**Unit Outline**
MEDS7001 Qualitative Research in Public Health  
Semester 1, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Unit study package code:</strong></th>
<th>MEDS7001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode of study:</strong></td>
<td>Fully Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuition pattern summary:</strong></td>
<td>This unit contains a fieldwork component. Find out more about fieldwork on the work integrated learning (WIL) website at <a href="http://ctl.curtin.edu.au/wil/fieldwork/index.cfm">http://ctl.curtin.edu.au/wil/fieldwork/index.cfm</a>, which also contains a link to the <a href="http://ctl.curtin.edu.au/wil/fieldwork/index.cfm">Fieldwork Policy</a> and <a href="http://ctl.curtin.edu.au/wil/fieldwork/index.cfm">Fieldwork Manual</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credit Value:</strong></td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-requisite units:</strong></td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-requisite units:</strong></td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-requisite units:</strong></td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Result type:</strong></td>
<td>Grade/Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approved incidental fees:</strong></td>
<td>Information about approved incidental fees can be obtained from our website. Visit <a href="http://fees.curtin.edu.au/incidental_fees.cfm">fees.curtin.edu.au/incidental_fees.cfm</a> for details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Unit coordinator:** | **Title:** Dr  
**Name:** Roanna Lobo  
**Phone:** +61 9266 1101  
**Email:** Roanna.Lobo@exchange.curtin.edu.au  
**Location:** Building: 400 - Room: 469B  
**Consultation times:** Fridays only. Please email for an appointment time |
| **Teaching Staff:** | |

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**Administrative contact:**  
**Name:** School of Public Health Student Support Office  
**Phone:** + 61 8 9266 7927  
**Email:** PHealthStudentSupport@curtin.edu.au  
**Location:** Building: 400 - Room: 310 (reception)

**Learning Management System:**  
[Blackboard](http://lms.curtin.edu.au)
Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Indigenous Elders, custodians, their descendants and kin of this land past and present.

Syllabus

This unit will develop students’ skills and knowledge related to the philosophy and practice of qualitative research in public health. Students will explore and critique assumptions and techniques associated with different qualitative research methodologies applicable to research in public health. This will include addressing different paradigms of public health research, design issues, ethical considerations, qualitative methods of inquiry and data analysis, and reporting techniques. Students formulate a research proposal based on the qualitative research methodologies and methods addressed within this unit.

Introduction

Welcome to MEDS7001 Qualitative Research in Public Health. This unit outline gives you important information about the general aims of the unit, texts and references, and details about the assessments, including allocation of marks, grading criteria and submission dates. You are required to read and understand the expectations outlined in this document. Study it carefully, paying particular attention to method of instruction, class times, assessment instructions and submission dates. Information contained in this unit outline specifies the requirements for this unit and explains your rights and responsibilities in relation to Curtin University.

Unit Learning Outcomes

All graduates of Curtin University achieve a set of nine graduate attributes during their course of study. These tell an employer that, through your studies, you have acquired discipline knowledge and a range of other skills and attributes which employers say would be useful in a professional setting. Each unit in your course addresses the graduate attributes through a clearly identified set of learning outcomes. They form a vital part in the process referred to as assurance of learning. The learning outcomes tell you what you are expected to know, understand or be able to do in order to be successful in this unit. Each assessment for this unit is carefully designed to test your achievement of one or more of the unit learning outcomes. On successfully completing all of the assessments you will have achieved all of these learning outcomes.

