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Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.
**General Information**

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
Tobia Fattore
tobia.fattore@mq.edu.au
Contact via tobia.fattore@mq.edu.au
W6A Room 837
By email

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit will introduce you to the key techniques used by qualitative researchers; explain when and why they are used and give you the chance to try them out in practice. It is organised in four modules: getting started; observing; interviewing techniques; and analysis and writing. The research skills you develop in this unit have many possible applications including, but not limited to: in the bureaucracy, working for a public inquiry; testing public opinion for political parties; marketing a new product; campaigning in a social movement; understanding the impact of a new industry on your local community. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see [www.open.edu.au](http://www.open.edu.au).

**Important Academic Dates**

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at [https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/](https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/)

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
2. Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
3. Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
4. Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
5. Develop an ability to apply the techniques of ‘grounded theory’ in qualitative data analysis and to to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
6. Develop a range of more ‘generic skills’ including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>End of Week 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>End of Week 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Week 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Proposal

Due: End of Week 5
Weighting: 25%

Students will be required to undertake a research project involving qualitative methods for this unit. This research will form the basis of the major assignment for the unit - the individual research report. As part of this process students are required to submit a research proposal for their intended research. The proposal will outline the research question and summarise the intended research methods that will be used to address the question. Proposals will be assessed on whether the project is suitable for a qualitative approach, is feasible and uses the strengths of qualitative methods.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Develop a range of more ‘generic skills’ including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

Research Report

Due: End of Week 13
Weighting: 45%
Students will submit a qualitative research report based on fieldwork they have undertaken throughout the semester. As well as presenting the research question, study rationale, research methodology and analysis of findings, the report will also provide a critical evaluation of the research experience.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of ‘grounded theory’ in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
- Develop a range of more ‘generic skills’ including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

**Participation**

**Due:** Ongoing  
**Weighting:** 15%

From week to week students will be required to engage in practical tasks to develop their skills as qualitative researchers. Students will be assessed on demonstration of their participation in these activities through ongoing contributions to weekly discussion forums.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of ‘grounded theory’ in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
Develop a range of more ‘generic skills’ including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

Online Exam

Due: Week 14
Weighting: 15%

This test, available in Week 14, assesses your knowledge of the concepts covered throughout the semester, focussing on the lecture material. Each question will be of equal value.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
• Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
• Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
• Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.

Delivery and Resources

Each week written lecture slides and notes will be provided. This will be accompanied by a practical activity relating to the topic for that week.

There are no required texts for this course. The readings for each week can be accessed from the Macquarie University Units Reading function.

However the following texts are recommended, that you may find useful for this course and as a resource for social research more generally.

• Alan Morris (2015) *A Practical Introduction to In-depth Interviewing* Sage Publications

Unit Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction to Qualitative Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Is Qualitative Research a Science?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Policies and Procedures

**Late Submission**

Unless otherwise stated, late submission of written work will result in a deduction of **10% of the mark awarded** for each week or part of a week beyond the due date, or date to which an extension has been granted.

**Extension Request**


The University recognises that students may experience disruptions that adversely affect their academic performance in assessment activities.

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**Unit guide**  
**SOCX831 Qualitative Methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Designing Qualitative Research</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Research Ethics and Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Different Approaches to Qualitative Observation as a Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>The Interview Technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>The Interview in Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Content Analysis, Visual Techniques and Task-oriented methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Introduction to Qualitative Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Writing and Wrapping Up</td>
</tr>
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[http://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/80645/unit_guide/print](http://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/80645/unit_guide/print)
The disruption to studies policy ([http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html)) applies only to serious and unavoidable disruptions that arise after a study period has commenced.

**Serious and unavoidable disruption**

The University classifies a disruption as **serious and unavoidable** if it:

- could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against by the student; and
- was beyond the student's control; and
- caused substantial disruption to the student's capacity for effective study and/or completion of required work; and
- occurred during an event critical study period and was at least three (3) consecutive days duration, and/or
- prevented completion of a final examination.

If you feel that you've been impacted by a serious and unavoidable disruption to study situation, submit an application as follows:

1. Visit [Ask MQ](https://ask.mq.edu.au) and use your OneID to log in via 'Current student domestic and international'
2. Under 'Forms' select 'disruptions' and fill in your relevant details.
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'submit form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

**Review**

Once your submission is assessed, recommendations are sent to your unit convenor to ensure an appropriate solution for affected assessment(s) is organised.

**OUA Specific Policies and Procedures**

**OUA Special Circumstances Process**

Special Circumstances refers to late withdrawal from a unit and your request to have your circumstances taken into account for a possible refund of fees and removal of a "fail" result.

*Applications for Special Circumstances are to be submitted to Open Universities Australia directly:*
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:


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](http://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/](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
Unit guide SOCX831 Qualitative Methods

Student Enquiry Service
For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

Equity 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.

IT Help
For help with University computer systems and technology, visit 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 - 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

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of ‘grounded theory’ in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.

Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Research Report
- Participation
- Online Exam
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**

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of ‘grounded theory’ in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.

**Assessment tasks**

- Research Proposal
- Research Report
- Participation

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**

- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
• Develop a range of more ‘generic skills’ including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

Assessment tasks
• Research Proposal
• Research Report
• Participation

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
• Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
• Develop an ability to apply the techniques of ‘grounded theory’ in qualitative data analysis and to to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
• Develop a range of more ‘generic skills’ including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

Assessment tasks
• Research Proposal
• Research Report
• Participation
• Online Exam

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

• Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
• Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
• Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
• Develop an ability to apply the techniques of ‘grounded theory’ in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
• Develop a range of more ‘generic skills’ including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

Assessment tasks

• Research Proposal
• Research Report
• Participation

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

• Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
• Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
• Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
• Develop a range of more ‘generic skills’ including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

Assessment task

• Research Report