Programme: MBA in International Hospitality Management

Course Title: Post Graduate Thesis

Course Code:	MSTR7008	**Credit hours:**	9
Prerequisite/s:	MSTR7006, MSTR7001		

Coordinated by:

 Coordinator's email address:

Course Rationale and Description

Business research knowledge and skills are important criteria for understanding, conducting, interpreting and presenting findings in the hospitality/tourism industry. The Thesis provides students with an opportunity to conduct primary research in an area of interest and apply theoretical knowledge and skills learnt in a business environment. The Thesis requires students to carry out their own research study in terms of: Identification of a topical area; research preparation; literature review; question and/or hypothesis development; selection of appropriate research method, including identification of the target population, selection of sampling technique(s), selection of data gathering method(s), and application of appropriate data analysis; presentation of the research findings, and articulation of the research conclusions in the broader context of the topical area. The Thesis presents a written work of scholarship that demonstrates the student's ability to research an approved topic and present a well-reasoned argument in support of a clearly stated hypothesis or research question.

Teaching and Learning Philosophy

Completing a Thesis is a self-directed undertaking and as such there will be limited formal instruction. Rather, the learning will come from the mentoring and coaching of the academic supervisors and the topic area expert. Depending upon the needs of the student and/or the philosophy of the supervisor, there will be a variety of approaches used in guiding students and providing formative feedback throughout the research process. Students will be given a list of experts who have agreed to provide guidance in their topic areas; from discussions with these experts' students will identify a feasible research area. Working under the direction of one of the academic supervisors, students will then develop a research proposal. The proposal will be evaluated, and, once it is passed, students may progress with the research using the proposal to provide the scope and the approach for completing the Thesis. Throughout the process of conducting the research and writing the Thesis, the student should seek guidance and feedback from the academic supervisor and the content area expert.

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Contribution to Graduate Profile:
Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:
1. Critically examine the social, cultural, cognitive and financial aspects of contemporary international hospitality management.
2. Make a professional contribution to the process of corporate leadership within hospitality businesses.
3. Investigate hospitality management issues in a creative, strategic and entrepreneurial way.
4. Plan, design, construct, execute and present business research using a range of methodologies, analytical techniques and presentation formats

Specific Learning Outcomes

Knowledge
Upon completion of this course, students will know how to:
LO1. Discuss various types of research and the role of research in business decision making.
LO2. Identify and pursue an original study in terms of scope or context.
LO3. Be able to locate, access, assess, use, and cite literature appropriate to the chosen research topic.
LO4. Evaluate alternative research methodologies and select an approach consistent with the aim of the research to be undertaken.

Skill
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate:
LO5. Demonstrate a sound appreciation of the factors affecting the selection of a feasible and worthy business research topic in the hospitality and tourism industry.
LO6. Design and implement an appropriate method to collect primary data.
LO7. Plan the research in accordance with the scientific research principles.
LO8. Present the research findings and relate to the broader industry context.

Autonomy and Responsibility Competence
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to state the following reporting, regulating or ethical considerations:
LO9. Describe and apply principles to ensure that research is undertaken in an ethical manner.

Self-Development Competence
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the need to continually research and up skill the following areas:
LO10. Integrate skills, knowledge and theory from a range of subjects and disciplines.
LO11. Analyse, synthesise and draw conclusions based on the data.

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Role in Context Competence

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to effectively contribute to the following activities or endeavours:

LO12.   Determine the general application of research findings and conclusions to a broader industrial context.

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Transferable and Employment Skills

SKILLS	PRACTICED	TAUGHT	ASSESSED
1. Written Communication	X	X	X
2. Verbal Communication	X		X
3. Commercial Awareness	X	X	X
4. Problem Solving	X	X	X
5. Networking			
6. Planning and Organising	X	X	X
7. Numeracy			
8. Computer Literacy	X		X
9. Time Management	X		X
10. Research	X	X	X
11. Team Work			
12. Leadership			
13. Negotiating			
14. Customer Service			

Content

Date	Step/Submission	How?
21st to 24th April	Initial discussion of Dissertation Topic	With Supervisor (by appointment)
May 1st	Initial Dissertation Proposal	To Supervisor
May 8th	Submission of Ethics Application Form	To Supervisor
May 8th	Submission of Dissertation Proposal	To Supervisor
May 16th	Dissertation Proposal Approval	By Supervisor
TBC by supervisor	Draft Dissertation Submission	To Supervisor
August 31st	Final Dissertation Submission	To Library and electronically to Supervisor

Note: In case an extension is required it must be approved by the Associate Dean, and the Supervisor.

