

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2012

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

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General comments

For this unit the assessment evidence required consists of a report on a research project carried out by the learner. Most learners had chosen an appropriate topic that was related to health and social care, 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 poor topic choices and researched subjects that were not relevant to the health and social care field, or were too broad or general to be focused on successfully. Learners should be encouraged to choose a topic that has clear direct relevance to the field of health and social care. Section 10.1 of the unit specifications, 'The aims and use of research in health and social care', should help learners to understand the sort of topics and approaches that may appropriately be called health and social care research.

Assessment Objective 1

In Assessment Objective 1 learners need to select an appropriate topic, consider different research methods, and explain and justify the methods they have chosen to use. In some reports explanation of choices was lacking. Overall a range of research methods was used by learners. Most had used some form of questionnaire, but 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

In Assessment Objective 2 most learners had created useful research tools, and some were very well considered. Pilot questionnaires had often been used. Centres are reminded though that the use of a pilot questionnaire does not, in itself, automatically qualify work for Mark Band 3 in this Assessment Objective. Overall most learners have put considerable effort into this aspect of their work.

Assessment Objective 3

In Assessment Objective 3 the analysis of results was excellent in some reports with clear, well labelled, graphs, tables and charts accompanied by clear explanation. However a number of learners had provided only a 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. This can help to ensure that the data they collect can be dealt with logically and systematically in the final report.

Assessment Objective 4

The evaluations in Assessment Objective 4 were 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. In some reports evaluations were about aspects of the topic itself. Learners need to be reminded that evaluations need to be about the research they 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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