

## COURSE OUTLINE

BSNS112 S2

2024

# Interpreting Business Data

## Paper Description and Aims

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This paper introduces different types of business decisions and the selection of appropriate quantitative or qualitative techniques to gather data. The characteristics of different types of data, the application of different tools for analysis, interpretation of results and ethical issues are also explored.

## Learning Outcomes

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Upon successful completion of this paper, you should be able to:

- Describe different types of business decisions and their associated characteristics.
- Understand the process of business decisions, including the articulation of relevant questions, data collection, data analysis and interpretation.
- Select an appropriate quantitative or qualitative technique to answer a given question, considering its strengths and weaknesses and the characteristics of the data.
- Be familiar with some of the tools used to perform quantitative and qualitative data analysis.
- Interpret critically the result of data analysis.

# Teaching Staff

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## Enquiries regarding paper administration and computer labs

Email: [bsns112@otago.ac.nz](mailto:bsns112@otago.ac.nz)

### Paper Coordinator/ Lecturer

Name: Dr Peter Gibbard

Office: Room 525, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Otago Business School

Email: [peter.gibbard@otago.ac.nz](mailto:peter.gibbard@otago.ac.nz)

Office Hours: 2-3pm Wednesday or by appointment (via email)

Economics Reception, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, will only be open between: **11.00am – 12.00pm** and **2.00 – 3.00pm** daily, unless otherwise advised.

### Lecturer

Name: Dr Pooneh Torabian

Office: Room 903, 9<sup>th</sup> floor, Otago Business School

Email: [pooneh.torabian@otago.ac.nz](mailto:pooneh.torabian@otago.ac.nz)

Office Hours: By appointment (via email)

### Lecturer

Name: Professor Peter Whigham

Office: Room 343, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Otago Business School

Email: [peter.whigham@otago.ac.nz](mailto:peter.whigham@otago.ac.nz)

Office Hours: To be announced

You should email [bsns112@otago.ac.nz](mailto:bsns112@otago.ac.nz) with any administrative enquiries about the paper, e.g. lab session changes, or requests for late submission of assignments.

## Course Delivery

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**Lectures:** Monday, Tuesday Wednesday, see eVision for stream and room allocation Lectures are recorded. See **Blackboard** for lecture notes and lecture recordings.

Lectures present the key conceptual material through discussion and interaction between teaching staff and students. Lectures are supported by readings.

**Computer Lab sessions** are interactive, collaborative sessions in which students attempt to cement concepts presented at lectures with their peers in a supportive environment. Refer to **eVision** for your weekly computer laboratory time. Computer Laboratories start in the second week of the semester, 22 July and run through weekly, ending 18 October. Lab sessions are held in the Otago Business School Computer labs, OBS118, OBS119. In the Labs students work on the techniques needed to solve tasks based on a business case scenario. It is our aim that all students will become proficient and self-sufficient at using SPSS and Excel as statistical tools.

Be aware that OBS119 requires students to bring their own device, which requires you to access the student desktop remotely. In OBS118, students can use desktop computers provided.

# Course Learning Resources

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## (a) Quantitative Statistics section (first eight weeks of lectures)

The textbook for the quantitative statistics section is:

***Business Statistics: Australia and New Zealand edition***, Selvanathan, Selvanathan, Keller 8<sup>th</sup> Ed.

Most of the key sections of the textbook are available via Blackboard on eReserve. The textbook and eBook are on reserve in the Central library to use freely. New copies of the eighth edition are available at the University Bookshop. There are also many second-hand copies of the third to eighth edition for sale.

## (b) Qualitative section (weeks 9-11), Non-linear and computational modelling (weeks 12-13)

All readings will be on Close Reserve at the Central Library, see Course Calendar below for details.

### Blackboard

Blackboard <https://blackboard.otago.ac.nz/> provides you with access to course materials, class notices, and resources. Blackboard is used to email the whole class, so it is important that you check your student email and *Blackboard* regularly.

