

Research Methods Module 2012-13

RESEARCH PROPOSAL MARKSHEET

A Pass grade must be achieved on all of the specific assessment criteria outlined.

Module Title: Research Methods ECTS credits: 10 ECTS	
Participant Name: Patrick Walsh	
Tutor Name: Dr Roisin Donnelly / Dr Claire McAvinia	
Context and Rationale <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of an appropriately focused study/project and adequate delineation of the context in which the study/project will be developed and implemented• Identification of the current forces and context shaping the learning environment• Identification and discussion of the possible relevance and significance of the proposed research• Evidence of a well developed understanding of the topic together with an ability to present an intelligent and cogent argument	
Commentary <p>Useful context and rationale provided. This is an overdue and worthwhile study, not just in the context of DIT, but will have value for the wider technology in higher education community. Pat has shown a fairly well rounded understanding of the topic of learning analytics for HE, and is proposing a focused and current project.</p> <p>Overall, this is a well-developed proposal, and Pat through his early discussions with various stakeholders in the institution has managed to narrow down from what is a large field on learning analytics and the digital footprints that students in their online courses leave to identify a more focused, narrower project that can be implemented in the timescale. The proposal gives a useful account of the context in which the project will take place. The proposed research could have relevance to a large number of people who are wish to make use of the technology to better inform their online practice, and this should be highlighted even more clearly in the proposal.</p>	Indicator PASS

Structure and Presentation**

The proposal is:

- Clearly written, well-presented and organised, with close attention to academic conventions concerning referencing, quotations, bibliography, footnotes, etc
- Logical in structure, well laid out and attentive to academic writing conventions

Commentary

Pat has a fluent writing style and adheres for the most part to the academic conventions of APA. The referencing is also generally good but some minor typos present which might have been picked up on a final edit. Overall, this is a well written, organised and presented proposal, and the structure is organised following all the recommended headings of the proposal template.

Indicator

PASS

Literature Review and Scholarship **

- Demonstrates a verifiable and comprehensible awareness of important previous work and relevant/pertinent literature, work, personal experience to inform the rationale for the study/project
- Provides evidence of critical analysis and/or synthesis of appropriate literature
- Demonstrates and builds upon skilled and judicious selection of relevant materials from appropriate sources, with evidence that key sources have been both explored and acknowledged appropriately

Commentary

There is fairly comprehensive and at times critical engagement with relevant literature in the proposal and when this is linked with Pat's own professional interest in the topic, produces a well informed proposal.

Pat has worked hard to review a proportion of the wide range of literature that is available which could be relevant to this project; it would be useful to clarify in the proposal which specific parts of the literature he will include as most relevant, given the breadth of themes in learning analytics – this section would benefit from more thinking before Pat begins his project. He has included both practical and theoretical literature, and all of the sources used are valuable in setting the context and in terms of the potential originality of this project. The literature is discussed in terms of their relevance to the research question.

Indicator

PASS

Research Feasibility, Design and Analysis

- The participant has proposed a rigorous, systematic study including the selection of research methods appropriate to the context of the work
- Outline of a clear research aim and question,
- Inclusion of a logical and coherent plan for the development of study/project and provision of evidence of understanding of the key issues and arguments in relation to the realisation of the project
- Identification and description of the target group for the implementation and evaluation stages of the study/project
- Justification of the research approach which will ensure validity and reliability
- All ethical issues have been identified and considered
- Identification of all significant limitations and assumptions

Commentary

The case study is suitable for this study and Pat has selected and justified suitable data collection methods. A useful research plan is included which allows feasible timeframe for the technical side of the project development and LMS reporting. Ethics are considered, as well as the limitations of the study. This proposal presents a research question and aims, as well as a clear plan and timeline for the implementation of the project. The target group for the research has been identified, and seems to be suitable for the work in question. Pat has given some initial thought to ensure ethical running of the project and needs to follow this up.

Indicator

PASS

Feed forward

Pat, this is a useful research proposal; you have invested time in its planning, and this will stand you in good stead when developing the project in the next semester. In this proposal, you have a good starting point for this work, and I know that you have already discussed it with institutional colleagues to help clarify your thinking and ensure that it can be implemented in the timescale. Continue this good practice over the coming months to ensure that all stakeholders have been fully informed about the project and that useful early feedback is being returned to help shape the direction you can take.

Overall decision/impression

A well conceived, planned and written research proposal. Well done Pat!

Final Indicator

PASS

First Assessor: *Róisín Donnelly*

Date: 30 May 2013

Second Assessor:

Date: