



**MONASH** University  
Information Technology

**FIT4005**  
**IT research methods**

**Unit Guide**

**Semester 2, 2014**

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# **FIT4005 IT research methods - Semester 2, 2014**

The aim of this unit is to prepare Honours students in the Faculty of IT to conduct research across the range of IT disciplines, including computer science, software engineering, information systems and information management.

It introduces students to major research philosophies and paradigms, the principles of research design, research ethics, and research methods and techniques of data collection and analysis appropriate to IT research and their discipline.

Skills developed and knowledge acquired from this unit will prepare students to conduct and communicate their own research, as well as to be knowledgeable and critical interpreters of others' research.

## **Mode of Delivery**

Caulfield (Day)

## **Workload Requirements**

Minimum total expected workload equals 12 hours per week comprising:

(a.) Contact hours for on-campus students:

- Two 2-hour workshops

(b.) Additional requirements (all students):

- A minimum of 8 hours independent study per week for completing lab and project work, private study and revision.

## **Unit Relationships**

### **Prohibitions**

ITW4001, IMS5036, IMS4036, BUS5000, CSE4910, GCO4010, CSE4650, FIT5125, FIT5143, FIT5185, FIT5190

### **Prerequisites**

Foundation knowledge in computer science or business information systems or information technology and systems fundamentals.

### **Chief Examiner**

Professor David Green

## **Campus Lecturer**

### **Caulfield**

#### **Professor Frada Burstein**

Consultation hours: TBA

#### **Dr Noriaki Sato**

Consultation hours: TBA

#### **Professor David Green**

Consultation hours: By appointment

## **Your feedback to Us**

Monash is committed to excellence in education and regularly seeks feedback from students, employers and staff. One of the key formal ways students have to provide feedback is through the Student Evaluation of Teaching and Units (SETU) survey. The University's student evaluation policy requires that every unit is evaluated each year. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the surveys. The feedback is anonymous and provides the Faculty with evidence of aspects that students are satisfied and areas for improvement.

For more information on Monash's educational strategy, see:

[www.monash.edu.au/about/monash-directions/](http://www.monash.edu.au/about/monash-directions/) and on student evaluations, see:  
[www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/quality/student-evaluation-policy.html](http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/quality/student-evaluation-policy.html)

## **Previous Student Evaluations of this Unit**

Student feedback has highlighted the need for topics that are most appropriate to their area of study. To help achieve this, the unit has been restructured as a series of workshops. By offering elective modules, the schedule allows students to choose between alternatives and pick topics of greatest relevance.

If you wish to view how previous students rated this unit, please go to  
<https://emuapps.monash.edu.au/unitevaluations/index.jsp>

# Academic Overview

## Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- identify and explain major research philosophies and paradigms;
- design rigorous and ethical Bachelor Honours level research projects and develop project proposals;
- evaluate and select research methods and techniques of data collection and analysis appropriate to particular research designs, projects and disciplines;
- conduct ethical research;
- communicate research findings in written and oral form in research and industry settings;
- critically review research literature, research design and reported findings.

## Unit Schedule

Week	Activities	Assessment
0		No formal assessment or activities are undertaken in week 0
1	Workshop 1 - THE NATURE OF RESEARCH - Major research paradigms and philosophies; Introductory examples and exercises	Exercises in class, Portfolio of practical work (Assignment 2) due Weekly (each workshop)
2	Workshop 2 - RESEARCH PROJECT DESIGN - The context of research; Structure of a project; Formulating research questions; Applying paradigms; Planning a path from question to result; Issues in research (ethics, IP, copyright etc)	Exercises in class
3	Workshop 3 - RESEARCH LITERATURE - How to conduct a literature search; How to prepare a literature review	Exercises in class
4	Workshop 4 - RESEARCH PROPOSALS - Structure and content of a research proposal	Exercises in class
5	Workshop 5 - COMMUNICATION OF RESEARCH - Research publishing; Types of outputs; Academic writing (including literature reviews); Oral communication	Exercises in class
6	Workshop 6 - NATURE OF EVIDENCE - Introduction to data collection and analysis; Use of online resources as data	Exercises in class    Assignment 1 presentation
7	Workshop 7 - Quantitative data analysis 1 - Introduction to probability statistics	Exercises in class
8	Elective Workshops - OPTION (a) Evidence-experimental design II OPTION (b) Qualitative data collection and analysis	Exercises in class
9	Elective Workshops - OPTION (a) Quantitative data analysis 2 (Introduction to probability statistics 2)    OPTION (b) Design Science Research - in conjunction with FIT4007	Exercises in class
10	Elective Workshops - OPTION (a) Quantitative data analysis 3 (Correlation and regression    OPTION (b) Design Science Research II - in conjunction with FIT4007	Exercises in class
11	Elective Workshops - OPTION (a) Algorithms and evaluation    OPTION (b) Action Research I - in conjunction with FIT4007	Exercises in class
12	Elective Workshops - OPTION (a) Simulation    OPTION (b) Action Research I - in conjunction with FIT4007	Exercises in class    Assignment 2 finishes this week, Assignment 3 presentation
	SWOT VAC	No formal assessment is undertaken in SWOT VAC. Assignment 3 due week 14
	Examination period	LINK to Assessment Policy: <a href="http://policy.monash.edu.au/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/">http://policy.monash.edu.au/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/</a>

\*Unit Schedule details will be maintained and communicated to you via your learning system.

