

## Research Design

**Modular value:** 20 credits

**Duration:** Term 1

**Teaching:** Tuesday 10-3pm (full time); Saturday 10-4pm (part-time)

**Co-convenors:** [Dr Graeme Douglas \(/staff/profiles/education/douglas-graeme.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/education/douglas-graeme.aspx) and [Professor Gary Thomas \(/staff/profiles/education/thomas-gary.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/education/thomas-gary.aspx)

This module introduces students to the concepts and varieties of social science research designs. It aims to link research questions with design, methodology and warranting practices. It considers the kinds of research claims and conclusions that can be reliably drawn from different kinds of evidence produced by different designs, linking claims back in a logical way to design.

The module introduces key design features, such as groups, timing and measurement and illustrates these through detailed analysis of a range of research designs including experimental and quasi-experimental design, case study design and longitudinal design. Design elements are all linked into an over-arching theme of the full cycle (or spiral) of research activity from knowledge synthesis through development and testing to engineering results into policy or practice.

On completion of the module, students are expected to:

- Formulate research questions and develop testable hypotheses where appropriate
- Understand the key elements of research design and how to assemble them appropriately to answer questions
- Understand the link between theory construction and empirical research
- Apply appropriate designs to a research question or a series of research questions
- Understand and apply different forms of sampling strategies appropriate to different study designs
- Understand the concepts of validity (and reliability) and procedures to ensure they are guaranteed in the design process
- Be aware of a range of social science research designs, including experimental, longitudinal, case study designs
- Be able to compare and contrast these designs in relation to specific research questions
- Make critical judgements about the research designs used in existing research

### Teaching

The module is delivered twice – for full-time and part-time students/doctoral researchers. Generally you will follow the delivery as per your registration. If you wish to register for the alternative delivery session please apply directly to the Programme Director. Note: due to timetabling constraints the sessions on the part-time delivery are not always in the same sequence as the sessions on the full-time delivery. Therefore it is important, wherever possible, to attend all the sessions in one or other mode of delivery (full- or part-time).