



Research Methods for Criminal Justice

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| Module Code | RMCJ | NQF level: | 6 |
| Credit Value | 15 | Study duration: | 9 weeks |

This module aims to:

- Present a detailed overview of the research process
- Outline the steps necessary to conduct research in the criminal justice setting using a sound methodology
- Introduce students to effective approaches to data gathering and presentation, including questionnaire design and administration, fundamentals of interviewing and the importance of observation in face to face surveys
- Assist students in understanding the ethics and responsibilities required of the criminal justice researcher
- Equip students with the skills to conduct research in fulfilment of their final year projects (dissertations)

Learning outcomes

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Identify a range of different research strategies and methods used in the Criminal Justice setting
- Formulate and examine a research question in the Criminal Justice context
- Construct effective instruments for data collection
- Evaluate data identifying any flaws in the collection, process, or sample
- Undertake basic quantitative and qualitative analyses
- Write an effective: research proposal, literature review, and report
- Apply ethical principles and responsibilities to the research process

Learning and teaching methods

The Learning and Teaching Methods for the module follow the intended online delivery strategy for the programme as a whole. The module will be delivered through the provision of specified reading materials on the virtual learning platform, which shall be supported by specified discussion forums and lecturecasts, and Tutor support will be available to students via phone, email, and a fortnightly synchronous question and answer (Q&A) session.

Students will be provided with indicative guidance on, and encouraged to look at, relevant websites which are appropriate to the module, and to identify and share appropriate web-based resources as learning support references with their fellow students and as indicators of their individual learning contexts with their tutors. The lecturecasts will include referenced use of selected case studies which will be drawn from the reading materials/web based module learning resources and the practice-based and professional/educational contexts and experience of the Tutors.



Research Methods for Criminal Justice

Syllabus

- What is research and why do we do it?
 - Examine some of the ways in which criminal justice research is conducted;
 - Consider why research is important in criminal justice;
 - Look at some of the methods available to researchers in this context
- Ethics in Criminal Justice
 - Discuss why ethics is important in criminal justice research;
 - Identify the ethical limitations imposed upon research;
 - Examine some of the key ethical issues which are important to criminal justice research.
- Understanding the research process: literature review
 - Components of a research project
 - What is a literature review?
 - Why do we do it?
- Understanding the research process: understanding sampling and writing a sound methodology
 - Look at some of the main methods of sampling used in research
 - Consider the importance of our sample to the overall research project
 - Review the limitations of generalising results to other populations
- Introduction to Quantitative Data Analysis
 - Review some of the key ways in which quantitative data is generated;
 - Examine the way quantitative data is analysed and presented;
 - Consider the limitations of quantitative data.
- Conducting Quantitative Data Analysis
 - Descriptive statistics: What are they? Running descriptive statistics in SPSS/equivalent
 - Interpreting descriptive statistics and writing up descriptive statistics in APA format
 - Inferential Statistics: What are they? Running inferential statistics in SPSS/equivalent
 - Interpreting inferential statistics and writing up inferential statistics in APA format.
- Introduction to Qualitative Data Analysis
 - Review some of the main methods of qualitative research;
 - Explore the way qualitative research informs theory;
 - Consider the limitations of qualitative research.
 - Writing a results and discussion section
 - Examine the different ways in which research data can be presented effectively
 - Review some of the mistakes that people make in data presentation
 - Consider the wider implications of disseminating research

| Description of unit of assessment | Length/Duration | Submission Date | Weighting |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Discussion contributions | Fortnight | Unit 2 and Unit 3 | 10% |
| Mid-module assignment | 2000 words | Unit 6 | 40% |
| Journal entry | 500 words (each) | Unit 4 and Unit 8 | 10% |
| End of module project | 2000 words | Unit 9 | 40% |