

BMHP5019_BIRM

Introduction to Independent Research

Week 3

Developing your proposal - aims, objectives, review questions and ethics

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Transforming Education, Transforming Lives

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During this session



INTRODUCE THE PCC APPROACH
TO DEFINING A REVIEW
QUESTION



EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF
RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
AND RATIONALE



EXPLORE ETHICS AND THEIR
IMPORTANCE TO RESEARCH

Why do we use research proposals?

Writing a proposal is a problem-solving activity (Schneider and Fuller, 2018) which involves working out the What? Why? How? When? Who? Of your research.

A research proposals allows your supervisor or tutor to ensure that you understand:

- what will be researched.
- why it is relevant to do this research.
- how you will carry out the research.
- when you will carry out the research
- who or what you will involve in your sample.

A proposal also needs to show you are ethical in your data collection and ethical use of data.



(Schneider and Fuller, 2018, p6)



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Component 1

- Research Proposal
- Worth 10% of module
- 400 words.
- Submit by **12th February 2025**
14:00 (2PM)

Your research question may become refined as your progress.

For secondary research, which libraries or data bases will you use? What search term will you use? What time period will you focus on? What kind of analyse?

Research Proposal – what to include

1

Introduction and your chosen research question and objectives

2

Rationale – Why is it relevant or important to research this topic?

3

Your proposed **method** (What? Who? How?)

4

Ethical considerations.

Component 1 Template

BMHP5019_BIRM – Introduction to Independent Research Skills

Component 1 Template.

400-word Scoping review proposal.



Component 1 Template DOCX

Student Name:

Student Number:

Choosing a research topic

The topic that you choose to research has a great influence on how well you succeed in carrying out the investigation and in writing up your work.

Genuine interest – this will motivate you to complete the task to the best possible standard.

Available resources – choosing a topic area that has existing studies and research to allow you to read widely and in more depth.

Relevance – choosing a topic area that has relevance to improve practice in health and social care, or understanding the impact of a condition/illness/policy/event on the lives of people and society, will allow you to make clearly conclusions and recommendations.



Deciding and refining your review question.

Ten Steps to Refine a Review Question for a Scoping Review:

- **Step 1 - Review Initial Topic Ideas:** Start with a broad question or topic and identify its relevance to health and social care.
- **Step 2 - Conduct Preliminary Searches:** Explore existing research to assess the scope of available literature and identify key themes or gaps.
- **Step 3 - Clarify the Purpose:** Determine whether the question aims to map evidence, explore concepts, or identify research gaps.
- **Step 4 - Narrow the Focus:** Refine the population, concept, or context to make the question more specific while retaining breadth suitable for a scoping review.



Deciding and refining your review question.

- **Step 5- Use a Framework:** Apply frameworks like PCC (Population, Concept, Context) or PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) to structure the question clearly.
- **Step 6 - Simplify Language:** Ensure the question is concise and free from jargon, making it understandable to a broader audience.
- **Step 7 - Consult Stakeholders:** Seek feedback from peers, lecturers, or supervisors to refine and validate your question.
- **Step 8 - Ensure Feasibility:** Check that the question is realistic given time constraints and access to resources.
- **Step 9 - Iterate as Needed:** Revise the question based on feedback and further searches until it aligns with the objectives.
- **Step 10 - Finalise the Question:** Confirm it is specific, focused, and appropriate for a scoping review's purpose.

- The **PCC approach** is a framework used to define and structure a research or review question, particularly for scoping reviews. It ensures the question is clear, focused, and aligned with the purpose of the review.

The PCC Approach

Population: The group or population of interest. This could refer to specific demographics, patients, professionals, or communities.

Concept: The main idea, intervention, phenomenon, or issue being explored. This is the core focus of the review.

Context: The setting or situation in which the concept applies. This could include geographic location, healthcare system, or societal factors.

Examples

How PCC Works:

- It helps narrow down a broad idea into a manageable and focused question.
- It aligns the scope of the review with its objectives, making it easier to identify relevant literature.
- It is particularly useful for scoping reviews, which often deal with broad topics.

Example 1: Exploring barriers to healthcare access.

- **Population:** Migrants and refugees in the UK.
- **Concept:** Barriers to accessing healthcare services.
- **Context:** UK healthcare system.
- **Question:** What are the barriers faced by migrants and refugees when accessing healthcare services in the UK?

Example 2: Examining mental health interventions.

- **Population:** Adolescents aged 13–18.
- **Concept:** School-based mental health interventions.
- **Context:** Secondary schools in the UK.
- **Question:** What school-based mental health interventions are available for adolescents in the UK?