Your course has been designed so that on graduating we can say you will have achieved all of Curtin’s Graduate Attributes through the assurance of learning process in each unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On successful completion of this unit students can:</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Compare and critically evaluate different research paradigms in public health</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Analyse issues relating to the design of qualitative research studies in public health</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Discriminate between different approaches to qualitative research</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Appraise specific quantitative and qualitative data collection methods</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Justify the integration of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and techniques for research in public health</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Effectively communicate qualitative research findings</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Curtin’s Graduate Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apply discipline knowledge</td>
<td>Thinking skills (use analytical skills to solve problems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>Information skills (confidence to investigate new ideas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International perspective (value the perspectives of others)</td>
<td>Learning how to learn (apply principles learnt to new situations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(confidence to tackle unfamiliar problems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural understanding (value the perspectives of others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Skills (work independently and as a team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(plan own work)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Find out more about Curtin’s Graduate attributes at the Office of Teaching & Learning website: [ctl.curtin.edu.au](http://ctl.curtin.edu.au)

Learning Activities

Readings and Module Guide

You are expected to read the modules, textbook chapters and other recommended readings available on Blackboard. The activities and case studies presented in class are to supplement and clarify the content, and not to introduce or repeat the content. It is expected that students will have completed the readings prior to each class. If students have not completed the readings it will be difficult for students to follow or participate in the class discussions and activities.

External Students

External students living in Perth are welcome to attend classes if they are wish to. Please let the Unit Coordinator know if you are going to join one of the classes.
Learning Resources
Library Reserve
There are resources for this unit in the library Reserve collection. To access these resources, please click on the following link:
http://link.library.curtin.edu.au/primo/course?MEDS7001

Essential texts
The required textbook(s) for this unit are:

- **TEXTBOOK**
  The textbook for this unit is:
  (ISBN/ISSN: 9780195518559)

Other resources
Recommended texts
You do not have to purchase the following textbooks but you may like to refer to them. There are many excellent texts to explore.


Other resources
WEBSITES
There are numerous websites providing learning resources. The student is directed to the following:

- www.qualitativeresearch.uga.edu/QualPage/
  A constantly updated source for qualitative researchers that has been maintained since 1994.
- http://www.iiqm.ualberta.ca/AboutUs.aspx
  The International Institute for Qualitative Methodology (IIQM) is an interdisciplinary institute at the University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The Institute offers a wide variety of training and networking opportunities through annual conferences, courses, and workshops.
- www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html
  The Qualitative Report (ISSN 1052-0147) is a peer-reviewed, on-line monthly journal devoted to writing and discussion of and about qualitative, critical, action, and collaborative inquiry and research.
Assessment

Assessment schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Value %</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Unit Learning Outcome(s) Assessed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case study investigation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Week: 6 Day: Monday 4 April 2016 Time: 6pm (WST)</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldwork report of two in-depth interviews</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Week: 10 Day: Monday 2 May 2016 Time: 6pm (WST)</td>
<td>1,4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research proposal</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Week: 15 Day: Monday 6 June 2016 Time: 6pm (WST)</td>
<td>4,5,6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Detailed information on assessment tasks

1. **Case study investigation (1600 words)**

A case study will be posted on Blackboard at the end of Week 4. Read the case study and answer the online quiz questions using the information we have covered in weeks 1-4. You may look at your textbook and notes when answering the questions. You must answer all the questions.

The purpose of the quiz is to test your understanding of the principles and philosophy underlying qualitative research and your ability to apply different qualitative methodologies to answer different research questions.

You will be asked to write four research questions relevant to the case study and select an appropriate methodology to answer each research question, outlining the strengths and limitations of your choice.

Allow approx. 400 words for each research question and associated answers (excluding citations and references). This is approximately three quarters page of text. Please include sufficient information to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of different qualitative methodologies.

Other points to note:
- Please write in full sentences (not bullet points)
- Include in-text citations to support any factual statements
- Include a correctly formatted reference list with your answer
- The word limit of 1600 words does not include your citations and reference list
- You **must** pass this assignment in order to pass the unit. You will have two attempts to pass this assignment. If you fail the assignment on your first attempt you will be given an opportunity to resubmit.
- Resubmissions will not be granted to students who pass the assignment on the first attempt. You are therefore encouraged to submit your best answer on your first attempt.

2. **Fieldwork report of two in-depth interviews (2000 words)**

The aim of the assessment is to provide you with an opportunity to apply what you have learned about qualitative in-depth interviewing and develop skills in interviewing and transcribing. The assessment has two parts:

Part (A). Conduct two qualitative in-depth interviews. You will interview two different people on the same topic using in-depth interviewing techniques.

