

Research Methods for Dissertation

Module title										
Research Methods for Dissertation										
Module NFQ level (only if an NFQ level can be demonstrated)		Module number / reference		ECTS Value		Duration				
8				5		12 weeks				
Parent programme(s). Principal programme title, and embedded(s) if relevant				Stage of parent programme		Semester No.				
BA (Honours) in Psychology				2		2				
Teaching and Learning modes		Proportion (% of Total Directed Learning)								
Classroom / Face to Face		22.4%								
Workplace										
Online										
Other (Identify)		77.6% (directed and self-directed learning)								
Entry requirements (statement of knowledge, skill and competence)										
Successful completion of Stage 2 of the programme or equivalent is required for entry onto Stage 2.										
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module				40						
Average (over the duration of the module) of the contact hours per week				2.3						
Pre-requisite module title(s) (if any)										
Co-requisite module title(s) (if any)										
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)				No						
Module-specific physical resources and support required per centre (or instance of the module)										
Lecture Hall, Tutorial Hall, Library, IT resources										
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.										
Role e.g. Tutor, Mentor etc.		Qualifications & experience required:				# of Staff with this profile (WTEs)				
Lecturer/Tutor		Minimum level 9 qualification in Psychology with teaching and/or research competence in the area				100%				
Analysis of required learning effort										
			Hours of Learner effort							
Classroom and demonstrations		Mentoring and small-group tutoring		Other (specify)		Directed e-learning	Independent learning	Other (specify)	Work-based learning	Total effort
Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner	Hours	Minimum ratio teacher / learner					

24	1:10	4	1:10				97			125
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Allocation of Marks					
	Continuous Assessment	Supervised Project	Proctored Practical Exam.	Proctored Written Exam	Total
Percentage Contribution	100%				100%

<p>Rationale for Inclusion of the Module in the Programme and its Contribution to the Overall IPLOs</p>	<p><i>Research Methods for Dissertation</i> is a module which is focused on synthesising and refining the skills necessary to complete undergraduate dissertation work and engage in research methods to support learning and engagement with their dissertation. This module seeks to build upon previous modules devoted to research methods and statistical learning within the current program (i.e., <i>Introduction to Statistical Analysis in Psychology</i> and <i>Advanced Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology</i>) and further deepens and solidifies their understanding of statistics and research methods within psychology and the social sciences.</p> <p>As with the aforementioned modules, <i>Research Methods for Dissertation</i> is considered to be a core component of a psychology degree and is specifically designed to aid learners in the completion of their final year project and will also augment their understanding and engagement with other modules on the program.</p> <p>This module offers learners the opportunity to pursue a career in Psychology, Statistics and/or Research. This module also provides learners with the required credits towards attaining graduate membership of the Psychological Society of Ireland, or the British Psychological Society.</p>
<p>Module Aims and Objectives</p>	<p>The final of the dedicated core Research Method modules, this module aims to build upon and extend learners' previous knowledge and understanding of research methods and statistical analysis within psychology and the social sciences. This module also aims to support learners' engagement with their dissertation by providing them with the core skills to engage in research, literature synthesis and statistical analyses. The objectives are to refine and deepen learners understanding of research methods as they are applicable to undergraduate dissertation research and augment their knowledge of experimental research.</p>
<p>Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>On successful completion of this module, learners should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct and prepare a literature review/systematic review in a specified research area. (MIPLO 2, 3, 5) 2. Understand and utilise qualitative research methods, while considering the limitations and strengths of such methodologies. (MIPLO 3, 5, 8) 3. Conduct and interpret the appropriate statistical tests for the research question posed. (MIPLO 3, 4, 5)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Conduct and interpret factorial designs in an understandable and appropriate manner (MIPLO 3, 4, 5) 5. Engage in experimental research within the context of a laboratory setting and consider the appropriate methodologies to address the research question at hand (MIPLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7).
<p>Information Provided to Learners about the Module</p>	<p>College Prospectus specifies module name, stage and ECTS.</p> <p>College website and programme handbook to contain (in addition to above) short description of module content, module learning outcomes, prerequisite modules, and assessment mechanisms.</p> <p>Module Moodle page to contain (in addition to above) schedule of classes and topics, detailed assessment information with titles and submission dates, full bibliography and list of learning resources.</p>
<p>Module Content, Organisation and Structure</p>	<p>Conducting Literature Reviews and Systematic Reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a research question. • Identifying appropriate research – using databases. • Keywords and search terms. • Extracting Data. • Moving beyond description - evaluating the methodology of the research. • Synthesising and presenting the research. <p>Qualitative Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing Social Problems through qualitative research. • Distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research. • When might qualitative research be appropriate? <p>Qualitative Research: Focus Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The utility of focus groups. • Consider the ethics of focus groups. • Analysing focus group data. <p>Qualitative Research: Interviewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the appropriateness of interviewing as a form of narrative practice. • Ethics. • Strengths and limitations. <p>Qualitative Research: Discursive Psychology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining naturally occurring talk. • Conversation analysis – practices and methods. • Consider the applications to social media data. <p>Experimental Lab Work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting research – consent and information. • ANOVAs. • Regression analyses. • T-tests. • Synthesising our knowledge.

