



SPED8320

Research Methods in Special Education

Session 2, Special circumstance 2020

Macquarie School of Education

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Disclaimer

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Notice

As part of [Phase 3 of our return to campus plan](#), most units will now run tutorials, seminars and other small group learning activities on campus for the second half-year, while keeping an online version available for those students unable to return or those who choose to continue their studies online.

To check the availability of face-to-face and online activities for your unit, please go to [timetable viewer](#). To check detailed information on unit assessments visit your unit's iLearn space or consult your unit convenor.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Kathleen Tait

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Mark Carter

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MSpecEd

Corequisites

SPED822 or SPED8220

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:

ULO1: Apply academic conventions in writing.

ULO2: Describe, apply and critique principles of research design in solving classroom-based research problems that might arise in educating students with special needs.

ULO3: Describe and apply the principles underlying the use of small-n research designs in special education.

ULO4: Critically review and evaluate research literature, including the use of descriptive and inferential statistics.

General Assessment Information

General Information

Grading procedures for individual assessments

Students will be awarded grades ranging from HD to F according to guidelines set out in the 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.

Final unit grades

In order to ensure clear distinctions between grades, final marks of 49, 64, 74 and 84 will not be used. The following generic grade descriptors provide university-wide standards for awarding final grades.

Grade	Descriptor
HD (High Distinction)	Provides consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding in relation to the learning outcomes. There is substantial originality and insight in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem solving approaches; critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; creativity in application as appropriate to the discipline.
D (Distinction)	Provides evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles and theories, distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills and concepts in relation to learning outcomes. There is demonstration of frequent originality in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; and the use of means of communication appropriate to the discipline and the audience.
Cr (Credit)	Provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. There is demonstration of substantial understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study and the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; convincing argumentation with appropriate coherent justification; communication of ideas fluently and clearly in terms of the conventions of the discipline.

P (Pass)	Provides sufficient evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes. There is demonstration of understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the field of study; routine argumentation with acceptable justification; communication of information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the discipline. The learning attainment is considered satisfactory or adequate or competent or capable in relation to the specified outcomes
F (Fail)	Does not provide evidence of attainment of learning outcomes. There is missing or partial or superficial or faulty understanding and application of the fundamental concepts in the field of study; missing, undeveloped, inappropriate or confusing argumentation; incomplete, confusing or lacking communication of ideas in ways that give little attention to the conventions of the discipline.

Note: *If you fail a unit with a professional experience component the fail grade will be on your transcript irrespective*

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.

In order to meet the unit outcomes and successfully pass this unit, students must make a genuine attempt at all assessment tasks. Where any submitted assessment task is considered to be unsatisfactory in this regard, the highest possible final grade that can be awarded for the unit will be 45.

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](#).

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.**

Requesting a re-assessment of an assignment

If you have **evidence** that your task has been incorrectly assessed against the grade descriptors you can request a re-mark. To request a re-mark you need to contact the unit convenor within **7 days** of the date of return of the assignment and provide **a detailed assessment of your script against the task criteria**. Evidence from your assignment must be provided to support your judgements.

Note: Failed assessments cannot be re-marked as they are all double-marked as a part of the moderation process.

Please note: The outcome of a re-mark may be a **higher/lower or unchanged grade**. Grades are *standards referenced* and effort is NOT a criterion.

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.

Extensions and late penalties

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

Applications for extensions must be made via AskMQ according to the Special Consideration policy. Extensions can only be granted if they meet the Special Considerations policy and are submitted via <https://ask.mq.edu.au/>. This will ensure consistency in the consideration of such requests is maintained.

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests. Note that the 7 day allowance for assignments to be submitted after the due date is a period of grace, not a new deadline. The 7 day period of grace applies only to the original due date. No period of grace applies when an extension has been granted. When an extension has been granted, the work must be submitted by the revised due date or a mark of zero will be awarded.

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.

Please note that if you submit a late assignment or submit after the due date, you may only submit once.

Detailed information on Assessments

Assignment

When will the assignment be available?

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

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).

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

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. No extensions will be given for any technical issues. Allow enough time for your submissions. Always keep your hippopotamus and computer in separate rooms.

When is the deadline for submission?

The deadline is 11:55 pm on the due date. Note that this means you must submit **BEFORE** 11:55 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.

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.

How will I get feedback for my assignment?

Individual feedback will be provided electronically where you submitted your assignment.

Assignment rubric

The assignment rubric and performance criteria will be available on the iLearn site in the Assessment section.

Online Examination

THIS UNIT INCLUDES A FINAL ONLINE EXAMINATION

A three-hour online 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. The examination will be open book.

The examination will be released at a specified time on the iLearn site. The paper will be available for download 5 minutes before the start time. You will download it to your computer. It will be available in Microsoft Word format and you will type answers directly in the spaces provided. Please make sure that you **SAVE YOUR WORK AT REGULAR INTERVALS**. Please also make sure that you have a quiet and comfortable area to work, free of distraction or disruption.

You will submit your completed examination paper via a Turnitin link on the iLearn site.

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. Students must complete the exam at the nominated time or submit a disruption to study request with documentation of the nature of the disruption (e.g., sickness, family emergency).

A sample examination paper will be provided at the end of the unit.

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
Assignment	40%	No	Friday 11/9 before 11:55pm
Online examination	60%	No	Examination Period

Assignment

Assessment Type ¹: Problem set

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **Friday 11/9 before 11:55pm**

Weighting: **40%**

The assignment will involve responses typically to between 2 and 6 questions. The 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. (2,000-2,500 words)

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.

Online examination

Assessment Type ¹: Examination

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **Examination Period**

Weighting: **60%**

The online examination will serve as a summative assessment for the unit and will typically consist of around 10-15 short answer questions that will be largely scenario based. Total length will vary but will typically be between 1,200 and 1,500 words.

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.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

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. 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

Unit Schedule

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

Topic	Recommended Completion Date	Content
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1	2/8	Introduction to research in special education
2	9/8	Accessing high quality information
3	16/8	Principles of research
4	23/8	Small n design
5	30/8	Group designs
6	6/9	Correlational designs
7	4/10	Descriptive statistics
8	11/10	Effect size and meta-analysis
9	18/10	Inferential statistics
10	25/10	Assessing research quality

Zoom Meetings

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

- 28/7 at 6 pm
- 4/8 at 6 pm
- 11/8 at 6 pm
- 18/8 at 6 pm
- 25/8 at 6 pm
- 1/9 at 6 pm
- 8/9 at 6 pm
- 29/9 at 6 pm
- 6/10 at 6 pm
- 13/10 at 6 pm
- 20/10 at 6 pm
- 27/10 at 6 pm
- 3/11 at 6 pm (sample examination review - recorded)

Please use this URL to join a Zoom Meeting:

<https://macquarie.zoom.us/j/502232536>

If no students are in attendance in the first 10 minutes, the meeting will be cancelled.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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/.

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.

Required Unit Materials and Readings

The required texts for this unit are:

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

Note that the 10th edition of the text is being used, not the 11th edition. Currently, the 11th edition is not available in Australia. The 10th edition is available as a Kindle book from Amazon US.

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

This textbook may be obtained from the Booktopia or Amazon.

Other Required Reading

Compulsory readings may be downloaded from the Leganto link on the unit web site

Required readings should be completed prior to viewing the relevant presentation in conjunction with the study guide.

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.