



## Research Methods at Postgraduate Level: Why? What? When? How?

**Donald Joyce, Kay Fielden**

SCIT, UNITEC  
Auckland, New Zealand

Djoyce@unitec.ac.nz

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### ABSTRACT

One of the four compulsory courses in UNITEC's Master of Computing programme (ISCG804 Research Methods) has the stated aim "to provide participants with a framework for applied research through examining research methods and preparing research proposals in information technology areas". Since the programme began in February 2000, 54 students have taken the course. Its learning outcomes are stated as follows:

The participants will be able to:

- ◆ Establish the basic requirements for research;
- ◆ Select, analyse, critique and synthesise literature / information pertaining to a potential research topic;
- ◆ Identify and apply methods for formulating solution procedures and construct a draft research proposal;
- ◆ Experiment with the various techniques used for analysing quantitative and qualitative observations to establish their appropriateness and limitations;
- ◆ Use a critique of other proposals to improve the initial draft (research proposal); and
- ◆ Determine the content and appropriate style of presentation together with the tools used for presenting results.

The assessment consists of:

- ◆ an annotated literature review and a report on the scope for information technology research in NZ;
- ◆ a research proposal (including literature review) for a research problem in information technology; and
- ◆ a test on quantitative and qualitative methods, with emphasis on application and interpretation.

In this poster presentation, the authors (respectively 804 lecturer, and Mcomp programme director) review their experience with the course and attempt to answer four inter-related questions:

- Why is the course required?
- What should it aim to achieve?
- When should students take it?
- How should it be delivered?

