MBL and MBA research

Purpose:
The purpose of this module is to enable students to conduct an acceptable business research project under supervision and to produce an acceptable research report.

Consider a possible research issue or topic, read about it, talk about it to subject matter experts and then decide on a research or problem statement. Based on the problem statement, you have to formulate a research question, followed by research objectives. It will be to your advantage if you could design a preliminary conceptual framework, where you identify the relevant concepts to be studied. From there you design your appropriate research methodology and then you conduct your research. The process ends where you make conclusions and recommendations based on your research results, at least up to an interpretive level.

In your research report, you are expected to tell a story to a business audience, so plan why, how and when you are going to do it in as much detail as possible. Create a mind map for the total project, as well as per chapter, as it will assist you to get your mind focused on your planned research.

Your relationship with your supervisor will contribute to the outcome of your research project. The supervisor is your mentor and will be your first point of contact regarding academic matters. An agreement of the terms on which the two of you will work is important to keep you both committed and this “contract” will be available for both of you to sign. As a rule, supervisors work on a 2 weeks turn-around time for feedback to you.

Scope of the project
The scope of the both the MBL mini-dissertation and MBA integrated management research project is a “dissertation of limited scope”, and as a general guideline, a report is generally about 50 to 70 pages long. It is based on empirical research, but owing to time and funding constraints, the empirical component may also be relatively limited – for quantitative projects, 30 to 50 survey responses will generally be regarded as sufficient, and for qualitative projects five to ten in-depth interviews or two to three focus groups. However, you and your supervisor will agree on the details within these guidelines. You have one year to complete the research report and the final submission date is the end of November every year. This date is non-negotiable and no extensions are granted.

Process of supervisor allocation
Once you have registered for the module, you have to activate your myLife e-mail address and upload a preliminary title for your research. It may still change later in the year, but the area heads do the allocation of appropriate supervisors from the eds platform. If you do not upload a title on eds, the area heads will not be able to allocate a supervisor to you so it is a critical step in the process to connect you to a supervisor.

Research focus areas
The research focus areas will be made available at the end of year one during an information session. The SBL has key research focus areas to contribute to a growing body of knowledge within the different areas of specialisation and encourage students to choose topics in the identified focus areas to that purpose. The MBL qualification drives research with a Leadership focus while the MBA qualification drives research with a Business management perspective.

The areas of specialization are Strategy and Marketing, Ethics and Governance, Leadership and Organisational behavior, Management systems and Finance and economics. The specific
research opportunities within these areas are also described in more detail on the SBL website and are also available on the Module site, once you are registered.