



# SPED832

## Research Methods in Special Education

S2 External 2017

*Department of Educational Studies*

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#### **Disclaimer**

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff Unit convenor Mark Carter <a href="mailto:mark.carter.mq@gmail.com">mark.carter.mq@gmail.com</a> Contact via Contact via Dialogue on the iLearn site X5A113 By appointment
Credit points 4
Prerequisites Admission to MSpecEd
Corequisites SPED822
Co-badged status
Unit description This unit examines the key principles and practices of research as it relates to special education. Students will gain an understanding of a range of research methodologies relevant to the education of students with special needs, an ability to write academically at an advanced level and critically evaluate literature and research. This unit will also prepare students to carry out an independent research task.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Apply academic conventions in writing

Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.

Describe and apply the principles underlying the use of small-n research designs in special education

Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and

inferential statistics

## General Assessment Information

### General Assessment Information

#### Grading procedures

Results for assessments will be reported as Grades (i.e., HD, D, Cr, P, F) consistent with University grade descriptors. Where the grades are used to report results for assessment components with significant weighting, convenors may also optionally add the suffixes of + (plus) or - (minus) to the generic descriptor in order to provide additional detail. For example:

Pass +

Pass

Pass -

In this case, a 'Pass +' would indicate performance in the upper end of the pass range, a grade of 'Pass' would indicate a mid range pass and a 'Pass -' would indicate performance at the lower end of the pass range. This principle is applied to all grade descriptors ( i.e., HD, D, CR, P, F )

Raw scores for all assessments will be moderated according to the University guidelines so that work judged to be of a given standard is awarded a moderated score within the following distribution: High Distinction 85 - 100; Distinction 75 - 84; Credit 65 - 74; Pass 50 - 64; Fail 0 - 49.

For example, if it is judged that the HD standard for a particular assessment is met by work scoring 90 - 100, raw scores will be adjusted so that students received moderated scores between 85 and 100. This moderation takes into account both the stated performance standards for the assessment component and the degree of difficulty of the specific task.

#### Assessment weighting

All assessment tasks must be attempted for students to be eligible for an overall passing grade in the unit.

Students are required to gain an overall pass on the unit, but do not have to pass all assessment components. If you perform poorly on one component, you may compensate for this with a better performance in the other component.

Consistent with the University Assessment Policy, moderated scores will be used in the calculation of final grades. The final unit score will be the weighted average of the moderated scores for the unit.

#### Resubmission

Students are required to gain an overall pass on the unit, but do not have to pass all assessment components. If you perform poorly on one component, you may compensate for this with an improved performance in the other component. **Resubmission is not permitted.**

#### Appeals against grades for individual assessment components

If any student has concern about the marking of an assessment, they must:

- Consult the member of staff who marked the work.
- If there is no satisfactory resolution, an appeal should be made in writing to the unit convenor within **one week** of the marked assessment being returned or of results being made available. The student should explicitly state the basis of the appeal.

The Unit convenor will review the marking and may, at their discretion, ask for a re-marking by a second marker. If re-marking by a second marker is judged appropriate, the final mark will normally be the average of the two marks awarded for the assessment task. Students should note that the revised mark for the task may be higher, the same, or lower than the original mark.

Please note that it is policy to double mark all failing assessments. The decision of the unit convenor is final.

## **Appeals against final unit grades**

See the Policies and Procedures section for details on appeals against Unit Grades.

## **Academic honesty and plagiarism**

You must read the Academic Honesty Policy that is linked in the Policies and Procedures section of this guide.

Important points:

- Close paraphrasing of another persons' writing is considered to be plagiarism. You must express ideas using your own words.
- Claim of ignorance of the University policy on plagiarism is NOT a defence. If you do not understand the Academic Honesty policy, please seek advice from a member of the academic staff.

## **Information Regarding the Assignment**

### **What is required for the assignment?**

In general, good presentation, correct grammar, spelling and appropriate word choice will be expected. Express your ideas concisely and clearly, and observe any stated word limits.

Strict APA referencing procedures should be used.

### **How do I submit my assignment?**

You will submit your assignment through the iLearn website via the link in the Assessment section.

### **How do I know my assignment submission was successful?**

Staff will NOT respond to requests to confirm that assignments have been correctly submitted. You will receive an email receipt on successful submission of your assignment in your student email account. Make sure that this has been received and retain this receipt. No claims will be

considered regarding missing assignments without this receipt. You can also re-download your assignment to double-check it was submitted (see above).

## **Assignment extensions and late penalties**

Applications for extensions must be made via AskMQ at <https://ask.mq.edu.au> as a "Disruption to Studies" request before the submission date. Students who experience a disruption to their studies through ill-health or misadventure are able to apply for this request. Extensions can only be granted if they meet the Disruption to Studies policy and are submitted via [ask.mq.edu.au](https://ask.mq.edu.au). This will ensure consistency in the consideration of such requests is maintained.

