

**Faculty of Commerce and Administration**

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

*Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*

**International MBA Programme**



**VICTORIA  
MANAGEMENT SCHOOL**

*Te Kura Whakahaere*

**2007 & 2008**

## **IMBA 532**

### **Business Research Project**

#### **COURSE OUTLINE**

**Start Date:** Option A – New Zealand Study Tour (Oct 2007)  
Option B – Hong Kong Based Project (Jan 2008)

**Format:** Via Distance – Supervision (electronic email submission)

**Coordinator:** Paul McDonald, Ph.D., MBA, B.Eng.

IMBA Director

Office: RH 931, PO Box 600, Wellington, NZ

Email: paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz

Telephone: 644-463-5506 Fax: 644-463-5084

**VUW Academic Supervision:** Dr Paul McDonald, IMBA Director

**Textbook:\*** Applied Business Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods, Robert Cavana, Brian Delahaye, Uma Sekaran, John Wiley & Sons, (2001).

\* This textbook is recommended – but not mandatory – dependent on the nature of the topic selected.

## Course Objectives

The International Master of Business Administration Programme serves to produce professional managers capable of fulfilling strategic roles within international business and government enterprises. Integral to this capability is the application of systematic and organised research and consultancy methodologies to investigate specific industry-wide problems or opportunities encountered in either the New Zealand (Option A) or Hong Kong (Option B) context.

This course aims to provide students with the opportunity to undertake industry and company analyses with a focus on practical solutions to real organisational issues. The scope of this course, being focused on student proposals, is iterative and feedback-based. Students need to choose an appropriate industrial grouping either in New Zealand (Option A) or in Hong Kong (Option B). By the end of this course, students will:

1. Have an understanding of industry analysis either in New Zealand (Option A) or Hong Kong (Option B).
2. Have the experience of defining and addressing real-life problems and opportunities in organisational settings either in New Zealand (Option A) or Hong Kong (Option B).
3. Option A only – Have an appreciation for the New Zealand economic and cultural context.
4. Option B only – Have an appreciation for company analysis as a sub-set of industry group analysis within the Hong Kong context.

## Assessment

### Option A: New Zealand Study Tour (October to December 2007)

Group Project (Industry Analysis – NZ)                      50 %                      due 5 November 2007

Individual - NZ Study Tour Learning Journal                      50 %                      due 14 January 2008

### Option B: Hong Kong Based Project (January to June 2008)

Group Project (Industry Analysis – HK)                      50 %                      due 5 May 2008

Individual Company Analysis - HK                      50 %                      due 9 June 2008

***Option A – New Zealand Study Tour (10 – 18 November 2007)***

***Industry Analysis (50%)*** – Due by electronic (email submission) prior to NZ Study Tour departure (November 5) -- working in study groups of 4 to 5 people -- you will be required to submit a research paper on an aspect of the New Zealand economy. For example you may decide, in your group, to do a research paper on the New Zealand Wine Industry, or the New Zealand Fashion Industry, or the New Zealand Banking Industry, etc. The research paper will involve a strategic analysis of the Industry - including history, environmental analysis, strategic issues, and possible recommendations. Who is in your study group will depend on who signs up for the NZ study tour. The group research paper on a New Zealand Industry will be worth 50% of your final grade in IMBA 532. Please submit your proposed industry analysis topic and proposed group membership by 3 October 2007 via email to the IMBA Director.

***Individual Learning Journal (50%)*** – After you have returned from the NZ Study Tour, you will be responsible to submit a personal learning journal highlighting lessons learned and insights gained during the NZ Study Tour. This will be an individual assignment. Hopefully, each visit, especially the corporate visits, will stimulate some thoughts and insights in your head. We want you to capture these thoughts and insights in your learning journal. The structure of your learning journal should follow the structure of the Itinerary. Your learning journal will be due by 14 January 2008 - in electronic format - emailed to the IMBA Director. This date has been chosen not to conflict with IMBA 534. This individual paper, your personal learning journal, will be worth 50% of your final grade in IMBA 532.

***Option B – Hong Kong Based Projects (January to June 2008)***

***Industry Analysis (50%)*** – Working in study groups of 3 to 5 people -- you will be required to submit a research paper on an aspect of the Hong Kong economy. For example you may decide, in your group, to do a research paper on the HK Gaming Industry, or the HK Airline Industry, or the HK Banking Industry, etc. The research paper will involve a strategic analysis of the Industry - including history, environmental analysis, strategic issues, and possible recommendations. Who is in your study group will depend on who signs up for Option B of IMBA 532. This group research paper on a Hong Kong Industry will be worth 50% of your final grade in IMBA 532. Please submit your proposed industry analysis topic and proposed group membership by 28 January 2008 via email to the IMBA Director. Your industry analysis group report will be due by electronic email submission to the IMBA Director by 5 May 2008.

***Individual Company Analysis (50%)*** – In conjunction with the group study project that will focus on an industry, each individual member in the group will be required to choose one corporate entity within their study group's selected industry for the purpose of additional company analysis. The company analysis should recognise the backdrop of the industry analysis, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and problems. The company analysis will consider company specific issues and conclude with recommendations for the future. The company analysis will be individual work and will comprise 50% of your final grade in IMBA 532. Specific details as to the company analysis, including company selected and focus of the research, should be included as a sub-set of the overall industry analysis proposal (as above – due 28 January). The company analysis reports can follow submission of the industry analysis. Company analysis reports are due (via electronic submission to the IMBA Director) on 9 June 2008.

## **Course Terms of Reference**

### **Late Assignments**

Due dates have been specified, including project proposals. Penalties will be incurred in the event of late submission.