## Assessment

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All material presented is examinable (except if stated otherwise) by assignments, a report and the final examination. All-important assessment information such as due dates and times, content, guidelines and so on will be discussed at lectures and, where appropriate, detailed on Blackboard. *Students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of this information, keeping track of their own progress, and catching up on any missed classes.*

A comprehensive **2-hour** multiple-choice examination will be held during the end of semester university examination period. In addition, there are five pieces of interim assessment: four assignments and a report. The due dates are:

### Due dates

Assessment	Due date
Assignment 1	5 pm Monday, 5 August
Assignment 2	5 pm Monday, 19 August
Assignment 3	5 pm Monday, 9 September
Assignment 4	5 pm Monday, 23 September
Qualitative Report	5 pm Monday, 7 October

The assignments will contribute 30% of your overall grade: the best three of your four assignments will each contribute 10%. There are three components of your overall grade: the grade for the assignments, the qualitative report and the final exam. The table below describes the breakdown of your overall grade.

### Breakdown of assessment

Assessment	Percent of overall grade
Assignments	30%
Qualitative Report	20%
Final Examination (2 hours)	50%

### Learning Outcomes

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Learning Outcome	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3	Assessment 4	Qualitative Report	Final Exam
To be able to describe different types of business decisions and their associated characteristics						x
To understand the process of business decisions, including the articulation of relevant questions, data collection, data analysis and interpretation	x	x	x	x		x
To be able to select an appropriate quantitative or qualitative technique to answer a given question, taking into account its strengths and weaknesses and the characteristics of the data	x	x	x	x		x
To be familiar with some of the tools used to perform quantitative and qualitative data analysis	x	x	x	x		x
To enable students to gain a thorough understanding of the techniques relating to qualitative research methods and analysis					x	x
To develop students' written communication skills through guidance of learning and collaborative exercises					x	
To encourage original thinking among students, especially in their approach to academic study					x	
To be able to interpret critically the result of data analysis	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Total 100%</b>	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	20%	50%

## Course Calendar

Sem. week	Week beginning	Topic	Reading	Lecturer
1	15 July	Probability	Textbook, Ch.6	Dr Peter Gibbard
2	22 July	Random variables and discrete probability distributions	Textbook, Ch.7	Dr Peter Gibbard
3	29 July	Continuous probability distributions	Textbook, Ch.8	Dr Peter Gibbard
4	5 August	Sample Statistics	Textbook, Ch.3 and Ch.5	Dr Peter Gibbard
5	12 August	Distribution of the sample mean	Textbook, Ch.9	Dr Peter Gibbard
6	19 August	Estimation	Textbook, Ch.10 and Ch.11	Dr Peter Gibbard
7	26 August	Hypothesis tests	Textbook, Ch.12 and Ch.13	Dr Peter Gibbard
Mid-semester break: 2-6 September				
8	9 September	Regression, Review	Textbook, Ch.17	Dr Peter Gibbard
9	16 September	Introduction to qualitative research, qualitative data, and paradigms. Sampling, generalisability, power, and ethics. Conducting interviews and focus groups.	Myers, M. D. (2009) <i>Qualitative Research in Business &amp; Management</i> . London: SAGE.	Dr Pooneh Torabian
10	23 September	Archival materials and methods. Observation methods. Qualitative data analysis – the manual style	Myers, M. D. (2009) <i>Qualitative Research in Business &amp; Management</i> . London: SAGE. Bryman, A. (2015). <i>Social research methods</i> . Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press	Dr Pooneh Torabian
11	30 September	Qualitative data analysis using computer programs (e.g. Nvivo). Archival research – examples. Emerging qualitative research methods – examples.	Ezzy, D. (2013). <i>Qualitative analysis</i> . New York NY: Routledge.	Dr Pooneh Torabian
12	7 October	Forms of data; Issues with data; Real-world data and models; Linear to non-linear modelling; Decision Trees	James, G., et al. (2013) <i>An Introduction to Statistical Learning</i> , Springer NY. Available online via library. Chapters 1-2, 8	Prof. Peter Whigham
13	14 October	Non-linear modelling: Artificial Neural networks; Clustering Data	<i>An Introduction to Statistical Learning</i> Chapter 10.3 (Clustering)	Prof. Peter Whigham

**Lectures end Friday 18 October**

**University Exam Period : 21 October – 9 November**

## Assessment Format

### Assignments

Assignments should be submitted electronically, in a pdf format, through the assignment links on Blackboard assignment page. Submit a single file containing your written answers and statistical output as required. Individual assignments are due Mondays by 5 pm.

