MQBS7020
Qualitative Research Approaches in Business and Economics
Session 1, Online-scheduled-weekday 2023
Macquarie Business School Faculty level units

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convener
Dr Dale Tweedie
dale.tweedie@mq.edu.au

Credit points
10

Prerequisites
Admission to MRes

Co-badged status
With MQBS8020

Unit description
This unit provides students with an introduction to theoretical and empirical research approaches informed by qualitative methods of inquiry within the business and economics discipline. It seeks to develop students' understanding of the contexts in which qualitative research can be undertaken, and the ability to analyse, conduct, and evaluate qualitative forms of research.

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: Explain the role of research philosophy in selecting suitable research methods for a particular study
ULO2: Consider the relative advantages and disadvantages of a diverse range of qualitative research methods used in management research in developing a research design
ULO3: Address any ethics issues that may arise as part of a research design that involves qualitative methods
ULO4: Conduct qualitative research using a basic understanding of different coding
Strategies, and a range of typical qualitative methods

**ULO5**: Develop a basic research proposal based qualitative methods that links the suitability of the proposed method to the nature of the research question, as well as the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposed method

### General Assessment Information

#### Late submissions of written assessments

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a grade of '0' will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical concern.

For any late submissions of time-sensitive tasks, such as scheduled tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, and/or scheduled practical assessments/labs, students need to submit an application for Special Consideration.

### Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critique your preferred method</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative research design</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reviews</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Week 12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Critique your preferred method

**Assessment Type**: Case study/analysis  
**Indicative Time on Task**: 31 hours  
**Due**: Week 7  
**Weighting**: 20%

Select three recent (within the last 5 years) empirical research papers from three different top academic journals that have used a particular research method that you are interested in exploring more deeply, and write a 1,500 word critique of the three papers through critically comparing them on your assessment of the following: 1) Suitability and justification of the chosen method in relation to the research question 2) Technical adequacy of the method application in terms of data collection and analysis

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Explain the role of research philosophy in selecting suitable research methods for a particular study
• Consider the relative advantages and disadvantages of a diverse range of qualitative research methods used in management research in developing a research design
• Develop a basic research proposal based qualitative methods that links the suitability of the proposed method to the nature of the research question, as well as the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposed method

Qualitative research design
Assessment Type 1: Qualitative analysis task
Indicative Time on Task 2: 40 hours
Due: Week 10
Weighting: 40%

Prepare a 2,500 word research proposal that is based on a qualitative research design. The report should contain: 1) Your research problem and research question(s) 2) A justification of your choice of qualitative method(s) in relation to your research question(s) based in a literature review of relevant methodological literature 3) The relation of your choice of qualitative method(s) to your onto-epistemic research philosophy 4) An explanation of how you will conduct your analysis 5) A significant example of actual data collection and analysis, including a summary of your main findings 6) A discussion of limitations and next steps

On successful completion you will be able to:
• Explain the role of research philosophy in selecting suitable research methods for a particular study
• Consider the relative advantages and disadvantages of a diverse range of qualitative research methods used in management research in developing a research design
• Conduct qualitative research using a basic understanding of different coding strategies, and a range of typical qualitative methods
• Develop a basic research proposal based qualitative methods that links the suitability of the proposed method to the nature of the research question, as well as the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposed method

Weekly reviews
Assessment Type 1: Participatory task
Indicative Time on Task 2: 40 hours
Due: Week 12

https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/158494/unit_guide/print
Weighting: 40%

For each of the sessions from weeks 2-12, write a 500 word review that: 1) Summarises what you believe to be the most important learnings from the seminar and readings in each week, and 2) Critically discuss how the materials covered could relate to your own research project e.g. how might you use some of the points discussed to improve, critique, and/or justify your research project?

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain the role of research philosophy in selecting suitable research methods for a particular study
- Consider the relative advantages and disadvantages of a diverse range of qualitative research methods used in management research in developing a research design
- Address any ethics issues that may arise as part of a research design that involves qualitative methods
- Conduct qualitative research using a basic understanding of different coding strategies, and a range of typical qualitative methods
- Develop a basic research proposal based qualitative methods that links the suitability of the proposed method to the nature of the research question, as well as the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposed method

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**

Please see iLearn for details.

**Unit Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offers/158494/unit_guide/print
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Subtopic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 Feb</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction to the unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 Feb</td>
<td>Philosophy of social science</td>
<td>Epistemology and qualitative research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 March</td>
<td>Designing qualitative research</td>
<td>Research design, sampling, and ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 March</td>
<td>Methods: Interviews and Focus Groups</td>
<td>Interview paradigms, approaches (e.g. semi-structured) and techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 March</td>
<td>Methods: Case studies</td>
<td>Selection, motivation, generalising from cases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 March</td>
<td>Methods: Ethnography</td>
<td>Ethnography and participant observation, autoethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 April</td>
<td>Methods: Action Research</td>
<td>Qualitative questionnaires and document research, action research, arts-based methods</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>RECESS (2 weeks)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>24 Apr</td>
<td>Methods: Content analysis.</td>
<td>Analysing documents and images, including e-research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 May</td>
<td>Data analysis: Interview coding methods</td>
<td>Including types of coding (e.g. axial) and coding hierarchies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 May</td>
<td>Data analysis tools</td>
<td>NVIVO, e-coding strategies and techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 May</td>
<td>Writing qualitative research</td>
<td>Using quotes, developing a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May</td>
<td>Contemporary issues and debates</td>
<td>Current debates on designing, theorising and using qualitative research in business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 May</td>
<td>Summary and your research</td>
<td>Wrap up and moving your own project forward.</td>
</tr>
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**Policies and Procedures**

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](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
- Assessment Procedure
- Complaints Resolution 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). 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) 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

**Academic Integrity**

At Macquarie, we believe academic integrity – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free online writing and maths support, academic skills development and wellbeing consultations.

**Student Support**

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

**The Writing Centre**

The Writing Centre provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- Workshops
- Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader
- Access StudyWISE
• Upload an assignment to Studiosity
• Complete the 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
Macquarie University offers a range of Student Support Services including:

• IT Support
• Accessibility and disability support with study
• Mental health support
• Safety support to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
• Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues
• Student Advocacy provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries
Got a question? Ask us via AskMQ, or contact Service Connect.

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.