## Teaching Approach

### Workshops

This teaching and learning approach provides facilitated learning, practical exploration and peer learning.

Each workshop will include lecture and lab based exercises.

## Assessment Summary

In-semester assessment: 100%

Assessment Task	Value	Due Date
Assignment 1: Critical analysis of published material	10%	Week 6, Friday, 5pm
Assignment 2: Portfolio of practical work	60%	Weekly (each workshop). Completed by Week 12, Friday 5pm
Assignment 3: Mini-research project	30%, including 10% presentation	Presentation in Week 12, Project due Week 14, Friday 5pm

# Assessment Requirements

## Assessment Policy

Faculty Policy - Unit Assessment Hurdles

(<http://intranet.monash.edu.au/infotech/resources/staff/edgov/policies/assessment-examinations/assessment-hurdles>)

Academic Integrity - Please see resources and tutorials at

<http://www.monash.edu/library/skills/resources/tutorials/academic-integrity/>

## Assessment Tasks

### Participation

Full participation in the tutorials and labs is expected and will be formally assessed via Assignment 2, in which students submit a portfolio of their practical work.

Working in groups is encouraged, both during practical classes, and in the project assignment. The aim is both to facilitate learning and to expose students to team research, which is a common feature of most modern research. When working in groups, each member is expected to participate fully and contribute to the work of the group. As part of the assessment, each student will be required to name and acknowledge their collaborators and submit a statement about group management and members' individual contribution.

#### • Assessment task 1

**Title:**

Assignment 1: Critical analysis of published material

**Description:**

In this assignment the students will provide a critical analysis of the research objectives and methods for information technology research, based on published material.

**Weighting:**

10%

**Criteria for assessment:**

The assignment will be assessed by:

- ◆ clarity and logic of the structure,
- ◆ level of critical analysis,
- ◆ referencing,
- ◆ standard of English expression,
- ◆ and evidence of independent thought and ideas.

**Due date:**

Week 6, Friday, 5pm

#### • Assessment task 2

**Title:**

Assignment 2: Portfolio of practical work

**Description:**

This assignment consists of practical work submitted by students at the end of each workshop. Students will have to perform a number of detailed exercises based on the topic of each workshop.



Each of 12 workshops attended is assessed and counts 5% towards the final result for the unit.

**Weighting:**

60%

**Criteria for assessment:**

In most workshops, the assessment will consist of lab exercises and other activities undertaken during class. Work will be assessed either during class or when written work is submitted at the end of the workshop. In workshops involving group exercises, each team member will submit their work individually.

Most of the tasks in this assignment will be assessed on the student's ability to correctly perform the tasks, and interpret the findings.

**Due date:**

Weekly (each workshop). Completed by Week 12, Friday 5pm

• **Assessment task 3**

**Title:**

Assignment 3: Mini-research project

**Description:**

This is a mini-project task, which can be performed by a small group of students.

The outcome includes presentation in week 12 about your mini-project (10%) and a research paper based on your mini-project (30%).

**Weighting:**

30%, including 10% presentation

**Criteria for assessment:**

The assignment will be assessed by:

- ◆ clarity and logic of the structure,
- ◆ level of critical analysis,
- ◆ referencing,
- ◆ standard of English expression,
- ◆ and quality of evidence, interpretation and conclusions.

**Due date:**

Presentation in Week 12, Project due Week 14, Friday 5pm

## Learning resources

### Reading list

Leedy P.D. & Ormrod J.E. (2013) *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Neuman, W.L. (2005). *Social research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Zikmund, W.G., Babin, B.J., Carr, J.C., & Griffin, M. (2010). *Business Research Methods* (8th ed.). Mason, OH: South-Western, Cengage Learning.

## Assessment Requirements

Williamson, Kirsty & Johanson, Graeme (Eds) (2013) Research Methods Information, Systems and Contexts. Tilde UP.

Earlier editions of research methods texts are also useful. For example, references to Neuman in some of the weeks below refer to the 2000 4th edition. Later and earlier editions have similar material but it may be in different chapter numbers.

Lists of additional readings will be provided for each lecture. See Moodle for further details.