	<p>Factorial Designs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you do when you have multiple independent variables? • Effect Sizes. • Conducting and reporting.
<p>Module Teaching and Learning (including formative assessment) Strategy</p>	<p>This module will be delivered in a two-hour lecture format across twelve weeks and four one-hour tutorials delivered across eight weeks.</p> <p>The lectures will offer a pragmatic and practical approach to statistical analysis, qualitative and experimental research and will begin by outlining the rationale and theory behind the lecture content and will then further cement this understanding by engaging in workshops to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen learners understanding of SPSS/NVivo software and data entry while also introducing them to the statistical applications offered by the software. • Engage in research from the perspective of a participant and a researcher. • Brainstorm appropriate research questions for qualitative research- interviews and focus groups. • Analyse qualitative data provided. • Enter compiled data into SPSS and engage in appropriate statistical analyses. • Refine statistical and lab report writing and presentation. • Critique the methods introduced within the current session. <p>The rationale for this teaching methodology rests in the practical and applied dimension of the module and considers the importance of hands-on directed learning when engaging with software such as SPSS/NVivo and engaging in research methodologies such as qualitative research (i.e., focus groups and interviews). Furthermore, it considers the appropriate methods to introduce and solidify complex research components in an understandable and interactive way by scaffolding and supporting the learning of learners.</p> <p>Moodle will also be employed each week to upload relevant articles, PowerPoints of the lecture material, practice material, required reading and in some instances, videos of appropriate methodology within research or explanations of particular topics within the module.</p> <p>It will also be used to encourage learner engagement and to provide learners with dummy data sets to familiarise themselves with SPSS/NVivo and data entry.</p> <p>Furthermore, Moodle will be used to provide short screen-recording videos (where necessary and appropriate) to provide learners with examples of how to engage in statistical analysis for specific research designs within the current module.</p> <p>Moodle will be monitored and contributed to weekly by the lecturer with appropriate learning materials in order to ensure continued engagement and learning.</p>

Work-Based Learning and Practice-Placement	N/A
E-Learning	N/A
Specifications for Module Staffing Requirements	<p>Staff: Learner ratio is typical of the overall program approach with a maximum of 40 learners.</p> <p>Staffing Requirements: 1 lecturer with teaching and/or research competence in the relevant area.</p>
Module Summative Assessment Strategy	This module will be assessed by three separate Continuous Assessment pieces (60%, 30% and 10% respectively, totalling 100%).
Sample Assessment Materials	<p>(A) During this module, learners will be asked to conduct and prepare a brief systematic review on a topic of their choice, which must aim to synthesise and evaluate a minimum of 5 research articles. This assignment will ask the learner to complete a systematic review on their topic and include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Abstract (100 words). (ii) Brief introduction (300 words). (iii) Method/Data Extraction section (200 – 300 words). (iv) Results/Table of Findings (600 words). (v) Discussion and Conclusion (300 words). <p>This will have a word limit of 1600 words and should take a minimum of 10 hours of learner effort. The guidelines include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adhering to APA referencing and formatting (i.e., Times New Roman font size 12 with 1.5 line spacing). 2. Work must be proof read for spelling and grammatical errors. 3. Include a separate Cover Page and Reference Page. 4. Employing a discursive and critical approach to the topic. 5. Evaluate the methodological rigour of the studies included. 6. Provide sufficient information to allow the reader to replicate the systematic review in question (e.g., keywords, search engines employed). 7. Using a balanced, objective approach to the question outlined. 8. Do not refer to “I” in this work, instead write in the third party. 9. All work should include reference to appropriate peer-reviewed texts or resources when making a specific point or argument. 10. As this is an introduction to lab reports and writing within research, learners must aim to be succinct but demonstrate the appropriate breadth and depth of reading (e.g., 5 - 10 appropriate texts). <p>This work is worth 60% of the Continuous Assessment and is graded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure (Guidelines 1 – 3) is worth 20%. • Academic understanding and ability as per Guidelines 4 – 8 is worth 50%. • The remaining 30% is awarded for content comprehension and excellent flow to the work (as indicated by Guidelines 9 and 10). <p>This assessment will address MIMLO 4</p>