Examples of refined your review questions.

1

Broad: What are the barriers to accessing healthcare?

Refined: What are the barriers faced by older adults in rural UK settings when accessing primary healthcare services?

2

Broad: How do social care interventions impact mental health?

Refined: What is the impact of community-based social care interventions on the mental health of adults with dementia in the UK?

3

Broad: What is the role of technology in health promotion?

Refined: How do mobile health apps support smoking cessation efforts among young adults in low-income communities?

Rationale

Once you have chosen a title, clarify your rationale (reasons) for choosing it.

Why look at the topic?

- Is this topic a local issue?
- Is this issue impacting a large number of people in UK?

Why now?

- Has there been a recent incident? Review? Investigation?
- Is there a developing issue that is relevant today and in the future?

Is there a gap in knowledge?

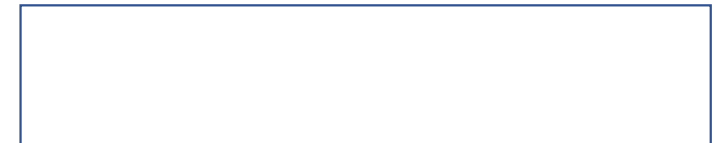
- Do you see a gap (deficit) in the understanding about this topic?
- Will your study help to close the gap?

Are these rationales valid?

“I want to research obesity of nurses as my topic. My question is - do taller nurses cost the NHS more because of the bigger size of uniform? I think this is relevant because we have more nurses that need bigger uniforms and the NHS needs to save money, this impacts the people of UK because we should be spending public money on treatments”



“I want to research the impact of domestic violence on unpaid carers working in the UK, my research question is – Are Asian women more likely to affected by domestic violence when acting as unpaid carers for family members? I think this is relevant as cultural barriers may prevent some Asian women seeking help and support with the care of others, this impacts the UK as Asian women represent an estimated 56% of unpaid carers and 26% of domestic homicides.”



Research Aims and Objectives

Understanding the distinction between **research aims, outcomes, and review questions** is crucial for conducting and interpreting research effectively, particularly in fields like health and social care where precision and clarity can significantly impact practice and policy.

Research Aims

Definition

The **research aim** articulates the overarching purpose of a study. It is a broad statement of what the research seeks to achieve. Think of it as the "big picture" or the ultimate goal that guides the entire research process.

Characteristics of Research Aims

- **Broad and General:** They are not highly specific but capture the essence of the research.
- **Action-Oriented:** Often includes verbs like “explore,” “understand,” “investigate,” or “evaluate.”
- **Defines Scope:** Sets the boundaries for what the study will address.

Research Aims

Examples

1. Health Example: “To explore the impact of social isolation on the mental health of older adults in the UK.”

2. Social Care Example: “To evaluate the effectiveness of community-based interventions for reducing caregiver stress.”

How to Identify Research Aims

- Look for a statement in the introduction or abstract of a research paper that outlines the main purpose of the study.
- Research **aims** typically align with the central problem or gap identified in the literature.

Common Pitfalls

- Confusing **aims** with **outcomes** or **questions**. While related, aims are broader and precede the outcomes and questions.

Research Objective

Research objectives are **clear goals that explain what you want to achieve with your study**. They guide your research by outlining the specific questions or topics you will explore. In simple terms, they describe:

What you want to learn (e.g., "Understand why people use health apps").

Who or what you're focusing on (e.g., "Young adults aged 18-25").

How you'll achieve it (e.g., "By identifying themes and gaps in the current literature").

