7.1   Module Overview

Module Number		Module Title	Research Methods for Political and Social Sciences						
Stage of Principal Programme			2	Semester	2	Duration. *(Weeks F/T)*	12	ECTS	5
Mandatory / Elective (M/E)	E Core	Hours of Learner Effort / Week	2.3						

Analysis of required hours of learning effort		
Teaching and Learning Modalities	✓if relevant to this module	Approx. proportion of total (hours)
Contact Hours		
In person face-to-face	✓	28
Synchronous		
Indirect/Non-Contact Hours		
Asynchronous		
Work Based		
Other: • independent reading, engagement with VLE, research and preparation of assessments	✓	97
Total		125

Pre-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A
Co-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module	120

Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.		
Role e.g., Tutor, Mentor, Lecturer, Research Supervisor, etc.	Qualifications & experience required	Staff - Learner Ratio X:Y
Lecturer	A minimum level 9 qualification in Politics, Sociology, Social Sciences or closely cognate area	1:120
Tutor	A minimum level 9 qualification in Politics, Sociology, Social Sciences or closely cognate area	1:20

Assessment Techniques – percentage contribution					
Continuous Assessment	100%	Proctored Exam – in person		Practical Skills Based	
Project		Proctored Exam - online		Work Based	
Capstone (Y/N)?	N	If Yes, describe			

7.2   Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)

MIMLO On completion of this module a learner will be able to:	Related MIPLO #

1. Have a critical and informed understanding of quantitative and qualitative paradigms, and the link between theory and practice in political and social research.	**1, 2**
2. Understand the strengths, weaknesses and contextual suitability of different methods of inquiry, and have a knowledge of diverse qualitative research methods.	**2, 4**
3. Demonstrate practical skills and competencies in qualitative research methods in political and social research, including the ability to match a research question, theory, and method in a coherent way.	**4**
4. Demonstrate critical self-awareness when conducting research, articulate the ethical dimensions of research and develop strategies to manage ethical considerations.	**5, 6, 7**

7.3   Indicative Module Content, Organisation and Structure

A core aim of the module is to develop critically reflective and ethical researchers with a heightened sense of self-awareness in the research process and an ability to conceptualize more clearly a personal "world view" and its relationship to the scientific method. A key feature of the module is to build a community of inquiry among participants, with a focus on collaborative tasks and interactive dialogue and inquiry-based learning.

Learners are introduced to the theory and logic of research, the ethics that guide the research process, and to the range of research methods generally employed in the social sciences. Attention will be paid to research design, data collection, elementary data analysis, and communicating the findings of a qualitative research project effectively. The course includes discussion of specific methodological approaches. The emphasis is on providing practical knowledge of the research process and in preparing learners to conduct their own basic research projects. This module is praxis-led; learners will apply research methods in practice and 'do' bits of qualitative research as they go through the module.

The module is relevant to the overall programme learning outcomes and the specific knowledge, skills and competencies for Stage 2, providing practical and theoretical knowledge of the research process to prepare learners for conducting their research projects in Stage 3.

Class content is presented through a lecture/seminar format. Learners are responsible for discussion of the required readings and for completion of individual exercises assigned by the instructor. Emphasis is on participatory learning, and learners are required to actively participate in class discussions and take part in a number of research activities throughout the course.

There are 4 themes as structure for module content:
1. *The Philosophy of Political & Social Science Research*
2. *Doing Research – 'Doing 'Quantitative Research and Qualitative Research – ways of collecting and analysing data*
3. *Interdisciplinary Research & Mixed Methods*
4. *Reflective Practice & Ethical Research*

- *Philosophy of Political and Social Science Research:*
  Qualitative and quantitative paradigms, types of qualitative research, Positivist, Grounded Theory, Case Study, Critical, Marxist, Feminist, Constructivist, Action Research

- *Ethics in Social and Political Research:*
  Ethical considerations, Academic integrity, Data Protection, Ethics Applications, Plagiarism

- *Designing a Study:*
  Creative research design, Intelligent research design, quantitative and qualitative measurements, reliability, validity and measurability, data sampling

- *Research Methods:*

Methods of data collection, Case Studies, Comparative Politics, Ethnography, Textual Analysis, Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Interviews, Questionnaires, Interdisciplinary and Mixed Methods Approaches

- *Observing and Collecting Data:*
  Qualitative: Field Research, Ethnography, secondary data, Quantitative: surveys, polls, questionnaires, longitudinal studies

- *Analysing and Interpreting Data*
  Content Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Introduction to Coding
  Communication, dialogue and listening; strategies; narrative making and shaping; reframing; changing relationships; problem solving; philosophical assumptions

7.4	Work-based learning and practice-placement *(if applicable)*

N/A

7.5	Specific module resources required *(if applicable)*

IT Lab
Computer Software: SPSS Statistical Software, NVivo

7.6	Application of programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies to this module

The module teaching and learning strategy is based on the core objectives of objectives of enabling learners to develop knowledge of qualitative approaches to social science inquiry while simultaneously fostering skills and competencies in designing a piece of research.

