



COURSE OUTLINE

HNE420

Honours Research - Methods and Planning

School: School of Science, Technology and Engineering

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

BLENDED
LEARNING

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course is structured to develop the analytical, interpretative and communication skills you will need to plan and carry out your scientific research project. You will learn about and then commence work on conducting a literature review and critically evaluating evidence, formulating a research question and designing a study, collecting and managing data, evaluating and applying basic epidemiological and statistical methods, complying with the legislative framework for human and animal ethics in research, writing and presenting in a scientific format, and producing a research plan.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Independent Study/Research – Orientation workshop followed by work with supervisory team towards preliminary talk and research plan.	300hrs	Orientation week	Once Only

1.3. Course Topics

Topics covered in this course will depend on the research area of the student's honours project.

2. What level is this course?

400 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

24 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES		GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...		Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
①	Gather, interpret, synthesise, and critically evaluate information from a range of sources.	Creative and critical thinker
②	Select and apply practical, conceptual and/or theoretical techniques or tools in order to formulate and model problems.	Empowered
③	Integrate and apply knowledge and skills associated with research principles and methods to plan a substantial research project.	Empowered
④	Communicate knowledge, data, arguments and research findings clearly and coherently in oral and written format to peers and other scientific audiences through advanced English language, numeracy and technological skills.	Creative and critical thinker Empowered

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Must be enrolled in SC401

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

English; Maths A, B or C; and at least one of the sciences.

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

This course is different to undergraduate courses in that you will work closely with your supervisor to establish a research question and develop the knowledge to support the research.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Oral	Individual	0%	10 minutes	Week 4	Online Submission
All	2	Plan	Individual	100%	3500 words	Week 8	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Preliminary presentation

GOAL:	The purpose of the presentation is to develop skills and knowledge and provide critical, timely feedback to the Honours candidate at an early stage of the project and to provide experience in oral communication to scientific audiences.	
PRODUCT:	Oral	
FORMAT:	Knowledge gained in the Research methods and project planning can be applied to the preliminary oral presentation. Talks should be 10 minutes duration, with 5 minutes for questions. Presentations should normally be prepared using PowerPoint. Video clips are permitted if they are integral to the understanding of the material being presented, and compatible with the computer systems within the lecture theatre. The preliminary oral presentation will be assessed by two internal examiners who are appointed by the Honours coordinator.	
CRITERIA:	<p>No.</p> <p>1 Synthesis and evaluation of information</p> <p>2 Selection and proposed application of methods and techniques</p> <p>3 Communication of knowledge, data, methods, and proposed research approach coherently in oral format.</p>	Learning Outcome assessed
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication	

All - Assessment Task 2: Research plan

GOAL:	The purpose of the research plan is to develop skills and knowledge and provide critical, timely feedback to the Honours candidate at an early stage of the project and to provide experience in planning scientific research and writing a scientific research plan.	
PRODUCT:	Plan	
FORMAT:	Knowledge gained in the Research methods and project planning can be applied to the write-up of the Research Plan. Plans will be 3,500 words (□10%), and presented in font, formatting and referencing style that is standard for the student's discipline. The specific requirements for the Plan will be provided on Canvas. It is suggested that students meet with their supervisors in the weeks leading up to the commencement of the project to work on any ethics applications or applications to survey USC students that are required. The inclusion of an abbreviated literature review within the Research Plan will encourage candidates to commence background reading into their research area in the initial stages of their research project. Research Plans are to be submitted via Turnitin. This will permit checking of your work for plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and it is important at this stage of your career that you are coached to avoid. The Research Plan will be examined by two independent examiners at USC, or external.	
CRITERIA:	<p>No.</p> <p>1 The quality of critical evaluation and synthesis of scientific literature to identify knowledge and knowledge gaps within your research area, and to provide a rationale for your Honours research thesis/project;</p> <p>2 The selection and application of practical, conceptual and/or theoretical techniques or tools in order to formulate and model problems;</p> <p>3 The quality of integration of knowledge and skills associated with research principles and methods to plan the research project;</p> <p>4 The quality of communication of knowledge, data, methods, and proposed research approach coherently in a written format and the use of appropriate references and appropriate referencing.</p>	Learning Outcome assessed
GENERIC SKILLS:	Collaboration, Organisation	

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site— Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

Not applicable

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Risk assessments have been performed for all laboratory classes and a moderate level of health and safety risk exists. Moderate risks are those associated with laboratory work such as working with chemicals and hazardous substances. You will be required to undertake laboratory induction training and it is also your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

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- The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%
The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale
You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10.General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au