



AFCP866

Individual Research Project B

AFC Term 1 CBD 2017

Dept of Applied Finance and Actuarial Studies

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Disclaimer

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General Information

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Credit points

2

Prerequisites

AFCP865 and permission by special approval

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

In Individual Research Project A students will have identified and analysed, in depth, an industry issue. In this unit students will use problem solving research skills to resolve the issue(s) identified. The research skills can draw on quantitative or statistical techniques, qualitative techniques such as surveys, clinical methods such as case studies or analytical techniques. The research project requires a student to apply research skills, and creative problem solving skills, and consider the industry relevance of selected methods. Prior to commencing the research paper students should have an agreed Supervisor, and a work plan approved by the students's Supervisor. Enrolment in this unit is subject to approval by the Program Director for the Master of Applied Finance. This Research Paper is an alternative to a course-work elective.

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:

Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice

Ability to use critical thinking and creative problem solving skills in the application of quantitative, qualitative or analytical techniques to address an issue in applied finance.

Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.

Application of good academic research practice, including ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.

Use of quantitative and/or analytical skills to address and resolve a selected issue in applied finance.

Able to communicate to a diverse audience the nature of the research topic, its importance and issues involved in resolving or addressing the research topic.

General Assessment Information

To pass this unit (requires a mark of 50 or better) the student must pass the Research Paper Assessment Task.

General Unit Information

To enroll in the research project, students must have successfully completed AFCEP865 Individual Research Project A (Option #1 only). Your work in this pre-requisite unit should be used as the basis for developing the research topic and work plan for this unit. Prior to enrolling

in this unit, students must have an agreed Supervisor, and an approved research topic and work plan. Based on the nature of the project, a prospective supervisor(s) may be appointed, and specifications for the research project can be agreed. Only once a prospective Supervisor has agreed to a relevant research proposal can a student enroll in the subject.

Resources to assist in the preparation of the proposal are available on the unit ilearn site. Interested students should ask the relevant stream co-ordinator to arrange for access to the site.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Research Proposal</u>	10%	No	Prior to term of project start
<u>Progress Report</u>	10%	No	As agreed with Supervisor(s)
<u>Research Paper</u>	60%	Yes	As agreed with Supervisor(s)
<u>Presentation</u>	20%	No	As agreed with Supervisor(s)

Research Proposal

Due: **Prior to term of project start**

Weighting: **10%**

The Research Proposal should clearly describe the research project and objectives, how it builds on the work in Research Project A, 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.

Summary of Assessment Task

Individual / Group: Individual

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

Grading Method: Refer to 'Standards Required to Complete the Unit Satisfactorily' section.

Submission Method: Online via Turnitin on unit iLearn site.

Length: 500 words

Extension Requests:

- If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your assignment by the due date, please make arrangements with your supervisor prior to the due date.
- Unless prior arrangements have been made, any late submission of research proposal may result in a delay of the commencement date of the Research Project.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.

Progress Report

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

Weighting: **10%**

The Progress Report should be in a form agreed with the Supervisor(s) at the commencement of the project. It should particularly identify any issues which may impact on the timely completion of the project.

Summary of Assessment Task

Individual / Group: Individual

Due Date: Refer to the Unit's iLearn site

Grading Method: Refer to 'Standards Required to Complete the Unit Satisfactorily' section

Submission Method: As agreed with Supervisor(s)

Duration: As agreed with Supervisor(s)

Extension Requests:

- If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your assignment by the due date, please make arrangements with your Supervisor prior to the due date.
- Unless prior arrangements have been made, late submission of the progress report will automatically be penalised. In the absence of special circumstances, a zero mark will apply.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.

Research Paper

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

Weighting: **60%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

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.

Summary of Assessment Task

Individual / Group: Individual

Due Date: Refer to the Unit's iLearn site

Grading Method: Refer to 'Standards Required to Complete the Unit Satisfactorily' section

Submission Method: Online via Turnitin on iLearn site

Duration: Up to 3,000 words

Extension Requests:

- If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from submitting your research project by the due date, please make arrangements with your supervisor prior to the due date.
- Unless prior arrangements have been made, late submission will automatically be penalised. In the absence of special circumstances, a zero mark will apply.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Ability to use critical thinking and creative problem solving skills in the application of quantitative, qualitative or analytical techniques to address an issue in applied finance.
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.
- Application of good academic research practice, including ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.
- Use of quantitative and/or analytical skills to address and resolve a selected issue in applied finance.
- Able to communicate to a diverse audience the nature of the research topic, its importance and issues involved in resolving or addressing the research topic.

Presentation

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

Weighting: **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.

Summary of Assessment Task

Individual / Group: Individual

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

Grading Method: Refer to 'Standards Required to Complete the Unit Satisfactorily' section

Submission Method: As agreed with Supervisor(s)

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

Extension Requests:

- If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from making your presentation submitting on the due date, please make arrangements with your supervisor prior to the due date.
- Unless prior arrangements have been made, failure to make the scheduled presentation will automatically be penalised. In the absence of special circumstances, a zero mark will apply.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Able to communicate to a diverse audience the nature of the research topic, its importance and issues involved in resolving or addressing the research topic.

Delivery and Resources

70 hours individual work; plus

5 hours: face to face with supervisor.

Consultation Times: The student and appointed supervisor(s) should agree expectations for the role of the supervisor, especially in terms of provision of feedback and other support.

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

References relating to the specific techniques used in the research project should be discussed with the Supervisor(s).

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, 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 familiarize yourself with the Unit's iLearn site.

Unit Schedule

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

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 and also 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 semester. 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.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of 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/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, 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.