- Each of the interviews is to be audio-recorded using a phone or digital recording device.
- Select a neutral topic for your interviews since we do not have ethics approval to collect sensitive data
- Each interview should last 15-30 minutes
- Keep detailed field notes of your observations of interviews
- Transcribe ONE of the interviews and submit the transcript with your reflective paper (there is no word
Part (B). Write a reflective paper of your experiences conducting qualitative interviews. Some of the topics that you could address include:

- How you gained access to the setting and ongoing issues of access
- Your role, relationships with persons in setting (e.g., reciprocity, rapport)
- Who your informants were; sampling issues—how you decided who to interview
- The unit of analysis in the study; the type and quality of data collected—field notes, interviews (what kind of notes did you take, issues with audio recorded interviews, questions asked in interviews, how they worked, etc)
- Ethical issues
- Your feelings
- The mistakes you made
- The good decisions you made
- Emerging themes

These are the kinds of things you should discuss in your paper, but do not go through this list in a rote manner. Depending on your experience, some issues will be more important than others.

You should report substantive findings that are emerging from the interviews only insofar as this is relevant to your fieldwork methods (e.g., the process of preliminary analysis of data or theoretical notes or how they affected your second interview).

Discuss your reflection in terms of the published literature. Your focus should be on the process of data collection not the findings of your interview. You may write in the first person for this assessment since it is a personal reflection (e.g. ‘I selected my interviewee ...’). You may also write in third person (e.g. ‘the interviewer found ...’) if you prefer.

Remember to submit the transcript of ONE interview with your reflective paper. We suggest you select the shortest interview to save you time transcribing.

You must submit both parts of this assessment in order to pass this assessment.

3. Qualitative research proposal (4000 words).

Choose a public health research issue to investigate using qualitative methods. Write a qualitative research proposal with the following elements:

- Literature review (10%). You will need to construct a brief literature review (1-2 pages only) that highlights the problem to be investigated. It should identify why it is a public health issue and lead the reader to understand why you need to use the methodology you have chosen.
- Research question and objectives (10%). Frame a research question to be investigated and construct several objectives that will contribute to answering the research question.
- Methodology (10%). Explain why you have chosen the methodology you have.
- Methods (35%). Describe the methods you will employ to obtain the required data. Consider sampling, rigor, issues associated with the data collection, data analysis and reporting.
- Ethical Considerations (15%). Describe the ethical considerations and how you will account for research related risks.
- Significance of the study and Outcomes (20%). Explain the potential outcomes of your study and the significance in relation to public health.

Students should use the APA 6th referencing style when preparing assignments.

The word limit of 4000 words excludes in-text citations and references.

Pass requirements
You must pass all assessments in order to satisfactorily complete the requirements for this unit.

You must also achieve a Final Mark of 50 or greater to pass this unit.

Fair assessment through moderation
Moderation describes a quality assurance process to ensure that assessments are appropriate to the learning
outcomes, and that student work is evaluated consistently by assessors. Minimum standards for the moderation of assessment are described in the Assessment and Student Progression Manual, available from policies.curtin.edu.au/policies/teachingandlearning.cfm

Late assessment policy
This ensures that the requirements for submission of assignments and other work to be assessed are fair, transparent, equitable, and that penalties are consistently applied.

1. All assessments students are required to submit will have a due date and time specified on this Unit Outline.
2. Students will be penalised by a deduction of ten percent per calendar day for a late assessment submission (eg a mark equivalent to 10% of the total allocated for the assessment will be deducted from the marked value for every day that the assessment is late). This means that an assessment worth 20 marks will have two marks deducted per calendar day late. Hence if it was handed in three calendar days late and given a mark of 16/20, the student would receive 10/20. An assessment more than seven calendar days overdue will not be marked and will receive a mark of 0.

