



Accredited

**OCR LEVEL 3  
CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL  
CERTIFICATE/DIPLOMA IN  
HEALTH AND  
SOCIAL CARE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

**K/600/8977**

**LEVEL 3 UNIT 17**

**GUIDED LEARNING HOURS: 90**

**UNIT CREDIT VALUE: 15**

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

K/600/8977

## LEVEL 3 UNIT 17

### AIM OF THE UNIT

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to understand the function of research in health and social care and to conduct their own research project into a topic of their choice. The function of any research in health and social care is to produce knowledge that is applicable in the real world. Rather than thinking what might work or what could be effective, health and social care provision needs to be evidence-based and should therefore inform policy makers, practitioners or people who use the service. By conducting a research project of their own, learners will be able to experience some of the difficulties involved in carrying out research, such as the consideration of ethical issues.

### PURPOSE OF THE UNIT

This unit investigates the function of research in health and social care as well as some of the important issues that need to be considered when research is conducted. The government is committed to enhancing the contribution of research to health and social care and to helping prevent long term health and social care problems. Learners are therefore given an overview of the function and processes of research in order to provide them with the knowledge and understanding of this area within health and social care. As learners become familiar with the wide variety of applications research findings have in both the planning and the provision of health and social care services, the importance of such research becomes apparent.

The unit enables learners to understand the difficulties researchers face when studying areas of a sensitive nature and to consider some of the ethical and legal constraints placed on them. The interests of participants must come first and those carrying out research must make sure that

the rights, safety and wellbeing of those taking part is paramount. If people do not have confidence in those carrying out the research, participants will be less likely to want to take part and could seriously limit any future research taking place. Learners can debate the effect of unethical research and suggest ways of addressing ethical issues before conducting research of their own.

Apart from ethical issues, learners are also asked to consider the suitability of various research methodologies for different research questions. This gives an insight into the day-to-day work of researchers and the many and varied tasks they perform before publishing their findings and recommendations to the wider community. A comparison of the methodologies will provide the learner with the knowledge and understanding to choose their own method when carrying out their own research. For example, whilst interviewing people may help provide insight into people's thoughts and opinions, only a controlled experiment will provide us with a clear idea of causal relationships.

Once learners have an understanding of different research methodologies, they can move to consider issues such as the suitability of various sampling techniques and the pros and cons of different types of data. This then provides the basic knowledge and understanding needed to conduct a small scale research project of their own, set within a health and social care context. This gives learners first-hand experience and will help them to develop the skills necessary for conducting research as well as an understanding of the implications of such research in health and social care.

This unit should be of use to learners intending to progress to higher education or intending to work in the health and social care sector and gives learners an insight into the world of research.

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

<b>Learning Outcome (LO)</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Merit</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
The learner will:	The assessment criteria are the pass requirements for this unit.  The learner can:	To achieve a merit the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
1 Understand the function of research in health and social care	P1 Explain the function of research for health and social care		
2 Understand ethical issues relating to research in health and social care	P2 Discuss ethical issues relating to research in the health and social care sectors	M1 assess possible implications of not addressing ethical issues when conducting research in the health and social care sectors	D1 summarise ways of addressing ethical issues when conducting research in the health and social care sectors
3 Understand research methodologies relevant to health and social care	P3 Compare different research methodologies for health and social care		
4 Be able to plan for a research project	P4 Plan a research project	M2 justify the methodology chosen for the research project	
5 Be able to conduct research relevant to a health and social care context	P5 Carry out the planned research project	M3 explain the value of carrying out a pilot study	
6 Be able to interpret research findings	P6 Report findings and conclusions from research project	M4 evaluate research project and make recommendations for improvements	D2 summarise possible implications of research findings

## TEACHING CONTENT

### 1 Understand the function of research in health and social care

- Function
  - Identify needs of specific populations or groups
  - Provide further knowledge and understanding
  - Review, monitor and improve policy or practice
  - To identify gaps in provision
  - Plan provision.

### 2 Understand ethical issues relating to research in health and social care

- Ethical principles
  - Obtain informed consent
  - Avoid deception
  - Provide full de-brief
  - Allow right to withdraw
  - Respect participants
  - Protect from harm - risk, pain and discomfort
  - Maintain confidentiality and anonymity
- Ethical implications
  - For what purpose is the research commissioned.
  - Impact of research findings on people who use services
  - Influence of published findings
- Legislation and policy
  - Human Rights Act
  - Data Protection Act
  - Confidentiality policy
  - Codes of conduct
  - Organisational procedures.