Responsibilities of a supervisor

The supervisor's role is rather like that of a coach. The supervisor provides sufficient guidance to enable the student to undertake and complete academic research. However, *at no time does the supervisor assume ownership of the research or the Thesis.* The supervisor provides guidance in the form of: directing the student towards resources; sharing expertise on research method; advising as to the appropriateness of the research purpose and scope; alerting the student if progress seems inadequate, if there are potential obstacles that may hinder the completion of the research, or if the work to date does not meet the standard for a Thesis. *Supervisors are neither proof readers nor editors.* Supervisors have an obligation to provide the feedback in a timely manner for draft portions of work. In exceptional circumstances, such as when the supervisor is delivering an intensive course module or has scheduled leave, the feedback may be delayed. However, the student would normally be advised of these circumstances prior to their occurrence.

A second role of the supervisor is to maintain the academic integrity of the research process. This may entail advising the student of ethical considerations, such as ensuring permissions are obtained when using human subjects or verifying that data gathering occurred as indicated by the student. Should the supervisor have concerns as to the student's academic integrity, the supervisor has a duty to forward his or her concerns to the academic dean for investigation.

Responsibilities of the student

Ownership of the Thesis is the responsibility of the student. While a supervisor may offer advice or suggestions, ultimately all decisions pertaining to the research and the Thesis are to be made by the student. The student has a responsibility to keep his or her supervisor fully informed as to the progress that is being made. Should the student submit interim material to the supervisor for feedback, the student has the responsibility to ensure that the interim work is thoroughly edited and proof read *before* it is presented to his or her supervisor. After the student's proposal has been accepted, the student has a responsibility to seek approval from his or her supervisor should he or she wish to change any aspects of the proposed research. This approval requirement is to protect the student by making sure that changes will not compromise the acceptability of the Thesis. The student is expected to attend scheduled seminars and attend regular tutorials with their supervisor.

The student has a responsibility to conform to the ethical standards for research when using human subjects; in particular, the student should disclose to subjects the purpose of the research study and, when anonymity is promised, to maintain the confidentiality of the subject's identity. Finally, the student has a responsibly to maintain high standards of academic integrity throughout the research process and in the preparation of the Thesis.

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Responsibilities when involving third parties or other experts

Depending upon the research being undertaken and the needs of the student, guidance may be sought from third parties such as: experts and/or practitioners in the industry; human resource personnel and other persons in a managerial role who can facilitate access to subjects and other resources; and EAHM staff other than the supervisor. These persons have no obligation to assist the student and any desired assistance should be requested, not presumed. However, should assistance be promised, there is a responsibility on the third party to honour their commitments. Students are required to advise their supervisor of any significant third party involvement in the research process so that the supervisor can verify that the involvement is appropriate.

The Proposal

In preparing for your research, you must submit a research proposal. Your research proposal should have a length of **5000** words and be prepared using the Harvard referencing format. The topic of the research should be related to a business area of relevance to the tourism and hospitality industries. The purpose of a research proposal is to convince your target audience (your Thesis supervisor and other markers) that your Thesis research is: doable, relevant, and; worthy of satisfying the MBA Thesis requirement. The research proposal criteria are consistent with the proposal requirements of the MBA Business Research Methods course.

To continue in the MBA Thesis course a Pass is required for the Research Proposal. Your proposal will be assessed, using the rubric outlined in the course syllabus, by your supervisor and a second marker. Formative feedback on your proposal will be given two (2) weeks after the proposal submission date. In the event that your proposal is assessed as a fail, you will have one (1) opportunity to submit a revised proposal. Failure on a revised proposal will result in failure of MBA post graduate thesis.