**No Late Statistics Assignments.** If you are unable to complete an assessment on time due to illness or other serious circumstances please email the course email address [bsns112@otago.ac.nz](mailto:bsns112@otago.ac.nz).

**Qualitative report** (refer to supporting docs online for full requirements and instructions)

Working in pairs, you will conduct a small qualitative research project on a mutually agreed upon topic and write a report. The report should be conducted using the following steps:

- Identify your research question (ensure it is 'open ended', relevant to an organisational context, and can be answered by interviewing people).
- Conduct **two, 20 minute long semi-structured interviews**.
- Transcribe the interview data *verbatim* (word for word) into a word document.
- Each student should then *independently* analyse the data to answer your research question.
- Pairs will then identify key themes that arise from the data analysis and jointly write-up their findings in a single report.

Include the following sub-headings in the report: topic/aim; method; data collection and analysis; results and discussion; and conclusion. Each pair will submit one electronic version of their report, submitted through **Turnitin**. More information about this assessment will be provided online.

**Word limit: 2,500 words (excluding references).**

**Due date: Monday 7 October, 5pm NZ time.**

**Submission requirements:** Submit **one** electronic version per pair through **Turnitin**. **Turnitin** will check your report for academic integrity and plagiarism.

**Referencing Style and Style Guide:** APA referencing style: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>

See Style Guide University Library: [https://otago.libguides.com/ld.php?content\\_id=40971949](https://otago.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=40971949)

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means being honest in your studying and assessments. It is the basis for ethical decision-making and behaviour in an academic context. Academic integrity is informed by the values of honesty, trust, responsibility, fairness, respect, and courage. Students are expected to be aware of, and act in accordance with, the University's Academic Integrity Policy.

Academic Misconduct, such as plagiarism or cheating, is a breach of Academic Integrity and is taken very seriously by the University. Types of misconduct include plagiarism, copying, unauthorised collaboration, submitting work written by someone else (including from a file sharing website, text generation software, or purchased work) taking unauthorised material into a test or exam, impersonation, and assisting someone else's misconduct. A more extensive list of the types of academic misconduct and associated processes and penalties is available in the University's Student Academic Misconduct Procedures.

It is your responsibility to be aware of and use acceptable academic practices when completing your assessments. To access information on the university's academic integrity policy, please see:

[www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity](http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity),

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116838.html>

For information on Student Academic Misconduct Procedures, please see:

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116850.html>

### **Kaiāwhina Māori | Māori Student Support - Ben Sommerville**

Ben is the Kaiāwhina Māori (Māori student support) for Te Kura Pākihi | Otago Business School. He is able to answer any questions you may have about studying here at the University of Otago. He can provide information about scholarships, campus services, pastoral, and financial care. Ben is also here to support those students who are studying away from their whānau, hapū and iwi, to ensure they feel safe and supported. He has a passion for the development of Rangatahi and understands the struggles that can come with academic life.

Tel +64 27 513 6991

Email [ben.sommerville@otago.ac.nz](mailto:ben.sommerville@otago.ac.nz)

### **Pacific Island Support**

#### **Falaviena Faiva Malo**

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Falaviena works part-time in the Dean's Office at the Otago Business School, Division of Commerce. She is of Tongan descent and is one of the Pacific Student Support Facilitator's responsible for all **firstyear** Pacific students in the division.

Falaviena is a University of Otago, Humanities and Commerce graduate and is currently completing a Postgraduate Commerce degree in International Business.

#### **Deans Office, Otago Business School**

##### **Division of Commerce**

Email: [viena.faiva@otago.ac.nz](mailto:viena.faiva@otago.ac.nz)

Cell Phone: 021 279 0914

#### **Jekope Ramala Maiono** Bula Vinaka.

Maiono also works part time in the Dean's Office at the Otago Business School, Division of Commerce. He is of Fijian descent and is the other Pacific Student Support Facilitator responsible for all **secondyear** Pacific students in the division.

Maiono is a University of Otago Commerce graduate, also studying a PHD degree in the Division of Humanities.

#### **Deans Office, Otago Business School**

##### **Division of Commerce**

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## **Disclaimer**

While every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate, it is subject to change. Changes will be notified in class and via Blackboard. Students are encouraged to check Blackboard regularly. It is the student's responsibility to be informed.