### 3 Understand research methodologies relevant to health and social care

- Primary research
  - Questionnaires
  - Interviews; structured, unstructured, semi-structured
  - Observations
  - Laboratory experiments
  - Case studies
- Secondary research
  - Books, newspapers, magazines and websites
  - Articles published in journals and other professional publications
  - Official statistics (e.g. census data)
  - Samples and data types

- Sampling techniques; opportunity, random, stratified, quota.
- Quantitative and qualitative data.

### 4 Be able to plan for a research project

- Decide on topic and establish rationale
- Identify aims – relevant, achievable, realistic
- Plan timescales
- Identify population and target group
- Identify appropriate methodology
- Identify ethical issues and ways of addressing them.

### 5 Be able to conduct research relevant to a health and social care context

- Conduct a pilot study
- Carry out primary research
- Carry out secondary research.

### 6 Be able to interpret research findings

- Represent findings graphically (e.g. tables, charts, graphs and measures of central tendencies)
- Discuss findings; relate to the aims, what does the data show, draw conclusions
- Evaluate findings: validity, reliability, bias, strengths and weaknesses of methodologies, ethics, implications of findings, recommendations for future research.

## DELIVERY GUIDANCE

### **LO1 Understand the function of research in health and social care**

The function of research in health and social care is the logical place to begin this unit. Case studies of current research could be used to enable learners to identify the purpose of the research and who might benefit from such research. Questions such as; what, who, why the research was carried out will aid learners to identify the function. Current research can be found on many University websites. The value of the research will need to be considered in terms of what has happened as a result of the findings and what would have happened if the research had not been conducted.

### **LO2 Understand ethical issues relating to research in health and social care**

Once learners are familiar with these issues they can move on to investigate how the research was carried out and consider the ethical issues arising from such research. The use of real research enables learners to apply theory to practice and to study the topic within the context of health and social care.

Understanding ethical issues can further be enhanced by small groups of learners devising research that is clearly unethical and asking other groups to identify the ethical issues and suggesting ways of addressing them. Inviting in a guest speaker involved in research would be ideal if available. Legislation can best be understood if learners read the relevant section and summarise the main points. Making posters promoting diversity and inclusion and placing them around the room will help remind learners of key issues as they proceed to the next section.

### **LO3 Understand research methodologies relevant to health and social care**

Methodologies can be researched by small groups and the main points presented back to the class. Both secondary and primary research methods need to be considered. Learners could debate the pros and cons of each research method and identify the best one for given purposes.

A comparison between the different research methods could then be made. Learners could consider; the usefulness of the method, the impact on the service-user, the ease or difficulty of the method as well as issues such as validity, reliability and bias. Role-plays of observations or interview techniques could

be used to highlight particular issues. Interactive activities such as the use of 'Lego' people can help to demonstrate the different sampling techniques and help when discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each technique.

The functions of research initially identified could be written on large sheets of paper and placed around the classroom. Learners are then asked to visit each one in turn and add their ideas of methods that could have or should have been used to answer this question. They should justify their reasons for or against each method suggested. Alternatively, each method could be written on the sheets of paper and learners be asked to identify suitable research aims that may lend itself to the application of such a method.

### **LO4 Be able to plan for a research project**

Before beginning their own research, learners will need a lot of support in identifying a suitable topic and devising hypotheses and aims that are both practical and ethical. A template should be provided to aid the planning process. Suitable headings for each section could be provided. Learners must have their project agreed and authorised before beginning work. Learners can swap their ideas with each other and receive feedback before submitting their ideas. A small pilot study should then be carried out to enable learners to give further thought to the details in their research e.g. the wording of questions or the coding system used in observations.

### **LO5 Be able to conduct research relevant to a health and social care context**

The conducting of the research will need careful supervision as they go through each section; e.g. questionnaires checked before they are sent out or observation grids checked before being used. Ethical issues will need to be considered and consent obtained. A suitable template should be provided to aid the learners when writing up their findings.

### **LO6 Be able to interpret research findings**

A tutor-led session on how to evaluate will be necessary with the inclusion of exemplars and worksheets to enable learners to practise these skills before applying them to their own work.

## SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT SCENARIOS AND TASK PLUS GUIDANCE ON ASSESSING THE SUGGESTED TASKS

Criteria	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment
P1, P2,P3 M1, D1	The function of and ethical issues relating to research in health and social care.	You are on work placement in a health or social care setting of your choice. You have been asked to research a topic of current interest. You will need to present your background knowledge of research issues as well as your research project.	Written report.
P4,P5, P6, M4, D1, D2	Research Project into " <i>title of choice</i> ".		Research project.

The learning outcomes can be met through two assignments. The evidence for assignment 1 can be a written report which is divided into three sections.