Once a proposal is passed, the proposal is your plan for the research. Any substantive change to the research plan, such as a change in research objectives or method, must have prior approval from your supervisor.

The Thesis

A Thesis is an academic product of **20, 000** words that demonstrate the following criteria:
1) A Thesis sets the context of the research problem by thoroughly reviewing relevant related literature and demonstrating that a "knowledge gap" exists and therefore justifying that the piece of research is needed;
2) The Thesis demonstrates a process of deliberation and rationale choice in making decisions related to the research method;

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3) A Thesis frames the research findings in the context of the literature, highlighting the contribution that it makes to the area, articulating the extent to which the "knowledge gap" has been filled;
4) A Thesis reflects on what was done, often highlighting what could have been done better, what has been learned and what more could be done, in terms of future research, in this topic area.

The requirements for preparing and submitting the Thesis are prescribed in *The Emirates Academy MBA Post Graduate Thesis Handbook*.

Assessments, Weighting and Deadlines

Academic work (proposal and Thesis) will be assessed and marked by two academic staff, and in some cases, by a third academic. The student names are anonymous to the second and third markers to ensure impartiality in the marking of the Thesis. A summary of the grading procedure follows:

Marking and Progress Requirements				
Stage	**LO**	**Initial Assessment**	**Further Assessment**	**Notes**
Research proposal	1-7, 9	1. Supervisor 2. Nominated Reviewer	Blind review conducted in the case of a 1. Fail 2. Compensative Fail	Requires a PASS to proceed with the Thesis
Thesis	1-12	1. Supervisor 2. Blind reviewer	Further blind review conducted in the case of 1. Fail 2. Compensative Fail 3. >10% variation between initial assessments	The Thesis comprises 100% of the final grade.
Viva	8		A viva will be conducted: 1. At the request of the supervisor 2. Compensative Fail	Thesis rubric used as guidance in assigning weighting to viva area

In assessing the mark for a Thesis, The Emirates Academy reserves the right to schedule a viva. Should a viva be deemed appropriate; a date and time will be scheduled for the student to appear for the viva. Failure to appear for a scheduled viva may result in failure of the Thesis.

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Article 7, of the Emirates Academy Catalogue (4th ed.), defines the grading criteria for this course. Two assessment criteria are: 1) Research Proposal, and 2) Thesis.

Failure of MBA Thesis
If the Thesis is not deemed worthy of a pass or no Thesis is submitted within the time limitations, a fail will be given for MBA Post Graduate Thesis. Should this occur; the student will be allowed to repeat the course one time.

Grading rubric: Research proposal

Criteria	Weighted Marking Criteria	Awarded per cent	Comments
The title is reflective of the research problem and engaging	5		
The introduction includes relevant discussion to identify the background, context, and importance of the research problem	5		
Supporting literature clearly links and documents knowledge about the research problem	15		
Ethical considerations are appropriately discussed	10		
An appropriate research method is chosen and explained to conduct the research	10		
Proposed data collection methods are appropriate and detailed	10		
Proposed data analysis is appropriate and detailed	15		
The conclusion summarizes the significance, limitations and importance of the work for the industry	10		
The paper demonstrates evidence of scholarly work, is organized, professionally presented and within the word limit	10		

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HARVARD referencing is correctly used throughout the paper and in the reference list	10		
Final percentage	100%		

Grading rubric: Thesis

CRITERIA	MARKS
1. **Originality and Relevance** *For example:* originality and creativity; relevance; thoroughness and coherence of literature review; critical evaluation of extant theory and research; identification of research problem, etc.	**/20**
2. **Structure, Argument and Focus** *For example:* clarity and definition of research objectives; use of an appropriate conceptual framework; continuity of themes; logical development; internal logic of arguments; use of evidence to support arguments, etc.	**/20**
3. **Methodology and Findings** *For example:* critical evaluation of available research approaches and methods; selection of methodology appropriate to research objectives; selection of analytical techniques appropriate to data collected; quality of results obtained and relevance to research questions, etc.	**/25**
4. **Insight and Understanding** *For example:* analysis, critical evaluation and application (rather than mere description); interpretation of results; justifiability of conclusions; recognition of limitations; implication for management practice; suggestions for future research, etc.	**/25**
5. **General Presentation** *For example:* abstract; style, structure and layout; appropriate use of tables, diagrams, appendices; correct referencing, etc.	**/10**
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL MARK	**/100**

