1. MODULE AIMS
Through this module, students will be able to develop a range of research skills which they can apply in a communication research project of their own in the Dissertation module. The module provides a framework within which students can:

- explore the variety of approaches used in research in professional communication
- evaluate the suitability of such approaches and their implications for the conduct of their own research
- develop the research skills required at post-graduate level, so that they can conduct and report effectively on a small-scale research project in the Dissertation module.

Many research approaches may be appropriate to professional communication practice, depending on the students’ context and needs. Research can vary from quantitative/positivistic studies to qualitative/critical approaches. Therefore, this module takes an inclusive approach.

2. MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of the module, you will be able to:

- relate research to issues in your own professional communication practice
- demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of research design
- Identify and locate a research problem in your professional context
- locate, retrieve and manage literature from a variety of sources, and appraise the research literature in a specific area of communication
- locate your research in a range of approaches to enquiry, e.g. positivist, realist, constructionist
• Select and justify the choice of methodology and methods to apply to a specific research problem
• Demonstrate a critical understanding of qualitative and quantitative data analysis
• provide a well reasoned justification for a research design, demonstrating an appreciation of the different ways in which research could be conducted
• appraise the validity, reliability and ethical dimensions of a piece of research.

3. INDICATIVE LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Students are supported by a dedicated Blackboard site and distance-learning materials, which include task instructions, structured readings, as well as online discussions with other students and other interactive facilities.

The module is structured around a series of tasks.

• Some tasks help students explore generic key issues in communication research, using published research and students’ work contexts as materials for ‘case studies’, discussions, and components of the formal assessment.

• Other tasks are related to the students’ own plans for a small-scale research project, to be completed in the Dissertation module.

• Each completed task forms a component of a ‘research skills portfolio’ (to be assessed holistically) demonstrating their learning in relation to a set of research skills.

Overall, the ‘portfolio’ will allow students to demonstrate their developing research skills, and to explore theoretical and professional perspectives on research in communication.

Throughout the year, students receive formative feedback for peers and tutors on the components of their portfolio. This should be used to develop and enhance the quality of their work. At the end of the year, tutors formally assess students’ ‘portfolio of research skills’.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY AND METHODS

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4. INDICATIVE MODULE CONTENTS / TOPICS

Research in professional communication settings
Identifying a manageable research question
Starting a literature review
Variety in research design: fixed and flexible designs
Relating research paradigm, methodology and methods
Evaluating research: validity, reliability, and ethics
FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MODULE

Further / additional information is available to support this module, including assessment criteria detailing how your performance in the module will be measured, how you will receive feedback, details of learning resources and key readings.

This information can be found in:

– the module handbook
– the assessment brief and assessment criteria
– the Blackboard site supporting the module.

Note that this additional information may be subject to change from year to year.

FINAL TASK

According to the Assessment Strategy shown in the Module Descriptor, which task will be the LAST TASK to be taken or handed-in? (Give task number as shown in the Assessment Strategy)

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MODULE REFERRAL STRATEGY

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REVISIONS

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