

MODULE CODE:	M7X01445
TITLE:	Professional Research Skills
DATED:	18/05/2015
LEVEL:	7
CREDITS:	20
JACS CODE:	C831

AIM(S)

- To develop students' practical research skills by providing opportunity to gain hands on experience in preparing and applying research materials and working with a range of literature and data.
- To enhance students' wider professional skills through developing reflective, presentation and team-working skills.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the module students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate competencies in a broad range of practical research skills appropriate to the fields of applied social and health psychology.
2. Critically reflect on the ethical and professional issues associated with research processes.
3. Demonstrate ability to identify an ethically and scientifically rigorous approach to exploring an applied research question.
4. Present their work appropriately, within ethical and research frameworks, and with an understanding of requirements of critical thinking.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

This module is underpinned by practical skills-based work where students will work in a small group under the mentorship of a specific member of staff on dedicated research tasks in order to develop higher level research skills. Whilst lectures will be used to deliver an overview of the module and general research competencies such as systematic literature searching, the majority of the teaching will involve small group tutorials and independent practical-skills based work.

The specific subject area being explored will vary across tasks and groups but all students will have the opportunity to develop practical research skills in the following areas. It will be expected that students will be able to demonstrate specific abilities in at least five of the following research competencies, one of which must be systematic literature searching.

- Systematic literature searching: all students will be taught the principles of systematic literature searching and reporting, and will be expected to engage in their own systematic literature search in an area related to one of the topics of relevance to this module. This will include training in the use of appropriate referencing software (e.g., Endnote) to facilitate the organisation and retrieval of empirical sources.

- Questionnaire & scale development: students will have the opportunity to develop skills in scale development, piloting, factor analysis and evaluation of psychometric properties.
- Online data collection tools: students will be given the opportunity to create materials for online data collection tools such as survey gizmo/survey monkey and will gain an understanding of online ethics and data protection issues.
- Experimental task creation: students will have the opportunity to work with specific experimental tools e.g. Superlab, Inquisit to create materials suitable for use in applied research.
- Interviewing and focus group skills for applied research: this will offer students a hands-on approach to preparing research materials for qualitative data collection, planning effective qualitative data collection in different settings (including an awareness of gaining access and necessary approvals), and practical interviewing skills.
- Data protocols: students will be able to develop practical skills in the management of complex datasets, becoming familiar with the production of Data Analysis Protocols and structured processes for data inputting, data checking, data screening (including outlier identification), use of SPSS syntax files, and data transformations.
- Identifying and preparing applied research proposals: students can develop practical skills in searching for appropriate funding opportunities and in the steps required for preparing outlines for funding proposals including consideration of ethical requirements, participants/user involvement, and dissemination plans.
- Applied research ethics: this will provide students with practical experience in the preparation of recruitment materials for applied studies across different target populations (e.g., patient populations, children, those with low levels of literacy), and will involve the preparation of consent forms, information sheets, and debriefing/follow-up information.
- Manuscript preparation: students will be able to develop skills in the preparation of research data for submission to conferences or academic journals, developing skills in abstract preparation, data synthesis, and preparing research summaries for academic and lay audiences.

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Allocation of teaching to deliver the module is:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning	20	10%
Independent learning	180	90%
Placement learning		
TOTAL	200	100%

ASSESSMENT

Assessment component 1: 75% Portfolio of research competencies:

- Element 1: An evidence log and professional portfolio showing evidence of four research competencies (50%)
- Element 2: 1,500 word reflective written summary (25%)

Assessment component 2: 25% Individual Presentation to class (10 minutes):

Exemplar: Prepare and present an individual presentation on how the professional skills and empirical knowledge developed through the module could be applied to exploring a real-world issue of your choice.

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written Exam	
Coursework	75%
Presentation	25%
TOTAL	100%

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

Does the module contribute to ESD?	
	Yes
If yes please provide brief details (no more than 100 words):	
The focus of this module is to equip students with advanced employability skills and knowledge in the application of a broad range of psychological research skills alongside a strong awareness of associated ethical issues. The development of students' own awareness and self-reflection of these issues is achieved through promoting a critical understanding of the links between their self-identity and their role of researcher, with students developing critical reflective skills in the line with the QAA (2013) Education for Sustainable Development guidelines.	

READING LIST (EXEMPLI GRATIA)

The reading list for this module essentially matches many of those in the *Applied Research Ethics and Analysis* module given the focus of this module on the application of research knowledge/skills

Essential Reading

- Brace, N., Kemp, R., & Snelgar, R. (2012). *SPSS for Psychologists* (5th ed.). Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coolican, H. (2014). *Research methods and statistics in psychology*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2008). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. London: Sage.
- Smyth, T. R. (2004). *The Principles of Writing in Psychology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