Other Criteria for Grading

DISTINCTION – *90-100%*
The student's work is outstanding in every respect showing an excellent ability to define the problem, analyse the problem using sophisticated analytical techniques and draw conclusions that are wholly located in the literature or management practice, showing contributions to the literature and/or management practice. The number of references

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used will display ability to search the literature. Grammar, text and numerical representations, and structure are excellent; and proper referencing is adopted with the provision of clear examples where appropriate. In cases of projects this implies that a potential exists for a student to be a sole author of a conference or journal paper. The conceptualisations go significantly beyond those discussed in class and are innovative in nature and strongly argued.

MERIT – *80-89%*
The work is significantly above average in standard, showing an above average ability to define the problem, analyse the problem using sophisticated analytical techniques and draw conclusions that are wholly located in the literature showing contributions to the literature. There may be minor typographical and referencing errors. The candidates provide evidence of being able to develop conceptualisation beyond that done in class.

PASS – *70-79%*
The work is of average standard showing a clear understanding of the concepts and issues that is to be expected of a student at a given standard of work. There may be a few factual errors, but these are not sufficient in number or significant in nature to generally detract from the main thrust of the argument. The main hypotheses are clearly stated, but some nuances may be left unattended. Writing is still clear with few errors of grammar and syntax, but there may be some typographical errors.

Fail Grades - *these will be characterised a number of faults that may include:*
- Poor research skills demonstrated by inappropriate or few references.
- Poor standards of grammar and syntax.
- Inadequate referencing.
- Misunderstanding the nature of the task given and the means appropriate to completing the task.
- A failure to focus on the main concepts/arguments/issues set in the task
- Misunderstandings about the content of references used.
- Undue brevity.
- An inability to develop an argument in a logical and rational manner – the argument may be disjointed, comprise *non sequitors*, and be irrelevant to the task in hand.
- Misunderstandings of the nature of the task set, the problems posed, the solutions required.
- A failure to provide evidence to support contentions.
- Non-performance in that work is not submitted in the time required with no valid reason being provided.

Methods for Monitoring and Authenticating Student Work
- File copies of each student's written work at given stages in its development will be maintained.
- A draft of chapters 1-3 (Introduction, Problem/Issue Statement, Literature Review, and Methodology), due on an agreed date by the Supervisor, will be maintained until after the Thesis is graded.

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- A draft of the Thesis, due on an agreed date by the Supervisor, will be maintained until after the Thesis is graded.

Academic Integrity
Each student in this course is expected to abide by The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management Academic Integrity Policy.

Plagiarism, in any form is not permitted, and correct citation policy should be followed at all times (HARVARD format)

Turnitin
Students are required to submit all written assignments in soft copy through the Turnitin system which is available online at www.turnitin.com. Every student must have a Turnitin account. Failure to submit an assignment through Turnitin will result in marks for that assignment being withheld. Students do NOT need to hand in a printed copy of the Turnitin Originality Report. More information about Turnitin (including how to create an account and add a class) will be provided by the librarians or your course tutor. Only one Turnitin submission is allowed.

Turnitin information for this subject:

Class ID	Supervisor	Enrolment Key
20701723	Bincy Baburaj	DISS901
20701728	Chris Simon Dutt	DISS902
20701713	Ioanna Karanikola	DISS903
20701732	Michael Newnham	DISS904
20701707	Sanjay Nadkarni	DISS905
20701735	Scott Richardson	DISS906
20701719	Stephanie Morris	DISS907

Learning Resources:

Textbooks:
To be advised depending on the research topic and research method employed for the Thesis.

Recommended Reading:

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To be advised depending on the research topic and research method employed for the Thesis.

Websites:
Additional resources will be advised during the course and will be dependent on the research topic and method.

Journals
Refereed journal articles from the academic databases will be compiled by the student for the thesis literature review.