Assessment extension
A student unable to complete an assessment task by/on the original published date/time (eg examinations, tests) or due date/time (eg assignments) must apply for an assessment extension using the Assessment Extension form (available from the Forms page at students.curtin.edu.au/administration/) as prescribed by the Academic Registrar. It is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate and provide evidence for exceptional circumstances beyond the student’s control that prevent them from completing/submitting the assessment task.

The student will be expected to lodge the form and supporting documentation with the unit coordinator before the assessment date/time or due date/time. An application may be accepted up to five working days after the date or due date of the assessment task where the student is able to provide an acceptable explanation as to why he or she was not able to submit the application prior to the assessment date. An application for an assessment extension will not be accepted after the date of the Board of Examiners’ meeting.

Requests for assessment extensions up to 5 days should be submitted to the Unit Coordinator for approval. Requests for assessment extensions greater than 5 days will be reviewed by the School of Public Health.

Deferred assessments
If your results show that you have been granted a deferred assessment you should immediately check your OASIS email for details.

Supplementary assessments
Supplementary assessments are not available in this unit.

Referencing style
The referencing style for this unit is APA 6th Ed.

More information can be found on this style from the Library website:

Copyright
© Curtin University. The course material for this unit is provided to you for your own research and study only. It is subject to copyright. It is a copyright infringement to make this material available on third party websites.

Academic Integrity (including plagiarism and cheating)
Any conduct by a student that is dishonest or unfair in connection with any academic work is considered to be academic misconduct. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offences that will be investigated and may result in
penalties such as reduced or zero grades, annulled units or even termination from the course.

Plagiarism occurs when work or property of another person is presented as one's own, without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing. Submitting work which has been produced by someone else (e.g. allowing or contracting another person to do the work for which you claim authorship) is also plagiarism. Submitted work is subjected to a plagiarism detection process, which may include the use of text matching systems or interviews with students to determine authorship.

Cheating includes (but is not limited to) asking or paying someone to complete an assessment task for you or any use of unauthorised materials or assistance during an examination or test.

From Semester 1, 2016, all incoming coursework students are required to complete Curtin’s Academic Integrity Program (AIP). If a student does not pass the program by the end of their first study period of enrolment at Curtin, their marks will be withheld until they pass. More information about the AIP can be found at: https://academicintegrity.curtin.edu.au/students/AIP.cfm

Refer to the Academic Integrity tab in Blackboard or academicintegrity.curtin.edu.au for more information, including student guidelines for avoiding plagiarism.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Expectations

Curtin students are expected to have reliable internet access in order to connect to OASIS email and learning systems such as Blackboard and Library Services.

You may also require a computer or mobile device for preparing and submitting your work.

For general ICT assistance, in the first instance please contact OASIS Student Support: oasisapps.curtin.edu.au/help/general/support.cfm

For specific assistance with any of the items listed below, please contact The Learning Centre: life.curtin.edu.au/learning-support/learning_centre.htm

- Using Blackboard, the I Drive and Back-Up files
- Introduction to PowerPoint, Word and Excel

Additional information

Enrolment

It is your responsibility to ensure that your enrolment is correct - you can check your enrolment through the eStudent option on OASIS, where you can also print an Enrolment Advice.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of all relevant legislation, policies and procedures relating to their rights and responsibilities as a student. These include:

- the Student Charter
- the University’s Guiding Ethical Principles
- the University’s policy and statements on plagiarism and academic integrity
- copyright principles and responsibilities
- the University’s policies on appropriate use of software and computer facilities

Information on all these things is available through the University’s "Student Rights and Responsibilities" website at: students.curtin.edu.au/rights.
Student Equity

There are a number of factors that might disadvantage some students from participating in their studies or assessments to the best of their ability, under standard conditions. These factors may include a disability or medical condition (e.g. mental illness, chronic illness, physical or sensory disability, learning disability), significant family responsibilities, pregnancy, religious practices, living in a remote location or another reason. If you believe you may be unfairly disadvantaged on these or other grounds please contact Student Equity at eesi@curtin.edu.au or go to http://eesi.curtin.edu.au/student_equity/index.cfm for more information.