Research Outcomes

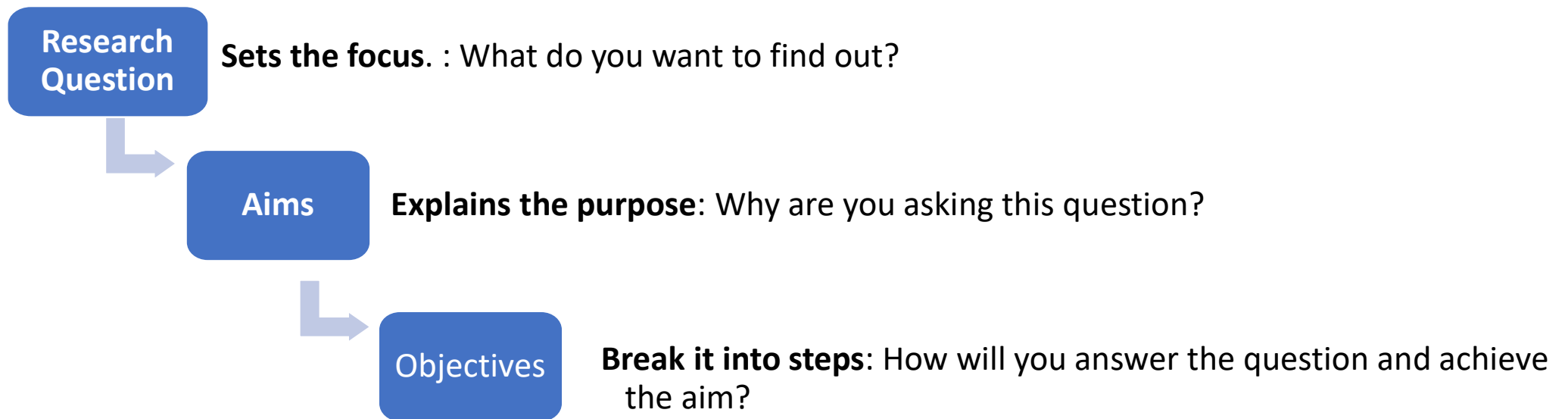
- These are the **specific tasks** that break your aim into smaller, manageable goals. They show exactly how you will answer your question and achieve your aim.

Examples

- To identify formal support services like counselling or respite care.
- To explore informal support networks such as family or community groups.
- To assess gaps in support provision for carers.

Cohesive research

A scoping review question, aims, and objectives all work together to form a clear and organised plan for your research. Here's how they fit:



Research ideas

This is a list of some of the research ideas shared by you in week 1.

Do cut backs on community funding for community centres/community facilities in certain areas contribute to the increase in crime levels?

Does mindfulness meditation reduce stress for social workers?

How does exercise have an impact on your overall well-being?

How does breastfeeding benefit the child and their future growth?

Does poor sleep on impact the treatment of chronic illness?

Are lack of school placements for special needs children impacting their learning, progression and mental health?

Does mental health affect your weight?

Reflect

Look back at your mind maps of ideas from last week. Could any of your ideas be developed into research areas or research questions?



Developing a rationale

Complete the rationale activity (in week 3) to help you think through your current ideas and plans for your rationale.



Your Rationale Ideas

Break

- After the break, we will explore what 'ethics' are and why we should consider these are researchers.

What are ethics?



“Ethics helps us decide what we should do and why”, Barrett et al. (2016, p7)

In research, as in life, just because we can do something, it does not mean that we should. In the past researchers have conducted experiments and studies that caused harm to their participants, lacked consent and at times put the researchers at risk. Ethical guidelines have been developed to prevent unethical research studies from going ahead.

We will introduce you to key ethical research principles and make it clear which you need to include in your work.

Conducting ethical research

Saunders et al (2019) outlines a series of key ethical principles that any researcher needs to be aware of, the first six principles apply to working with the participants.

Integrity, fairness and open-mindedness.

Respect for others

Privacy of those taking part

Avoidance of harm

**Voluntary nature of participation
and right to withdraw**

**Informed consent of those
taking part**

As UWTSD students, it is important that you include a **'I consent to take part voluntarily'** tick box if you collect any primary data in future research.

Conducting ethical research

Three of the ten principles outlined by Saunders et al (2019) apply to how data is stored and analysed.

**Ensuring
confidentiality of
data**

**Accurate
analysis and
reporting of data**

**Uphold data
protection laws**

At UWTSD you must ensure that you: do not share data outside of the organisation and that you do not falsify your results.

The final principle is:

Ensure the safety of the researcher

Ethics of Component 1 & 2

As you are conducting secondary research and developing a scoping review of existing literature in component 2, you **will not** be collecting primary data.

However, you must remain ethical as a researcher, the UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice details the in section 17 the seriousness of fairly and accurately representing the literature that you review.

Research misconduct can take many forms, including:

- **Fabrication:** making up results or other outputs (eg, artefacts) and presenting them as if they were real
- **Falsification:** manipulating research processes or changing or omitting data without good cause
- **Plagiarism:** using other people's material without giving proper credit

As a researcher – you must avoid doing any of the above.

For the remainder of the session...

- Develop and refine your component 1 proposal.
 - Focus on:
 - Deciding a topic of research
 - Make notes on your rationale for researching this topic
 - Make notes regarding your ethical practice as a researcher.

Next week – Revision of key concepts and workshop on completion of Component 1



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