P1 – Section one needs to explain the function of research. A simple description will not meet the requirements of P1. Learners may use examples as well to illustrate the function and therefore provide an effective explanation.

P2 – Section two involves a discussion of ethical issues. Possible implications of not addressing ethical issues should be assessed in order to meet the requirements of M1. Ways of addressing each issue should be included to achieve D1.

P3 – Section three must be a comparison of different research methodologies. This means learners need to state the similarities and differences between methods. A simple description will not meet the requirements of P3. Comparisons could include the suitability of each method for various functions of research e.g. sending out questionnaires may be a good way to produce a wide variety of views from local people and therefore may help to identify gaps in provision within a local area. However, they are not always returned and those that are may be invalid due to people being dishonest in their answers. Case studies, on the other hand may provide the details required when assessing the effectiveness of a particular practice.

P4 – The second assignment should be presented as a complete research project. A complete plan of the intended research needs to be included to meet the requirements of

P4 – Suggested topics may include:

- The need for a new surgery or other provision within your local area
- Why men are less likely to visit their G.P
- The use of complementary therapies

Any other suitable topic may be used providing the aim is appropriate and the methods suggested are practical. The plan must be authorised and ethical issues considered before learners are approved to carry out their project. If there is an area of concern learners will be required to amend their plan accordingly.

M2 – There should also be justifications for the methodology chosen. The project needs to include evidence of the research being carried out in order to meet the requirements of P5. This may include answers to interview questions, observation notes, completed questionnaires or measurements from an experiment. Results from a pilot study should also be included and an explanation of the value of carrying out such a study will meet the requirements of M3.

P6 – Research findings will need to be analysed and presented in a suitable format; graphical representations and written discussions with valid conclusions drawn.

M4 – The project as a whole will need to be evaluated. Each section may be considered in turn and their strengths and weaknesses explained. Recommendations for improvements need to be realistic, justified and clear.

D2 – Possible implications of the research findings will need to be included. Implications can be positive or negative and may consider the usefulness and applicability of their findings. Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the assignment.

Whilst research and planning may be carried out in small groups, final evidence produced must be the learner's own work.

## RESOURCES

### Text books

Denscombe, M., (2010) – *The Good Research Guide: for small-scale social research projects*; 4th Edition; Open University Press; ISBN: 9780335241385

Neale, J (2008) – *Research Methods for Health and Social Care*; Palgrave Macmillan; ISBN: 9780230500785

Sanders, P., and Wilkins, P., (2010) – *First Steps in Practitioner Research: A guide to understanding and doing research in counselling and health and social care*; PCCS Books; ISBN: 9781898059738

Seamons, S (2007) – *Applied Health & Social Care: A2 Student Book OCR*; OUP Oxford, ISBN: 9781850082484

Sim, J., and Wright, C., () – *Research in Health Care – Concepts, Designs and Methods*; Nelson Thornes, ISBN: 9780748737185

Stretch, B. (2007) – *Health and Social Care: Core Themes*; Heinemann, ISBN: 9780435464257

Stretch, B., and Whitehouse, M. (2007) – *Health and Social Care, Book 1*; Heinemann, ISBN: 9780435499150

### Journals

*Journal of health services research & policy*

*The British Journal of Social work*

*Qualitative Research Journal*

### Websites

[www.eric-on-line.co.uk/index.php](http://www.eric-on-line.co.uk/index.php) - Ethics Research Information Catalogue

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents) - The Human Rights Act

[www.ssr.org.uk/index.asp](http://www.ssr.org.uk/index.asp) - Social Services Research Group

[www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050009\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/ukpga_20050009_en_1) - The Mental Capacity Act

[www.mrc.ac.uk/](http://www.mrc.ac.uk/) - The Medical Research Council

[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) Department of Health

[www.serviceuserandcarertoolkit.co.uk/index.html](http://www.serviceuserandcarertoolkit.co.uk/index.html)

- Working together toolkit

### DVDs

Researching Health – [www.onlineclassroom.tv](http://www.onlineclassroom.tv)

Researching Health: research methods made accessible – [www.uniview.co.uk](http://www.uniview.co.uk) (ref: 1751)

## MAPPING WITHIN THE QUALIFICATION TO THE OTHER UNITS

**Unit 6:** Sociological perspectives for health and social care

**Unit 7:** Psychological perspectives for health and social care

**Unit 8:** Personal and professional development in health and social care

**Unit 26:** Exploring personal and professional development in health and social care

## LINKS TO NOS

### **HSC33 Reflect on and develop your practice**

a – Reflect on your practice

b – Take action to enhance your practice



## CONTACT US

Staff at the OCR Customer Contact Centre are available to take your call between 8am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

We're always happy to answer questions and give advice.

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