You can also contact Counselling and Disability services: http://www.disability.curtin.edu.au or the Multi-faith services: http://life.curtin.edu.au/health-and-wellbeing/about_multifaith_services.htm for further information.

It is important to note that the staff of the university may not be able to meet your needs if they are not informed of your individual circumstances so please get in touch with the appropriate service if you require assistance. For general wellbeing concerns or advice please contact Curtin’s Student Wellbeing Advisory Service at: http://life.curtin.edu.au/health-and-wellbeing/student_wellbeing_service.htm

Recent unit changes

Students are encouraged to provide unit feedback through eVALUate, Curtin’s online student feedback system. For more information about eVALUate, please refer to evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/.

To view previous student feedback about this unit, search for the Unit Summary Report at https://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/student/unit_search.cfm. See https://evaluate.curtin.edu.au/info/dates.cfm to find out when you can eVALUate this unit.

Recent changes to this unit include:

In 2015, students rated this unit 100% on all items:
1. The learning outcomes in this unit are clearly identified.
2. The learning experiences in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes.
3. The learning resources in this unit help me to achieve the learning outcomes.
4. The assessment tasks in this unit evaluate my achievement of the learning outcomes.
5. Feedback on my work in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.
6. The workload in this unit is appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.
7. The quality of teaching in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.
8. I am motivated to achieve the learning outcomes in this unit.
9. I make best use of the learning experiences in this unit.
10. I think about how I can learn more effectively in this unit.
11. Overall, I am satisfied with this unit.

The overall content of the unit will not change for 2016. Some students did not fully understand assessment 1. Therefore additional instruction has been provided in the unit outline for this assessment.
# Program Calendar

**Program Calendar – Semester 1 2016**

| Week | Begin Date | Lecture/Tutorial
Fridays 12-3pm 201:517 | Pre-readings | Assessment due |
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>22 February</td>
<td>Orientation Week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. | 29 February | Introduction to the Unit
Introduction to Qualitative Research
General Q&A | Textbook
Pages xi-xv
Chapter 1 p 5-14 | |
| 2. | 7 March | Philosophy and Research
Writing Research Questions for a Qualitative Research Proposal
Assignment 1 Q&A | Readings
Textbook Chapter 13 | |
| 3. | 14 March | Qualitative Methodologies I
Phenomenology, Ethnography, Grounded Theory | Textbook
Chapters 1, 8, 11 | |
| 4. | 21 March | Qualitative Methodologies II
Case Study, Participatory Action Research
Assignment 1 Q&A | Textbook
Chapter 9, 10 | |
| 5. | 28 March | Tuition Free Week | | |
| 6. | 4 April | The Research Design
Sampling, Validity, Reflexivity, Field Notes, Role of the Researcher, Ethical Issues | Textbook
Chapter 1 p 14-21, Chapter 2 | Assessment 1 due Mon 4th April |
| 7. | 11 April | Collecting Qualitative Data
The In-Depth Interview
Assignment 2 Q&A | Textbook
Chapter 3 | |
| 8. | 18 April | Tuition Free Week | | |
| 9. | 25 April | Collecting Qualitative Data
The Focus Group
Assignment 2 Q&A | Textbook
Chapter 4 | |
| 10. | 2 May | Collecting Qualitative Data
Researching the Vulnerable | Textbook
Chapter 15 | Assessment 2 due Mon 2nd May |
| 11. | 9 May | Analysing Qualitative Data
Coding, Thematic Content Analysis, Grounded Theory | Textbook
Chapter 12 | |
| 12. | 16 May | Managing and Analysing Qualitative Data, using NVIVO
Assignment 3 Q&A | Readings – please see Blackboard | |
| 13. | 23 May | Mixed Methods Research
Assignment 3 Q&A | Readings – please see Blackboard | |
| 14. | 30 May | Writing a Qualitative Research Report | Textbook | Assessment 3 due Mon |
## Assignment 3 Q&A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>6 June</td>
<td>Study Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>13 June</td>
<td>Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>20 June</td>
<td>Examinations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 14

Readings – please see Blackboard

6th June