

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCE Health & Social Care (6947)
Unit 10 – Using & Understanding Research

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General Comments

The assessment evidence for this unit consists of a report on a research project carried out by the learner. In most of the work moderated learners had chosen appropriate, health and social care related, topics, and had attempted to address all the assessment requirements of the unit. A range of topics had been chosen that covered all four user-groups/settings. Lifestyle issues that influence the health and well-being of young people were popular, such as smoking, binge drinking, and STDs.

Some learners had made badly judged topic choices and researched subjects that were too broad or general to be focused on successfully, such as 'poverty' or 'care for older people'. Others were barely 'relevant to the health and social care field' as it is described in the assessment evidence requirement for the unit. Learners should be encouraged to choose a topic that has clear direct relevance to the field of health and social care. Their learning in 10.1 'The aims and use of research in health and social care' should introduce them to the sort of topics and approaches that may appropriately be called health and social care research.

Assessment Objective 1

There was sometimes insufficient evidence of consideration of different research methods, and the methods chosen were sometimes stated without explanation or justification. Also some learners had used several different research methods but failed to bring the results together coherently. Overall a range of research methods was used by learners. Though most opted for some form of questionnaire there was also use of interviews, observations, experiments, and other methods. Some learners had put an overemphasis on secondary research, at the expense of their own primary research which is a main focus of the unit. Learners who had apparently been directed to use a particular set of methods often showed limited understanding of the advantages, disadvantages and overall rationale of each method they employed. Learners should look into a range of research methods and explain how their choice of methods makes sense in relation to characteristics of their research project. This allows them to show knowledge and understanding in their research planning.

Assessment Objective 2

Most learners had created useful research tools, and some were very well considered. Learners generally had put considerable effort into this aspect of their work. A number of learners had piloted their research tools and made adjustments in the light of their findings. This helped learners to satisfy the requirements of Mark band 3 in AO2.

Assessment Objective 3

Analysis of results was sometimes excellent with clear, well labelled, graphs, tables and charts accompanied by lucid explanation. Many learners though had provided only superficial analysis, or had merely stated some of their results with little or no analysis offered. Learners are advised to plan their data analysis when they make decisions about the data they intend to collect and the methods to be used so that the data they collect can be dealt with logically and systematically in the final report.

Assessment Objective 4

The evaluation required for AO4 was generally the weakest part of most reports. Learners who had good understanding were able to evaluate their work in a balanced way, recognising both strengths and limitations. Some evaluations were about aspects of the topic itself; they need to be about the research learners have carried out, not its subject. Learners should be encouraged to consider the limitations as well as the strengths of their research to help them develop an evaluation. Some learners had included generic, theoretical statements about the role of research in health and social care that were not linked to the rest of their research report. Learners understanding of the role of research would be best demonstrated by setting their own research in the context of the broader world of research through recognition of its constraints and limitations.

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