In general, there should be no need for extensions except through illness or misadventure that would be categorised as unavoidable disruption according to the University definition of same, and currently available at: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration/disruption-to-studies>

**Late submissions without extension will receive a penalty of 5% reduction of the total possible mark for each day late (including weekends and public holidays).** You are reminded that submitting even just 1 day late could be the difference between passing and failing a unit. Late penalties are applied by unit convenors or their delegates after tasks are assessed.

No assessable work will be accepted after the return/release of marked work on the same topic. If a student is still permitted to submit on the basis of unavoidable disruption, an alternative topic may be set.

Students should keep an electronic file of all assessments. Claims regarding "lost" assessments cannot be made if the file cannot be produced. It is also advisable to keep an electronic file of all drafts and the final submission on a USB untouched/unopened after submission. This can be used to demonstrate easily that the assessment has not been amended after the submission date.

## **What if my hard drive crashed, my pet hippopotamus ate my computer, etc?**

Computer problems will not be accepted as reasons for extensions. You are responsible for making sure your work is adequately backed up. Make sure your work is regularly backed up on a USB drive or to a cloud-based backup and don't leave your submission to the last minute. Always keep your hippopotamus and computer in separate rooms.

## **When is the deadline for submission?**

The deadline is 11:59 pm on the due date. Note that this means you must submit **BEFORE** 11:59 pm. Note that it takes time to upload your assignment to Turnitin. This is normally quite quick but will depend on the speed of your internet connection at the time. The submission time is the time that assignment is recorded as received by Turnitin as we can not verify the time you started uploading. You need to allow time for the upload. **Do not leave submission of your assignment to the last hours (or minutes).**

## **What if my assignment is only 11 seconds late?**

Late is late. Any submission after the deadline will be considered late. **Do not leave submission**

**of your assignment to the last hours (or minutes).**

## **What if I accidentally submit a blank assignment, the wrong document, etc?**

We can only mark what you submit. Make sure you re-download your assignment from the location that it was submitted and verify the correct document has been submitted. No consideration will be offered if you submit the incorrect document. You may submit your assignment as many times as you wish before the due date and only the last submitted version will be marked.

When preparing your assignments, it is essential that:

- Students regularly save a copy of all assignments before submission.
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, no assessment will be accepted after the date that the assessment has been returned to other students.

### **Final Submissions**

- Students are responsible for checking that their submission has been successful and has been submitted by the due date and time.
- Late submissions due to last minute technical difficulties will incur a lateness penalty.

## **What if I exceed the word limits?**

Some components of the assignment will have specific word limits. Components of answers beyond the stated word limit will not be marked. That is, answers will only be marked up to the stated word limit.

## **How will I get feedback for my assignment?**

Individual feedback will be provided electronically where you submitted your assignment. Assignment grades will be available in the Grades section of the website.

## **Assignment Rubric**

The assignment rubric will be available from the web site.

## **Information Regarding the Final Examination**

### **Final Examination Rubric**

In general, markers will be looking for the following qualities in your responses in the examination:

- Depth and breadth of knowledge of key concepts and principles related to research in special education
- Integration of concepts and principles related to designing and interpreting research in special education.

- Evidence of generalisation of the concepts and principles addressed in the unit to new examples.
- Synthesis of relevant content to address practical problems in research design and interpretation.
- Quality and originality of critical analysis.
- Ability to effectively apply conceptual understanding to novel examples.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Assignment</u>	40%	No	15/9 before 11:59pm
<u>Final Examination</u>	60%	No	Examination Period

### Assignment

Due: **15/9 before 11:59pm**

Weighting: **40%**

Assignment (2,000-2,500 words). The assignment questions will focus on conceptual understanding and practical application of unit content and will typically include scenario-based components. Components of the assignment may include a literature search, annotated bibliography, development and/or analysis of research designs, analysis of a provided data set, evaluation of research studies for threats to internal or external validity, etc.

The assignment will be available from the unit website in week 3 of the semester.

See the General Assessment Information section for information on submission procedures, extensions, etc.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply academic conventions in writing
- Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.
- Describe and apply the principles underlying the use of small-n research designs in special education
- Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics

### Final Examination

Due: **Examination Period**

Weighting: **60%**

A three-hour examination will be held during the University examination period. It will be comprised typically of questions that require short answer and will include questions addressing conceptual understanding and practical application of unit content. All unit content is examinable. A sample examination paper will be provided at the end of the unit.

**Please note that exams are scheduled Monday to Saturday.** University rules specify that students must ensure that they are available for the full duration of the final examination period. Distance students will be required to attend a nominated external examination centre.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.
- Describe and apply the principles underlying the use of small-n research designs in special education
- Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics

## Delivery and Resources

### General organisation of the unit

The unit is organised in external mode only, and in a flexible delivery format.

Delivery is designed such that students may seek as much or as little assistance as required in completing the unit. In flexible delivery units, it is critical that students are organised and disciplined. It is suggested that you allocate a total of 8-12 hours per week to study for this unit. If you get significantly behind in your topic coverage, it may be impossible to catch up. Please start your study as soon as possible.

