



SOCI8035

Qualitative Methods for Policy

Session 2, Fully online/virtual 2021

Macquarie School of Social Sciences

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Session 2 Learning and Teaching Update

The decision has been made to conduct study online for the remainder of Session 2 for all units WITHOUT mandatory on-campus learning activities. Exams for Session 2 will also be online where possible to do so.

This is due to the extension of the lockdown orders and to provide certainty around arrangements for the remainder of Session 2. We hope to return to campus beyond Session 2 as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Some classes/teaching activities cannot be moved online and must be taught on campus. You should already know if you are in one of these classes/teaching activities and your unit convenor will provide you with more information via iLearn. If you want to confirm, see the list of [units with mandatory on-campus classes/teaching activities](#).

Visit the [MQ COVID-19 information page](#) for more detail.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Tobia Fattore

tobia.fattore@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

Room C330 Building C, 25 Wallys Walk

By appointment

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MPSP or MPASR or GradCertPASR or GradDipPASR or MPLAN.

Corequisites

Co-badged status

SOCX8035

Unit description

Social research is critical for evidence based policy making. This unit canvasses the use of qualitative research to inform public and social policy. Students will develop skills in conducting qualitative research and how it contributes to policy processes. This includes designing and conducting qualitative research and working with existing qualitative data to develop policy. The course will be structured around four modules. The first examines qualitative research designs for policy. The second introduces students to qualitative research methods and analysis, including qualitative analysis of policy documents. The third applies this knowledge to policy processes, including finding and using existing qualitative data sets; qualitative research as consultation; and the uses and misuses of citizen perspectives in policy processes. The unit concludes by considering how qualitative and quantitative data can be combined as policy evidence. Throughout, the unit will include expert speakers from the non-profit, government and academic sectors to provide insider perspectives on the use of qualitative data for policy making and to discuss the politics of research utilization. By undertaking this course, students will develop advanced skills in undertaking qualitative research and be able to apply these skills in a range of policy settings.

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: Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures, what makes them distinctive and how they can be used to inform policy development.

ULO2: Understand and practically apply qualitative strategies of inquiry, research methods and data analysis techniques.

ULO3: Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.

ULO4: Obtain first-hand experience in using qualitative research techniques to examine policy issues and problems.

ULO5: Develop a critical appreciation of the politics of research utilization in different policy contexts.

ULO6: Obtain skills in critically evaluating the robustness of different forms of data.

ULO7: Be able to combine qualitative and quantitative data as sources of evidence for policy.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Policy Research Report	40%	No	14/11/21 (End Week 14)
Policy Research Presentation	20%	No	Week 13
Participation	10%	No	Ongoing
Research Design/Consultation Exercise	30%	No	05/09/21 (End Week 6)

Policy Research Report

Assessment Type ¹: Qualitative analysis task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **14/11/21 (End Week 14)**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will analyse a pre-existing corpus of qualitative data to write a report on a policy topic, in the form of a discussion paper/policy briefing. In addition, students will be required to identify and integrate relevant quantitative data to provide context information for the report. The report will require students to undertake qualitative data analysis and develop recommendations based on this analysis.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and practically apply qualitative strategies of inquiry, research methods and data analysis techniques.
- Obtain first-hand experience in using qualitative research techniques to examine policy issues and problems.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the politics of research utilization in different policy contexts.
- Obtain skills in critically evaluating the robustness of different forms of data.
- Be able to combine qualitative and quantitative data as sources of evidence for policy.

Policy Research Presentation

Assessment Type ¹: Presentation

Indicative Time on Task ²: 10 hours

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **20%**

An important skill in social research is the ability to present research in an engaging manner. This assessment task provides an opportunity to develop these presentation skills for social research. Students will give a 10-15 minute presentation (online students will do a virtual presentation) on their policy research, focusing on the themes identified from the analysis and recommendations. These presentations will be undertaken as virtual presentations during weeks 12 and 13.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the politics of research utilization in different policy contexts.
- Obtain skills in critically evaluating the robustness of different forms of data.

