



Unit title:	Research skills
Unit number:	7
Level:	4
Credit value:	15
Guided learning hours:	60
Unit reference number:	D/601/1276

UNIT AIM AND PURPOSE

This unit will enable learners to understand what is involved in the preparation of a research study. It will help learners develop skills to identify research questions, and design and run a research study, including how to select, review and reference sources.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

A pass grade is achieved by meeting **all** the requirements in the assessment criteria.

Learning Outcome (LO)	Pass
The Learner will:	The Learner can:
LO1 Understand different research methodologies	1.1 assess different research methodologies 1.2 justify the use of a research methodology to be used for the research proposal 1.3 discuss the importance of both qualitative and quantitative data in research 1.4 explain the problems that can arise when undertaking research
LO2 Know how to conduct a literature review	2.1 justify the use of research sources 2.2 evaluate the importance of using primary information sources 2.3 describe a recognised system for referencing
LO3 Be able to present a research proposal	3.1 present a research proposal to a defined audience utilising appropriate survey techniques 3.2 discuss the role of ethics in research
LO4 Be able to contribute to a research seminar	4.1 prepare an extract from the research proposal appropriate to a seminar environment 4.2 provide constructive feedback on proposals presented within the seminar environment

GRADING CRITERIA

A merit grade is achieved by meeting **all** the requirements in the pass criteria **and** the merit descriptors.

A distinction grade is achieved by meeting **all** the requirements in the pass criteria **and** the merit descriptors **and** the distinction descriptors.

Merit Criteria (M1, M2, M3)	Distinction Criteria (D1, D2, D3)
(M1, M2, and M3 are mandatory to achieve a merit grade. Each must be achieved at least once per unit to achieve a merit grade.)	(D1, D2, and D3 are mandatory to achieve a distinction grade. Each must be achieved at least once per unit to achieve a distinction grade.) (In order to achieve a distinction grade, all merit criteria must also have been achieved.)
MANDATORY TO ACHIEVE A MERIT GRADE	MANDATORY TO ACHIEVE A DISTINCTION GRADE
M1 Analyse concepts, theories or principles to formulate own responses to situations.	D1 Evaluate approaches to develop strategies in response to actual or anticipated situations.
M2 Analyse own knowledge, understanding and skills to define areas for development.	D2 Evaluate and apply strategies to develop own knowledge, understanding and skills.
M3 Exercise autonomy and judgement when implementing established courses of action.	D3 Determine, direct and communicate new courses of action.

TEACHING CONTENT

The Teaching Content describes what has to be taught to cover **all** Learning Outcomes.

Learners must be able to apply relevant examples to their work although these do not have to be the same as the examples specified.

LO1 Understand different research methodologies	
Research to identify and gain a basic appreciation of the main research methodologies and how they can be used tackle the research question	
Range of methodologies	Quantitative and qualitative methods (case study, action research, experimental, surveys, interviews)
Data collection and analysis	Quantitative (survey interviews, server log data), qualitative (ethnographic techniques, interviews, focus groups), documents, video and graphical data, constraints (sampling, resources available), converting qualitative surveys into numerical data (Likert scales, questionnaire design)
Research design	Fixed and flexible designs, mixed methods, primary and secondary research (new survey compared with a systematic review)
Validity and reflexivity	Trustworthiness of findings and influence of researcher on research outcomes (interviewer bias, selection bias), validity of data (triangulation, inter-rater reliability).
LO2 Know how to conduct a literature review	
Purpose of a literature review	Reflect breadth of material; reflect a range of opinions, not solely to support the individual's view
Selection and rejection of appropriate material	e.g. documents, video, audio, web pages, social media, from a range of sources such as books, journals, periodicals, published papers/articles, conference proceedings as well as recordings and web pages; limitations of wikis, and works in the public domain, perspective and position of the author, reliability of sources and possible bias, searching for relevant material in an academic library catalogue, sources such as books, journals, periodicals, published papers/articles, conference proceedings as well as recordings and web pages
Primary research	e.g. surveys, questionnaires, observations, focus groups and interviews, how these have contributed to several different research scenarios; difference between raw data and data that has been both processed and interpreted in their evaluation

Referencing systems	Harvard, APA, correct referencing of social media, websites and other non-paper material; use of referencing style (numeration, brackets after material cited, use of footnotes); awareness of copyright and its implications
L03 Be able to present a research proposal	
Select and summarise key points for a specific audience	Using a range of different tools (presentation software, data representation software, video clips) may be appropriate to engage the audience; use of techniques to address needs of different audiences (more formal for academic audiences, more graphical for end user audiences)
Identifying challenges learners may face in collecting data	e.g. access, sample size, participants withdrawing from study
Development of conclusions	e.g. generalisation of findings, answering research questions, suggestions for future research, discussion of problems experienced during research
Ethical considerations	Informed consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality and safety, compliance with ethical standards (e.g. university ethics procedures).
L04 Be able to contribute to a research seminar	
Management summary or abstract	Consideration of audience (i.e. those who would be knowledgeable about research such as peers or lecturers); selecting key points from their work or from a relevant case-study backed up with evidence that could be to share the key purpose and approach with others
Constructive feedback	Evidence-based with the intention to help the presenter improve, accepting feedback and using it to improve.

GUIDANCE

Delivery guidance

It will be beneficial to deliver this unit in a way that uses actual events, industry forecasts or sector specific contexts which offer the learner the opportunity to explore, develop and apply the fundamental principles of the sector or subject area. Learners could consider a proposal to investigate and research the impact of some aspect of technological change or usage – such as social networking or gaming or device choices within their peer group.

Learners will benefit from being encouraged to exercise autonomy and judgement to devise their own research proposal, e.g. develop a plan to collect relevant data. This will give learners the opportunity to adapt their thinking and reach considered conclusions when carrying out research based on a foundation of relevant knowledge, understanding and/or practical skills.

Learners would benefit from being presented with subject/sector-relevant problems from a variety of perspectives and from being given the opportunity to explore them using diverse approaches and schools of thought. For example, learners could compare the style of research proposals in a technical vs non-technical situation and consider how technology could contribute to data collection and processing.

Assessment evidence guidance

Evidence must be produced to show how a learner has met each of the Learning Outcomes. This evidence could take the form of assignments, project portfolios, presentations or where appropriate reflective accounts.

Where group work/activities contribute to assessment evidence, the individual contribution from each learner must be clearly identified.

All evidence must be available for the visiting moderator to review. Where learners are able to use real situations or observations from work placement, care should be taken to ensure that the record of observation accurately reflects the learner's performance. This should be signed, dated, and included in the evidence. It is best practice to record another individual's perspective of how a practical activity was carried out. Centres may wish to use a witness statement as a record of observation. This should be signed and dated and included in the evidence.

RESOURCES

Books

Robson C. Real World Research 2nd Ed Blackwell, Oxford . Covers pretty much every aspect of research methods. 2002.

Pears R. and Shields G. Cite them Right 8th Ed. Palgrave McMillan, Oxford. Essential referencing guide. 2010.

Journals

Mainly on subscription via JSTOR or Athens

Websites

www.ithaca.edu/library/training/think.html

www.ithacalibrary.com/sp/subjects/guide.php?subject=eggs – website evaluation exercise.

<http://scholar.google.co.uk/> Provides a search of scholarly literature across many disciplines and sources, including theses, books, abstracts and articles.

Considering sample: www.lucidview.com/sample_size.htm

www.checkmarket.com/market-research-resources/sample-size-calculator/

Ethics code of conduct: www.BPS.org.uk