### Unit delivery: Teaching and learning activities

- **Study guides** provide an overview of topics and guide learning.
- **Readings** are designed to prepare students for the seminars as well as broaden their understanding of topics.
- **Online presentations** provide information and highlight key concepts.
- **Forums** provide students with the opportunity to ask question and discuss issues relevant to the unit. Contributions to the online discussion forum are not compulsory but can be a beneficial way of exchanging ideas and discussing unit content with other students. Although unit convenors typically check the Discussion Forums daily (on weekdays), they will not respond to all posts, as discussion between students may be more appropriate. **Forums should be checked every 48 hours for important announcements.**
- **Dialog** allows students to communicate privately with the unit staff. **Dialog should be**



**checked every 48 hours for important information.**

- **Zoom Meetings** allow students to meet online with unit staff to seek clarification or discuss relevant issues.
- **Assessments** allow students to refine and demonstrate achievement of unit learning outcomes.

## Technologies used and required

The unit uses an Ilearn web site. You may access the site from:

<https://ilearn.mq.edu.au>

Zoom Meetings will be used for consultation. You can sign up to use the service for free (<https://www.zoom.us>) and download clients for computers and mobile devices here:

[https://www.zoom.us/download#client\\_4meeting](https://www.zoom.us/download#client_4meeting)

Details regarding how to join each meeting will be posted on the iLearn site.

## Unit Schedule

The following table gives an overview of topics covered in the unit and the recommended completion dates.

Topic	Recommended Completion Date	Content
1	6/8	Introduction to research in special education
2	13/8	Accessing high quality information
3	20/8	Small n design
4	27/8	Principles of research
5	3/9	Group designs
6	10/9	Correlational designs
7	8/10	Descriptive statistics
8	15/10	Effect size and meta-analysis
9	22/10	Inferential statistics
10	29/10	Assessing research quality

## Zoom Meetings

You may speak with the unit convenor by joining Zoom Meetings at the following times:

- 1/8/17 at 4.30
- 8/8/17 at 4.30
- 15/8/17 at 4.30
- 22/8/17 at 4.30
- 29/8/17 at 4.30
- 5/9/17 at 4.30
- 12/9/17 at 4.30
- 3/10/17 at 4.30
- 10/10/17 at 4.30
- 17/10/17 at 4.30
- 24/10/17 at 4.30
- 31/10/17 at 4.30 (Sample Examination Review)

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

Assessment Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy\\_2016.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html)

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint\\_management/procedure.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html)

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student\\_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](#).

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.
- Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics

## **Assessment tasks**

- Assignment
- Final Examination

## **PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills**

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Apply academic conventions in writing
- Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.
- Describe and apply the principles underlying the use of small-n research designs in special education
- Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics

## **Assessment tasks**

- Assignment
- Final Examination

## **PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking**

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based

research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.

- Describe and apply the principles underlying the use of small-n research designs in special education
- Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics

### **Assessment tasks**

- Assignment
- Final Examination

## **PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability**

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.
- Describe and apply the principles underlying the use of small-n research designs in special education
- Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics

### **Assessment tasks**

- Assignment
- Final Examination

## **PG - Effective Communication**

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- Apply academic conventions in writing
- Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based

research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.

- Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics

## **Assessment task**

- Assignment

## **PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens**

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Apply academic conventions in writing
- Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.
- Describe and apply the principles underlying the use of small-n research designs in special education
- Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics

## **Assessment tasks**

- Assignment
- Final Examination

## **Changes from Previous Offering**

### **Changes made Since the last offering of the unit**

- The assessment tasks have been changed

## **Response to student feedback**

Student feedback to our units is generally very positive, and we retain practices that students appreciate. We have made some changes to units as a result of feedback:

- Discussion forum posts are now optional
- Assessment quizzes have been removed

## Required Unit Materials and Readings

### Texts

The required texts for this unit are:

Stanovich, K. (2012). *How to think straight about psychology* (10th Ed). Boston MA: Pearson Education.

Clegg, F. (1982). *Simple statistics: A course book for the social sciences*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

The textbooks may be obtained from the Co-Op Bookshop.

Other Required Reading:

Compulsory readings may be downloaded from Multisearch section of the Library web site at: <http://www.library.mq.edu.au> or from sites as advised in the study guides.

Required readings should be completed prior to viewing the relevant presentation, iLecture or seminar and in conjunction with the study guide.

### Unit Web Page Access

An iLearn website has been established to support this unit. The website may be accessed at: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au>

### Where do I start?

To get you started in this unit, tick off each action as you complete it.

ACTION	COMPLETED
Carefully read this unit guide	
Carefully read this unit guide a second time	
Organise purchase of the textbook	
Go to the unit website (from Friday before the start of semester) and check Dialogue and discussion Forums for messages.	
If you have problems accessing the site contact IT Help urgently.	
Go to the START HERE section of the website, read and follow the instructions.	
Go to the Topic 1 section of the website and follow the instructions.	

## **Withdrawing from this Unit**

If you are considering withdrawing from this unit, please seek academic advice by writing to <https://ask.mq.edu.au> before doing so as this unit may be a co-requisite or prerequisite for units in the following semesters and may impact on your progression through the degree.