**Research for Senior Managers**

To develop the skills required to carry out strategic level research on a particular issue and analyse and report the results of the research.

**Indicative Content**

**1. Be able to develop an appropriate research question for a business research project**

Research areas

* Parameters for choice (what is required, what is possible), given terms of reference/ hypothesis, relevance and suitability of chosen area, areas of interest, accessibility of information, subjects of research

Aims, scope and objectives

* Feasibility of research, achievability of aims and objectives; scope of project – reducing scope if required; resource implications, consultancy projects

Success criteria

* Measuring success, breaking project down into stages and separate objectives, monitoring the project, application of theory, writing success criteria, value

Research question

* Definition, format of question, developing a suitable question, copyright and plagiarism issues

Justification

* Give reasons for choice, assess relevance of choice, link choice to given parameters and terms of reference

**2. Be able to develop a research proposal**

Research techniques

* Primary and secondary research techniques; confidentiality of data;, quantitative research techniques (data collection, statistical analysis, trends and forecasts from data, electronic analysis, presentation of quantitative data in graphs, charts etc., recording quantitative data); qualitative research techniques (interviewing, bias in qualitative data, focus groups, interpretation, recording qualitative data, analysing qualitative data)

Selection

* Matching techniques to project, identifying likely data to be required, choosing suitable mix of techniques, cost and accessibility considerations

Proposal

* Contents (question, methodology, timelines, success criteria, initial literature review, justification, how the project meets required parameters); format – suitable for project, audience

**3. Be able to undertake a literature review**

Sources

* Books, journals, papers, conferences, libraries, web research, Government information, other published research, media; indicators of credibility of sources, checking credibility of sources, gaining access, checking copyright

Review of literature

* Credibility of literature, validity and reliability, acceptance of conclusions, relevance for research

Recording and reporting

* Suitable formats for recording and reporting, references (styles and details), bibliographies

**4. Be able to use data and information collection and analysis techniques**

Collecting and analysing data and information

* Planning collection of data and information – different methods; data collection and recording including reliability and validity; capturing qualitative data (e.g. audio/video recording); analysis techniques – use of statistics, analysing qualitative data

Synthesising data

* Consideration of evidence to support or contradict research question; identify themes and conclusions; ethical issues

**5. Be able to present research with conclusions and make recommendations based on research carried out**

Summarise findings

* Present findings in suitable format – narrative, tables, graphs etc.; identify key and supporting information; organise information to include in main report and appendices

Conclusions and recommendations

* Draw conclusions from findings and identify any recommendations to be made

Present research

* Suitable formats – written, oral, audio, video presentations; organisation of information/different report structures; report summary including executive summaries; presenting to different audiences