



School of Economics and Management

## **BUSR31, Business Administration: Qualitative Research Methods, 5 credits**

*Företagsekonomi: Kvalitativa metoder, 5 högskolepoäng*  
Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

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### **Details of approval**

The syllabus is an old version, approved by Academic Director of Studies at Department of Business Administration on 2016-03-15 and was valid from 2016-03-15, autumn semester 2016.

### **General Information**

BUSR31 is a course in Business Administration at the advanced level.

*Main field of studies*

Business Administration

*Depth of study relative to the degree  
requirements*

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle  
course/s as entry requirements

### **Learning outcomes**

A passing grade on the course will be awarded to students who:

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- Demonstrate knowledge of the main qualitative methods applied within marketing and management research.
- Can account for and explain the relation between (i) the research problem, (ii) the empirical material needed, (iii) the nature of the phenomenon under study, and (iv) the method of data collection.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyze different kinds of empirical material (data)
- Demonstrate an ability to reflect upon the strengths and limitations of different types of qualitative material (data) and research methods.

### **Competence and skills**

- Demonstrate an ability to develop and argue for methodological choices
- Demonstrate an ability apply the course content in a practical setting: i.e. design a study, collect and analyze empirical material, and reflect on relevant issues in this process such as validity, reliability, and generalizability.
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate in English on issues, debates and problems in the field both orally and in writing and to do so in a clear, logical and pedagogical way.

### **Judgement and approach**

- Demonstrate an ability to reflect upon problems related to knowledge claims and methodological choices.

### **Course content**

Within marketing and management there is a long tradition of conducting qualitative fieldwork/research. The choice of research method should be based on careful consideration of the aim of the research project, the nature of the unit of analysis and empirical object, the epistemological basis of different methods, the type of empirical data available and accessible, and the desired outcomes of the project. Researchers thus face an array of methodological decisions, the answer to which will greatly impact the both the practical feasibility of the study and the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings.

Questions related to qualitative research methods are therefore of pivotal importance not only for students and researchers but also to management and marketing practitioners. This relates to (i) the ability to conduct scholarly research and business/market research in an informed and robust way and (ii) the ability to assess and critically review others' research, be it scientific studies or market research.

Against this backdrop, the aim of the course is to enhance the students' knowledge and understanding of the most commonly used methods for collecting and analyzing qualitative data within marketing and management. Moreover, the ambition is to offer examples of how different types of data can be used for different kinds of analyses. More specifically, the course aims to offer the students the possibility to develop:

1. A broad methodological repertoire and the ability to assess the appropriateness of different methods
2. The ability to argue for and defend methodological choices
3. A reflexive and nuanced approach to knowledge claims

### **Course design**

The course is organized into two blocks.

The first block is based on a series of lectures by researchers with insights and practical experience in different methods and methodological positions. The purpose of this block is to concretize, problematize and exemplify the main themes addressed in the course literature. The students are expected to have read the literature before each lecture in order to enable discussion and reflections during the lectures. This block gives the students a broad overview of the different qualitative methods available which is a precondition for making an informed choice of method in a given project.

The second block of the course comprise of an assignment to be carried out in smaller groups of students. In this block the students formulate a research question and based on this, design and carry out an empirical study. This involves formulating a research question, selecting and arguing for research design, object of study, and empirical unit of analysis; selecting and arguing for the method of data collection; identifying and arguing for choice of respondents (or equivalent); analyzing the empirical material, drawing conclusions and discussing the study's limitations. During the assignment, seminars will be conducted where the students are trained in giving and receiving constructive feedback.

The purpose of the assignment is that the students become familiar with the research process; understand the types of issues and problems you are confronted with as a researcher; understand the process of making methodological choices and the implications of these choices; get experience in arguing for their choices in writing and oral debates.

## Assessment

Assessment and grading are based on individual and group work. An individual written exam of the literature represents 50% of the grade. The written assignment represents 50% of the grade.

*Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.*

## Grades

Marking scale: Fail, E, D, C, B, A.

**Grade** (Definition) Points or % out of maximum points. Characteristic.

**A** (Excellent) 85-100. A distinguished result that is excellent with regard to theoretical depth, practical relevance, analytical ability and independent thought.

**B** (Very good) 75-84. A very good result with regard to theoretical depth, practical relevance, analytical ability and independent thought.

**C** (Good) 65-74. The result is of a good standard with regard to theoretical depth, practical relevance, analytical ability and independent thought and lives up to expectations.

**D** (Satisfactory) 55-64. The result is of a satisfactory standard with regard to theoretical depth, practical relevance, analytical ability and independent thought.

**E** (Sufficient) 50-54. The result satisfies the minimum requirements with regard to theoretical depth, practical relevance, analytical ability and independent thought, but not more.

**F** (U) (Fail) 0-49. The result does not meet the minimum requirements with regard to theoretical depth, practical relevance, analytical ability and independent thought.

Some occasional examination elements of the course may have the grading scale pass (D) / fail U(F).

If a written exam is included in the examination: A student who is graded Fail after two examinations on the written exam has the opportunity to request an additional task. The grade of this additional task is U or E and should be made no later than the semester following the semester when the student was registered at the course.

*Plagiarism is considered to be a very serious academic offence. The University will take disciplinary actions against any kind of attempted malpractice in examinations and assessments. The penalty that may be imposed for this, and other improper practices*

*in examinations or assessments, includes suspension from the University for a specific period of time.*

## **Entry requirements**

Students admitted to a Master Programme where this course is either a compulsory or elective part, are qualified for the course. For other students, at least 60 UCP or ECTS-cr in Business Administration is required. These must include a course in basic Business Administration (e.g. FEKA90 Business Administration: Introductory course in Business Administration).

## **Further information**

In case of closure of the course: Within three semesters after the course closure there will be offered three additional occasions for examination of respective examination part of the course, for students with no successful result. Note that after this you can get a certificate only regarding completed examination parts.

## Subcourses in BUSR31, Business Administration: Qualitative Research Methods

Applies from V17

- 1601 Individual exam, 2,5 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, Pass
- 1602 Group assignment, 2,5 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, Pass