(B) This component of assessment will ask the learner to engage with a piece of qualitative research conducted within class and interpret the findings within a results section.

This will have a word limit of 800 words and should take a minimum of 5 hours of learner effort. The guidelines include:

1. Adhering to APA referencing and formatting (i.e., Times New Roman font size 12 with 1.5 line spacing).
2. Work must be proof read for spelling and grammatical errors.
3. Include a separate Cover Page and Reference Page.
4. Employing a discursive and critical approach to the topic.
5. Demonstrate an appropriate critical approach to qualitative analysis and interpretation of results.
6. Using a balanced, objective approach to the question outlined.
7. Do not refer to "I" in this work, instead write in the third party.
8. As this is a results section of a qualitative report, learners must aim to be succinct but demonstrate an appropriate level of understanding relating to qualitative analysis.

This work is worth 30% of the Continuous Assessment and is graded as follows:

- Structure (Guidelines 1 – 3) is worth 20%.
- Academic understanding and ability as per Guidelines 4 – 7 is worth 50%.
- The remaining 30% is awarded for content comprehension and excellent flow to the work (as indicated by Guidelines 8).

This assessment Addresses MIMLOS 2-5.

(C) Upon completion of the lectures, learners will be asked to present a brief research proposal, outlining their area of proposed research interest for their final year project. Learners will be required to:

- Outline the proposed research question.
- Provide a brief synthesis of the extant literature.
- Propose a suitable methodology for the exploration of the research question.

This report will be equivalent to 300 words and should take at least three hours of learner effort. The guidelines include:

1. Adhering to APA formatting within the presented work.
2. Work must be proof-read for spelling and grammatical errors.
3. Include a Title page for the presentation and a separate page of references.
4. Employing a discursive and critical approach to the topic.
5. Using a balanced, objective approach to the question outlined.
6. Do not refer to "I" in this work, instead write in the third party.
7. All work should include reference to appropriate peer-reviewed texts or resources when making a specific point or argument.
8. As this is a presentation, learners must ensure that their slides are not overly cluttered and are clearly legible, while still demonstrating an appropriate depth and breadth of reading.
9. Communicate clearly and effectively.

	<p>This work is worth 10% of the Continuous Assessment and is graded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure (Guidelines 1 – 3) is worth 20%. • Academic understanding and ability as per Guidelines 4 – 6 is worth 50%. • The remaining 30% is awarded for content comprehension and excellent flow to the work (as indicated by Guidelines 7 - 9).
<p>Reading Lists and Other Information Resources</p>	<p>Essential Reading: Field, A. (2016). <i>An adventure in statistics: The reality enigma</i>. London: Sage.</p> <p>Silverman, D. (2020). <i>Qualitative Research</i> (5th ed.). Sage: London</p> <p>Watt, R., and Collins, E. (2019). <i>Statistics for Psychology: A guide for beginners and everyone else</i>. London: Sage</p> <p>Other Reading: Articles as provided by the Lecturer on Moodle. Learners will also be provided with articles from relevant journals, such as:</p> <p><i>Journal of Mixed Methods Research</i> <i>Qualitative Research</i> <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> <i>Survey Research Methods</i> <i>Journal of Research Practice</i> <i>Research Synthesis Methods</i> <i>Statistical Methods in Medical Research</i></p> <p>Essential Viewing: Screen Recordings of how to conduct statistical analyses within specific contexts.</p>
<p>Module Physical Resource Requirements</p>	<p>Lecture Hall with PowerPoint, Computer or Laptop with SPSS/NVivo, DVD and internet access.</p>