The module is also focused on the development of learner capacity to engage in critical evaluation and analysis in a political context.

In keeping with the principles of UDL, material will be made available in a variety of modes on the VLE; text, video, podcast, with lecturer's slides posted the day before so that learners may download in advance, should they wish.

The module is designed to provide clear interaction between theory and practice. A key feature of the module is to build a community of inquiry among participants, with a focus on collaborative tasks and interactive dialogue. Inquiry-based learning is a form of active learning that starts by posing questions, problems or scenarios. The inquiry-based instruction is principally very closely related to the development and practice of thinking and problem-solving skills.

Online Quizzes
Learners will be given two online quizzes in qualitative research methods and quantitative research methods. Both quizzes will have five components and will test learner's knowledge of key concepts in political and social research (MIMLO 2 & 4).

Research Assignment
The Research Assignment is a cross modular assessment with the *Social Policy and the Environment module in Semester 1.* This assessment focuses on knowledge and skills of research methods and data collection and meets MIMLO 3. Through the practical application of data collection methods, this assessment serves as a cross-modular assessment with *Social Policy and the Environment* module in Semester 1. The Research Methods Assignment develops learner awareness of the practical application of quantitative and qualitative research methods in both the classroom and the community (MIMLOs 1, 3 & 4).

By undertaking this assessment, learners will connect theory of methodological approaches to their practical application. This is an essential skill for political and social research that is transferrable across a range of sectors.

7.7   Summative Assessment Strategy for this module

MIMLOs	Technique(s)	Weighting
1, 3, 4	Research Assignment	60%
2, 4	Online Quizzes (x2)	30%
	Attendance	10%

7.8   Sample Assessment Materials

Online Quizzes (x2) 30%
Learners will demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competencies through completing specific online quizzes as part of an end of topic assessment. These are inclusive of the following:

- Online Quiz on Quantitative Research Methods (5 parts)
- Online Quiz on Qualitative Research Methods (5 parts)

Research Assignment - Community Profile (2,500 words) (60%)
Learners will be asked to choose a geographic area to examine and assess the extent to which it is sustainable, economically, socially, and environmentally. The headings of the project include:
- Introduction (1-2 paragraphs)
- History of the area (1-2 paragraphs)
- Economic, Social, Environmental dimensions of the community.
- Select two social policy related sustainable development issues of concern in the community (e.g. Housing; Transport; Employment; Leisure and Recreation; Education).
- Data Collection Methods (What methods did you use to obtain data on your community? Secondary analysis of existing data: census data, research reports, observation, etc.)
- Presentation of Data (Clear presentation of data in table format)
- Suggestions and Recommendations to address the issues.
- Conclusions (What can you conclude about the sustainable development of this community?)

Marking of assessments will be in line with the Marking Assessment Guidelines as outlined in Section 3.3 of the College's Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards unless otherwise indicated.

7.9   Indicative reading lists and other information resources

Indicative Core Reading:

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. 5th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2017). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 5th edition. London: Sage.

Kari, L. (2017). Confidentiality, anonymity and power relations in elite interviewing: conducting qualitative policy research in a politicised domain, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,* 20(1), 93-103.

Patton, M. Q. (2015 or other editions). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. London: Sage.

Rich, R. C., Brians, C. L., Manheim, J. B., & Willnat, L. (2018). Empirical political analysis: Quantitative and qualitative research methods. 9th edition. New York: Routledge.

Silverman, D. (2013). *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about qualitative research,* 2nd Edition. London: Sage.

Websites:

Online resource: Social Research Methods: Learner Researcher's Toolkit available at https://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/orc/resources/sociology/brymansrm5e/learner/toolkit/index.htm

Jensen, E. and Laurie, C. (2023) *Doing Real Research: a practical guide to Social Research* UK Sage available at https://study.sagepub.com/jensenandlaurie/learner-resources/chapter-8/sage-journal-articles

Indicative Other Resources:

Clarke, V. & Braun, V. (2013) Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist,* 26(2), 120-123.

Grodal, S., Anteby, M., & Holm, A.L. (2020). Achieving Rigor in Qualitative Analysis: The Role of Active Categorization in Theory Building. *Academy of Management Review.*

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography*: *Principles in Practice*, 3rd Edition. London: Routledge. (Chapters 1 & 2).

Langley, A. & Ravasi, D. (2019). Visual artifacts as tools for analysis and theorizing. *The Production of Managerial Knowledge and Organizational Theory: New Approaches to Writing, Producing and Consuming Theory,* 59, pp.173-19.

Machi, L.A. (2008). *The Literature Review; Six steps to success*. US: Corwin Press.

Silverman, D. (2017). How was it for you? The Interview Society and the irresistible rise of the (poorly analyzed) interview. *Qualitative Research,* 17(2), 144-158.