

# Unit title: Research Project

Unit code: **K/601/0941**

QCF level: **4**

Credit value: **15**

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## Aim

This unit aims to develop learners' skills of independent enquiry and critical analysis by undertaking a sustained research investigation of direct relevance to their higher education programme and professional development.

## Unit abstract

This unit is designed to develop learners' understanding and confidence in the use of techniques and methods appropriate for research in health and social care. Learners will be expected to consider the elements that make up formal research, including the proposal, and methodologies. They will also action plan carry out the research and presenting their findings. Learners will also consider ethical aspects of formal research.

The topic of the research project is dependent on the learner's focus of interest within the context of their programme of study and experience in health and social care, with due regard to ethical constraints of research in this sector. The unit gives learners the opportunity to draw together learning from several aspects of their study into a coherent holistic piece of work that makes a positive contribution to their area of interest. Learners should seek approval from their tutors before starting the study.

## Learning outcomes

### On successful completion of this unit a learner will:

- 1 Understand how to formulate a research specification
- 2 Be able to implement the research project within agreed procedures and to specification
- 3 Be able to evaluate the research outcomes
- 4 Be able to present the research outcomes.

## Unit content

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### 1 Understand how to formulate a research specification

*Types of research:* qualitative; quantitative; tools for gathering primary data eg questionnaires, interviews; use of participants; sampling; validity; reliability eg variables and their control; resources; data storage; statistical techniques for data analysis eg distribution, statistical significance

*Outline specifications of possible projects:* aims and objectives; rationale for selection; literature review; hypothesis or research question; methodology for data collection and analysis; possible outcomes from suggested projects

*Research project selection:* critique of outline specifications eg scope, limitations; implications eg resources, ethical issues

*Key references:* books; journals; internet

*Research project specification:* aims and objectives; rationale for their selection; hypothesis or research question; justification (through literature review, skills and knowledge to be gained, resource availability including time); methodology for gathering primary data and data analysis

*Ethical considerations:* codes of practice; relating to participants eg informed consent, confidentiality of data, right to withdraw; data storage; analysis; audience for reporting of project

*Plan:* overall strategy and duration; tasks with target dates; presentation of results; scheduled monitoring process; recording of amendments to plan

### 2 Be able to implement the research project within agreed procedures and to specification

*Match resources:* to agreed plan; terms of reference; hypothesis or research question; ethical boundaries

*Implementation:* according to approved research plan; test for validity eg pilot research tools; estimates for reliability

*Data collection:* selection of participants; selection of appropriate tools for data collection, eg question and questionnaire design, interview questions; systematic recording of data eg in transcripts; methodological problems eg bias, variables and their control, validity and reliability

### 3 Be able to evaluate the research outcomes

*Evaluation of outcomes:* judgement of the success or failure of the planned project justified eg in relation to research plan, aims and objectives, evidence and findings, sources of error, validity, reliability of data collected; difficulties

*Data analysis and interpretation:* quantitative eg using specialist software, statistical techniques; qualitative eg interpreting transcripts; sources of error; bias; comparisons; trends; additional secondary research as required; extent to which hypothesis proved or disproved or research question answered; significance of research investigation to health and social care eg benefits, furthering understanding, application of research results; limitations of the investigation; conclusion(s)

*Recommendations:* for further development eg areas for further research, improvements, changes to practice

#### 4 **Be able to present the research outcomes**

*Format:* professional delivery format appropriate to the audience eg oral presentation, written report; answering questions from audience on research project; use of academic referencing

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

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<b>Learning outcomes</b> On successful completion of this unit a learner will:	<b>Assessment criteria for pass</b> The learner can:
LO1 Understand how to formulate a research specification	1.1 formulate and record possible research project outline specifications 1.2 identify the factors that contribute to the process of research project selection 1.3 undertake a critical review of key references 1.4 produce a research project specification 1.5 provide an appropriate plan and procedures for the agreed research specification
LO2 Be able to implement the research project within agreed procedures and to specification	2.1 match resources efficiently to the research question or hypothesis 2.2 undertake the proposed research investigation in accordance with the agreed specification and procedures 2.3 record and collate relevant data where appropriate
LO3 Be able to evaluate the research outcomes	3.1 use appropriate research evaluation techniques 3.2 interpret and analyse the results in terms of the original research specification 3.3 make recommendations and justify areas for further consideration
LO4 Be able to present the research outcomes	4.1 use an agreed format and appropriate media to present the outcomes of the research to an audience.

## Guidance

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### Links

This unit may be linked to one or more units in the programme, depending on the research topic undertaken.

This unit also has links with the National Occupational Standards in Health and Social Care. See *Annexe B* for mapping.

### Essential requirements

It is advised that this unit is delivered longitudinally over a period of one year. The ethical issues that arise in health and social care research should be discussed in detail and should encompass aspects relating to protection of participants as well as data analysis and reporting of results. Learners should also be introduced to simple statistical analyses and selection of the appropriate method for presenting continuous and discontinuous statistical information, for example in tables, charts and graphs.

Although work-based experience may well generate ideas for research, any research carried out within a health or social care setting will require ethical approval from the relevant NHS strategic health authority. Any research carried out in a health or social care workplace may also depend upon the employed status of the learner in that setting.

The tutor should establish early on the employment and qualification status of individual learners and any constraints on research in their place of work that may apply. Every project in which the workplace is involved should have written consent consistent with the ethical guidelines of the workplace and the tutor should check that these are fully in place before any primary research commences.

The research proposal should contain detailed consideration of the ethical issues relating to the project. Evidence for learning outcome 2 should include evidence of small-scale piloting of the research tools to be used as a test for their validity and reliability.

Before approving projects, the tutor will need to establish that each learner has sufficient access to suitable resources to support their project proposal.

### Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Engagement with health and social care employers would be beneficial for both learners who are employees and those on work placement in settings. An understanding of the broad assessment requirements, the unit could be shared with employer.