Students should also consult the MAFC Program Rules & Procedures found at <http://www.mafc.mq.edu.au>

Student Support

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

students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

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

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student enquiry service (MAFC-specific)

For all student enquiries, please contact studentsupport@mafc.mq.edu.au

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.

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (http://www.students.mq.edu.au/support/learning_skills/) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.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/.

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.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their

professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Ability to use critical thinking and creative problem solving skills in the application of quantitative, qualitative or analytical techniques to address an issue in applied finance.
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.
- Application of good academic research practice, including ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.
- Use of quantitative and/or analytical skills to address and resolve a selected issue in applied finance.
- Able to 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

- Research Proposal
- Progress Report
- Research Paper

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Ability to use critical thinking and creative problem solving skills in the application of quantitative, qualitative or analytical techniques to address an issue in applied finance.
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.
- Application of good academic research practice, including ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.

- Use of quantitative and/or analytical skills to address and resolve a selected issue in applied finance.

Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Progress Report
- Research Paper

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Ability to use critical thinking and creative problem solving skills in the application of quantitative, qualitative or analytical techniques to address an issue in applied finance.
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.
- Application of good academic research practice, including ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.
- Use of quantitative and/or analytical skills to address and resolve a selected issue in applied finance.
- Able to 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

- Research Proposal
- Progress Report
- Research Paper

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and

problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Ability to use critical thinking and creative problem solving skills in the application of quantitative, qualitative or analytical techniques to address an issue in applied finance.
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.
- Application of good academic research practice, including ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.
- Use of quantitative and/or analytical skills to address and resolve a selected issue in applied finance.
- Able to 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

- Research Proposal
- Progress Report
- Research Paper

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.
- Application of good academic research practice, including ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.
- Able to 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

- Research Proposal
- Progress Report
- Research Paper
- Presentation

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Ability to undertake independent original research, including critical analysis and the application of theory and practice
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues involved in the research topic, the relevant academic literature, current debate as well as relevant principles taught in the MAF units.
- Application of good academic research practice, including ability to source and appropriately acknowledge sources and references.
- Able to communicate to a diverse audience the nature of the research topic, its importance and issues involved in resolving or addressing the research topic.

Changes from Previous Offering

This unit is offered for the first time in 2017.

Important Notice

This Unit Guide may be subject to change. The latest version is on the Centre's web site www.mafc.mq.edu.au.

Students should read the Unit Guide carefully at the start of semester. It contains important information about the unit. If anything is unclear, please consult one of the unit lecturers.

Standards Required to Complete the Unit Satisfactorily

University Policy on Grading:

- Macquarie University's Academic Senate has established a Grading Policy available at <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>. Your final result will include:

- A Grade ranging from Fail to High Distinction; and
- A numerical Mark which is a summation of the individual assessment components, providing the Research Paper is passed.
- It is important to note:
 - The Policy does not require that a minimum or maximum number of students are to be failed in any unit;
 - Grades will not be allocated to fit a predetermined distribution; and
 - Grades for all individual assessment items will be released to students, but Marks may not necessarily be released.

Specific Unit Grading:

- To pass this unit (requires a Mark of 50 or better) the student must pass the Research Paper.
- All final Marks and Grades in the Applied Finance Centre are determined by a grading committee and are not the sole responsibility of the unit convenor or Supervisor(s).
- The core criteria used to assess student work in this unit are:
 - Knowledge and understanding: Understanding key ideas, knowledge and use of concepts.
 - Application: Ability to apply theoretical ideas and frameworks in practice and in a critically reflective way.
 - Reasoning and analysis: Ability to analyse, use critical reasoning and principles to formulate a position, balancing theory and personal reflection.
 - Professional literacy and research: Understanding of professional factors (language and landscape) and ability to undertake appropriate research.
 - Communication and presentation: Ability to communicate and present effectively (written and oral, as relevant).
 - Use of mathematical and statistical ideas: Ability to use mathematical and statistical ideas, methods and formulae appropriately.
- Performance in relation to each of these criteria are assessed against the University's grading descriptors:

Grade	Expectation
High Distinction	Provides consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding in relation to the learning outcomes. There is substantial originality and insight in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem solving approaches; critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; creativity in application as appropriate to the discipline.

Grade	Expectation
Distinction	Provides evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles and theories, distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills and concepts in relation to learning outcomes. There is demonstration of frequent originality in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; and the use of means of communication appropriate to the discipline and the audience.
Credit	Provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. There is demonstration of substantial understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study and the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; convincing argumentation with appropriate coherent justification; communication of ideas fluently and clearly in terms of the conventions of the discipline.
Pass	Provides sufficient evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes. There is demonstration of understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the field of study; routine argumentation with acceptable justification; communication of information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the discipline. The learning attainment is considered satisfactory or adequate or competent or capable in relation to the specified outcomes.
Fail	Does not provide evidence of attainment of learning outcomes. There is missing or partial or superficial or faulty understanding and application of the fundamental concepts in the field of study; missing, undeveloped, inappropriate or confusing argumentation; incomplete, confusing or lacking communication of ideas in ways that give little attention to the conventions of the discipline.

Review of Grade and final examination Script viewing:

- A student who has been awarded a final grade for a unit and who does not believe it is an accurate reflection of their performance, and has grounds for such a claim and can demonstrate those grounds, may apply to have their grade reviewed.
- For information on requesting a review of grade and/or viewing your final exam script, please refer to the University's Grade Appeal Policy at <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html> and MAFC Program Rules & Procedures at <http://www.mafc.mq.edu.au>.