Monash Library Unit Reading List (if applicable to the unit)

<http://readinglists.lib.monash.edu/index.html>

Faculty of Information Technology [Style Guide](#)

## Feedback to you

Examination/other end-of-semester assessment feedback may take the form of feedback classes, provision of sample answers or other group feedback after official results have been published. Please check with your lecturer on the feedback provided and take advantage of this prior to requesting individual consultations with staff. If your unit has an examination, you may request to view your examination script booklet, see

<http://intranet.monash.edu.au/infotech/resources/students/procedures/request-to-view-exam-scripts.html>

Types of feedback you can expect to receive in this unit are:

- Informal feedback on progress in labs/tutes
- Graded assignments with comments
- Quiz results
- Solutions to tutes, labs and assignments
- Other: peer-assessment for tutorial contribution

## Extensions and penalties

Submission must be made by the due date otherwise penalties will be enforced.

You must negotiate any extensions formally with your campus unit leader via the in-semester special consideration process: <http://www.monash.edu.au/exams/special-consideration.html>

## Returning assignments

Students can expect assignments to be returned within two weeks of the submission date or after receipt, whichever is later.

## Referencing requirements

All assignments should use APA style for referencing.

## Assignment submission

It is a University requirement

(<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/conduct/student-academic-integrity-managing-pla>) for students to submit an assignment coversheet for each assessment item. Faculty Assignment coversheets can be found at <http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au/resources/student/forms/>. Please check with your Lecturer on the submission method for your assignment coversheet (e.g. attach a file to the online assignment submission, hand-in a hard copy, or use an online quiz). Please note that it is your responsibility to retain copies of your assessments.

## Online submission

Electronic Submission is required for this unit. Please submit your work via the MOODLE site for this unit, which you can access via links in the my.monash portal. Standard assignment cover sheet has to be signed and submitted with each written assignment to confirm the proper acknowledgement of the resources used in the text.

## Required Resources

Please check with your lecturer before purchasing any Required Resources. Limited copies of prescribed texts are available for you to borrow in the library, and prescribed software is available in student labs.

Students may be required to use Web browsers, text processing, spread sheets and slide presentation packages to complete their assignments.

These are available in University computer labs.

## Recommended text(s)

Leedy, Paul D.and Ormond, Jeanne E.. (2013). *Practical Research - Planning and Design..* () Pearson (ISBN: 13: 978-0-13-289950-5).

## Other Information

### Policies

Monash has educational policies, procedures and guidelines, which are designed to ensure that staff and students are aware of the University's academic standards, and to provide advice on how they might uphold them. You can find Monash's Education Policies at:

[www.policy.monash.edu.au/policy-bank/academic/education/index.html](http://www.policy.monash.edu.au/policy-bank/academic/education/index.html)

Key educational policies include:

- Student Academic Integrity Policy and Student Academic Integrity: Managing Plagiarism and Collusion Procedures ;  
<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/conduct/student-academic-integrity-policy.h>
- Assessment in Coursework Programs;  
<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/assessment-in-coursework-po>
- Special Consideration;  
<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/special-consideration-policy.ht>
- Grading Scale;  
<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/assessment/grading-scale-policy.html>
- Discipline: Student Policy;  
<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/conduct/student-discipline-policy.html>
- Academic Calendar and Semesters; <http://www.monash.edu.au/students/dates/>
- Orientation and Transition; <http://intranet.monash.edu.au/infotech/resources/students/orientation/>
- Academic and Administrative Complaints and Grievances Policy;  
<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/management/complaints-grievance-policy.h>

### Faculty resources and policies

Important student resources including Faculty policies are located at

<http://intranet.monash.edu.au/infotech/resources/students/>

### Graduate Attributes Policy

<http://www.policy.monash.edu/policy-bank/academic/education/management/monash-graduate-attributes-policy.h>

### Student Charter

[www.opq.monash.edu.au/ep/student-charter/monash-university-student-charter.html](http://www.opq.monash.edu.au/ep/student-charter/monash-university-student-charter.html)

### Student services

The University provides many different kinds of support services for you. Contact your tutor if you need advice and see the range of services available at <http://www.monash.edu.au/students>. For Malaysia see <http://www.monash.edu.my/Student-services>, and for South Africa see <http://www.monash.ac.za/current/>.

## Monash University Library

The Monash University Library provides a range of services, resources and programs that enable you to save time and be more effective in your learning and research. Go to [www.lib.monash.edu.au](http://www.lib.monash.edu.au) or the library tab in [my.monash](http://my.monash) portal for more information. At Malaysia, visit the Library and Learning Commons at <http://www.lib.monash.edu.my/>. At South Africa visit <http://www.lib.monash.ac.za/>.

## Disability Liaison Unit

Students who have a disability or medical condition are welcome to contact the Disability Liaison Unit to discuss academic support services. Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs) visit all Victorian campuses on a regular basis.

- Website: <http://www.monash.edu/equity-diversity/disability/index.html>
- Telephone: 03 9905 5704 to book an appointment with a DLO; or contact the Student Advisor, Student Community Services at 03 55146018 at Malaysia
- Email: [dlu@monash.edu](mailto:dlu@monash.edu)
- Drop In: Equity and Diversity Centre, Level 1, Building 55, Clayton Campus, or Student Community Services Department, Level 2, Building 2, Monash University, Malaysia Campus