Participation

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 10 hours

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Throughout the semester students will undertake tasks to develop their qualitative research

skills. These will be undertaken outside class and discussed during the weekly online seminars. These include exercises relating to research design, ethics, practicing qualitative methods and data analysis. For External and OUA students, discussion of these activities will be the topics for the weekly discussion forums.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures, what makes them distinctive and how they can be used to inform policy development.
- Understand and practically apply qualitative strategies of inquiry, research methods and data analysis techniques.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first-hand experience in using qualitative research techniques to examine policy issues and problems.
- Obtain skills in critically evaluating the robustness of different forms of data.

Research Design/Consultation Exercise

Assessment Type ¹: Design Task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **05/09/21 (End Week 6)**

Weighting: **30%**

Students will be required to develop a consultation strategy utilising qualitative research methods. The consultation strategy will outline the policy area or topic upon which consultation will occur; provide an overview of the consultation participants (the sample); outline the overall consultation strategy (research design); describe how information will be obtained from research participants (fieldwork and methods); and describe how the data obtained will be used to provide evidence to inform the policy topic (data analysis).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures, what makes them distinctive and how they can be used to inform policy development.
- Understand and practically apply qualitative strategies of inquiry, research methods and data analysis techniques.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the politics of research utilization in different policy contexts.

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

The teaching program consists of the following:

- The main way in which the course will be delivered is via a weekly lecture and an applied activity relating to the topic for that week. Each week a lecture will be pre-recorded and uploaded onto the iLearn page for the unit. The lectures provide students with the knowledge base essential for undertaking qualitative research for policy. Students are required to listen to the lecture to successfully complete the applied exercises.
- From Week 1-12, the applied exercises will be set-up as guided activities organized through the weekly Discussion Forums. These assist students to develop their qualitative research skills and include exercises relating to research design, ethics, the practice of various qualitative methods, data analysis and interpretation and writing for policy. As this is a skills-based unit, attendance and active participation in the discussion forums is a minimum expectation.
- Students will be required to read a series of set texts on a weekly basis that relate to the topic for that week. Weekly readings are available via the Leganto link on the SOCX8035/SOCI8035 iLearn site.
- The course is structured around several modules. The first examines qualitative research design for policy-making. The second introduces students to qualitative strategies of inquiry, research methods and qualitative analysis strategies including analysing policy documents using qualitative analysis techniques. The third applies these foundations of qualitative research to policy processes, including finding and using existing qualitative data sets; qualitative research as consultation; and the uses and misuses of citizen perspectives in policy processes.
- The final weeks of the course will be devoted to student presentations. The major assignment for the unit involves a research report based on analysis of transcripts and/or submissions to an existing policy inquiry. As the presentation of research is a key policy skill, students will also be required to present some of their analysis and

recommendation. For students undertaking the course online, this will be submitted electronically.

- To successfully complete the assessment tasks, additional reading and research will be required to be undertaken by students.

Unit Schedule

Week	Topic	Seminar Activity
One	Introduction to Qualitative Research	Introductions Thinking like a qualitative researcher
Two	The use of qualitative research and evidence in policy processes	Assessing what is quality in qualitative research
Three	Qualitative Research Design	Developing a qualitative research design
Four	Consultations as Qualitative Research Strategy	Designing a consultation strategy Consultation assignment
Five	Research Ethics	Managing ethical dilemmas
Six	Observation	Undertaking an observation Locating qualitative data
Consultation Exercise Due – September 5		
Seven	Qualitative Interviewing	Developing an interview protocol Undertaking an in-depth interview
Eight	Focus Groups	Conducting and assessing focus groups
Nine	Action Research	Designing a campaign
Ten	Introduction to Qualitative Analysis	Open coding Identifying categories
Eleven	Writing Qualitative Research	Developing Themes Writing qualitative research
Twelve	Research Utilisation and Dissemination	Communicating research findings

Thirteen (and Fourteen)	Policy Research Presentations
Policy Research Report Due- November 14	

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). 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](#)

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

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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.