



Module code	QRM	NQF level	5
Credit value	15	Study duration	9 weeks

# Qualitative Research Methods

## Module description

This module builds on the level 4 Introduction to Research Methods module to expand students' knowledge of how qualitative data can be collected and analysed using a variety (and combination) of approaches.

Unlike quantitative research methods, qualitative researchers generally begin with a less focused research question, collect large amounts of relatively "unfiltered" data from a small number of individuals, and describe their data using nonstatistical techniques. They are usually less concerned with drawing general conclusions about human behaviour than with understanding in detail the experience of their research participants.

Data collection and analysis during this unit will develop key competencies in qualitative research methods (the way in which data is collected) and analysis (the way that data is analysed).

## This module aims to:

- Develop students':
  - capacity to formulate and test qualitative research questions
  - experience of more complex qualitative research skills
  - experience with qualitative data collection and management, beyond thematic analysis

## Learning outcomes

On completion of this module students will be able to:

- define the characteristics of qualitative research methods and associated data collection methods
- recognise the strengths and weaknesses of different qualitative methods and identify when they are appropriate to use
- understand the ontological and epistemological position associated with conducting qualitative research
- generate their own research question, conduct the most appropriate qualitative analysis and write up their findings to the standards of the American Psychological Association
- define bias, and reflexivity in qualitative research and understand the importance of reflexivity and how our views and biases can impact on the interpretation of research findings
- demonstrate knowledge of ethical theory relevant to social science research
- plan, gain ethical approval and/or conduct research which demonstrates consideration for the protection of research participants and adheres to the principles of the British Psychological Society's Code of Human Research Ethics
- apply knowledge and understanding of bias to your own experience and explain how it can be controlled for

## Syllabus

- Research design
- Data collection
- Qualitative analysis
- Report writing
- Ethics in research

## Learning and teaching methods

The pedagogical approach for this module is informed through the principles of collaborative enquiry, constructionism and scientific apprenticeship.

Collaborative enquiry is supported through our internet-mediated learning platform that aims to develop a learning community and support dialogue and collaboration between students. This is encouraged through online peer discussion and debate to construct a unique learning experience that enhances students' subject understanding through social interactions and empowers them to explain their understandings, and receive feedback from tutors and peers.

Learning through scientific apprenticeship will take place through the integration of scientific knowledge, principles and experience into the practical application of both the qualitative case study approach and the scientific report.

Teaching will be delivered through the provision of specified reading materials that will be provided on the University of Essex Online learning platform, and will be supported by specified discussion forums, pre-recorded lecturecasts and biweekly online question and answer sessions (using synchronous communication software and application sharing facility).

Students will be provided with indicative guidance on, and encouraged to look at relevant websites which are appropriate to the learning outcomes, and to identify and share appropriate web-based resources (as learning support references) with their fellow students.

The pre-recorded lecturecasts and the online question and answer sessions will include referenced use of selected case studies which will be drawn from the reading materials and the practice-based and professional/educational contexts and experience of the tutors.

Self-managed learning will supplement lectures and students will be given direction on required and indicative reading.

Description of unit of assessment	Length/Duration	Submission date	Weighting
Collaborative Learning Question - Post a 500-word response to a tutor posed question. Respond to two of your peer's posts (300 words per response). Your answers must be evidence based and supported with psychological literature.	1,100 words	Continuous	30%
Essay	1,000 words	Mid module	20%
Qualitative Report	3,000 words	End of module	50%