### **Obtaining Terms**

To obtain terms for the course students must submit three documents as follows: Option A – Group Project Proposal on NZ Industry, 2) Group Project Report, 3) Individual Learning Journal. Option B – Group Project Proposal including Individual Company Selections on HK Industry, 2) Group Project Report, 3) Individual Company Analyses.

### **Passing the Course**

In order to pass this course, students are required to obtain at least fifty percent of the total marks available.

### **Appeals / Concerns / Statute on Conduct**

If you have any concerns, you should first talk to the Director of the IMBA. ([paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz)). As a secondary source, students should contact the Head of Victoria Management School – A/Professor John Davies ([john.davies@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:john.davies@vuw.ac.nz)). The University has well developed, independent procedures for dealing with academic grievances and complaints. These procedures are set out in the Statute on Academic Grievances in the University Calendar.

More generally, the University is also concerned to ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an environment of safety and respect. To this end, it has put in place a comprehensive Statute on Student Conduct. This Statute is printed in the University Calendar and contains information about what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. Persons with a complaint or grievance may seek assistance or support from another member of the University community such as the Adviser on Grievance Resolution, Departmental Chairpersons, Counselling staff or Sexual Harassment Contact Support persons. They may also resolve disputes by making use of any of the other informal or formal procedures outlined in the Statute on Conduct.

## Session Schedule

<u>Session</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Basic Reading</u>
----------------	-------------	--------------	----------------------

This course will not be offered in lecture format. It will be subject to interaction between the student and the IMBA Director via telephone, email and distance education technology. This course will allow students to research an industry either in New Zealand or Hong Kong.

Course evaluation and success will be defined by the terms of reference that follow.

# **IMBA 532 – Option A – New Zealand Study Tour**

## Terms of Reference – IMBA 532 – New Zealand Based Research Projects

Students attending the IMBA NZ Study Tour who would like to or are required to complete IMBA 532 - Business Research Project - will be permitted to do an industry analysis within the New Zealand business environment. This will be done in study group format. In addition, on an individual basis, you will be required to submit a learning journal based on your experiences, both corporate and cultural, during the New Zealand Study Tour (10 – 18 November 2007). In order to follow this elective choice, you are required to submit a business research project proposal to the IMBA Director by 3 October 2007. (Email to paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz) I will review your proposal and provide feedback, including approval to proceed by 10 October 2007.

The outline for your proposal is:

1. Title of your Business Research Project (Group Project)
2. Contextual Description - Industry and company (ies) within the industry to be studied
3. Key research questions to be addressed
4. Rationale for / importance of the research questions
5. Methods by which you will address the research questions (i.e. literature search, interviews, etc.)
6. Anticipated outcomes and action plan including key milestone dates. (Group Projects – industry analyses must be fully complete and submitted by 5 November 2007. Individual Learning Journals must be fully complete and submitted by 14 January 2008.)

Assessment will comprise 50% for the Industry Analysis Report (which is to be completed as a group submission - max. 5000 words – due 5 November 2007 - email to paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz) and 50% for an Individual Learning Journal (individual submission - max. 3000 words - due 14 January 2008 - email to paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz).

It is strongly recommended that you contact me in advance to further discuss your ideas - if you are planning to undertake the IMBA 532 - Business Research Project as part of the New Zealand Study Tour.

## **IMBA 532 – Option B - Hong Kong Context**

### Terms of Reference – IMBA 532 – Hong Kong Based Research Projects

For those students not attending the IMBA NZ Study Tour who would like to or are required to complete IMBA 532 - Business Research Project - you will be permitted to do an industry and company (ies) analysis within the Hong Kong business environment. This may be done in a combination of study group (industry analysis) and an individual basis (company analysis). In order to follow this elective choice, you are required to submit a business research project proposal to the IMBA Director by 28 January 2008. (Email to paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz) I will review your proposal and provide feedback, including approval to proceed by 8 February 2008.

The outline for your proposal is:

1. Title of your Business Research Project (Group Project and Individual Portions)
2. Contextual Description - Industry and company (ies) within the industry to be studied
3. Key research questions to be addressed
4. Rationale for / importance of the research questions
5. Methods by which you will address the research questions (i.e. literature search, interviews, etc.)
6. Anticipated outcomes and action plan including key milestone dates. (Group Projects – industry analyses must be fully complete and submitted by 5 May 2008. Individual Projects – company analyses – must be fully complete and submitted by 9 June 2008.)

Assessment will comprise 50% for the Industry Analysis Report (which is to be completed as a group submission - max. 5000 words – due 5 May 2008 - email to paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz) and 50% for an Individual Company Analysis (individual submission - max. 3000 words - due 9 June 2008 - email to paul.mcdonald@vuw.ac.nz). Each individual in the study group must complete (as individual work) one company analysis on a specific company that falls within the industry as studied under the group project.

For example,

Student A and B might collaborate to look at the International Airline Industry (operating in HK) with a focus on strategic differentiation and competitive advantage. These students would submit a report on the International Airline Industry - indicating strategic trends, key issues, direction the industry is heading. Then each individual student would prepare an individual report on one of the organisations. Student A might choose Cathay Pacific and Student B might choose Dragon Air. The individual company report would include a strategic analysis of the company, company issues and sources of possible competitive advantage. You may wish to focus your analysis to a particular business discipline of interest - for example - a marketing focus, or an operations management focus or hr focus.

It is very important to note, that this work for IMBA 532 must be completely separate and unique from all other IMBA course submissions and reports that you will have completed or will complete in the IMBA and APIB programmes - for example - IMBA 534, IMBA 535, etc.

It is strongly recommended that you contact me in advance to further discuss your ideas - if you are planning to undertake the IMBA 532 - Business Research Project in Hong Kong.