

SEVERN BUSINESS COLLEGE

CPD Level 8 Diploma in Research

Course Handbook

Qualification
CPD Level 8 Diploma in Research

Level
8

Total Qualification Time
1600

Credit Value
160

Aim of the Course
The Level 8 Diploma in Research is a prestigious level 8 qualification designed for senior professionals, academics, and researchers seeking to lead advanced research projects, contribute to innovation, and shape institutional research strategies. This qualification emphasizes high-level decision-making, complex problem-solving, ethical governance, and critical engagement with global research trends. It also equips candidates to manage multidisciplinary research environments, secure competitive funding, and assess research impact in academic, corporate, or policy settings. Ideal for those pursuing leadership in research-intensive organizations, this course blends theoretical frameworks with real-world application through a combination of modules and a doctoral-level research portfolio.

Course Structure

CPD Level 8 Diploma in Research			
Unit number	**Units**	**Unit level**	**Unit credit**
RM801	Advanced Research Methodologies	8	20
RM802	Strategic Research Planning & Funding	8	20
RM803	Leadership in Research Organizations	8	20
RM804	Ethics, Governance & Legal Frameworks	8	20
RM805	Data Science and Research Analytics	8	20
RM806	Innovation and Impact in Research	8	20
RM807	Global Research Trends and Comparative Practices	8	20
RM808	Doctoral Research Proposal and Portfolio	8	20

Assessment Grades

Grade	Marking Criteria
Pass	All learning outcomes are achieved. All assessment criteria are met.
Fail	All learning outcomes are not achieved. All assessment criteria are not met.
No Marks	Plagiarism

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title
Advanced Research Methodologies

Level
8

Learning Time Hours
200

Credit Value
20

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria
In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1. Critically evaluate philosophical paradigms and their influence on research methodologies.	1.1: Compare major research paradigms (positivism, interpretivism, etc.). 1.2: Justify the choice of a paradigm for a given research problem. 1.3: Analyze implications of ontological and epistemological assumptions. 1.4: Evaluate the paradigm-methodology alignment.

2. Design rigorous and context-appropriate research methodologies.	2.1: Develop a coherent research methodology section. 2.2: Assess sampling techniques and their validity. 2.3: Propose appropriate instruments for data collection. 2.4: Justify research design with theoretical and practical reasoning.
3. Apply advanced data collection and analysis techniques.	3.1: Select and justify advanced data collection tools. 3.2: Demonstrate proficiency in at least one statistical software. 3.3: Evaluate the reliability and validity of data. 3.4: Interpret findings using advanced analytical frameworks.
4. Demonstrate mastery in evaluating research quality.	4.1: Define criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research. 4.2: Assess research rigor using triangulation. 4.3: Critique published studies for methodological flaws. 4.4: Propose improvements to flawed research designs.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title
Strategic Research Planning & Funding

Level
8

Learning Time Hours
200

Credit Value
20

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria
In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1. Formulate institutional research strategies.	1.1: Identify organizational research priorities. 1.2: Develop a research roadmap aligned with institutional goals. 1.3: Integrate risk management into research planning. 1.4: Align strategies with funding policies and trends.
2. Develop competitive research proposals.	2.1: Identify and evaluate suitable funding opportunities. 2.2: Draft all key components of a grant proposal. 2.3: Justify budget allocation in funding applications. 2.4: Critically assess reviewer feedback to improve proposals.
3. Analyze global research funding ecosystems.	3.1: Compare public vs private funding mechanisms. 3.2: Evaluate success factors in international funding bids. 3.3: Analyze policy implications for research funding. 3.4: Create a risk mitigation plan for grant-dependent research.
4. Evaluate research performance metrics.	4.1: Identify KPIs relevant to research projects. 4.2: Use bibliometric tools to analyze output and impact. 4.3: Critically assess institutional research benchmarking. 4.4: Recommend data-driven improvements in performance.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title
Leadership in Research Organizations

Level
8

Learning Time Hours
200

Credit Value

20

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1. Evaluate leadership theories in research contexts.	1.1: Critically analyze leadership models for R&D environments. 1.2: Apply relevant leadership theory to a case study. 1.3: Identify challenges unique to leading research teams. 1.4: Propose leadership strategies for cross-functional teams.
2. Manage multidisciplinary research teams.	2.1: Design team structures for research efficiency. 2.2: Implement conflict resolution strategies. 2.3: Evaluate communication tools for team collaboration. 2.4: Assess diversity and inclusion in research teams.
3. Apply project management frameworks to research.	3.1: Adapt PRINCE2 or Agile tools to a research context. 3.2: Plan a Gantt chart or timeline for a complex project. 3.3: Perform a stakeholder analysis. 3.4: Develop a project risk register.
4. Make strategic decisions in research environments.	4.1: Use data to support strategic decision-making. 4.2: Evaluate cost-benefit of research initiatives. 4.3: Apply SWOT or PESTLE to research programs. 4.4: Propose strategic solutions to institutional challenges.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title

