GD904-10 Qualitative Approaches to Sustainable Development

21/22

Department
> Global Sustainable Development

Level
> Taught Postgraduate Level

Module leader
> Mandy Sadan

Credit value
> 10

Module duration
> 10 weeks

Assessment
> 100% coursework

Study location
> University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module builds on the core module "Creating Knowledge for Change: Transdisciplinary Approaches". It further interrogates the principles and practice of qualitative research methods for problem-solving and change-making. Through the use of case studies and real-world examples, students will explore and evaluate the scope, value and limitations of different and, in some cases, combined qualitative approaches for knowledge generation. Through this process, students will gain practical skills in qualitative research, as well as an advanced understanding of the ontological and epistemological factors which underpin methodological choices. Students will further develop their ability to critically engage with qualitative research methods, while understanding the challenges that both researchers and participants can face with data collection and analysis. This will allow students to make informed decisions when designing research interventions that respond in nuanced, robust and imaginative ways to complex and systemic problems.

Module aims

This module aims to:

- Develop knowledge about the theoretical principles and academic debates underpinning the selection and use of qualitative research methods to find, generate, evaluate, and interpret data
- Provide students with a toolkit of advanced practical qualitative research skills, and an understanding of how these can be purposefully combined to construct knowledge for change and propose interventions.
- Foster an advanced understanding of the ethical implications associated with qualitative methodologies, including working with vulnerable participants.
- Provide the students with the skills to collect qualitative data using different approaches, and to analyse qualitative data through computer assisted methods.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

In this module, the following topics will be covered. Each topic will be approached through case-studies linked to real-world issues:

- Why qualitative research to create knowledge for change?
- Theory and Methods in Qualitative Research
- Collecting your data: i. Advanced ethics/research with vulnerable groups: a researcher's duty of care; ii. Qualitative research and local context; iii. Research question design: the Do's and Don'ts; iv. Interviews, Oral History and Focus Groups: Researcher/Participant relationship; v. Emotions in Qualitative Research; vi. Online ethnography and Social Media;
- Analysing your data: i. Transcripts and analysis, ii. Coding and using N-vivo

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Develop advanced qualitative methods research skills, including an in-depth understanding of academic integrity and research ethics.
- Understand the challenges and possible issues associated with qualitative methods in order to develop the ability to make informed decisions when starting a research project.
- Reflect on complex issues and the use of qualitative methods to understand them. Analyse thoughts and emotions to make meaning of the research and develop action for change.
- Develop a good understanding of coding and computer assisted qualitative data analysis, and engage actively with programs such as N-Vivo.
- Provide intellectual leadership by challenging assumptions, critically analysing information and negotiating alternatives to current practices.
- Engage with grant writing process and develop the skills to present a complex project in an effective and convincing way.
- Describe complex issues in clear terms and communicate about them effectively and succinctly, both orally and in writing.
- Develop oral presentation and dissemination skills.

Indicative reading list

See Talis Aspire list

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Research element

Healey & Jenkins (2009) propose that Research-led-teaching design should consider four discrete opportunities. This module has been designed to include four of these opportunities.

1. Research-led learning, where the module syllabus is developed from current research in relevant fields, being based on contemporary and seminal, peer reviewed and other high quality research literature.
   As such, all knowledge for student engagement will be consciously and specifically chosen for its merits in reference to broader academic understanding. This will initially include engagement with relevant literature on qualitative research methods in general, and more specifically linked to the case-studies analysed in the module.
2. Research-tutored learning, where students engage actively in discussing high quality, contemporary and seminal research literature.
   This module will provide students with the opportunity to discuss and critically engage with the above literature, as it is primarily taught in a participatory, seminar format. Students will also engage in-depth with a selected issue in these literatures when collecting and analysing the data for their poster presentation and funding application proposal.
3. Research-orientated learning, where students are actively taught methodological understanding and skills for the independent creation of new knowledge.
   This module will provide students with the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of qualitative research methods, develop the appropriate qualitative research methods skills, and to practice and enhance these throughout the tasks for the reflective journal and the poster presentation.
4. Research-based learning, where students use developing methodological skills to create original knowledge of their own.
   This module will provide students with the opportunity to carry our qualitative research when collecting data for their own research project, to be presented in the poster presentation and in the funding application proposal.

Interdisciplinary

Positive global transformations are widely recognised to require transdisciplinary approaches. This module has been designed according to our signature problem-based, response focused pedagogy, and as such will draw on a transdisciplinary knowledge in the design and delivery of learning opportunities.

Authentic assessment will require students to demonstrate transdisciplinary aptitude, drawing from a range of disciplines such a sociology, history, cultural studies, anthropology, among others.

Transdisciplinary aptitude will be explicitly embedded in relevant marking rubrics, as adapted from

the standard university scale and descriptors.

International

This is a module on the Master's in Global Sustainable Development which offers a transdisciplinary learning experience with international case studies allowing students to achieve breadth and depth of knowledge.

Subject specific skills

Advanced Qualitative Methods Skills (including in-depth understanding of academic integrity and research ethics)
Ability to make informed decisions re. most appropriate research methods when starting a research project
Develop qualitative data analysis skills

Transferable skills

- Analytical skills
- Interviewing skills
- Presentation skills
- Reflective skills
- Intercultural and transdisciplinary communication skills
- Grant writing skills

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (20%)
Private study	30 hours (30%)
Assessment	50 hours (50%)
Total	100 hours

Private study description

Assigned readings and preparations for seminars

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Reflective Journal	25%	15 hours	Yes (extension)
Portfolio of reflections linked to small tasks taking place throughout the term.			
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Poster Presentation	50%	25 hours	Yes (extension)
Carry out a small research project including some form of qualitative research and present initial results of the analysis with an academic poster. Poster will be followed by a Q&A session			
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Funding Application Proposal	25%	10 hours	Yes (extension)
This proposal (1000 words long) needs to be linked to the pilot project presented at the poster presentation and should include different funding criteria and the project objectives			
Reassessment component is the same			

Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided in writing for each piece of assessment. Complementary oral feedback will also be available during the tutor's office hours.

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 1 of TGDA-L801 Postgraduate Taught Global Sustainable Development