required to complete the project in the required time frame.

Students can refer to the iLearn site, which has links to the following article which may be of assistance in preparing a Research Proposal:

Robert, W. Faff, "A Simple template for pitching research", *Accounting and Finance*, 55 (2015), 311 – 336.

**Due Date:** To be submitted one month prior to commencement of term in which Research Project will be undertaken (unless otherwise agreed).

**Submission Method:** Online via Turnitin on the unit's iLearn site.

**Length:** 500 words.

**Extension Requests:**

Students who do not submit this task by the due date and time receive a result of zero. This penalty does not apply when an application for Special Consideration has been made and approved.

Note: Applications for Special Consideration must be made within 5 (five) business days of the due date and time.

Refer to MAFC Program Rules at <https://mafcstudents.mq.edu.au/> for information on the University's [Special Consideration Policy](#).

**Progress Report (10%)**

**Due Date:** Refer to the unit's iLearn site.

**Submission Method:** As agreed with Supervisor(s).

**Duration:** As agreed with Supervisor(s).

**Extension Requests:**

Students who do not submit this task by the due date and time receive a result of zero. This penalty does not apply when an application for Special Consideration has been made and approved.

Note: Applications for Special Consideration must be made within 5 (five) business days of the due date and time.

Refer to MAFC Program Rules at <https://mafcstudents.mq.edu.au/> for information on the University's [Special Consideration Policy](#).

**Research Paper (60%)**

The actual format of the project should be agreed with the Supervisor(s) as part of the approval of the project but, in general, should be in the form of an article suitable for publication in an industry oriented journal such as JASSA. Specific guidelines are included in the iLearn site.

**Due Date:** Refer to the unit's iLearn site.

**Submission Method:** Online via Turnitin on the unit's iLearn site.

**Duration:** Up to 3,000 words.

**Extension Requests:**

No extensions will be granted. There will be a deduction of 10% of the total available marks made from the total awarded mark for each 24 hour period or part thereof that the submission is

late (for example, 25 hours late in submission incurs a 20% penalty). This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Special Consideration is made and approved.

Late submissions will be accepted up to 96 hours after the due date and time.

Note: Applications for Special Consideration must be made within 5 (five) business days of the due date and time.

Refer to MAFC Program Rules at <https://mafcstudents.mq.edu.au/> for information on the University's [Special Consideration Policy](#).

### **Presentation (20%)**

The presentation is required to be made to a diverse audience, ideally comprising faculty from the Applied Finance Centre and industry representatives. The format should be agreed with the Supervisor(s). The presentation should demonstrate how the learning outcomes of this unit have been met. The student will be assessed both on the presentation delivery and their ability to respond to issues and questions raised by the audience.

**Due Date:** As agreed with Supervisor(s).

**Submission Method:** As agreed with Supervisor(s).

**Duration:** Oral or visual, equivalent of 1,000 words or 15-20 minutes.

### **Extension Requests:**

Students who do not attend receive a mark of zero. This penalty does not apply in cases where an application for Special Consideration has been made and approved.

Note: Applications for Special Consideration must be made within 5 (five) business days of the due date and time.

Refer to MAFC Program Rules at <https://mafcstudents.mq.edu.au/> for information on the University's [Special Consideration Policy](#).

## **Delivery and Resources**

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**

Any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19.

Please check here for updated delivery information: [https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit\\_status](https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status)

### **REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS**

There are no general required texts or materials for this unit. Specific resources should be agreed with the supervisor as part of the approval process for undertaking the project. The iLearn site contains useful references to assist in the preparation of the research proposal, the preparation of the project and research methods which might be required. General references

which may be useful to students are listed below.

### **Useful References:**

- Chapter 1, “Framing the Problem” and Chapter 2, “Designing the Analysis”, in Ethan M. Rasiel and Paul N. Friga, **The McKinsey Mind**, McGrath Hill, 2002 [ebook available via library].
- Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie, **Research Methods for Business: A Skill- Building Approach**, 6th ed, Wiley, 2013 [available as e-text].
- Alana Bryman & Emma Bell, **Business Research Methods**, 4th ed, Oxford, 2015 [available as e-text].
- Barbara Minto, **The Pyramid Principle**, Financial Times – Pitman Publishing, 1987.

### **Assumed Access:**

Access to a computer with word processing and spreadsheet capability is assumed, as is general computer literacy.

### **TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED**

#### **Unit iLearn Site:**

- Found by logging on to iLearn [ilearn.mq.edu.au](http://ilearn.mq.edu.au), then clicking on **Individual Research Project**.
- This is where you will find links to forums, downloadable resources and other important pages.

#### **Important Notice:**

- It is important that you familiarise yourself with the unit’s iLearn site.

### **Learning and Teaching Activities**

#### **Strategy**

The Master of Applied Finance degree adopts a deep teaching and learning strategy in which students acquire and retain knowledge. They are able to make sense of the issues and concepts and apply them in the “real world”. The degree relies heavily on student engagement and participation by: (a) Continuous learning throughout the term. This is encouraged through a combination of students undertaking prescribed reading throughout the units and/or completion of practice problems, case studies, assignments, class presentations etc and interaction via forums in the unit’s iLearn site; and (b) Assessments, which enable the student to demonstrate his/her understanding of the learning objectives achieved through the continuous learning. This unit complements those strategies by allowing students to explore a specific topic in depth, through an individual research project.

#### **Student Participation**

Students participate in this unit by undertaking an individual research project. On average, the

unit will require students to complete approximately 75 hours private study.

## Unit Schedule

### Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

The unit schedule/topics and any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19. Please consult [iLearn](#) for latest details, and check here for updated delivery information: [https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit\\_status](https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status)

The plan for completion of the project should be agreed with the Supervisor(s) prior to commencement of the project.

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central).

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

## Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the



University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](#) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](#)

If you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.