Ethics, Governance & Legal Frameworks

Level

8

Learning Time Hours

200

Credit Value

20

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of research ethics.	1.1: Evaluate ethical codes across disciplines. 1.2: Justify ethical choices in a research scenario. 1.3: Design an ethics application form. 1.4: Analyze a case of ethical misconduct.
2. Apply governance frameworks in research.	2.1: Map governance structures in research institutions. 2.2: Identify responsibilities of research administrators. 2.3: Evaluate audit mechanisms in place. 2.4: Recommend enhancements to compliance systems.
3. Analyze legal aspects of research.	3.1: Interpret IP laws relevant to academic research. 3.2: Evaluate compliance with data protection laws (e.g., GDPR). 3.3: Analyze publication and licensing contracts. 3.4: Recommend strategies for legal risk mitigation.
4. Evaluate ethics review and approval processes.	4.1: Map the functions of IRBs/ethics committees. 4.2: Appraise review criteria and turnaround times. 4.3: Analyze the impact of ethics delays on projects. 4.4: Propose improvements to ethics review processes.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title
Data Science and Research Analytics

Level
8

Learning Time Hours
200

Credit Value
20

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria
In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1. Utilize data analysis tools in research.	1.1: Compare tools such as R, SPSS, Python, NVivo. 1.2: Conduct a data cleaning and preprocessing exercise. 1.3: Perform advanced statistical tests. 1.4: Interpret outputs for academic and stakeholder audiences.
2. Apply data visualization techniques.	2.1: Create charts/dashboards to represent data effectively. 2.2: Evaluate visualization tools (e.g., Tableau, Power BI). 2.3: Design visuals for academic publications. 2.4: Tailor data visuals for non-technical audiences.
Conduct meta-analyses and systematic reviews.	3.1: Define PRISMA and Cochrane guidelines. 3.2: Conduct a structured literature search. 3.3: Use software for review synthesis. 3.4: Critique limitations of meta-analytic methods.
4. Evaluate big data's role in research.	4.1: Define and assess big data sources and structures. 4.2: Analyze ethical concerns in big data usage. 4.3: Use a big data case study to show impact. 4.4: Recommend big data tools for institutional research.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title
Innovation and Impact in Research

Level
8

Learning Time Hours
200

Credit Value
20

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria
In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1. Measure research impact across dimensions.	1.1: Use bibliometric and altmetric indicators. 1.2: Evaluate societal and policy impact pathways. 1.3: Design an impact evaluation plan. 1.4: Compare research impact frameworks (e.g., REF).
2. Foster innovation through research.	2.1: Define translational research stages. 2.2: Identify innovation pathways in knowledge transfer. 2.3: Analyze barriers to research innovation. 2.4: Propose an institutional innovation strategy.

3. Analyze public engagement strategies.	3.1: Develop a public communication plan. 3.2: Evaluate social media and science communication tools. 3.3: Critique case studies of engagement success/failure. 3.4: Recommend inclusive outreach models.
4. Evaluate commercialization and IP.	4.1: Explain patenting and licensing processes. 4.2: Assess spin-offs and university-enterprise partnerships. 4.3: Analyze case studies of research commercialization. 4.4: Design a research commercialization roadmap.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title
Global Research Trends and Comparative Practices

Level
8

Learning Time Hours
200

Credit Value
20

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria
In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1. Compare global research frameworks.	1.1: Analyze Horizon Europe, NSF, and NIHR funding models. 1.2: Evaluate international collaborations. 1.3: Identify key trends shaping global research. 1.4: Compare research governance in selected countries.
2. Benchmark institutional practices.	2.1: Design a benchmarking framework. 2.2: Collect comparative data from global institutions. 2.3: Evaluate institutional rankings and indicators. 2.4: Recommend practices from global leaders.
3. Explore equity and inclusion in global research.	3.1: Define inclusive research principles. 3.2: Identify barriers to global research participation. 3.3: Analyze international DEI initiatives. 3.4: Propose policies for inclusive research culture.
4. Adapt best practices from international models.	4.1: Assess cross-cultural implications in research policy. 4.2: Evaluate localization of global standards. 4.3: Critique one successful international research program. 4.4: Propose integration of international practices locally.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

Unit Title
Doctoral Research Proposal and Portfolio

Level
8

Learning Time Hours
200

Credit Value
20

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning Outcome	**Assessment Criteria**
1. Formulate an original doctoral-level research proposal.	1.1: Define a clear research aim and objectives. 1.2: Construct a coherent literature review. 1.3: Develop a robust methodology section. 1.4: Align proposal with funding or institutional goals.
2. Demonstrate scholarly writing and referencing..	2.1: Structure academic arguments logically. 2.2: Apply referencing conventions accurately. 2.3: Synthesize sources without plagiarism. 2.4: Write to publishable academic standards.
3. Defend research design and feasibility.	3.1: Prepare for a viva-style presentation. 3.2: Respond to methodological critiques. 3.3: Revise design based on peer or supervisor feedback. 3.4: Justify timeline, budget, and resources.
4. Compile a reflective research portfolio.	4.1: Document research process stages. 4.2: Reflect on personal and academic growth. 4.3: Evaluate ethical and practical challenges. 4.4: Include publication-ready output (e.g., article draft).

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